

STAND. COM. REP. NO. **2172**

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 07 2024

RE: S.B. No. 2543
S.D. 1

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President of the Senate
Thirty-Second State Legislature
Regular Session of 2024
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Public Safety and Intergovernmental and Military Affairs, to which was referred S.B. No. 2543 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO SEARCH AND RESCUE,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to require government entities to seek reimbursement for search and rescue expenses from persons who require rescue after ignoring warning signs, leaving a hiking trail to enter a prohibited area, or hiking on a trail closed to the public.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Department of Law Enforcement and five individuals.

Your Committee received testimony in opposition to this measure from one individual.

Your Committee received comments on this measure from Pono Consulting.

Your Committee finds that the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic fueled a sustained surge of experienced and inexperienced hikers venturing outdoors. Emergency rescue situations where hikers ignored posted warning signs, intentionally left a hiking trail, or entered property that is closed to the public required first responders to put all ongoing operations on hold, with



agencies often incurring additional unbudgeted costs and expense through overtime, calling in additional responders, and costs of equipment and supplies. This measure will shift the cost to hikers who ignore posted warning signs, intentionally leave a hiking trail, or enter property that is closed to the public, which may act as a deterrent and reduce violations, improve public safety, and mitigate the need for costly and dangerous rescues.

Your Committee has amended this measure by inserting an effective date of January 1, 2042, to encourage further discussion.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Public Safety and Intergovernmental and Military Affairs that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of S.B. No. 2543, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 2543, S.D. 1, and be referred to your Committees on Judiciary and Ways and Means.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Public Safety and
Intergovernmental and Military
Affairs,



GLENN WAKAI, Chair



