

**ROBERT K. MERCE**  
2467 Aha Aina Place  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96821  
(808) 398-9594

TO: Committee on Health  
RE: SB 732  
HEARING DATE: Friday, February 12, 2021  
TIME: 1:00 p.m.  
CONF. Via Videoconference  
POSITION: **Support**

Dear Chair Keohokaole, Vice Chair Baker, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Bob Merce. I am a retired lawyer and previously served as Vice Chair of the HCR 85 Task Force on Prison Reform, and I am the principal author of the Task Force's Final Report to the 2019 Legislature.

I support SB 732 which would create a two-year pilot program for a mobile response team to respond to incidents related to mental health, substance abuse, and suicide threats, as well as providing conflict resolution and welfare checks in lieu of an armed response on the island of Oahu.

The mobile response team created by SB 732 appears to be very similar to the Crisis Assistance Helping out on the Streets (CAHOOTS) program staffed and operated by the White Bird Clinic in Eugene, Oregon, a college town of 170,000 people. In 2019 the CAHOOTS team responded to 29,000 calls, about 20 percent of the city's dispatches.<sup>1</sup> Only 150, or 0.5 percent of those calls required, police backup.<sup>2</sup>

CAHOOTS reports that it saves the city of Eugene about \$8.5 million in public safety costs every year, plus another \$14 million in ambulance trips and ER costs.<sup>3</sup>

Oahu has about 4,448 homeless people, 23 percent of whom report having mental health problem, and 18 percent of whom report having a substance use problem.<sup>4</sup> Many of those people end up having encounters with the police that result in arrest and incarceration. A mobile

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<sup>1</sup> Scottie Andrew, "This town of 170,000 replaced some cops with medics and mental health workers. It's worked for over 30 years," CNN July 5, 2020. Accessed February 10, 2021  
<https://www.cnn.com/2020/07/05/us/cahoots-replace-police-mental-health-trnd/index.html>

<sup>2</sup> This Town, supra. note 1.

<sup>3</sup> This Town, supra.

<sup>4</sup> Partners in Care, "Oahu's 2020 Point in Time Count." Accessed February 10, 2021  
<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5db76f1aadb44fb77280f1/t/5efa984a8ae4f774863509e8/1593481306526/PIC+2020+PIT+Count+Report+Final.pdf>

response team comprised of the health care professionals listed in paragraph b(1) of SB 732 would be much more effective than the police in responding to homeless people in distress and others with mental health and/or substance use disorders, and the program would undoubtedly save millions in incarceration, ambulance, and ER costs.

I strongly urge you to pass SB 732.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important bill.

Bob Merce



# Hawai'i Psychological Association

*For a Healthy Hawai'i*

P.O. Box 833  
Honolulu, HI 96808

[www.hawaiipsychology.org](http://www.hawaiipsychology.org)

Phone: (808) 521-8995

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH  
Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair  
Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Vice Chair

Friday February 12, 2021 - 1:00pm - videoconference

**Strong Support of SB732  
RELATING TO NON-VIOLENT MOBILE CRISIS INTERVENTION TEAM**

HPA strongly supports the proposed collaborative program, under the auspices of the Department of Health, for a “non-violent response team to provide mobile crisis intervention response to incidents related to mental health, substance abuse, suicide threats, as well as providing conflict resolution and welfare checks in lieu of an armed response on the island of Oahu.”

**We recommend that psychologists be included in the non-violent response team**, which currently is limited to “nurse, paramedic, or emergency medical technician, and crisis workers who have substantial training and experience in the mental health field.”

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input into this important bill.

Sincerely,

Alex Lichton, Ph.D.  
Chair, HPA Legislative Action Committee

**SB-732**

Submitted on: 2/9/2021 7:02:35 PM

Testimony for HTH on 2/12/2021 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Martha Jenkins	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I adamantly support SB 732 as an effort toward protecting our communities and most vulnerable populations. We currently ask far too much of inadequately-trained police officers, and Hawai'i must explore alternative forms of emergency response.

**SB-732**

Submitted on: 2/9/2021 10:12:59 PM

Testimony for HTH on 2/12/2021 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Joseph Brown III	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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

I write in **STRONG SUPPORT** of this measure. This pilot program is exactly the kind of progressive policy making we need, and the right direction for our State to move in.

As we know from available data and the experiences of our heavily policed communities, and as has been made abundantly clear by George Floyd's murder last Summer, our current system of policing and incarceration is not only immoral, but is also wholly ineffective in achieving public safety. We, as a society, require the abolition of the prison industrial complex, which includes policing as we now know it, and a brand new public safety infrastructure.

The pilot program proposed in this bill is a great opportunity for the State to try a different method of providing for public safety, one that reduces harm instead of adding to it, and that seeks to respond to incidences in the most effective way possible. Let our law enforcement officials focus on solving and investigating violent crimes, which they are apparently struggling to accomplish, per FBI data reported by Civil Beat late last year:

"Of the 2,866 cases of homicide, rape, robbery and aggravated assault reported last year, HPD cleared only 735 cases – a rate of 25.7%. The average percentage for a similarly sized city is 35.6% and is 45.5% across all police departments, [according to FBI data](#)."

Please give this program a chance as we (the community) continue striving for a system of restorative justice.

Sincerely,

Joey Brown

Kailua, 96734

**SB-732**

Submitted on: 2/10/2021 12:30:14 AM

Testimony for HTH on 2/12/2021 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Carrie Ann Shirota	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha,

I am writing in strong support of SB732 Relating to the Non-Violent Response Team Pilot Program.

Our jails and prisons are severely overcrowded. Many persons inside of our jails and prisons have not received adequate health care and treatment to address their mental health and substance use diagnosis. Consequently, without treatment and support, many people are propelled into our jails and prisons - places of despair, high suicide rates and violence - further exacerbating their underlying health issues.

This pilot project is modeled in concept after successful programs in other jurisdictions. CAHOOTS in Oregon is one specific example of success.

Please invest in what works. Please pass SB732.

Sincerely,

Carrie Ann Shirota, Esq.

cashirota808@gmail.com

**SB-732**

Submitted on: 2/10/2021 10:30:34 AM

Testimony for HTH on 2/12/2021 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Carla Allison	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

My name is Carla Allison and I strongly support SB732. Hawaii has the opportunity to learn from programs where medics and crisis workers respond to public safety calls instead of the police. Eugene, Oregon’s program has operated for over 30 years. “It operates in collaboration with the police department, dispatching social workers instead of officers. The program has an annual budget of roughly \$2 million and saves the city of Eugene an estimated \$8.5 million annually in public safety costs, in addition to \$14 million in ambulance trips and emergency room costs.”\* We have an opportunity with this bill to create a program that works for our communities. Please support SB732. Thank you! \*USNews & World Report July 6, 2020 One City’s 30-Year Experiment With Reimagining Public Safety

**SB-732**

Submitted on: 2/10/2021 10:56:06 AM

Testimony for HTH on 2/12/2021 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Raelyn Reyno Yeomans	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Strong support



**SB-732**

Submitted on: 2/10/2021 6:05:52 PM

Testimony for HTH on 2/12/2021 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Courtney Mrowczynski	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I strongly **support** SB732. This is essential for beginning the process of creating better relations with police, easing the workload of police, and ensuring citizens get the proper care and attention that they need.

*Testimony of Jacquie Esser to the Senate Committee on Health in **Strong Support** of S.B. No. 732, a bill that directs the department of health to create a two-year non-violent response team program.*

**February 12, 2021**

S.B. No. 732: RELATING TO THE NON-VIOLENT RESPONSE TEAM PILOT PROGRAM

Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Baker, and Members of the Committee:

I submit this written testimony in strong support of creating a non-violent response team to address certain public health situations that currently call for police.

Calling the police on someone experiencing a behavioral health crisis can be deadly – both for law enforcement and community members. In the United States, at least one in four people killed by the police has a serious mental health problem.<sup>1</sup>

Public health issues should be met with public health solutions. We turn to the police in situations where years of experience and common sense tell us that their involvement is unnecessary, and actually can make things worse.

We want our police officers doing their job – to solve crime. When we over burden our police officers with public health issues, they cannot focus on the serious violent crimes that cause the most harm to our communities. This results in low clear rates and makes us all less safe. In 2019, 2,866 cases involving homicide, rape, robbery and aggravated assault were reported to the Honolulu Police Department (“HPD”).<sup>2</sup> Of those 2,866 cases, HPD solved a mere 735.<sup>3</sup> By taking police out of issues involving homelessness, mental illness, substance use disorder, and other nonviolent incidents, it frees up police officers to do their jobs and solve crime.

The non-violent response approach has been tried elsewhere – and it works. In 1989, Eugene, Oregon developed the Crisis Assistance Helping out on the Streets

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<sup>1</sup> Wall Street Journal, “When Mental-Health Experts, Not Police, Are the First Responders,” <https://www.wsj.com/articles/when-mental-health-experts-not-police-are-the-first-responders-1543071600>.

<sup>2</sup> Civil Beat, “HPD Crime-Solving Record Is The Worst It’s Been In At Least 40 Years,” [https://www.civilbeat.org/2020/09/hpd-crime-solving-record-is-the-worst-its-been-in-at-least-40-years/?fbclid=IwAR3X\\_fCKbx1k-6AKXxrJgI1u9a49GnPm5DjpbH5gHtPjL9TvXr\\_uOtXg6Y](https://www.civilbeat.org/2020/09/hpd-crime-solving-record-is-the-worst-its-been-in-at-least-40-years/?fbclid=IwAR3X_fCKbx1k-6AKXxrJgI1u9a49GnPm5DjpbH5gHtPjL9TvXr_uOtXg6Y).

<sup>3</sup> Id.

(“CAHOOTS”) program. CAHOOTS is a community-based public safety system to provide mental health first response for crises involving mental illness, homelessness, and substance use disorder.<sup>4</sup> The CAHOOTS mobile crisis team are not law enforcement officers and do not carry weapons.<sup>5</sup> They are trained to endure a non-violent resolution of crisis situations and deal with a wide range of mental health-related crises, including conflict resolution, welfare checks, substance use disorder, suicide threats, and more, relying on trauma-informed de-escalation and harm reduction techniques.<sup>6</sup> The CAHOOTS team handles over 20% of their local 911 calls instead of police – saving lives and saving Eugene millions of dollars in the process.<sup>7</sup> The team makes referrals to behavior health supports and services without the uniforms, sirens, and handcuffs that can exacerbate feelings of distress for people in crisis.

Following the success of CAHOOTS, more and more cities have formed similar crisis response teams.<sup>8</sup> For the past six months, the city of Denver, Colorado has been running the Support Team Assisted Response (“STAR”) pilot program to replace police when 911 is called for at least seven reasons connected to

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<sup>4</sup> White Bird Clinic, “What Is Cahoots?” (Oct. 2020), <https://whitebirdclinic.org/what-is-cahoots/>.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.*

<sup>6</sup> *Id.*

<sup>7</sup> *Id.*

<sup>8</sup> *See*, Inquirer, “Mobile Crisis Unites in the Philly Area Take Strain Off Police When Dealing with Mental-Health Incidents” (Aug. 2020), <https://www.inquirer.com/health/mental-health-mobile-crisis-units-philadelphia-20200813.html>; KGW8, “A New Answer to 911? Portland Could Soon Send ‘Street Response Teams’ Instead of Police,” <https://www.kgw.com/article/news/investigations/a-new-answer-to-911-portland-could-soon-send-street-response-teams-instead-of-police/283-a94bb69e-5cf4-4f75-bbc8-7941370c04f7>; Tampa Bay Times, “Police In St. Petersburg to Step Back from Nonviolent Emergency Calls” (Jul. 2020), <https://www.tampabay.com/news/2020/07/09/police-in-st-petersburg-could-step-back-from-nonviolent-emergency-calls/>; City and County of San Francisco Office of the Mayor News Releases, “Additional Reforms Will Focus on Eliminating the Need for Police to be First Responders for Non-Criminal Situations” (June 2020), <https://sfmayor.org/article/mayor-london-breed-announces-roadmap-new-police-reforms>; CNN, “Los Angeles Will Create Unarmed Crisis Response Teams for Nonviolent 911 Calls” (Oct. 2020), <https://www.cnn.com/2020/10/14/us/los-angeles-unarmed-crisis-response-teams-911-calls/index.html>; The City, “Five Days Without Cops: Could Brooklyn Policing Experiment be a ‘Model for the Future’?” (Jan. 2021), <https://www.thecity.nyc/2021/1/3/22211709/nypd-cops-brooklyn-brownsville-experiment-defund-police>.

homelessness, substance use and poverty.<sup>9</sup> In the first six months of STAR, no one they encountered was arrested.<sup>10</sup>

Making these experts available boosts the quality of care, avoids needless escalation by law enforcement, and minimizes the stigma attached to people with mental illness. By taking the police out of responding to these situations, it reduces unnecessary police contact and allows police to spend more time on crime-related matters.

This is an alternative to police that police and everyone can and should get behind because it keeps us all safer.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support of S.B. No. 732.

Sincerely,

Jacquie Esser  
Kailua, Hawai'i  
esserjt@gmail.com

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<sup>9</sup> Denverite, "In the first six months of health care professionals replacing police officers, no one they encountered was arrested" (Feb. 2021), <https://denverite.com/2021/02/02/in-the-first-six-months-of-health-care-professionals-replacing-police-officers-no-one-they-encountered-was-arrested/>.

<sup>10</sup> Id.

**Chair Jarrett Keohokalole**  
**Vice Chair Rosalyn Baker**

**Senate Committee on Health**

**Friday, February 12, 2021**  
**1:00PM**

**TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF SB732 RELATING TO THE NON-VIOLENT  
RESPONSE TEAM PILOT PROGRAM**

Aloha Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Baker, Members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Jun Shin, I am a Junior at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa and currently serve as an at-large board member for the Young Progressives Demanding Action. I am testifying today as an individual in **STRONG SUPPORT** of **SB732**, Relating to the Non-violent Response Team Pilot Program. This bill would direct the Department of Health to create a two-year non-violent response team pilot program to respond to incidents related to mental health, substance abuse, suicide threats, as well as providing conflict resolution and welfare checks instead of an armed response on the island of O‘ahu.

Public health issues should be met with public health solutions, not armed police officers. Police officers are not trained to respond to behavioral health crises, which can really be dangerous for both the police officer and/or citizens involved if armed officers are the ones responding to a situation. Through this pilot program, crisis intervention team members would be trained to de-escalate situations involving conflict and crisis without the use of force or the threat of force, connecting persons with resources that they need to live and get the help that they deserve.

This program would save money and will save lives. Just as importantly, this will divert people away from entering our overcrowded jails and prisons, which has been well-documented as unfit for human beings. I hope that this pilot program can eventually be a permanent program used throughout the State of Hawai‘i.

I urge you to **PASS SB732** out of your committee.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Jun Shin,  
1561 Kanunu Street  
Honolulu, HI 96814  
Cell: 808-255-6663  
Email: junshinbusiness729@gmail.com

**SB-732**

Submitted on: 2/11/2021 8:34:11 AM

Testimony for HTH on 2/12/2021 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I strongly support this bill.

**SB-732**

Submitted on: 2/11/2021 11:00:08 AM

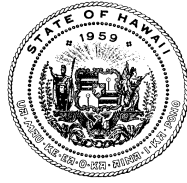
Testimony for HTH on 2/12/2021 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Ralph Garcia	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha,

Please support SB732 to help fund programs that will decriminalize non-violent and homeless related issues. We should be focusing it has a health issue instead of criminal justice problem. We can look at similar programs such as Denver's STAR program which sent social services for some emergency calls. What they found is they never needed to call police for backup and they were able to get the right services to those people. This could potentially reduce our jails, lower prison recidivism, resolve root cause instead of putting a band-aid , and in the long term save cost to our judicial system.



STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
P. O. Box 3378  
Honolulu, HI 96801-3378  
doh.testimony@doh.hawaii.gov



**Testimony in OPPOSITION to S.B. 732  
RELATING TO THE NON-VIOLENT RESPONSE TEAM PILOT PROGRAM**

SENATOR JARRETT KEOHOKALOLE, CHAIR  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

Hearing Date: 2/12/2021

Hearing Time: 1:00 p.m.

1 **Department Position:** The Department of Health (“Department”) opposes this measure, offers  
2 comments, and respectfully requests that this measure be deferred.

3 **Department Testimony:** The subject matter of this measure intersects with the scope of the  
4 Department’s Behavioral Health Administration (BHA) whose statutory mandate is to assure a  
5 comprehensive statewide behavioral health care system by leveraging and coordinating public,  
6 private and community resources. Through the BHA, the Department is committed to carrying  
7 out this mandate by reducing silos, ensuring behavioral health care is readily accessible, and  
8 person-centered.

9 The Department appreciates the legislature’s ongoing support of behavioral health  
10 programs and services that address timely access to care. The proposed two-year pilot  
11 program for a non-violent response team on Oahu that provides mobile crisis intervention in  
12 response to incidents related to mental health, substance abuse, and suicide threats, as well as  
13 providing conflict resolution and welfare checks in lieu of an armed response by a law  
14 enforcement officer, has merit, the Department believes it is not needed, and appropriating  
15 funds would be wasteful and unjustified as the proposed pilot program duplicates existing  
16 efforts.



1           Currently, the BHA’s Adult Mental Health Division coordinates crisis services statewide  
2 which includes an array of options that are accessible by contacting the Hawaii CARES Program,  
3 Hawaii’s statewide 24-hour a day, 7-day a week behavioral health call center at 832-3100 (on  
4 Oahu), toll free from Neighbor Islands 1 (800) 753-6879, or by texting ALOHA to 741741.

5           When an individual contacts the Hawaii CARES Program and indicates a need for  
6 community-based behavioral health support, CARES staff assist the individual by linking them to  
7 appropriate crisis services including crisis mobile outreach (CMO), Mental Health Emergency  
8 Workers (MHEWs), short-term stabilization beds, and 24-hour residential group home  
9 placement with specialized programming (“Palekana”).

10           The Department humbly asks for the legislature’s support of the existing crisis  
11 intervention services and programs that are already a part of the BHA’s continuum of care and  
12 respectfully request that this measure be deferred.

13           **Offered Amendments:** None.

14           Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

15           **Fiscal Implications:** Undertermined.



**LATE**

Young Progressives Demanding Action  
P.O. Box 11105  
Honolulu, HI 96828

February 11, 2021

**TO: SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH**  
**RE: Testimony in Support of SB732**

Dear Senators,

Young Progressives Demanding Action **strongly supports SB732**. Diverting non-violent calls for service away from a law enforcement and toward the Department of Health would be a profound change in how we, as a society, respond when someone calls for assistance. It's a key part of addressing our structural inequities. It would enable a more effective system of safety that works for communities and keeps them safe while reducing levels of costly mass incarceration.

Changing our response for non-violent calls will do two critical things:

- Address the specific need that motivated the person to call for assistance with the most effective response; and
- Free up our police officers to focus on the situations that require a response from armed and trained officers, such as violent crimes, investigations, and the work that they were hired to do to keep the community safe.

There may still some non-violent calls that police will respond to, like burglaries that have occurred or auto theft and break-ins, but there are many non-violent calls for service that don't need an armed police response.

**Our police officers are not mental health professionals.** They are not medically-trained, and they are not social workers or child development specialists. It's a failure of our overall public safety and human services system that we expect them to be. Our state should develop a systematic response plan to improve direct connection to community-based service providers.

Innovative approaches, such as San Francisco's Street Medicine behavioral health professionals and Street Violence Intervention project are the kinds of alternative approaches to public safety that we need in Hawai'i. These models have been proven to be both effective and sustainable.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Will Caron  
Board President & Secretary  
[action@ypdahawaii.org](mailto:action@ypdahawaii.org)

**LATE**

**SB-732**

Submitted on: 2/11/2021 2:36:42 PM

Testimony for HTH on 2/12/2021 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Nedi McKnight	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I strongly support SB732.

**LATE**

**SB-732**

Submitted on: 2/11/2021 2:46:01 PM

Testimony for HTH on 2/12/2021 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
jeanne wheeler	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

This would foster mature response worthy of a civilized society - please pass this bill!  
Mahalo

**LATE**

**SB-732**

Submitted on: 2/11/2021 3:27:36 PM  
Testimony for HTH on 2/12/2021 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Shannon Rudolph	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Strongly Support.  
Time to try this great idea. It's becoming a successful program in many other places. Let's free up our police officers for the real crimes that are rampant & send social workers out for less-lethal situations.

**LATE**

**SB-732**

Submitted on: 2/11/2021 3:56:29 PM  
Testimony for HTH on 2/12/2021 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Christopher Egbo	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

We overwhelm our officers to conduct work they are not trained or qualified to do. Our officers are over worked. In order to protect and serve our communities they have to focus on solving crime not dealing with mental health crisis.

Having a organized group of trained individuals whose sole job is to handle non violent calls for assistance, will help to make our communities safer and and reduce the stress we place on our over worked officers

**LATE**

**SB-732**

Submitted on: 2/11/2021 4:37:09 PM

Testimony for HTH on 2/12/2021 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Thomas Brandt	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Support.

I think we already expect too much of law enforcement officers, by asking them to deal with many of the symptoms of deeper social and economic problems. They are also not trained or paid to act as psychiatric social workers. So in this sense, we need to de-militarize civilian law enforcement and give them a wider array of non-lethal tools to do their jobs.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.



**LATE**

**SB-732**

Submitted on: 2/11/2021 6:55:14 PM

Testimony for HTH on 2/12/2021 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Mary True	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I fully support this. As a retired college counselor I feel sending police can frequently escalate the situation.

**LATE**

**SB-732**

Submitted on: 2/11/2021 7:28:28 PM

Testimony for HTH on 2/12/2021 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Corrina Carnes	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha,

I support this bill as a needed companion to recent proposals to expand mental health treatment and tighten gun laws. Since 2015, nearly 1/4 of all people killed by police in the U.S. had a known mental illness (Washington Post, Feb 9, 2021). Hawaii is not immune to this issue, as evidenced by the 2018 killing of Steven Hyer and others. Transitioning to a non-violent response for mental health emergencies will protect both our police officers and the communities they serve.

Warmest regards,

Corrina Carnes

Waialua, HI

**LATE**

**SB-732**

Submitted on: 2/11/2021 9:28:29 PM  
Testimony for HTH on 2/12/2021 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Doris Segal Matsunaga	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha,

As a retired public health educator in Hawaii's community health centers, I urge you to support SB732. Mahalo.

Doris Segal Matsunaga

'Aiea, Hawaii

**LATE**

**SB-732**

Submitted on: 2/11/2021 11:19:57 PM  
Testimony for HTH on 2/12/2021 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Natasha White	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.  
I strongly support this bill. We must put public health and safety first, which entails health professionals handling crisis work they are trained and equipped for, rather than sending an armed response that further escalates traumatic situations, and can cause more harm. Police departments are not capable of providing specialized responses to health crises, and we should not expect them to be. This pilot program is an essential step towards improved public safety and welfare.

**LATE**

**SB-732**

Submitted on: 2/12/2021 2:48:29 AM

Testimony for HTH on 2/12/2021 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Barryn Chun	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

As a lifetime resident of Hawai`i, I support this measure as it would be one of many crucial first steps in assisting the houseless/homeless. These people need someone to talk to, not a citation from a police officer. You need to understand what feeling helpless is like, on top of being ignored/judged as subhuman on a daily basis. Then, some guy hands you a yellow slip of paper which just tells you you're doing something wrong,

Just look at this article. Is this how we should be treating people?

<https://www.civilbeat.org/2021/02/hawaii-homeless-program-failed-after-prosecutors-and-police-wouldnt-play-ball>