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STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION | KA 'OIHANA ALAKAU
869 PUNCHBOWL STREET
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-5097

March 18, 2025
3:00 P.M.
State Capitol, Room 224

**H.B. 706, H.D. 1
RELATING TO HIGHWAY SAFETY**

Senate Committee on Transportation and Culture and the Arts

The Hawaii Department of Transportation (HDOT) **supports** H.B. 706, H.D. 1, which requires persons under the age of 16 to wear a helmet while riding a skateboard. Clarifies that the Act does not infringe on county ordinances prohibiting skateboards on streets and roadways.

According to the Hawaii Department of Health, from 2019 through 2023, there were 11 serious skateboard injuries on our roadways, two of which were under the age of 17 and neither of them were wearing helmets.

According to the National Library of Medicine, wearing a helmet while skateboarding reduces the risk of head injuries by up to 88 percent.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

March 16, 2025

Chair Chris Lee
Senate Transportation and Culture and the Arts Committee
Hawaii State Capitol
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: HB 706_HD 1 (Takenouchi), Helmet Requirements
Position: Support

Dear Chair Lee,

AAA Hawaii is pleased to support HB 706_HD1 (Takenouchi), which would require anyone under age 16 to wear a helmet when operating a skateboard on public streets, roadways, bikeways, and any other public properties. If enacted, this bill would align helmet requirements for skateboarding with bicycling, which also mandates helmet use of riders under age 16.

Skateboarding is a fun but risky sport. It requires a high level of balance on a small, unstable platform, meaning even slight disruptions or uneven terrain can easily cause a loss of balance and result in a fall. Skateboarding injuries account for thousands of injuries each year, most involving children. According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, more than 230,000 people with skateboarding-related injuries received emergency treatment at hospitals in 2022 alone. Of those injuries, more than 3 in 10 involved children under the age of 15.

Studies show non-helmeted skateboarders have a 60% greater risk of sustaining an injury than helmeted skateboarders. This means head trauma are the most common type of skateboarding injury, even though wearing a helmet significantly reduces the risk of fatalities and severe head injuries. Accordingly, an increasing number of states are mandating helmet use for minors on streets and other public properties such as skateparks.

AAA Hawaii was founded in 1915 in Honolulu and is a leader in motorist services and a strong advocate for traffic safety. With over 170,000 members in Hawaii and 60 million nationwide, service to and the safety of our members, other motorists, and all road users is our founding and continuing purpose. Helmets alone cannot prevent traffic safety collisions, but they can act as the last line of defense for in preventing serious trauma. From seat belts to helmets, all road users need to stay ready for the dangers around them. We share your effort to improve road safety and appreciate the objective of HB 706. AAA Hawai'i supports HB 706_HD1 as amended.

Respectfully Submitted,



Marianne Kim
Senior Public Policy Specialist



COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND CULTURE AND THE ARTS

Senator Chris Lee, Chair

Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Vice Chair

DATE: Tuesday, March 18, 2025
TIME: 3:00 PM
PLACE: Conference Room 224 & Videoconference
State Capitol

RE: HB706 HD1 Relating to Highway Safety

From: Lisa Dau, RN, Injury Prevention Coordinator
Keiki Injury Prevention Coalition (KIPC)

I am writing to express our strong support for HB706 HD1, which requires all skateboard users under sixteen to wear helmets while riding. KIPC believes this measure is critical for ensuring the safety of young skateboarders and preventing serious head injuries.

Skateboarding is a popular activity among young people, but it also poses significant risks. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), wearing a helmet can lower the risk of severe head injuries by up to 85%. Young riders, due to their developing motor skills and awareness of risks, are particularly vulnerable to falls and collisions. Requiring helmet use would help establish safe habits and greatly reduce preventable injuries.

In addition, traumatic brain injuries impose a significant burden on families and the healthcare system. Emergency treatments and long-term rehabilitation for head injuries can be expensive, making prevention the most effective solution. Hawaii already has a law requiring bicycle helmets under sixteen, so it is only logical to extend similar safety measures to skateboarding.

Organizations such as the American Academy of Pediatrics and the National Safety Council strongly advocate for helmet use in action sports. By enacting this law, we can save lives, reduce medical costs, and promote responsible recreation.

KIPC respectfully urges you to support HB706 HD1 and take necessary action to protect our youth. Thank you for your time and dedication to public safety.

Sincerely,
Lisa Dau, RN, MBA, BSN, CPSTI
KIPC, Injury Prevention Coordinator

The Keiki Injury Prevention Coalition's (KIPC) mission is to prevent and reduce injuries to children in Hawaii. <https://kipchawaii.org/>

HB-706-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2025 9:56:09 AM

Testimony for TCA on 3/18/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Wendy Freeman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB 706 in memory of Kameron Steinhoff. I believe teenagers and children should be required to wear helmets while riding skateboards to prevent traumatic brain injuries (TBI).

HB-706-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2025 10:17:42 PM

Testimony for TCA on 3/18/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kawika Lyons	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I Paula Kurashige support HB 706 as a physical therapist and as a grandmother to my grandson, Kameron Steinhoff, who passed away from not wearing a helmet while skateboarding 14 years ago. Also to my nephew Mark Kurashige who also passed in Kona by not wearing a helmet on a skateboard. This helmet bill will help to avoid traumatic brain injuries (tbi).