

JAN 19 2024

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO CIVIL ASSET FORFEITURE.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that civil asset
2 forfeiture frequently leaves innocent citizens deprived of
3 personal property without ever having been charged or convicted
4 of any crime. This amounts to government-sponsored theft. The
5 fair administration of justice means ensuring that not a single
6 innocent individual's personal property is permanently seized
7 without just cause and conviction, or compensation; an injustice
8 anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.

9 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to end civil asset
10 forfeiture without conviction, which undermines the fair
11 administration of justice.

12 SECTION 2. Section 712A-5, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
13 amended by amending subsection (2) to read as follows:

14 "(2) Except that:

15 (a) Real property, or an interest therein, may be

16 forfeited under the provisions of this chapter only in



1 cases in which the covered offense is chargeable as a
2 felony offense under state law;

3 (b) No property shall be forfeited under this chapter to
4 the extent of an interest of an owner [~~by reason of~~
5 ~~any act or omission established by that owner to have~~
6 ~~been committed or omitted without the knowledge and~~
7 ~~consent of that owner;~~] by reason of:

8 (i) The commission of any covered offense unless the:

9 (A) Covered offense is chargeable as a felony
10 offense under state law; and

11 (B) Owner has been convicted of the covered
12 offense by a verdict or plea, including a no
13 contest plea or a deferred acceptance of
14 guilty plea or no contest plea; or

15 (ii) Any act or omission established by that owner to
16 have been committed or omitted without the
17 knowledge and consent of that owner;

18 provided that nothing in this subsection shall be
19 construed to prevent the seizure of property prior to
20 conviction pursuant to section 712A-6.



1 (c) No conveyance used by any person as a common carrier
2 in the transaction of a business as a common carrier
3 is subject to forfeiture under this section unless it
4 appears that the owner or other person in charge of
5 the conveyance is a consenting party or privy to a
6 violation of this chapter;

7 (d) No conveyance is subject to forfeiture under this
8 section by reason of any act or omission established
9 by the owner thereof to have been committed or omitted
10 without the owner's knowledge or consent; ~~and~~

11 (e) A forfeiture of a conveyance encumbered by a bona fide
12 security interest is subject to the interest of the
13 secured party if the secured party neither had
14 knowledge of nor consented to the act or omission~~[-]~~;
15 and

16 (f) This chapter shall not apply to the forfeiture of an
17 animal prior to disposition of criminal charges
18 pursuant to section 711-1109.2."

19 SECTION 3. Section 712A-16, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
20 amended by amending subsection (2) to read as follows:



1 "(2) All forfeited property and the sale proceeds thereof,
2 up to a maximum of three million dollars per year, not
3 previously transferred pursuant to ~~[+]subsection[+]~~ (1) (a) of
4 this section, ~~[shall,]~~ after payment of expenses of
5 administration and sale, ~~[be distributed as follows:]~~

6 ~~(a) One quarter shall be distributed to the unit or units
7 of state or local government [whose] officers or
8 employees conducted the investigation and caused the
9 arrest of the person whose property was forfeited or
10 seizure of the property for forfeiture;~~

11 ~~(b) One quarter shall be distributed to the prosecuting
12 attorney who instituted the action producing the
13 forfeiture; and~~

14 ~~(c) One half shall be deposited into the criminal
15 forfeiture fund established by this chapter.]~~

16 including reimbursement for any costs incurred by the department
17 of the attorney general related to the seizure or storage of
18 seized property, shall be deposited to the credit of the state
19 general fund."



S.B. NO. 2705

1 SECTION 4. This Act does not affect rights and duties that
2 matured, penalties that were incurred, and proceedings that were
3 begun before its effective date.

4 SECTION 5. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed
5 and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

6 SECTION 6. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

7

INTRODUCED BY: 



S.B. NO. 2705

Report Title:

Attorney General; Penal Code; Forfeiture; Civil Assets

Description:

Prohibits civil asset forfeiture unless the covered offense is a felony for which the property owner has been convicted.

Excludes the forfeiture proceedings for an animal pending criminal charges. Requires the Attorney General to deposit the net proceeds of the forfeited property to the credit of the state general fund.

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

