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TESTIMONY BY:
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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION | KA 'OIHANA ALAKAU
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March 27, 2024
2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, RM 325

S.B. 2735, S.D. 1, H.D. 1
RELATING TO DRIVER LICENSING

House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs

The Hawaii Department of Transportation **supports S.B. 2735, S.D. 1, H.D. 1**, which requires driver's license examination to test the applicant's knowledge of the dangers that larger motor vehicles present to pedestrians. Requires offenders who are found to be excessively speeding or driving while intoxicated to retake and pass their driver's license examination for each offense.

We believe this bill will reduce motor vehicle fatalities and injuries by deterring dangerous driving behaviors. The inconvenience of having to retake the driver licensing exam will hopefully make drivers more responsible. Additionally, educating new drivers about the potential hazards of driving a larger motor vehicle can assist with pedestrian safety.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

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March 25, 2024

Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs
Rep. David A. Tarnas, Chair
Rep. Gregg Takayama, Vice Chair
Conference Room 325
State Capital
Honolulu, HI 96813

Re: Testimony in Opposition of S.B. 2735, SD 1, HD 1
Hearing: March 27, 2024, 2:00 PM

Dear Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Takayama and Committee Members:

This letter is in opposition of S.B. 2735, SD 1, HD 1, which seeks to test a driver's license applicant's knowledge on the dangers that larger motor vehicles pose to pedestrians and bicyclists, and requiring persons who commit the offense of excessive speeding or habitually operating a vehicle under the influence of an intoxicant to reapply, retake and pass a driver's license for each offense.

The bill seeks to require driver's to be tested on "the applicant's knowledge of the dangers that large vehicles, including trucks, pose to pedestrians and bicyclists[.]" Educating drivers about the potential danger of larger vehicles will not make drivers safer. It is also uncertain whether the information will benefit all drivers, including those who do not operate a large vehicle or truck. If the legislature prioritizes the dissemination of this information, there are more effective means to do so through advertising campaigns or requiring purchasers or renters of this class of vehicles to sign an acknowledgement of the potential hazards.

Similarly, requiring individuals who commit the offense of excessive speeding or habitually operating a vehicle under the influence of an intoxicant to reapply, retake and pass a driver's license for each offense is unnecessary based on the current sentencing requirements. The excessive speeding statute requires that the offender attend a course of instruction in driver retraining. The retraining course will be more effective in properly educating and training drivers because it specifically addresses operating a vehicle safely as opposed to general licensing requirements. Moreover, a conviction of excessive speeding automatically triggers a SR-22 which is a certificate proving that a high-risk driver has met the legal requirements for car insurance in Hawaii. If the individual does not obtain SR-22 insurance, their driver's license will be suspended for three years. Reapplying and retaking a driver's test are not necessary for those whose ability to obtain a driver's license is suspended.

For individuals convicted of habitually operating a vehicle under the influence of an intoxicant, there is a mandatory revocation of the driver's license for not less than three years. Where the driver's license is revoked, a driver must reapply and retake a driver's test prior to attempting to obtain a new driver's license. Thus, the proposed amendment is duplicative of the statute. For subsequent convictions under the statute, it is a mandatory permanent revocation of the driver's license and hence inapplicable.

In each instance for each proposed amendment, there is no demonstratable need for the amendments. The amendments will not ensure curative effects. And the sentencing amendments are superfluous and redundant.

Thank you for taking these comments into consideration.

Sincerely,
/s/ Taryn Tomasa
Deputy Public Defender



Testimony of the Oahu Metropolitan Planning Organization

House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs

03/27/24 2:00PM

CR 325 & Videoconference

SB 2735 SD1 HD1 RELATING TO DRIVER LICENSING

Dear Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Takayama, and Committee Members,

The Oahu Metropolitan Planning Organization (OahuMPO) **supports SB 2735 SD1 HD1** which would require the driver's license examination to test the applicant's knowledge of the dangers that larger motor vehicles present to pedestrians and bicyclists and would require offenders who are found to be excessively speeding or driving while intoxicated to retake and pass the driver's license examination for each offense. The implementation of this measure supports a major goal of our long-range plan to increase the safety of the transportation system.

In 2023, nearly a third of all traffic deaths in Hawaii involved a pedestrian or bicyclist. As of March 6, 2024, the Hawaii State Department of Transportation indicated over a third of traffic fatalities in Hawaii have involved a pedestrian. While the number of fatalities has decreased since the same period in 2023, the proportion involving pedestrians has increased. Providing educational opportunities to make drivers in training aware of the dangers larger motor vehicles pose to pedestrians and bicyclists will hopefully assist in trending fatalities to zero by 2050, a goal indicated in our long-range plan.

The OahuMPO is the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) on the island of Oahu responsible for carrying out a multimodal transportation planning process, including the development of a long-range (25-year horizon) metropolitan transportation plan, referred to as the Oahu Regional Transportation Plan (ORTP) that encourages and promotes a safe and efficient transportation system to serve the mobility needs of people and freight (including walkways, bicycles, and transit), fosters economic growth and development, and takes into consideration resiliency needs, while minimizing fuel consumption and air pollution ([23 CFR 450.300](#)).

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.

Testimony on Senate Bill No. 2735

RELATING TO DRIVER LICENSING

Wednesday, March 27, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.

Conference Room 325 & Videoconference

State Capitol

415 South Beretania Street

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

My name is Kayla Kamisato, and I am a graduate student at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. I am submitting testimony in **strong support** of **SB2735**, which proposes that the driver's license examination assess the applicant's understanding of the risks larger motor vehicles pose to pedestrians and bicyclists. Additionally, it mandates that individuals caught excessively speeding or driving while intoxicated retake and pass the driver's license examination for each offense.

It would be a considerable step forward to include a segment in the driver's license examination to assess applicants' knowledge of the dangers of larger motor vehicles concerning the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists. According to data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), every day, about 37 people in the United States die due to drunk driving accidents, with a significant portion of these tragedies involving collisions with larger motor vehicles. By incorporating the education component into the licensing process, drivers can be more equipped with the awareness and understanding necessary to mitigate these risks, ultimately saving lives.

Furthermore, the provision requiring individuals caught excessively speeding or driving under the influence to retake and pass the driver's license examination could significantly decrease the likelihood of accidents, injuries, and fatalities on our roads. By mandating reevaluation, SB2735 serves as a deterrent and offers an opportunity for rehabilitation and reeducation. This evidence-based approach aligns with best practices in traffic safety and has the potential to yield tangible reductions in traffic-related incidents.

Just like many families in Hawai'i, mine has endured the devastating impact of a drunk driver. In 1996, we suffered the tragic loss of my Uncle due to the reckless actions of a speeding, drunk driver at Kualoa Ranch. The pain of losing a loved one to such a preventable tragedy is indescribable. We urge lawmakers to support SB2735 and enact meaningful change that honors the lives lost and protects the safety of our communities.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in solid support of SB2735!

Kayla Kamisato (she/her)
Kāne'ōhe, Hawai'i

SB-2735-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/22/2024 7:13:01 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Scott Kidd	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this measure