



STATE OF HAWAII ORGANIZATION OF POLICE OFFICERS

" A Police Organization for Police Officers Only "
Founded 1971

March 27, 2022

ONLINE /FAX: 808-586-6879; 808-587-7230

The Honorable Clarence K. Nishihara
Chair
The Honorable Lynn DeCoite
Vice-Chair
Senate Committee on Public Safety, Intergovernmental, and Military Affairs
Hawaii State Capitol, Rooms 214, 231
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Re: **SCR 88, SC 78-Urging The Allocation Of Additional Resources To Increase Police Presence On The Waianae Coast And The Creation Of A New Police District For Waianae That Is Separate From Kapolei And Ewa**

Dear Chair Nishihara, Vice-Chair DeCoite, 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 SCR 88 and SR 78 which calls for the creation of another police district and for increased staffing on the Waianae Coast.

While we strongly support the creation of a new district to police the Waianae area, the resolution does not address how we are expected to staff a newly created district 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 with warm body officers and respond to the urging of “an increase in staffing and resources” when we cannot fill the districts, sectors and beats that already exist.

The resolution correctly acknowledges that “increased staffing and resources” are needed to serve the Waianae area. The resolution also refers to District 8 as having the highest number of murders and aggravated assaults in 2020. Having a high crime rate in an area with an inadequate staffing of officers is not by accident or coincidental. It is the direct result of not having as sufficient number of officers policing the district, however, it is impossible to staff an area if we simply do not have the bodies to do so.

Main Office & Honolulu Chapter Office
1717 Hoe Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96819-3125
Tel: (808) 847-4676 "84 SHOPO"
www.shopohawaii.org Fax: (808) 841-4818

Hawaii Chapter Office
688 Kinoole Street, Room 220B
Hilo, Hawaii 96720-3877
Tel: (808) 934-8405
Fax: (808) 934-8210

Kauai Chapter Office
3176 Oihana Street, Suite 104, Lihue
Mailing Add: P. O. Box 1708
Lihue, Hawaii 96766-5708
Tel: (808) 246-8911

Maui Chapter Office
1887 Wili Pa Loop, Suite 2
Wailuku, Hawaii 96793-1253
Tel: (808) 242-6129
Fax: (808) 242-9519

The Honorable Clarence K. Nishihara, Chair
The Honorable Lynn DeCoite, Vice-Chair
Senate Committee on Public Safety, Intergovernmental, and Military Affairs
Re: SCR 88, SC 78-Urging The Allocation Of Additional Resources To Increase Police
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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 also know this as well. 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.

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. Many of our police officers have families and relatives who live in Waianae. 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?

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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

SCR-88

Submitted on: 3/24/2022 8:58:59 PM

Testimony for PSM on 3/29/2022 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Richard W. Adams	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I live in Ma'ili Village on the West Coast. I walk the Ma'ili Beach Park everyday. I am a very active member of the community as far as utilizing the State's 311 app to report homeless, abandon vehicles, drug activity, dead animals, illegal campers and illegal dumping of trash and garbage. I encourage my neighbors to do the same thing. The additional presence of HPD Officers in our community would be a blessing for residents and individuals that utilize Ma'ili Beach Park. You have my 100% support to approve and fund this and related bills.