



Rep. Della Au Belatti, Chair
Rep. Kim Coco Iwamoto, Vice Chair
Committee on Public Safety

Rep. Darius K. Kila, Chair
Rep. Tina Nakada Grandinetti, Vice Chair
Committee on Transportation

Testimony of **VFW Department of Hawai'i**

Friday, February 7, 2025

Strong Support for House Bill No. 657 – Relating to Disabled Veterans

Honorable Chairs, Vice Chairs and Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony in **strong support** for House Bill No. 657. This bill proposes to repeal the current motor vehicle registration fee exemption for disabled veterans by replacing it with a motor vehicle weight tax exemption.

This would be a significant cost saving measure for kupuna veterans, especially for those living on a fixed income.

We urge your committees to pass House Bill No. 657, unamended.

Respectfully,

Jame K. Schaedel
Member, National Legislative Committee
VFW Department of Hawai'i



**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 657
Relating to Disabled Veterans**

Committee Public Safety
Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair

Committee on Transportation
Representative Darius K. Kila, Chair

Friday, February 7, 2025 at 10:45 a.m.
Conference Room 411 & Videoconference
415 South Beretania Street

Chairs Belatti and Kila, Vice Chairs Iwamoto and Grandinetti, and Members of the Committees:

The Hawaii Military Affairs Council ("MAC") supports HB 657 which exempts disabled veterans from the State's vehicle weight tax and repeals the exemption for disabled veterans from the State's annual vehicle registration fee.

The MAC was established in 1985 when the Chamber was appointed by the State to serve as the liaison to the military. The MAC advocates on behalf of Hawaii's military, and is comprised of business leaders, academic institutions, State and County officials, members of the CODEL, community leaders, labor unions and organizations and retired U.S. flag and general officers. The MAC works to support Hawaii's location as a strategic U.S. headquarters in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region which is crucial for U.S. national and homeland security.

The spirit of Act 141, Session Laws of Hawaii 2008, exempts members of the National Guard, military reserves, and other armed services in good standing from the county vehicle weight tax for one motor vehicle. This Act was intended to demonstrate Hawaii's appreciation, care and support for those who serve our state and nation. The same principle should apply to our disabled veterans who have made significant sacrifices.

The MAC notes for the Committees that under HB 657, financial relief for disabled veterans would be available under the state's vehicle weight tax, but they still would be obligated with a \$45 annual state vehicle registration fee.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony in support.

TAX FOUNDATION OF HAWAII

735 Bishop Street, Suite 417

Honolulu, Hawaii 96813 Tel. 536-4587

SUBJECT: MOTOR VEHICLE; Exemption for Disabled Veterans

BILL NUMBER: HB 657, SB 607

INTRODUCED BY: HB by HASHEM, AMATO, GARCIA, KAHALOA, LAMOSAO, LEE, M., MIYAKE, MORIKAWA, OLDS, TODD; SB by WAKAI, CHANG, GABBARD, RICHARDS, Fevella, San Buenaventura

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Exempts disabled veterans from the State's vehicle weight tax and repeals the exemption for disabled veterans from the State's annual vehicle registration fee.

SYNOPSIS: Amends section 249-6.5, HRS, to include disabled veterans in the vehicle weight tax exemption; and makes conforming amendments to section 249-31, HRS, for the registration fee exemption.

Adds section 249-6-5(b) definition of “disabled veterans”.

Deletes the section 249-31.5, HRS, annual vehicle registration fee exemption for disabled veterans.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2025.

STAFF COMMENTS: This measure consolidates the exemptions provided to disabled veterans in section 249, HRS, County Vehicular Taxes Vehicle Weight Tax. Currently, disabled veterans are exempt from the vehicle registration fee. The measure proposes to eliminate this exemption and replace it with an exemption from the vehicle weight tax; similar to that provided to National Guard, military reserves and other active military personnel.

The measure also appears to narrow the targeted disabled veteran eligible for exemption. Section 249-31.5, HRS, currently requires the disabled veteran to have been “*other than dishonorably* discharged from the United States uniformed armed forces”. The measure defines disabled veteran for purposes of the vehicle weight tax exemption as “has served in, and *been honorably* discharged from, any branch of the United States armed forces”.

Section 249-31.5 was added by Act 128, SLH 2015, and provides that 100% disabled veterans (except those dishonorably discharged) shall be exempt from the state motor vehicle registration fee provided the exemption shall not apply to commercial vehicles and be applicable to only one motor vehicle for vehicles registered or renewed after 1/1/2016.

The motor vehicle weight tax and registration fees are user charges designed to recover the cost of construction and maintenance of Hawaii’s highway system. It should be remembered that all motorists use the state highways and should, therefore, lend a hand in paying for good and safe roads. Note that any exemption granted to a select group of users requires that the lost revenues

Re: HB 657, SB 607

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be made up by those who must continue to pay. Motorists generally will have to pick up the additional costs that may be created by this proposed exemption.

Digested: 2/5/2025

HB-657

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 1:51:35 PM

Testimony for PBS on 2/7/2025 10:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ramon Maui Quizon	Hawaii National Guard Enlisted Association	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of HB657 – Relating to Disabled Veterans

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto/Chair Kila, Vice Chair Grandinetti, and members of the committees on Public Safety and Transportation,

As a former Hawaii National Guardsman and retired veteran, I strongly support HB657, which exempts disabled veterans from the State’s vehicle weight tax while repealing the exemption from the annual vehicle registration fee.

Many disabled veterans in Hawaii live on fixed incomes and face rising costs of living, making financial relief through tax exemptions critical. The vehicle weight tax exemption provides meaningful assistance by reducing a recurring financial burden, ensuring that our disabled veterans—many of whom sacrificed their health and well-being in service to our country—receive well-deserved support.

I urge the Legislature to pass HB657 to uphold Hawaii’s commitment to its veterans and recognize their service by easing financial strain where it matters most.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

//signed//

R.MAUI QUIZON, SMSgt (Retired)
Hawaii National Guard Enlisted Association

HB-657

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 10:45:18 AM

Testimony for PBS on 2/7/2025 10:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
TIM REIMER	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This is a good Bill to pass . Disabled Veterans should not be charged any fees pertaining to their vehicles. Registration, Safety Inspection and any Auto Registration Back Taxes should not be charged. I, support this bill with the conditions mentioned above . Thank you , Tim

Reimer Disabled Veteran

HB-657

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 12:12:32 PM

Testimony for PBS on 2/7/2025 10:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mike Golojuch, Sr.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB657.

Mike Golojuch, Sr., Lt Col, USAF(Ret)

HB-657

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 1:00:37 PM

Testimony for PBS on 2/7/2025 10:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
William K. Chang	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am a disabled veteran and I support HB 657.

HB-657

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 7:44:59 AM

Testimony for PBS on 2/7/2025 10:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Teri Heede	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Disabled vets need your support. Many of us are struggling financially due to our inability to work.

THIS could help. BE A HELPER!

HB-657

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 8:32:44 PM

Testimony for PBS on 2/7/2025 10:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Johnnie-Mae L. Perry	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry SUPPORT HB657 RELATING TO DISABLED VETERANS.

Comment: To include widow or widower upon the death of the disabled veterans. Provided if the widow or widower is eligible for VA benefits.