

HONOLULU EMERGENCY SERVICES DEPARTMENT  
KA 'OIHANA LAWELAWE ULIA PŌPILIKIA O HONOLULU  
**CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU**

3375 KOAPAKA STREET, SUITE H450 • HONOLULU, HAWAII 96819  
PHONE: (808) 723-7800 • FAX: (808) 723-7836 • WEB: <https://emergencyservices.honolulu.gov/>

RICK BLANGIARDI  
MAYOR  
MEIA



JAMES H.E. IRELAND, M.D.  
DIRECTOR  
PO'O

IAN T. T. SANTEE, MPA  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
HOPE PO'O

March 25, 2024

The Honorable Kyle Yamashita, Chair  
The Honorable Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair  
and Members  
The House Committee on Finance  
Hawaii State Capitol  
415 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Committee Members:

SUBJECT: Testimony in Support of SB116 SD1 HD1

I stand in strong support of Senate Bill 116 SD1 HD1, recognizing Duke Kahanamoku's legendary contributions to our islands' ocean and water safety initiatives. I am especially pleased to see proposed in the bill that funds from these special plates will benefit water safety and swim education across our state.

This license plate bill is a natural way to continue to bring together the many stakeholders who support aquatic safety in our islands. Who better than Duke to unite our common collective goal in helping keep people safe in the water?

Mahalo,

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



Keiki Injury Prevention Coalition

To: COMMITTEE ON FINANCE  
Rep. Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair  
Rep. Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair  
Re: Notice Hearing – SB 116, SD1, HD1 RELATING TO SPECIAL NUMBER PLATES  
Date: Wednesday, March 27, 2024  
Time: 2:00 pm  
Place: Via Videoconference  
Conference Room 308  
State Capitol  
415 South Beretania Street

My name is Lisa Dau and I represent the Keiki Injury Prevention Coalition, a non-profit since 1995, comprised of broad-based representation from more than 150 organizations, agencies, and individuals committed to preventing injuries to children and youth in Hawaii.

**KIPC SUPPORTS SB166 Relating to Special Number Plates**

KIPC is in strong support of SB166 to create a Duke Kahanamoku license plate and raise funds for local aquatic safety grants.

Water is one of life's true joys. It surrounds our islands; it can bring us together and be a source of lifelong memories. Water can be dangerous and deadly, and requires our respect. Drowning is the single leading cause of death of children ages 1-4 in Hawaii and across the nation. Hawai'i has the second-highest drowning rate for residents in the nation (behind Alaska) and is the leading cause of death of Hawai'i children aged 1-15. Drowning is the leading cause of injury-related death for adult tourists.

To educate more of our citizens, this bill will assist in promoting and growing neighborhood swim and water safety initiatives. In the meantime, Duke Kahanamoku, our official Ambassador of Aloha and one of the best Native Hawaiian water athletes, would also be honored by this bill.

Thank you,

Lisa Dau, RN, MBA, BSN  
Injury Prevention Coordinator

**SB-116-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/26/2024 12:49:08 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/27/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Sarah Fairchild	Outrigger Duke Kahanamoku Foundation	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Dear Rep. Yamashita and Finance Committee Members,

I am writing in strong support of SB116 to create a Duke Kahanamoku license plate to raise money to support and expand water safety and swim education programs throughout Hawaii. According to Hawaii Department of Health statistics, Hawaii ranks second in the nation for the rate of drowning among residents, and drowning is the leading cause of death for Hawaii keiki ages 1-15. The United Nations and the World Health Organization have officially recognized drowning as a major public health problem and it's time for our island state to do the same and put more resources towards prevention. We need widespread and continual aquatics education for children, adults, residents, and visitors. With this license plate fundraiser, the State can contribute to this important purpose with minimal financial cost to the government. Duke Kahanamoku — Native Hawaiian Olympic swimmer, godfather of surfing, 13-term elected Sheriff of Honolulu, and Ambassador of Aloha, raised on the shores of Waikiki — is an important figure to commemorate as a role model for our community. Duke's likeness on a license plate symbolizes the waterman excellence and aloha spirit our state is proud to be known for. It would be an honor to his name to use the resulting proceeds to teach aquatics safety and to save lives.

I strongly urge you to pass this legislation. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Mahalo,

Sarah Fairchild

Executive Director

Outrigger Duke Kahanamoku Foundation



March 26, 2024

House Committee on Finance

Chair Yamashita , Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Committee Members:

Testimony in Support of  
SB 116 SD1 HD1

The purpose of this letter is to provide our support for SB 116 SD1 HD1, which seeks to create a Duke Kahanamoku license plate to fund water safety programs.

Sadly, drowning is the leading cause of death in Hawaii for children ages 1-15, and Hawaii ranks second in the nation for the rate of drowning among residents. This license plate would dramatically help to reduce if not eliminate these tragic statistics by improving water safety programs at minimal cost to the Hawaii taxpayers.

As a canoe club on the Big Island, we are fully aware of the importance of water safety and believe that this measure would ultimately fund programs to promote water safety and swim education across the State as a tribute to the legacy of Duke Kahanamoku.

We strongly support this SB 116 SD1 HD1 and urge your committee to pass this bill.

Respectfully,



EDWARD T. TEIXEIRA  
President

**SB-116-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/25/2024 8:03:05 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/27/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Mike Dilks	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We have the best lifeguards on the planet, not an exaggeration. We are a tourist economy and the tourists are here for our ocean and beaches. Our lifeguards are grossly underpaid and undersupported compared to other programs in other states. I would proudly support our lifeguards with a license plate.

**SB-116-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/25/2024 8:27:38 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/27/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Donna L. Ching	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Mahalo for your strong support of this important bill to raise funds for swim safety programs in Hawaii. Hawaii needs to lead the nation in keiki swim safety, not drownings! This legislation is long over due. Using Duke Kahanamoku's legacy to advance ocean and swimming safety is poetic and pono. Aloha, Donna L Ching

**SB-116-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/25/2024 8:50:00 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/27/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Earl S. Tenn	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Kakou:

I am in strong support of SB 116 to create a Duke Kahanamoku license plate and raise funds for local aquatic grants. Drowning is the leading cause of death for Hawaii's children ages 1-15 and Hawaii ranks second in the nation for rate of drowning among residents. With minimal cost to the government, this bill will help support and expand some great local water safety and swim programs to educate more of our residents,

Mahalo piha for allowing me to testify.

Earl S. Tenn

Liaison for Nadine Alexander Kahanamoku

**SB-116-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/25/2024 9:38:29 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/27/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
jessamy town hornor	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I am writing as a longtime advocate in the area of water safety in support of SB116 to create special license plates to honor Duke Kahanamoku. This license plate would help educate our community about the inspirational role he played as a Hawaiian waterman and athlete, and also as a good samaritan who saved many lives during his time in the ocean as a surfer.

The special license plate would also help raise funds to support water safety outreach and programming in Hawaii. Funding is critical to grow water safety at the scale needed given our state's high rate of drowning. Without adding to existing budgetary challenges this year, this license plate bill will also allow the public to contribute directly to an area that benefits all of us in Hawaii.

Lastly, the Outrigger Duke Kahanamoku Foundation has been a leading organization in this arena - as a founding member of the Hawaii Water Safety Coalition they are well positioned to direct resulting grants to initiatives and programming in the community where they are most needed.

Mahalo for your time.

Jessamy Town Hornor

Founder, Ocean Safety 'Ohana

Coordinator, Hawaii Water Safety Coalition



**SB-116-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/26/2024 4:50:42 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/27/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bonnie Porter	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**I am in strong support of SB116 to create a Duke Kahanamoku license plate and raise funds for local aquatic safety grants. Drowning is the leading cause of death for Hawaii keiki ages 1-15 and Hawaii ranks second in the nation for rate of drowning among residents. With minimal cost to the government, this bill will help support and expand some great local water safety and swim programs to educate more of our residents.**

**Meanwhile, this bill would also commemorate Duke Kahanamoku, one of the greatest Native Hawaiian water athletes, and our official Ambassador of Aloha.**

**I have a 10 and 8 year old, and my goal is to help them, and their future generations become more keen in water safety and life saving techniques. They see their uncles and aunties beginning to pave the way for future watermen and waterwomen, and they want so badly to be just like them.**

**This testimony is written for them too.**

**SB-116-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/26/2024 8:09:19 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/27/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Betty Depolito	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in support of SB166. Raising funds for grants to support education of anything that is for our water safety and swimming programs is a must for Hawaii. I have been a lifeguard for most of my life and know how important it is to have this kind of training. We have high rates of problems in our waters for locals and tourists alike. We need this support. I also am 100 percent in agreement that we should promote my hero Duke Kahanamoku! This is a great way to do that!

**SB-116-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/26/2024 8:45:11 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/27/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Devin Minardi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I wholeheartedly endorse SB166, advocating for the creation of a Duke Kahanamoku license plate to bolster funding for local aquatic safety grants. As someone deeply involved in aquatic safety, I recognize the pressing need to address the alarming statistics surrounding drowning, particularly among Hawaii's youth aged 1-15. With Hawaii ranking second in the nation for drowning rates among residents, it's evident that decisive action is imperative. SB166 offers a pragmatic solution with minimal burden on government resources, directing funds towards vital water safety and swim programs. By expanding access to education and resources, we can empower more residents to navigate water environments safely. Moreover, this bill serves as a fitting tribute to Duke Kahanamoku, a legendary figure in Native Hawaiian water sports and our esteemed Ambassador of Aloha. Through commemorating his legacy, we honor not only his athletic prowess but also his commitment to promoting water safety for all.

**SB-116-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/26/2024 10:53:45 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/27/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Riley Smith	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support the approval to issue Duke Kahanamoku license plates. Duke was our first Hawaiian Olympian and we should honor his legacy by approving these commemorative license plates. Riley Smith

**SB-116-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/26/2024 11:04:16 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/27/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Allison Schaefer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I'm writing to support the Duke Kahanamoku License Plate bill to raise money for local aquatic safety grants to help address our drowning epidemic. And of course, Duke Kahanamoku is one of the most famous people to have grown up in your district and has become a symbol of Hawai'i's aloha spirit, water sports mastery, and hospitality.

As a reminder, we are facing some grim drowning statistics in Hawai'i:

- Hawai'i has the second-highest drowning rate for residents in the nation.
- Drowning is now the leading cause of death of Hawai'i children aged 1-16.
- Drowning is the leading cause of injury-related death for tourists.

As the parent of a drowning victim, I understand these statistics and the cost to our community, perhaps better than most. My daughter Charlotte "Sharkey" Schaefer, 5, drowned in 2004 while trying to save a friend who had fallen into a poorly maintained and clogged detention pond that had become a drowning hazard.

I am part of the Hawai'i Water Safety Coalition, and we are working on a statewide water safety plan, which will have recommendations to bring down the terrible drowning rates in our state. Drowning isn't an individual problem; it is a community problem. Rescues are expensive and put our first responders and other Good Samaritans in our community at risk. Visitor deaths threaten our reputation as a top visitor destination. Community deaths hurt the soul of Hawai'i and leave an irreplaceable gap in our collective ohana.

The money from the license plates could also be used for drowning prevention campaigns and outreach, swimming lessons and junior lifeguard programs, and perhaps adding rescue tubes where warranted. I believe these measures would save lives.

Just like my daughter, who stood on the banks of a flooded pond and watched her friend struggling, you have a life-or-death decision to make. Let me remind you that even though the risks were great, my daughter Sharkey didn't hesitate. She saved a life. Will you work with us to save lives?

Mahalo nui loa for your consideration.

Allison Schaefer Dubovsky



**SB-116-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/26/2024 12:19:48 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/27/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Allison Guard	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in strong support of **SB116** to create a Duke Kahanamoku license plate and raise funds for local aquatic safety grants. Drowning is the leading cause of death for Hawaii keiki ages 1-15 and Hawaii ranks second in the nation for rate of drowning among residents. With minimal cost to the government, this bill will help support and expand some great local water safety and swim programs to educate more of our residents. Meanwhile, this bill would also commemorate Duke Kahanamoku, one of the greatest Native Hawaiian water athletes, and our official Ambassador of Aloha.

Being a state surrounded by water it makes sense.

**SB-116-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/26/2024 8:51:42 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/27/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ana Abbey	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in strong support of **SB116** to create a Duke Kahanamoku license plate and raise funds for local aquatic safety grants. Drowning is the leading cause of death for Hawaii keiki ages 1-15 and Hawaii ranks second in the nation for rate of drowning among residents. With minimal cost to the government, this bill will help support and expand some great local water safety and swim programs to educate more of our residents. Meanwhile, this bill would also commemorate Duke Kahanamoku, one of the greatest Native Hawaiian water athletes, and our official Ambassador of Aloha.

Ana Lehua Abbey



**SB-116-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/27/2024 10:26:14 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/27/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
jaime arreola	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, I am in strong favor of SB116 to create a Duke Kahanamoku license plate and raise funds for local aquatic safety grants. With minimal cost to the government this bill will help support, expand great local water safety and swim programs to educate more of our community. This bill will also commemorate Duke Kahanamoku, one of the greatest Native Hawaiian athletes.

My name is Jaime Arreola, President of Kauai Lifeguard Association. Mahalo!