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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO LAW ENFORCEMENT.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:**

1           SECTION 1. The legislature finds that more information is  
2 needed to assess the efficacy of "weed and seed" programs, and  
3 to determine the impact of the programs on the State's  
4 communities. Weed and seed programs, originally founded by  
5 former president George H. W. Bush, involve increased policing  
6 in communities having high crime rates. Some evidence suggests  
7 that this strategy disproportionately targets marginalized  
8 communities and results in the militarization or over-policing  
9 of low-income neighborhoods. The program may also result in  
10 unjustly high criminal sentences for persons who happen to be  
11 arrested in designated weed and seed areas.

12           The legislature believes that the State should reevaluate  
13 weed and seed programs in Hawaii to ensure that the programs are  
14 effective at reducing crime without militarizing the State's  
15 neighborhoods or disproportionately impacting marginalized  
16 communities.



1           Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to establish a task  
2 force on ethical policing to evaluate the efficacy and impact of  
3 weed and seed programs.

4           SECTION 2. (a) There is established a task force on  
5 ethical policing within the department of the attorney general  
6 for administrative purposes. The task force shall comprise:

- 7           (1) A representative from the office of the attorney  
8                 general;
- 9           (2) A representative from each branch office of the office  
10                of the public defender;
- 11           (3) A representative from the office of the prosecuting  
12                attorney for each county;
- 13           (4) A representative from the Hawaii correctional system  
14                oversight commission;
- 15           (5) A representative from the judiciary;
- 16           (6) A representative from the office of the governor;
- 17           (7) The president of the senate, or the president's  
18                designee;
- 19           (8) The speaker of the house of representatives, or the  
20                speaker's designee;



1 (9) A representative from the university of Hawaii college  
2 of social sciences having a background in criminal  
3 justice research; and

4 (10) A member of the public having a background in criminal  
5 justice work, who shall be selected and invited to  
6 participate by the chair of the task force.

7 (b) At its initial meeting, which shall occur no later  
8 than thirty days after the effective date of this Act, the task  
9 force shall elect a chair and vice chair from among its members.

10 (c) A majority of the task force members shall constitute  
11 a quorum to do business.

12 (d) The task force shall use crime, arrest, prosecution,  
13 and policing data from the last years, compiled with the  
14 assistance of the Hawaii criminal justice data center, to  
15 evaluate the efficacy and impact of weed and seed programs in  
16 Hawaii, including the programs' effect on:

- 17 (1) Crime rates in designated weed and seed areas;  
18 (2) Crime rates in communities adjacent to designated weed  
19 and seed areas;  
20 (3) Arrest rates in designated weed and seed areas for  
21 persons who are black, indigenous, or persons of



- 1 color, including Native Hawaiians and Pacific  
2 Islanders;
- 3 (4) Arrest rates in designated weed and seed areas for  
4 low-income persons and unsheltered persons;
- 5 (5) Average sentence lengths for persons arrested in  
6 designated weed and seed areas;
- 7 (6) The average number of law enforcement officers present  
8 in designated weed and seed areas; and
- 9 (7) The perception of residents who live and work in  
10 designated weed and seed areas of the quality and  
11 frequency of their encounters with law enforcement  
12 officers.
- 13 (e) The task force shall seek input from residents who  
14 live and work in designated weed and seed areas for purposes of  
15 subsection (d) (7).
- 16 (f) Members of the task force shall serve without  
17 compensation but may be reimbursed for reasonable expenses,  
18 including travel expenses, necessary for the performance of  
19 their duties.
- 20 (g) The task force shall submit a report of its findings  
21 and recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the



1 legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of  
2 the regular session of 2025.

3 (h) The task force on ethical policing shall ceased to  
4 exist on July 1, 2025.

5 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

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INTRODUCED BY:



JAN 23 2024



# H.B. NO. 2621

**Report Title:**

Law Enforcement; Task Force; Weed and Seed Programs; Report

**Description:**

Establishes a task force on ethical policing to evaluate the efficacy and impact of Weed and Seed programs. Requires a report to the Legislature.

*The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.*

