



STATE OF HAWAII ORGANIZATION OF POLICE OFFICERS

" A Police Organization for Police Officers Only "
Founded 1971

April 3, 2022

ONLINE/FAX: 808-586-6684; 808-586-8474

The Honorable Mark M. Nakashima
Chair
The Honorable Scot Z. Matayoshi
Vice-Chair
House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs
Hawaii State Capitol, Rooms 331, 432
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Re: **HCR 87, HR78-Urging The City And County Of Honolulu To Establish A
New Police District In Leeward Oahu To Provide Adequate Police Services
And Law Enforcement Response For Growing Leeward Oahu Communities**

Dear Chair Nakashima, Vice-Chair Matayoshi, and Honorable Committee members:

I serve as the President of the State of Hawaii Organization of Police Officers (“SHOPO”) and write to you on behalf of our Union in **strong support** of HCR 87 and HR 78 which calls for the creation of a new police district on the Leeward side to provide “adequate police services” to the Leeward communities.

While we strongly support the creation of a new district and police station to police the Ewa/Kapolei areas and the Waianae Coast, the resolution does not address how we are expected to staff this wish list with officers given the severe staffing crisis we are in. As a union, we would like to know how we are supposed to fill a new district and a new police station with warm body officers and provide “adequate police services” when we cannot fill the districts, sectors and beats that already exist.

The resolution correctly acknowledges the need for “a greater police presence,” “better law enforcement response,” and “an additional police station” to serve the Waianae area. The resolution also refers to District 8 and the assaults, burglaries, drug and alcohol violations, homicides, motor vehicle thefts, sex crimes, vandalism, and disturbing the peace calls that our officers must respond to daily while also dealing with an area that has one of the highest percentage of homeless individuals. Having a high crime rate in an area with an inadequate staffing of officers is not coincidental. It is the direct result of not having a sufficient number of

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The Honorable Mark M. Nakashima, Chair
The Honorable Scot Z. Matayoshi, Vice-Chair
House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs
Re: HCR 87, HR78-Urging The City And County Of Honolulu To Establish A New Police District In Leeward Oahu To Provide Adequate Police Services And Law Enforcement Response For Growing Leeward Oahu Communities
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officers policing the district, however, it is impossible to staff an area if we simply do not have enough police officers. This problem will be compounded by the Law Enforcement Standards Board that will make it that much more difficult to recruit and retain officers in the Honolulu Police Department (“HPD”).

The recent broad daylight shootout and gun fight in a Waianae neighborhood that left one person dead and another wounded by gun fire is something we should not have to accept or normalize. The people who reside on the Leeward Coast deserve better. But these constant calls to defund the police and putting into place various new boards to make people feel something positive is being done is pure window dressing. We need more police officers in uniform patrolling our neighborhoods and streets to deter and stop crime from happening in the first instance. That is basic policing that is lacking in many of our community areas including Waianae, Nanakuli, Makaha and Maili where many of our police officers were raised and continue to live with their families.

You will recall that former Chief Susan Ballard publicly stated in 2018 and 2019 that HPD was cutting services including the investigation of certain **felony** crimes. She announced to you and the rest of the public that certain reported crimes would simply not be investigated because of the lack of officers. The criminals are smart and know this. This is 2022 and the staffing crisis is worse and the criminals know that. Turnover is constant, new recruits enlist and then cannot make it through our training or they graduate and soon leave for other jurisdictions that offer higher compensation and take our training with them. Our most experienced officers who are eligible to retire get out as soon as they can. The officers who continue to work are fatigued and burned out working excessive hours.

The local residents and business owners of the Leeward Coast have been desperate for a greater police presence for years but it has fallen on deaf ears because nothing productive has been done to increase the number of police officers in District 8 to provide those residents with the level of police protection they deserve. Instead of helping us find ways to recruit and retain officers, we have seen our compensation rates fall substantially behind similarly sized jurisdictions, our retirement benefits slashed by the legislature, and we have been working without a contract for almost a year creating an atmosphere of instability and anxiety. Our current pay and reduced retirement benefits do not attract a sufficient number of qualified recruits, the attrition rate at the police academy is staggering and shocking, and those who are eligible to retire are exiting at the first opportunity. We are in the midst of a staffing crisis yet this resolution calls for an expansion of police services and greater police presence and protection without offering any real world solutions on how to make this all happen. You simply cannot have your cake and eat it too.

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As far as our union is concerned, the residents and business owners in Waianae deserve the same level of police service, presence, and protection as those who live in Kahala and Hawaii Kai. It should be no less of a priority to maintain their safety and to protect the property and possessions of those who live and work in Waianae than areas that have higher real estate values and income levels. Moreover, the residents and business owners did not only recently call for a greater police presence as the resolution seems to infer. They have been crying out for greater police protection for years, but shamefully no one has responded with any substance. The simple fact is we do not have enough officers to adequately protect the residents of Waianae and other areas, and have made this known for a long time but the situation remains the same. HPD's hierarchy seems more concerned about saving overtime funds and returning the unspent funds to the City council rather than spending it on protecting the citizens of Waianae and other neighborhoods that require greater police protection. Your resolution urges an increase in staffing for the Waianae Coast but again I have to ask you, where do you propose we get the officers from? Please tell us how we are going to staff a new district when we cannot fully staff our current districts. While we certainly support the intent of this resolution, we wish this honorable body would do more to provide substantive support for our officers instead of working earnestly to pass legislation that creates additional and unnecessary certifications and standards that discourages rather than encourages people from joining the police department.

We thank you for allowing us to be heard and to share our concerns on this resolution and hope your committee will also offer concrete and specific solutions to address and mitigate the shortage of police officers so that we can provide the necessary level of police protection to the residents and businesses of Waianae and other communities.

Respectfully submitted,

ROBERT "BOBBY" CAVACO
SHOPO President

HCR-87

Submitted on: 4/3/2022 6:04:25 PM

Testimony for JHA on 4/5/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Allan Vosburgh	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As previously submitted, I fully support creation of expanded Honolulu Police Department capacity on the Leeward Coast of Oahu. We are experiencing a significant expansion of population in our area, with no apparent increase in HPD resources to address the inevitable rise in calls for support. Our HPD men and women need your support to do their job. The Waianae Station has the space designed in to function as a fully independent HPD District, but was never completed or equipped to perform that function. We are already seeing an increase in property crime, as well as serious crimes to include homicide in District 8. This is simply too big an area to serve with existing HPD resources. By creating an separate District, HPD leaders can apportion their resources in a way that provides for public safety as well as safety for officers. I urge you to strongly consider this initiative.

HCR-87

Submitted on: 4/4/2022 12:22:02 PM

Testimony for JHA on 4/5/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Danny Liebertz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Ewa Plain communities have experienced an enormous growth spurt over the past 5-10 years - and is continuing to grow, as is our neighbor, Kapolei. These 2 large communities, along with those families and businesses on the Waianae coast have reached a capacity that needs more policing, more patrols, more police presence - the current number of officers and support staff currently assigned to this area is way understaffed. Geographically, looking at a map and the areas to be covered, it is stretched almost larger than any other current district.

Please, please provide us 2 districts with an adequate police presence within both - to accommodate the fastest growing communities on the island - especially the new, about to open, Lagoon area with more restaurants, a hotel, condominiums, shops and water attractions.

Thank you

HCR-87

Submitted on: 4/4/2022 12:30:52 PM

Testimony for JHA on 4/5/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stephanie Ware	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

With the growing population in Ewa due to new housing and commercial developments, we need a dedicated Police District for our area. Our area continues to see rapid development and all that comes with it - crime, traffic, etc. Having our own district would provide the necessary police presence to make our neighborhoods safer for residents, businesses and visitors. A firm 'YES' on this bill!