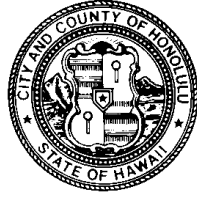


HONOLULU EMERGENCY SERVICES DEPARTMENT
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

3375 KOAPAKA STREET, SUITE H-450 • HONOLULU, HAWAII 96819-1814
Phone: (808) 723-7800 • Fax: (808) 723-7836



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April 5, 2023

The Honorable Sen. Glenn Wakai, Chair
and Members
The Committee on Public Safety and Intergovernmental and Military Affairs
Hawai'i State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Wakai, Vice Chair Elefante and Committee Members:

SUBJECT: Testimony in Support of HCR21, HD1

On behalf of the nearly 300 City & County of Honolulu lifeguards on the island of O`ahu, I write in strong support of HCR21, HD1, and also to Mahalo the entire 2023 Hawai'i State Legislature for its interest and support of ocean safety writ large.

My perspective may not necessarily represent the position of the Mayor Blangiardi Administration, but I assure you that the time has come to seriously consider improving the services of both the Ocean Safety and Emergency Medical Services Divisions of the City and County of Honolulu. In the past few years, a movement to separate EMS and Ocean Safety has garnered significant traction: two different resolutions passed the Honolulu City Council 9-0, and Mayor Blangiardi called for studying the issue during his 2023 State of the City Address.

Separating the Ocean Safety and EMS divisions into stand-alone departments would not cost much, could better enable our hardworking, dedicated and brave paramedics and lifeguards to advocate for what they truly need, and could improve public oversight of first responder budgets and processes – particularly if the separation allowed for the amendment of the City Charter to implement Ocean Safety and EMS Commissions, similar to those for the city's police and fire departments.

O`ahu's lifeguards stand in strong support of this measure and hope it simply calls more attention to the outstanding work of our EMS, police and fire brethren.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John K. Titchen".

John K. Titchen
Chief of Ocean Safety
City & County of Honolulu

HCR-21-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/4/2023 10:43:26 AM

Testimony for PSM on 4/10/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
jared jovero	Testifying for OSD	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this. Stop delaying. We've been urging this for a long time now.



OUTRIGGER
DUKE KAHANAMOKU
FOUNDATION

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FOUNDATION**

P. O. BOX 160924
HONOLULU, HI 96816

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Testimony to the COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND
MILITARY AFFAIRS

Monday, April 10, 2023, 3:00 pm

VIA Conference Room 225 & Videoconference

Dear Chair Wakai, Vice Chair Elefante, and members of the Committee on Public Safety and Intergovernmental and Military Affairs,

The Outrigger Duke Kahanamoku is in support of HCR 21 which urges the City and County of Honolulu to remove the Ocean Safety and Lifeguard Services Division from the Emergency Service Department, and to establish it as a new separate department.

The Outrigger Duke Kahanamoku Foundation seeks to perpetuate the legacy of Duke Kahanamoku through support of water sports, volleyball, and water safety. As Sheriff of Honolulu from 1932 to 1961, Duke was a strong proponent of public safety, and as a master waterman, he was vigilant of others in the ocean.

The head of EMS is politically appointed and therefore somewhat beholden to the mayor's office. This keeps Ocean Safety from managing its own budget or working independently from politics, like the fire department and the police department can do. Further EMS and Ocean Safety have related but obviously different scopes of work. As a best practice, it would be optimal for individual public safety departments including EMS and Ocean Safety to be independent from politics so that the focus can be on saving lives.

Thank you,

Sarah Fairchild

Executive Director

DUKE'S CREED:

"In Hawai'i, we greet friends, loved ones or strangers with Aloha, which means with love. Aloha is the key word to the universal spirit of real hospitality, which makes Hawai'i renowned as the world's center of understanding and fellowship. Try meeting or leaving people with Aloha. You'll be surprised by their reaction. I believe it and it is my creed. Aloha to you."

DUKE PAOA KAHANAMOKU



HAWAII GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION
AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO

RANDY PERREIRA, Executive Director • Tel: 808.543.0011 • Fax: 808.528.0922

The Thirty-Second Legislature, State of Hawaii
House of Representatives
Committee on Public Safety and Intergovernmental and Military Affairs

Testimony by
Hawaii Government Employees Association

April 10, 2023

H.C.R. 21, H.D. 1 — RELATING TO OCEAN SAFETY

The Hawaii Government Employees Association, AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO opposes the intent of H.C.R. 21, H.D. 1 which urges the City and County of Honolulu to remove the Ocean Safety and Lifeguard services Division from the Emergency Services Department and establish it as a new, separate department.

As the exclusive representative of the Water Safety Officers of the City and County of Honolulu, **we strongly support the establishment of a new and separate department for our Water Safety Officers. Establishing a new department, allows for greater autonomy and ensures the specific needs of the Water Safety Officers are met.** However, we must stress that this must be addressed at the county level, through the Honolulu City Council and the City and County of Honolulu. The State Legislature should not meddle in County-level issues or put forth legislation that could impact the County's inter-governmental structure.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition of H.C.R. 21, H.D. 1.

Respectfully submitted,

Randy Perreira
Executive Director

HCR-21-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/4/2023 11:40:55 AM

Testimony for PSM on 4/10/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michelle Matson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Ocean Safety and Lifeguard Services Division's immense responsibilities call for establishing their own Department separate and distinct from EMS to enable them to manage their own funding independent of politics, and to advocate for sufficient funding to fully focus on performing rescues and saving lives, and engage in ocean safety outreach to effectively educate and inform the public.

HCR-21-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/4/2023 2:37:06 PM

Testimony for PSM on 4/10/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Chelsey Hatori	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

City and County Of Honolulu's Ocean Safety should be it's own department. This is long over due.. We in Hawaii are surrounded by the Ocean. Although it is such a beautiful site to see, it also can be the most dangerous sites to see within mintues. With that being said, our life guards are there when we need them at these most dangerous times. We have the best water men and women in the world.. and it is time to take good care of them as they take good care of us.

HCR-21-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/4/2023 3:24:44 PM

Testimony for PSM on 4/10/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Derek	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I believe Ocean Safety becoming its own department is a step in the right direction. By having its own budget to create more full time positions to better serve the community, as well as creating a dawn to dusk work hours to prevent and minimize water related injuries. Many of the water related injuries and rescues happen before and after lifeguards are on/off duty. There is only positives about becoming its own department and no negatives. I support Ocean Safety to the fullest in becoming its own department.

HCR-21-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/4/2023 4:38:04 PM

Testimony for PSM on 4/10/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Janice Giles	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support Ocean Safety in having their own Department. This will allow people to make the right decisions for their employees, because they will have experience in this department. Having EMS look over Ocean Safety is like having an accountant supervise chefs in a kitchen. It just doesn't match. In turn, more people will be saved, because there will be more positions that will open up for Ocean Safety.

HCR-21-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/4/2023 6:10:46 PM

Testimony for PSM on 4/10/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jaron Chong	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I fully support bill HCR21 HD1. Ocean Safety needs to its own department and be separate from the Emergency Services Department. It will benefit both agencies greatly. The needs of each agency is different from one another. A budget specifically assigned to each agency will help with their needs for budget, personnel, equipment, etc. Ocean Safety needs to have a director with years of experience regarding to ocean safety and lifeguarding services. It will benefit the employees by having someone appointed with knowledge of how best to serve their needs and the public needs.

HCR-21-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/5/2023 1:58:46 PM

Testimony for PSM on 4/10/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jana Ireijo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To whom it may concern,

I am written in favor of HCR21 to remove the ocean safety and lifeguard services from the emergency services department, and establish it as a new, separate department.

Sincerely,

Jana Ireijo

HCR-21-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/5/2023 8:02:22 PM

Testimony for PSM on 4/10/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ron Bregman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strongly in favor of this legislation.

HCR-21-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/5/2023 8:07:23 PM

Testimony for PSM on 4/10/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
jude parker	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in support of HCR21 HD1.

mahalo.

HCR-21-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/7/2023 12:24:59 PM

Testimony for PSM on 4/10/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bryan Phillips	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Bryan Phillips, I am a former Ocean Safety Lifeguard of 19 years who resigned in December 2022. I support HCR21. I sat as the HGEA BU 14 and 15 president as the lead negotiator for the last 3 contract negotiations.

A separate department of Ocean Safety should reflect the structure of HPD and HFD with commissions. Ocean Safety and Emergency Services would both benefit by having focused missions to provide public safety at the highest level. Mahalo, Bryan Phillips

HCR-21-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/10/2023 6:06:31 AM

Testimony for PSM on 4/10/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mike McHale	Testifying for Ocean Safety	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a Ocean Safety Officer since 2004 watching our department not being able to grow as to cover the needs of the public and complete the compliance of the law for the entire department to be providing extended hours for the public due to delays by the HESD managing director, it is long overdue that OSD becomes it's own deparment,

I support HCR21 HD1

Thank you,

Mike McHale

HCR-21-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/9/2023 7:38:04 PM

Testimony for PSM on 4/10/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
ikaika won	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support Ocean Safety becoming it's own department. I believe the people of Oahu and it's visitors will benefit greatly from this, enhancing the service that this world class organization has been already been providing.

HCR-21-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/9/2023 7:39:27 PM

Testimony for PSM on 4/10/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Evan Hodges	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Evan Hodges, I am an Ocean Safety Officer for the City and County of Honolulu. I strongly support this bill to remove the Ocean Safety Division from EMS in order to create an Ocean Safety Department. I believe this is a critical step in ensuring that the program gets the resources it needs in order to perform the best possible service and care for beach patrons on Oahu. I believe that the Ocean Safety program deserves this opportunity since it has proven its importance to the community time and time again. Please carefully consider this bill and all the benefits that could come from the passing of it.

Thank you,

Evan Hodges

HCR-21-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/9/2023 8:03:31 PM

Testimony for PSM on 4/10/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gabrielle Woolery	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Gabrielle, I am a nurse on oahu and avid water woman. I strongly support this bill to remove the Ocean Safety Division from EMS in order to create an Ocean Safety Department. I believe this is a critical step in ensuring that the program gets the resources it needs in order to perform the best possible service and care for beach patrons on Oahu. I know that those who are a part of the Ocean Safety program and community are some of the most hardworking and selfless people out there and deserve the opportunity to become their own department. Please carefully consider this bill and all the benefits that could come from the passing of it.

Thank you,
Gabrielle

HCR-21-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/9/2023 8:04:15 PM

Testimony for PSM on 4/10/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Brett Carter	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this

HCR-21-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/9/2023 8:04:16 PM

Testimony for PSM on 4/10/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mack crilley	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Lifeguards in Hawaii are in a category of their own. They are faced with the constant challenge of life or death scenarios and are normally faced with these challenges alone in a one man tower with hundreds of spectators.

As beautiful as the ocean is it is very unforgiving to not only it's visitors but well respected watermen and women aswell. The lifeguards need better funding for acquiring new and better equipment, higher pay and more lifeguards. Establishing ocean safety into its own department is what I believe to be a step in the right direction for to accomplishing these necessary demands.

HCR-21-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/9/2023 8:16:33 PM

Testimony for PSM on 4/10/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kaiulani Bowers	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, my name is Kaiulani Bowers and I have been a lifeguard with Ocean Safety for 15 years. Over the past decade and a half I have experienced and watched our division suffer and lack in many ways due to the fact that we have been under other departments.

Ocean Safety is a specialized group, while we are first responders similar to Fire and EMS we stand alone in what we do. We are always first on scene from the start, we then have to make split second life or death decisions in ever changing hazardous conditions and to top it off we enter most of these situations alone or with minimal back up.

Over these past 15 years I have seen Ocean Safety denied time and time again when we ask for many vital and essential things such as, raises in pay to match the importance and critical job that we do and bigger budgets so that we may upgrade our basic necessary lifesaving equipment to be able to progress with the ever growing population. I have witnessed OS lose many incredible lifeguards because we are under paid. Not only is it sad to see these amazing watermen and woman leave because they can't support a family but it hurts the community because we are constantly under staffed, leaving towers closed or leaving us without proper back up.

Establish Ocean Safety as its own department so that we get the support that we need in a timely manner and are better able to serve the community. The number one activity for visitors and residents is the beach. Whether near shore, in the water or doing water activities lifeguards are responsible for everyone's safety, responding no matter the situation, while the amount of people enjoying our beaches multiplies daily. The ability to grow and acquire what we need to perform optimally, is as our own department, not just a division.

Mahalo nui for your time and understanding

HCR-21-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/9/2023 8:19:14 PM

Testimony for PSM on 4/10/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Josh R.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

It's imperative that OSD be lifted from underneath ESD and EMS. It's so important that OSD has its own department where the focus can be 100% on growing the Ocean Safety Department for the better of our community and the men and women who serve it. ESD or EMS is very important and need to be focused on what they do best and their expertise. Likewise OSD needs the head of the department to be solely focused on OSD and be an expert in the field to get what they need to grow and prosper to better serve. We have the most dangerous ocean waters in the world and it takes a lifetime of experience to do what they do. We are way behind the mainland in efficiency and support for those that risk their lives to save us. Bottom line, both departments are very important and deserve the focus of the department heads to be solely on their respective departments. Ocean safety has been trying to get FULL dawn to dusk coverage for a very long time to save lives. Many people have lost their lives because of this. But there's been a lot of hang ups up top. OSD is very capable, however they are still getting hung up because of lack of resources being spread so thin between these two departments. This change would make the world of difference. Please help our community and the very people putting their lives on the line for us.

Mahalo for hearing me

HCR-21-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/9/2023 8:38:33 PM

Testimony for PSM on 4/10/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Amanda McCreery	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in favor of Ocean Safety establishing itself as a new, separate department. I believe it will allow them the freedom and budget to achieve their goals of keeping Hawaii's citizens as well as visitors safe in and around the oceans and waterways of Oahu.

HCR-21-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/9/2023 9:00:06 PM

Testimony for PSM on 4/10/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
kale sylvia	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill. Ocean safety needs this

HCR-21-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/9/2023 9:24:18 PM

Testimony for PSM on 4/10/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joey Cadiz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this resolution as a frontline worker under the current departmental structure with Ocean Safety as a division under EMS. I recognize that there have been many struggles in providing the public the ‘best service possible’ due to the very different jobs/environments Ocean Safety has from EMS. I believe that Ocean Safety is at a place where we can maintain autonomy for the betterment of our agency and for all the people we watch over.

Ocean Safety Officers (lifeguards) have several very specific skills that are unique to being able to identify risks and hazards in and around the ocean; while also being able to execute water-related rescues when needed. The type of person selected for this job already carry a certain degree of ocean competence, that is then finely tuned through the training Ocean Safety offers. Unfortunately the same can’t be said about other agencies, which is why Ocean Safety needs to be managed by ocean-savvy people with self-determination to create the best outcomes for employees and the general public alike.

HCR-21-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/9/2023 10:44:51 PM

Testimony for PSM on 4/10/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
James Loganbill	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I have been employed as a C&C lifeguard for over 30 years and can confirm that the demand for lifeguard services on O'ahu has never been greater and in fact continues to increase at a rate we've never seen before. The increase in residential population as well as a rapid increase in visitors has led to greater numbers of people in and around the ocean and therefore more people in need of assistance. I must also mention that social media has significantly increased the playing field and continues to do so with more and more people getting into trouble in areas that historically were not of much concern but have now become tourist attractions such as Spitting Caves at Portlock or the Mokulua islands off of Lanikai to name a few. This increased demand for services coupled with HFD no longer using jet skis for ocean rescues necessitates an "all hands on deck" approach and response from C&C Ocean Safety which can only be given properly when operating as it's own department. I have full confidence in the current OS management team to operate efficiently and competently as a new department in addressing the needs of my fellow employees to provide quality lifeguard services for the entire coastline of O'ahu. Mahalo, James Loganbill

HCR-21-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/10/2023 7:54:17 AM

Testimony for PSM on 4/10/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ian Bachmann	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please help help ocean safety become its own department! The public needs this to help ocean safety get the funds & needs to server the people in the state of Hawaii!!

HCR-21-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/10/2023 9:17:14 AM

Testimony for PSM on 4/10/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Noland Tamashiro	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I fully support ocean safety becoming its own separate department.