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**TESTIMONY OF NAHELANI WEBSTER ON BEHALF OF THE HAWAII
ASSOCIATION FOR JUSTICE (HAJ) REGARDING S.B. 2501, SD1**

Date: Wednesday, February 28, 2018

Time: 11:00 a.m.

Room: 211

To: Chair Donovan M. Dela Cruz and Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means

My name is Nahelani Webster and I am presenting this testimony on behalf of the Hawaii Association for Justice (HAJ) regarding S.B. 2501, SD1, Relating to Homelessness.

We agree with the intent of the bill but respectfully ask that section (j) on page 3 be stricken. The provision absolving the State from all liability for any loss, damage, injury, or death is simply too broad and would be against public policy because it would remove the safeguards in place that currently protect homeless individuals.

Although the measure is well intentioned to encourage the department of human services to establish safe zones, this can still be achieved without removing the safeguards in place to protect individuals from harm. The State has a responsibility to create a safe environment for all citizens whether they are homeless individuals or not. Therefore, we recommend that the State not be removed from their responsibility to maintain the safe zones in a reasonable and safe condition for all occupants.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Please feel free to contact us should you have any questions or need additional information.