



February 25, 2020

To: The Honorable Karl Rhoads, Chair,  
The Honorable Jarrett Keolokalole, Vice Chair, and Members of the  
Senate Committee on Judiciary

Re: **SB 2781– relating to balloons**

Hearing: Thursday, February 27, 2020, 10:30 a.m. Room 016

Position: **Strong Support**

Aloha, Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Keolokalole, and Members of the Committee,

The HAWAI'I REEF AND OCEAN COALITION – HIROC – was formed in 2017 by coral reef scientists, educators, local Hawaii environmental organizations, elected officials, and others to address a crisis facing Hawaii's coral reefs and ocean – namely, the pollution of our near-shore environment by sunscreens that are literally killing our marine life. We are currently asking the Legislature to pass a handful of very important bills to save our coral reefs – they are bills relating to sunscreens, plus bills on cesspools, plastic marine debris, the climate crisis and sea-level rise, and fishing of species important for reef and ocean health.

One especially harmful type of marine debris is balloons filled with gases lighter than air, which often end up in the ocean in Hawaii. Sea birds, turtles, and marine mammals are often killed by ingesting balloons they think are food or by getting tangled on attached ribbons. Balloons, like other plastics, absorb and release persistent organic pollutants, toxic chemicals that adversely affect the health and longevity of marine organisms. In short, these gas-filled balloons are toxic to marine life and should not be sold in Hawaii. Please pass this bill. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Alan B. Burdick, for HIROC  
[Burdick808@gmail.com](mailto:Burdick808@gmail.com) 486-1018

# Beach Environmental Awareness Campaign Hawai'i

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(808) 393 2168 · [www.b-e-a-c-h.org](http://www.b-e-a-c-h.org)

DATE: Wednesday 26th February, 2020

TO: Chair Karl Rhoads, Vice-Chair Keohokalole and Members of the Committee on Judiciary

FROM: Suzanne Frazer, President, Beach Environmental Awareness Campaign Hawai'i

RE: **TESTIMONY IN VERY STRONG SUPPORT OF SB2781**  
Relating to litter control. Prohibits the intentional release of balloons.  
Committee meeting on Thursday 27th February, 2020 at 10:30AM

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice-Chair Keohokalole and Committee Members,

I am writing on behalf of Beach Environmental Awareness Campaign Hawai'i (B.E.A.C.H.) in very strong support of SB2781 which will ban intentional balloon releases throughout Hawai'i. Thank you to Senator Gabbard for introducing this bill and to the Committee on Agriculture and the Environment for passing it.

Releasing balloons is littering. This type of litter is one of the most harmful there is to marine life. Sea turtles, albatrosses and other marine life that eat squid and jellyfish can mistake a balloon in the ocean for food. Please see attached photos of balloons found at the beach and in the water. When balloons are ingested they cause blockages of the gastro-intestinal tract that then leads to starvation and death. The plastic ribbon attached to balloons is also a danger as it can cause injury or death to marine life that become entangled in it or ingest it.

It is unnecessary to release balloons into the air for celebration or commemoration of events. There are many other non-lethal ways to celebrate such as planting a tree, giving a lei or lighting a candle. B.E.A.C.H. has found that balloon litter on beaches increases particularly around May and June which indicates that the litter originates locally most likely from balloons released at graduation. One of our B.E.A.C.H. members was saddened to see a group of people celebrating graduation come out of a restaurant and release balloons into the air. A law in Hawai'i is needed to stop this from happening.

A number of states have passed laws related to balloon releases including California, Connecticut, Florida, Tennessee and Virginia. Several cities have also passed laws including San Francisco and Baltimore.

Hawai'i is a state surrounded by water and therefore it is imperative that action is taken to prevent one of the most hazardous types of litter from getting into the ocean and becoming marine debris. SB2781 will achieve the goal of preventing balloon litter.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide written testimony in very strong support of SB2781. Please pass this bill as is. Mahalo!

Sincerely,

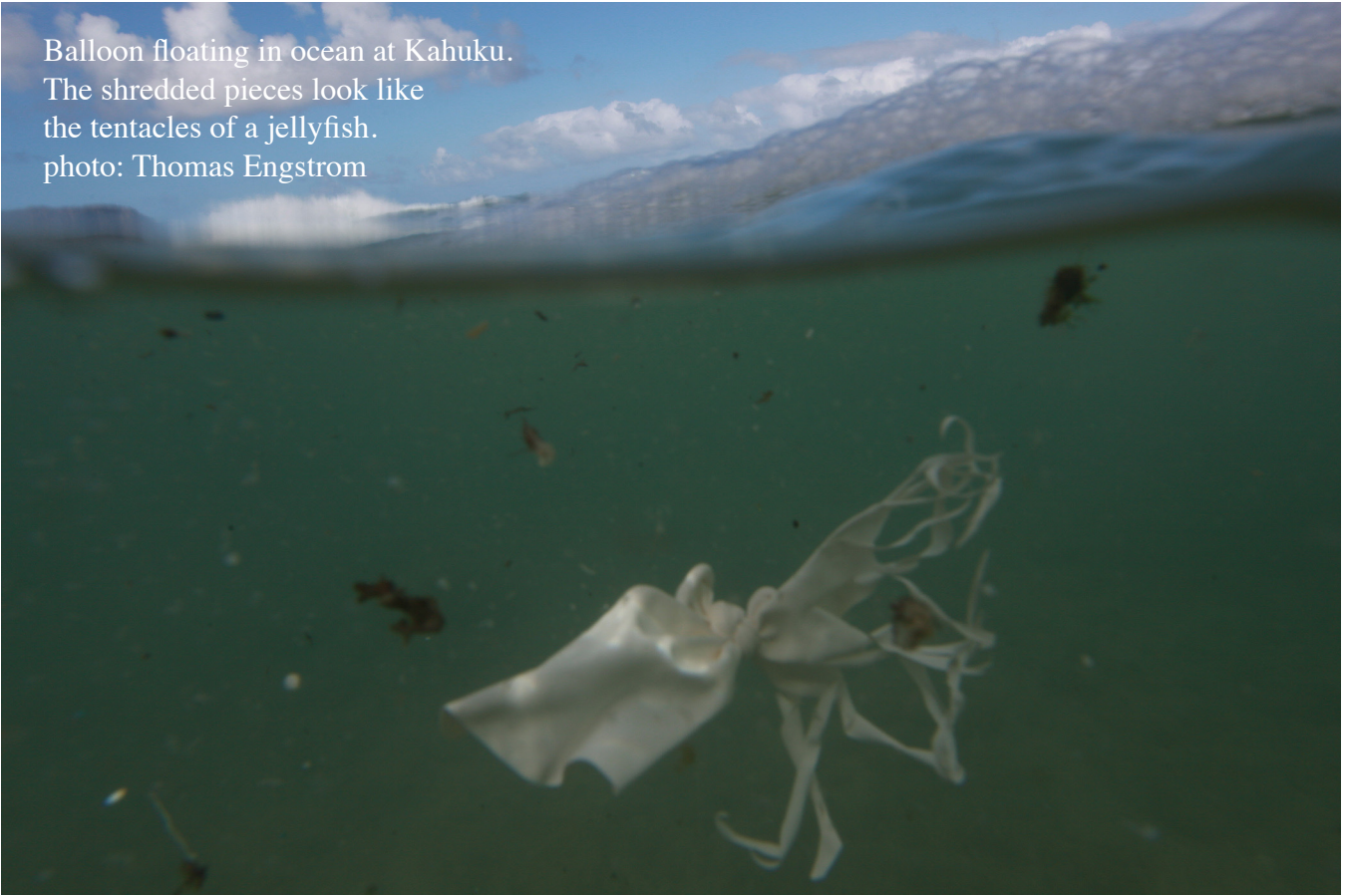


Suzanne Frazer.

B.E.A.C.H. Co-Founder & President



Balloon floating in ocean at Kahuku.  
The shredded pieces look like  
the tentacles of a jellyfish.  
photo: Thomas Engstrom



Balloons collected from shoreline  
The pink shredded balloon with  
plastic ribbons coming off looks  
like a jellyfish.  
photo: B.E.A.C.H.





## Why Are Latex Balloons Dangerous?

Latex balloons are one of the most dangerous and life-threatening items for people with latex allergy. Latex balloons are coated in powder that helps latex proteins become airborne, inhaled and can cause a severe allergic reaction. Latex proteins are smaller than pollen so the body cannot filter them out before they reach the lungs. The level of latex proteins in balloons is extremely high compared to other latex products. Due to this, many hospitals and schools now ban latex balloons.

- **Latex protein levels in powder-free latex gloves are approximately 5 parts per mL**
- **Latex protein levels in a single latex balloon are approximately 4700 parts per mL!**

(Yunginger JW, et al. J Allergy Clin Immunol. 1994)

**What is latex allergy?** Latex allergy is a serious, progressive, potentially life-threatening allergic condition. People with latex allergy can be diagnosed with allergic contact dermatitis (Type IV latex allergy) or the more severe, immediate hypersensitivity (Type I), or both Type IV and Type I. People can be exposed by direct contact, inhalation, or indirect contact. Each exposure can advance a latex allergy to make the person more seriously reactive. Even if a balloon is not touched it can cause a severe allergic reaction. Latex allergy is incurable.

**What are the symptoms of a latex reaction?** Reactions and symptoms can range from mild to life-threatening. They can include, but are not limited to any of the following:

- Skin/Eyes: Redness, swelling, rash, itching, hives, lesions
- Throat: Hoarse, difficulty swallowing, swelling
- Lungs: Coughing, wheezing, difficulty breathing, chest tightness
- Gut: nausea, vomiting, diarrhea
- Anaphylactic Shock: low blood pressure, obstructed breathing, heart failure and death

**Who is at risk?** Up to 6% of the general population have a latex allergy (CDC). Latex allergy is caused by repeated exposure to natural rubber latex. Those most at risk are people with any allergy (esp. bananas, avocado, kiwi, chestnuts); asthma; eczema; spina bifida; a history of multiple surgeries; occupational exposure (healthcare, food service, military); and the elderly.

**PLEASE HELP KEEP US SAFE FROM LATEX BALLOON EXPOSURE!** By the time a latex allergic person can see a balloon, they may have already been exposed to a potentially life-threatening level of airborne latex proteins. Please do not release balloons and choose latex free alternatives for decorating and events.

**SB-2781**

Submitted on: 2/24/2020 1:36:27 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/27/2020 10:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Jennifer Lopez	Individual	Support	No

## Comments:

Please pass this ban. Balloons are dangerous to wildlife, livestock the environment and humans with latex allergy. As a person who is airborne allergic to latex I implore you to protect us and ban the intentional release of balloons. What goes up always comes down and if it comes down anywhere near me it could cost me my life.

**SB-2781**

Submitted on: 2/24/2020 6:41:55 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/27/2020 10:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Cindy Hespe	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support SB2781. Balloons are bad for our environment, and dangerous for wildlife, livestock and people with latex allergies. I have a severe life-threatening latex allergy. We vacation in states that ban latex in food service (Arizona, California, Hawaii, Oregon primarily) so that I can vacation safely. Secondly, we look for states that ban balloon releases.

Hawaii is a beautiful state - there is no need to release balloons. Please pass SB2781 and keep it naturally beautiful!

**SB-2781**

Submitted on: 2/24/2020 10:16:08 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/27/2020 10:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Climate Protector	Testifying for Climate Protectors Coalition	Support	No

Comments:

**SB-2781**

Submitted on: 2/25/2020 5:28:53 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/27/2020 10:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Victoria Anderson	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Please pass this bill! We need to do all we can to protect our marine life!



**SB-2781**

Submitted on: 2/25/2020 6:43:41 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/27/2020 10:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Ruth Simonton	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am writing in support of HAWII SB2781. Intentional balloon releases are not only a danger to animals and the environment, they are also a danger to 1-6% of us with with latex allergies.

I have a severe airborne and contact latex allergy. One latex balloon has the potential to cause me to have an anaphylactic allergic reaction, and I don't even have to touch it. If there is a balloon or has been a balloon in my air space, for example stuck in a tree or caught on a sign, I immediately become hoarse, I develop itchy red eczema around my eyes and behind my ears, my chest hurts, my blood pressure drops, and I become lightheaded. I have to carry epinephrine, benadryl and a rescue inhaler at all times.

Please consider those of us with diagnosed latex allergies as well as those with undiagnosed latex allergies, especially children, and adopt a policy banning the intentional release of balloons inflated with a gas lighter than air. Latex allergy is life threatening, progressive, and preventable.

Sincerely,  
Ruth Simonton

**SB-2781**

Submitted on: 2/26/2020 12:26:47 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/27/2020 10:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Gerard Silva	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

More Stupidity !!!

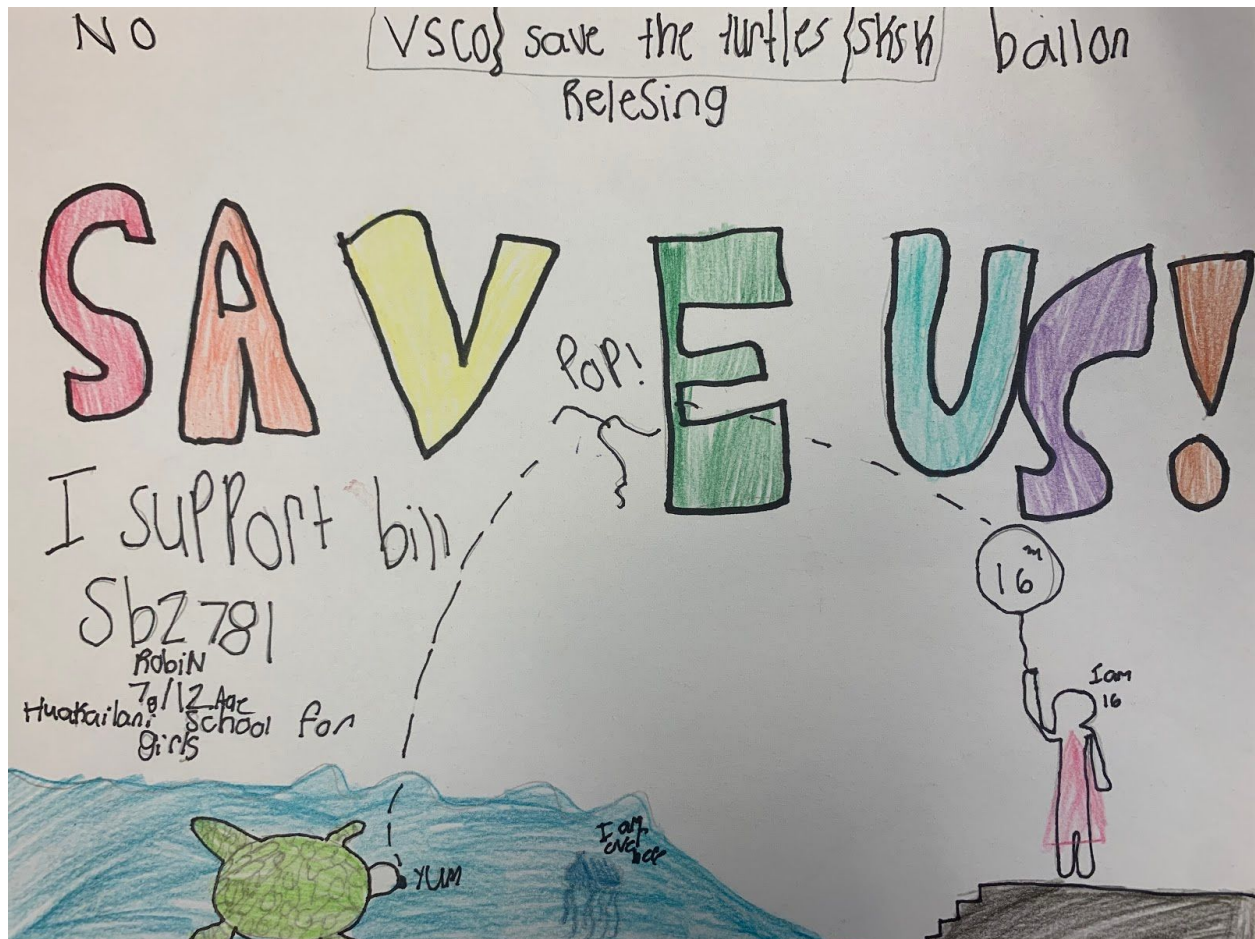
There are more important things like investgating were all the Federal money went from the Federal Government for the Rail. The Biggest Rip off In the History of this State.

We the people of Hawaii are Fed up with all this Crap!!!!

Aloha Chair Rhoads and members of the committee on judiciary,

My name is Robin Barnes from huakailani school for girls and i am a 7th grader who is 12 years old and i am a resident of kaaawa,hi. I am writing in strong support of SB278 banning balloon releases. I think it is important to ban balloon releases because all of the turtles are dying because they think that balloons are jellyfish because when people release balloons, when they get to a high enough altitude they will pop and then go into the water and the turtles mistake them for manowar and jellyfish and then eat them. If this keeps happening then our turtles will go extinct and we won't have them any more. Here is the thing too, it is not just a one time thing that happens. It is constantly happening I have seen it happen many times before even I have done it but when I learned about this and what happens I will never ever do that again because it is so bad for the earth and the environment and I don't want sea turtles to die because of a balloon like that is not good.in conclusion please pass this bill as is.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide written testimony in support of SB2781.



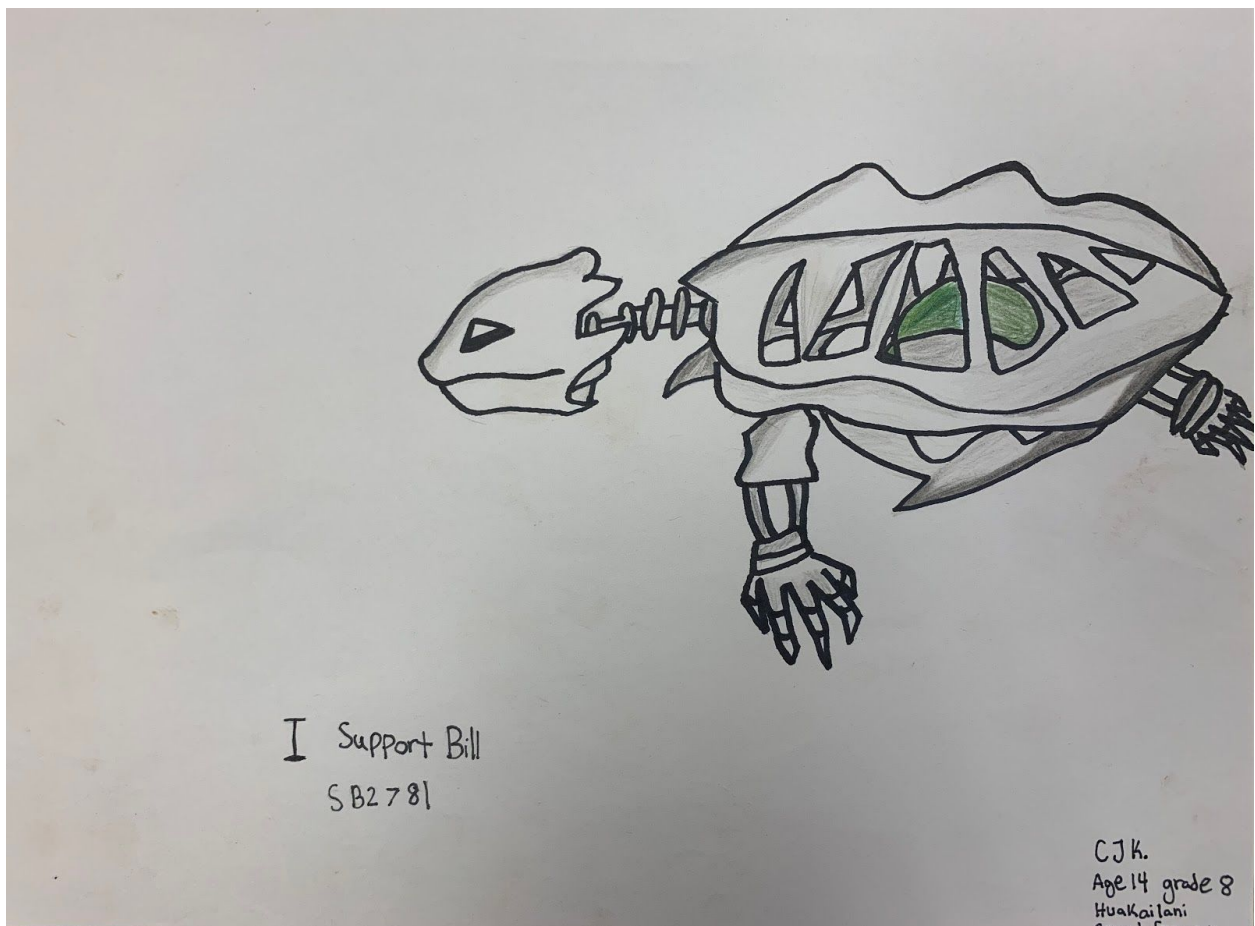
Aloha Chair Rhoads and members of the committee on judiciary,

My name is C.J. I am 14 years old and I am a resident of Kaneohe. I am writing in strong support of SB2781 banning balloon releases.

I believe that balloons are dangerous to the environment. Balloons have lots of hazardous chemicals in them. Besides that, balloons are made from plastic! And if someone lets go of a balloon then it will land in the water or on land and hurt our environment or our animals!

Please pass this bill as is. Thank you for this opportunity to provide written testimony in strong support of SB2781.

Mahalo,  
C.J



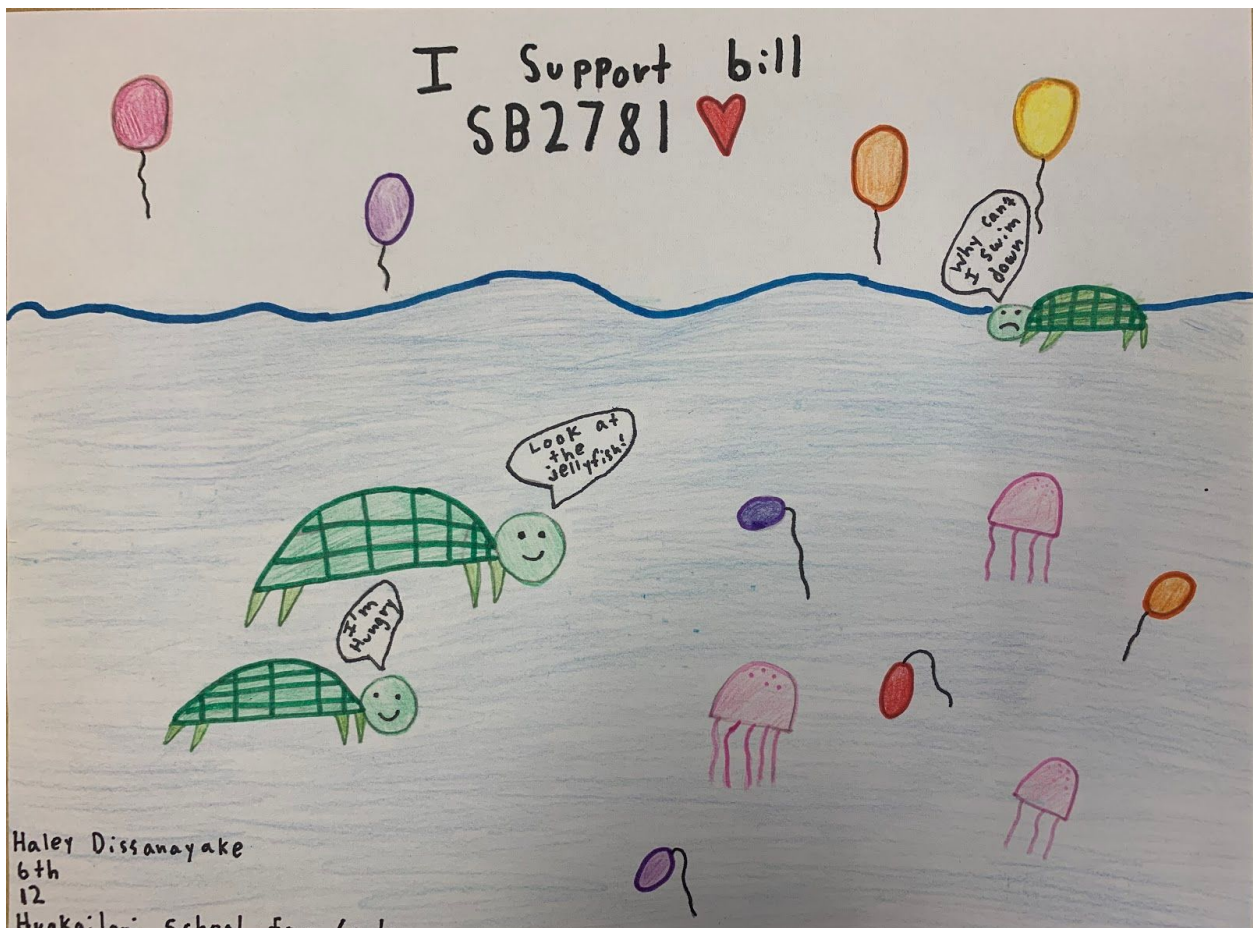
Aloha Chair Rhoads and Members of the committee on Judiciary,

My name is Haley, I am 12 years old and I am in the 6th grade. I am a resident of Hawaii Kai. I am writing in strong support of SB2781 banning balloon releases.

Please consider passing this bill, it is very important to keep our oceans clean for many reasons such as our environment, hurting turtles, and littering in the ocean. I have seen many balloons on the beach before, I never knew that they would end up in turtles stomachs. I just want you to think about laying on the top of the ocean knowing these will be your last days, this is what sea turtles go through.

Please pass this bill so our marine life will no longer suffer. Thank you for this opportunity to provide written testimony in strong support of SB2781.

Mahalo,  
Haley

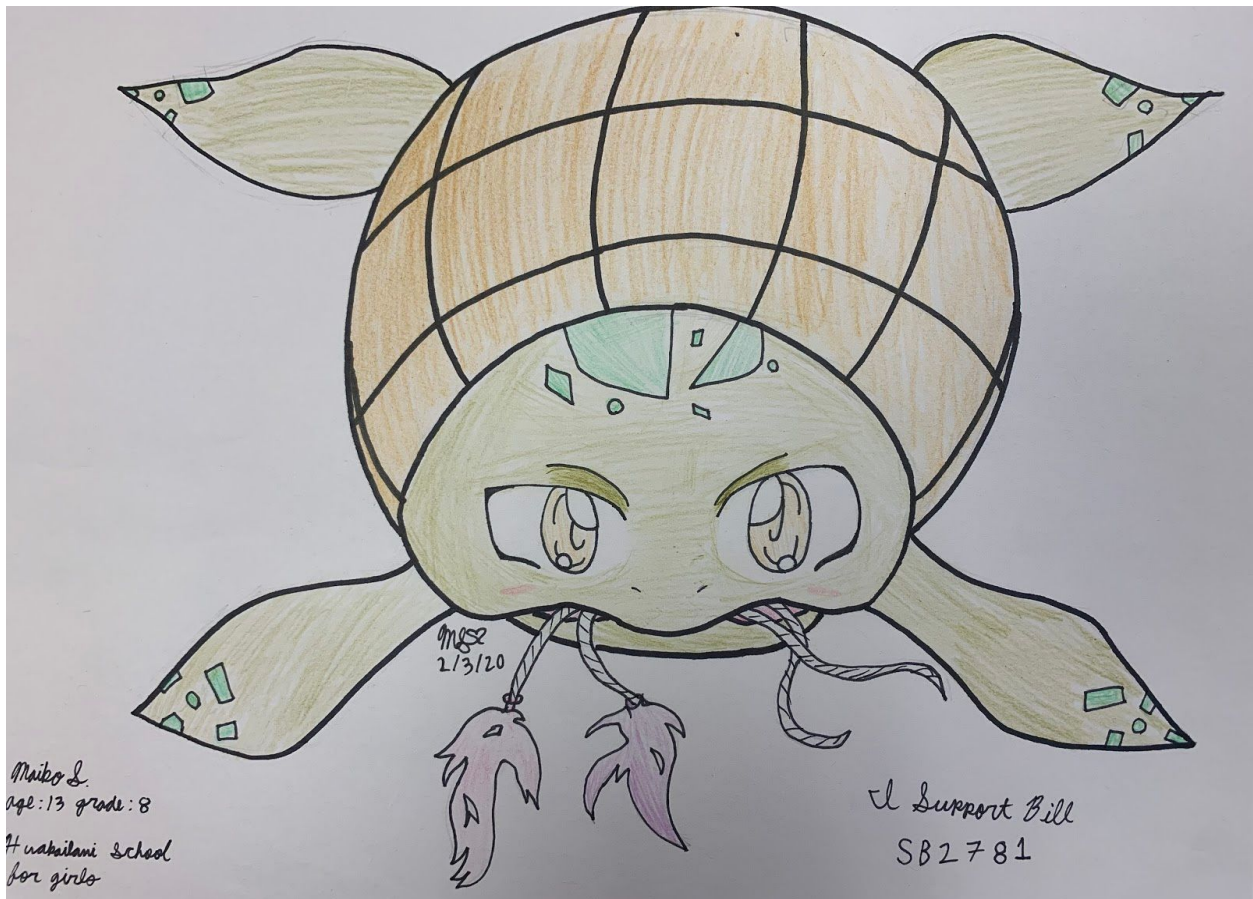


Dear Chair Rhoads and members of the committee on Judiciary,

My name is Maiko S. and I'm in the eighth grade; also I'm a resident of Kaneohe. I think it's important to support the ballon toss ban so that our native sea creatures may live long happy lives, and so the future generations of children just like me get to see a real turtle rather than a fake one or one that's made of artificial intelligence.

Please pass this bill as is. I'm glad I could express my feelings on bill SB2781 for you.

Mahalo,  
Maiko S.



Aloha Chair Rhoads and members of the committee on Judiciary,  
My name is Mandy T. and I'm in grade 7. I am a resident of kailua and I am writing in strong support of SB2781 banning balloon releases.

I think it's important to ban balloon releases because when you let go of the balloon it might pop and go into the ocean and get the sea life creatures sick or die. I have experience when people celebrate a holiday or a special event and they celebrate by letting go of balloons and eating. Please pass this bill as is. Thank you for this opportunity to provide written testimony in strong support of SB2781.

Mahalo,  
Mandy T.

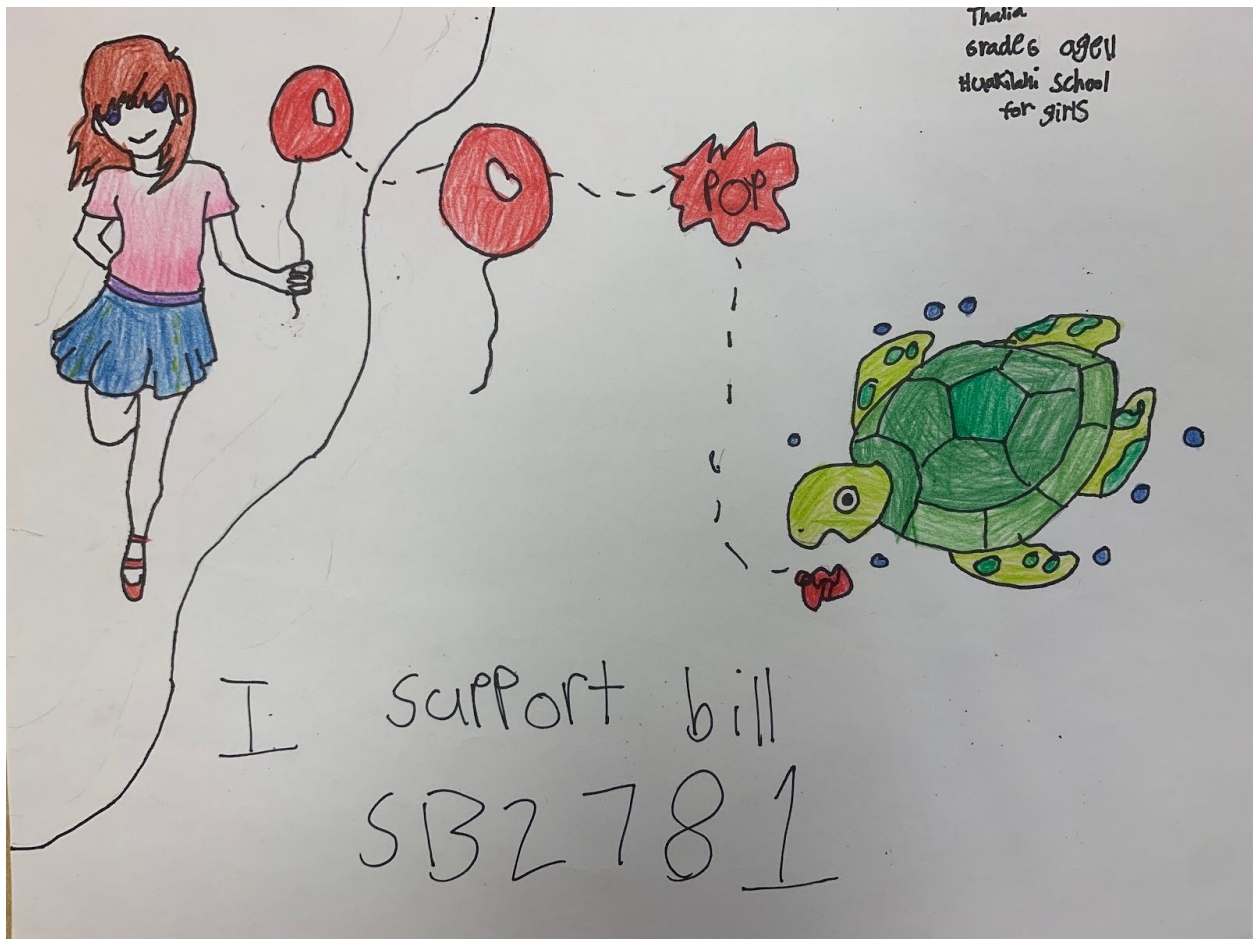


Aloha Chair Rhoads and members of the committee on Judiciary,

My name is Thalia. I'm 11 years old and in sixth grade and I am a resident of Kailua and I am writing in strong support of SB2781.

Turtles eat balloons thinking that they're jellyfish and it gets lodged in the turtle's digestive tract, trapping air disrupting its ability to dive down. Then the turtle no longer has the ability to feed or protect itself.

So please pass the bill that stops balloons from being released outdoors. And please save the turtles!

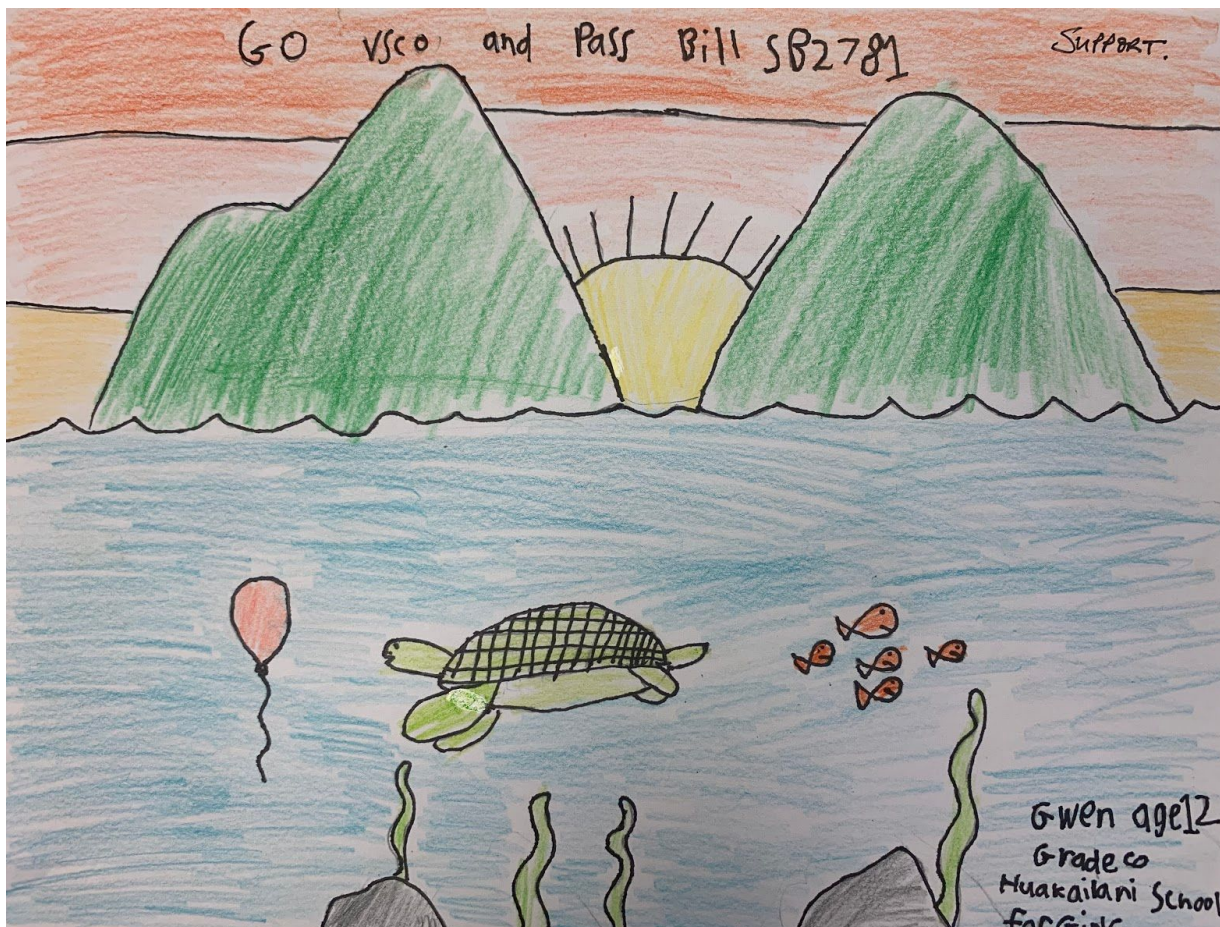




Dear chair Rhoads and members of the committee on judiciary,

I Am Gwenivere M. and a resident of Kailua. I Am in grade 6 and strongly support SB2781 that will ban balloon releases. I believe that it is important to ban balloon releases because when they eventually pop they will most likely fall into the ocean. Living in the sea are creatures like a turtle, who will mistake balloons for their food and eat it. Since rubber will not decompose inside an animal's stomach it will cause gas and inflammation in the turtle, which will leave him floating on the surface of the water not being able to dive down deep to get it's real food and starve. It takes approximately 21 days or so for the turtle to perish which means 21 days of agonizing pain. It's not just turtles that died in this horrible manner other sea creatures may mistake balloons for their food and suffer the same fate as the sea turtle.

So I hope you see my point and pass SB2781.

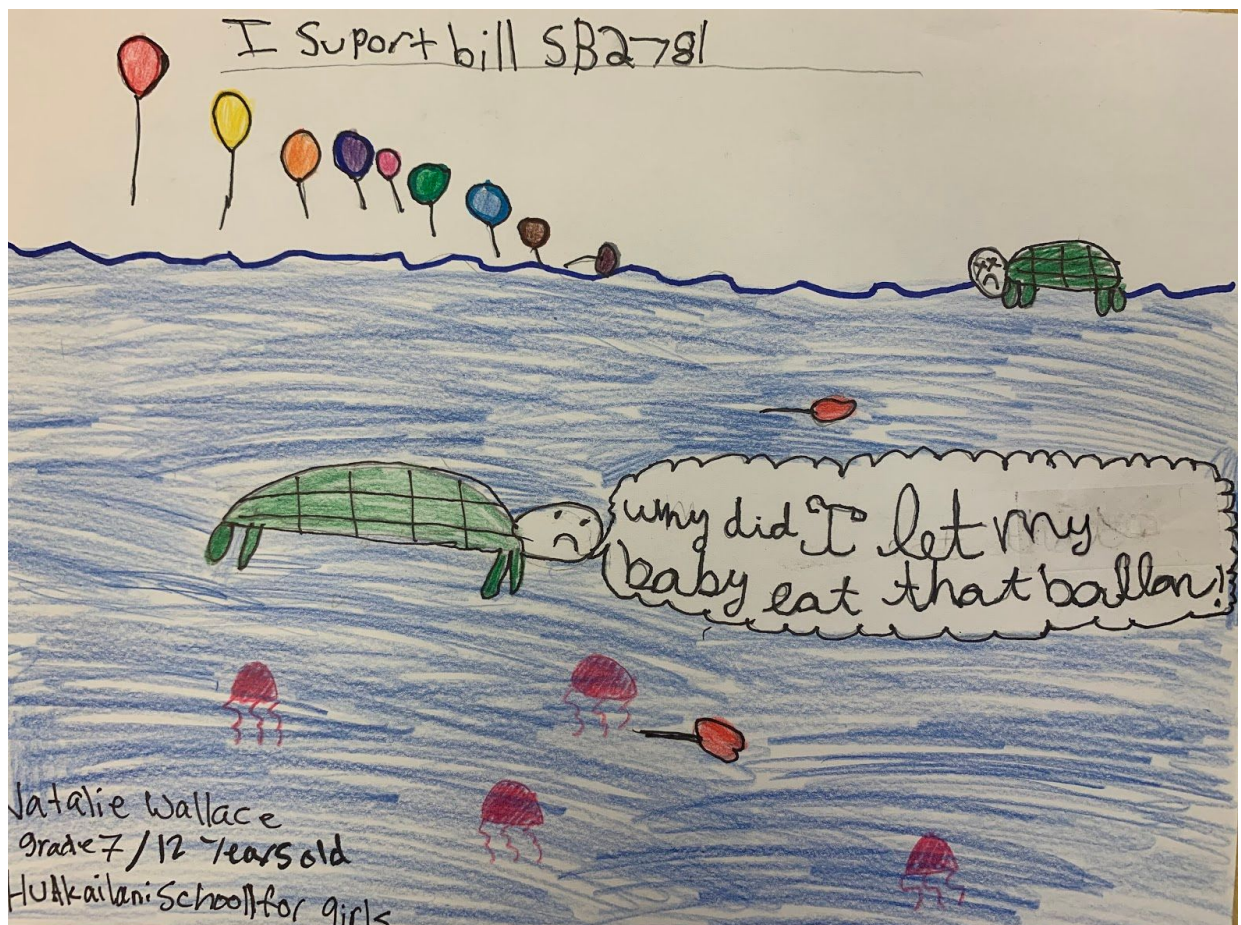


Aloha Chair Rhoads and members of the committee on Judiciary.

My name is Natalie Ann Wallace. I am 12 years old and I am in 7th grade and I am a resident of Kailua. I am writing in strong support of SB2781 banning balloon releases. I think it is not good to release balloons because if it lands in the water the sea turtles might think that it is a jellyfish and eat it. I remember one time I was walking on the beach and I picked it up because I felt so bad about it. Please pass this bill as is. Thank you for this opportunity to provide written testimony in strong support of SB2781.

Mahalo,

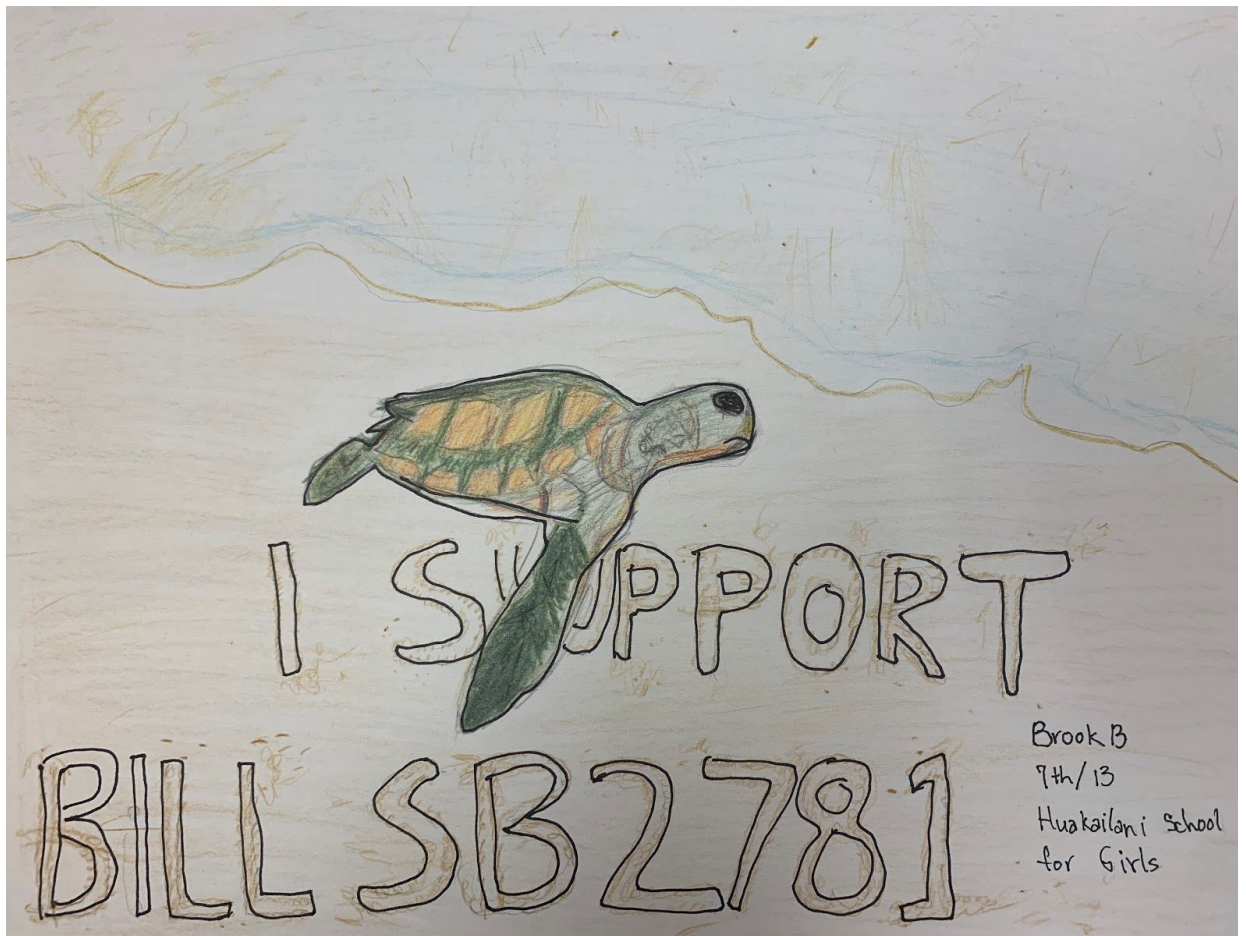
Natalie Wallace



Aloha Chair Rhodes and members of the committee on Judiciary,  
My name is Brook and I am a resident of Kailua. I am writing in strong support of bill SB2781 banning balloon releases.

I think it is important to ban balloon releases because the toxic plastic of the rubber balloon is polluting our ocean and hurting marine animals. Because eventually, the popped balloon is consumed by a marine animal, this causes the creature to suffer from gastrointestinal issues. For Example if a turtle consumes plastic it will get stuck in the turtle's digestive system which traps the air, and so it will not have the ability to dive down for food.

Please pass this bill as is. Thank you for this opportunity to provide written testimony in strong support of SB2781.



Aloha Chair Rhoads and members of the Committee on Judiciary,

My name is Tyler, and i'm 11 years old and i'm in 6th grade. I am a resident of Kaneohe. I am writing in strong support of SB2781 banning balloon releases. I think it is important to ban balloon releases because the balloons almost always end up being eaten. Even more than 100,000 marine animals die from balloons every year. Not only that balloons cause dangerous power outages. Please pass this bill as is. Thank you for this opportunity to provide written testimony in strong support of SB2781.

Thank you.





**SB-2781**

Submitted on: 2/26/2020 10:25:19 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/27/2020 10:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Dean Otsuki	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I strongly support SB2781 to ban intentional balloon releases. Eventually, balloons released in the air will pop and come down usually in the ocean where marine life like sea turtles mistake it for their natural food.

Please pass SB2781 and help protect marine life.

Aloha, Dean Otsuki

**LATE**

**SB-2781**

Submitted on: 2/26/2020 4:27:26 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/27/2020 10:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Lisa-ann Pang	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I strongly support SB2781 which prohibits the intentional release of balloons. It is a hazardous form of litter that can cause entanglement to wildlife and marine life. These animals may also mistake for food. Intentional balloon releases is intentional littering and there should be a fine for this. Thank you for this opportunity to write testimony in support of SB2781.

**LATE**

**SB-2781**

Submitted on: 2/26/2020 4:38:19 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/27/2020 10:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Cathy Goeggel	Testifying for Animal Rights Hawai'i	Support	Yes

Comments: