

HR-131-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/28/2025 2:39:57 PM

Testimony for EDN on 4/1/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Terri Yoshinaga	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill.

**WRITTEN TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF
HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION:**

URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, AND CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU TO ENSURE THE SAFETY OF KIPAPA ELEMENTARY STUDENTS USING SCHOOL CROSSWALKS.

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

My name is Dr. Jhameel Duarte, proud Principal of Kīpapa Elementary School, and I am submitting this testimony in **strong support** of the resolution urging the Department of Transportation, Department of Education, and the City and County of Honolulu to take immediate action to ensure the safety of Kīpapa Elementary School students who utilize the Kuahelani Avenue crosswalk.

As the resolution rightly notes, pedestrian safety is a pressing concern not only in Hawaii but nationwide. In 2022 alone, over 7,500 pedestrians lost their lives and more than 67,000 were injured in traffic-related incidents, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. These tragic numbers are a sobering reminder that even a single moment of driver distraction or poor road design can lead to irreversible consequences—especially for our keiki.

Kuahelani Avenue is a heavily traveled road, serving as a connector to a major highway and a key thoroughfare in Mililani. Its proximity to Kīpapa Elementary School poses a daily risk for young children and their families who must navigate this crosswalk on foot. The current configuration—while featuring painted stripes and crossing guards—remains inadequate given the road's curve, high traffic volume, and obstructed visibility due to parked vehicles. The school currently places our own cones and signage to help notify drivers of students and school zones, but these are still not enough. On a daily basis, our school staff and students are fearful to cross because of the speed many vehicles are taking.

Federal guidelines from the U.S. Department of Transportation emphasize the need for enhanced visibility features in areas where standard crosswalks do not offer sufficient protection. This resolution appropriately calls for these critical safety upgrades, including:

- **Warning signage well in advance of the curve on Kuahelani Avenue,**
- **Installation of speed bumps with corresponding signage,**
- **A "STOP Here for Pedestrians" sign placed approximately 50 feet ahead of the crosswalk, and**
- **Solar-powered rapid flashing beacons provide visual cues to approaching drivers.**

These are proven, evidence-based measures that significantly reduce vehicle speeds and increase driver awareness. Studies have shown that speed bumps can reduce driver speed by up to 40%, which in turn can reduce the risk of injury or death by up to 60%.

We cannot wait for a preventable tragedy to occur. The safety of our keiki must always be a top priority, and this resolution provides a responsible and effective path forward to protect our most vulnerable road users.

I respectfully urge you to support this resolution and to advocate for swift implementation of these safety measures at the Kīpapa Elementary crosswalk. Let us demonstrate our commitment to safe, walkable communities and ensure that every child can get to and from school without fear.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Dr. Jhameel Duarte
Principal, Kīpapa Elementary School
95-076 Kīpapa Drive, Miiilani, HI 96789
(808) 305-4200

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Submitted on: 3/30/2025 2:31:29 PM

Testimony for EDN on 4/1/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kahalenoe Kamalani	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Committee on Education,

I am writing to express my **strong support for HR 131**, which urges the Department of Transportation, Department of Education, and City and County of Honolulu to implement visibility enhancement measures on the Kuahelani Avenue crosswalk at Kipapa Elementary School.

As a member and parent of the Mililani and Kipapa Elementary School community, I am very concerned about the safety of my keiki when they have to cross this street. Additional visibility measures such as signage, lighting, and speed bumps will significantly increase the safety of this crosswalk and likely the peace of mind for many parents.

I urge this committee to consider the importance of this measure in providing a safer crosswalk for our Kipapa Elementary keiki and community.

Thank you for considering this important measure.

Mahalo,

Kahalenoe Kamalani

96-169 Kipapa Drive, Mililani, HI, 96789

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Submitted on: 3/30/2025 8:59:38 PM

Testimony for EDN on 4/1/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joseph Gedeon	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hi! Thankyou for hearing my input about this issue.

I've recently been a witness to a vehicular accident at this crosswalk. I witnessed a car seem to lose control, hit the curb, and smash into the rear end of a line of parked cars parked along the street. The speed of the vehicle was enough to push the car into the car in front of it and damage it as well. The direction the car was heading is downhill which creates a situation where drivers are more inclined to speed. I ran to see if anyone was injured. Luckily, the only person involved, the driver, was not injured. When the driver stepped out of his car he said something VERY important. He stated that as he came around the curve of the road, the sun was at such a level that he instantly lost all visibility. This was a sober, capable, middle aged gentleman that couldn't maintain the driving line to avoid the large parked vehicles on the street because his vision was extremely limited by the sun.

I've lived in this area for 10 years. I can attest to the danger this crosswalk is in due to visibility concerns. At the wrong time of day, or if the road is wet and the sun is reflecting off the recent rainfall (Mililani rains can be quite often) the visibility near this crosswalk can be severely hindered. After witnessing this accident, nearby neighbors came out and shared their own stories of single driver accidents witnessed in this area.

I realize the sun and rainfall can have a negative safety effect on many crosswalks and roadways. If this was a lightly used crosswalk with minimal accidents cited in the area, and the sun had the potential to block 20% visibility at certain times of day, then this would still be worthy of improvement.

This is NOT that crosswalk! This crosswalk primarily services the elementary school. Particularly, this crosswalk services the preschool and kindergarten aged children and their families who are instructed to pick up their very young children on this side of the school. It is a very busy crosswalk, servicing very young children. The sun, plus weather conditions, can render visibility almost impossible at times. A look into reported accidents in the area should prove the necessity for this crosswalk's visibility to be improved.

Thankyou for taking my testimony into account. We all want improved pedestrian safety. I believe this is a problem with an easy solution and it primarily protects our community's young children. Let's fix this! Aloha!

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Submitted on: 3/30/2025 9:06:55 PM

Testimony for EDN on 4/1/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sherrice Munechika	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Sherrice Munechika and I am a teacher at Kipapa Elementary School. I am writing to you today with urgent concern and unwavering support for a bill that mandates the Department of Transportation and the City and County of Honolulu to implement critical visibility enhancement measures on the Kuahelani Avenue crosswalk at Kipapa Elementary School.

The current situation on Kuahelani Avenue near Kipapa Elementary School poses a significant and unacceptable risk to the safety of our children, faculty, and community members. As it stands, vehicles routinely travel at excessive speeds along the bend adjacent to the school. This dangerous behavior is exacerbated by a clear lack of driver awareness regarding the presence of a school zone and the need to exercise extreme caution.

The consequences of this negligence are not hypothetical; they are real and alarming. Within the recent past, **two faculty vehicles have been side-swiped** while attempting to navigate the traffic flow near the school. This is a stark demonstration of the lack of visibility and the disregard for safe speeds in this area. If vehicles are striking parked cars, it is only a matter of time before a pedestrian, especially a young child, is seriously injured or worse.

We consistently observe vehicles failing to slow down as they pass Kipapa Elementary School, seemingly unaware that they are in a designated school zone. This is particularly concerning during drop-off and pick-up times when pedestrian traffic, including young and often unpredictable children, is at its peak. The existing signage, if present, is clearly insufficient to effectively alert drivers and compel them to reduce their speed.

To address this critical safety issue, we strongly advocate for the implementation of the following visibility enhancement measures:

- **Clearly Marked "School Zone" Signage:** Highly visible and strategically placed "School Zone" signs, in compliance with best practices and regulations, are essential to immediately alert drivers that they are entering an area where heightened caution is required. These signs should be of sufficient size and utilize reflective materials for maximum visibility, especially during dawn, dusk, and inclement weather.
- **Installation of Speed Bumps:** Strategically placed speed bumps in the immediate vicinity of the school and leading up to the crosswalk will serve as a physical deterrent to

speeding. These traffic calming measures have proven effective in forcing drivers to reduce their speed and pay closer attention to their surroundings in school zones.

- **Implementation of Flashing Signs at the Crosswalk:** The installation of flashing pedestrian crossing signs, activated during school hours and potentially during drop-off and pick-up times, will significantly enhance the visibility of pedestrians attempting to cross Kuahelani Avenue. These visual cues will provide a clear warning to approaching drivers and increase the likelihood of them yielding the right-of-way.

Implementing these measures is not merely a matter of convenience; it is a matter of life and safety. We have a responsibility to create a safe environment for our children to learn and for our faculty to work. The current conditions on Kuahelani Avenue at Kipapa Elementary School are failing to meet this fundamental responsibility.

We urge you to support this vital bill and ensure the swift implementation of these necessary visibility enhancements. By working together, the Department of Transportation, the Department of Education, and the City and County of Honolulu can take concrete steps to prevent future accidents and protect the well-being of our keiki and community.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and commitment to the safety of our community.

Sincerely,

Sherrice Munechika

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Submitted on: 3/30/2025 9:57:53 PM

Testimony for EDN on 4/1/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Maureen Chang	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Education Committee,

As a concerned parent and pediatrician I am in strong support of HCR 137/HR 131 regarding visibility enhancement measures on the Kuahelani Avenue crosswalk at Kipapa Elementary School.

Sincerely, Maureen Chang MD

HR-131-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 12:02:52 AM

Testimony for EDN on 4/1/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Punahele kaikala	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Education Committee,

I am in strong support of HCR 137/HR 131 regarding visibility enhancement measures on the Kuahelani Avenue crosswalk at Kipapa Elementary School. I have lived on this street for 30+ years. The crosswalk is located right after a blind bend and catches drivers off guard. I have slammed my breaks by the surprise of pedestrians waiting to cross or crossing. The crosswalk is also not very visible after dark. The park and courts are very busy creating a lot of traffic and use for this crosswalk. Please consider measures to make this crosswalk safer. Lights, raised crosswalk, crossing lights, reflectors will all help in creating a safer surrounding for this crosswalk.

Sincerely, Punahele Kaikala punaspam@gmail.com

HR-131-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 8:44:28 AM

Testimony for EDN on 4/1/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Karina Castillo	Kipapa Elementary School	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am writing today as there is a great concern regarding the safety of our keiki along Kuahelani Avenue. I have witnessed firsthand the dangers and countless speeding incidents along that street. Many of our keiki walk to school by themselves, but even with a parent, there is a real concern when crossing Kuahelani Avenue! The Kipapa Elementary School staff has been doing an amazing job stepping in as crossing guards, wearing yellow vests, and holding up stop signs, to ensure the safety of our children. However, it is not enough. Cars continue to speed around the blind curve on Kuahelani Avenue and often have to slam on their brakes as there is not enough time to slow down, reaching the crosswalk very quickly. Because of this, drivers are sometimes aggressive with our crossing guards, cursing at them and even driving past quickly before the crossing guards have reached the sidewalk. It truly is a danger to the Kipapa staff, families, keiki, and the whole community!

We are asking for your support in a study that would show our need for at least two flashing school zone speed limit signs and a speed bump that would help to provide drivers with a visual reminder to slow down for children and families.

Thank you for your consideration as I know the safety of our keiki and community is of utmost importance to you.

Karina Castillo

Kipapa Elementary School PCNC and concerned parent

HR-131-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 9:44:05 AM

Testimony for EDN on 4/1/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Roxanne Chuck	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I was the Crossing Guard that worked for HPD and stopped at the ending of school 2024. Something needs to be done due to the speeding and inattentive drivers. I blew my whistle and go out with my stop sign up and reach the middle of the road and have had drivers that are not paying attention or speeding keep coming, so I blew my whistle again then they stop right before the crosswalk and tell me Sorry, they didn't see me. I had one grandmother when I already was in the middle of the crosswalk, with the students in the crosswalk, too that just went though without even stopping, so I blew my whistle before she went though! I have seen before I get to the crosswalk, students waiting to cross and not one car stops to let them cross, even on Kipapa side! When I worked on both sides I use to wave to every car coming from both ways so they would see me there and slow down!

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Submitted on: 3/31/2025 10:05:43 AM

Testimony for EDN on 4/1/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elden Ching	Kipapa Elemenary	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The traffic is really dangerous around Kipapa Elementary School and I'm afraid that it is just a matter of time that someone will get hurt or worse. I have heard of many situations where people including crossing guards were almost hit by cars. We hope something can be done to make people more aware that they are in a school zone and that there is a crosswalk where a lot of students and families are crossing the street.

LATE

HR-131-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 2:31:18 PM

Testimony for EDN on 4/1/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Janis Tolentino	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Woodson, Vice Chair La Chica, and members of the education committee,

I strongly SUPPORT this resolution.

As a teacher at Kipapa Elementary for 5 years, I have seen this section of Kuahelani as a dangerous area for students and families to cross the street. Staff members park on the street daily as parking for school, and it is very common to have cars speeding when entering or exiting the parked car. There have also been staff members who have had their cars damaged due to speeding cars driving around this bend. I worry about the safety of students, families, and staff and I support adding in extra safety measures to increase visibility of this crosswalk.

LATE

HR-131-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 2:31:29 PM

Testimony for EDN on 4/1/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kiana Wong	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Woodson, Vice Chair La Chica, and Members of the Education Committee,

I strongly support this resolution. Kuahelani is a very popular street that students, families, and teachers all use daily. Our crossing guards are out there every morning and every afternoon making sure our students and families can cross safely. Please help them keep the street safe for everyone.

I park my car on the street in front of Kipapa school every day because it is closer to my classroom. I also see families drop off their students near the gate on the sidewalk. Cars are moving very quickly around the corner and I feel it is very dangerous. If they don't see families trying to open their car doors, or if they don't see someone walking across the street it could be very detrimental for both parties.

Thank you for your consideration!

Kiana Wong, Kipapa Teacher

LATE

HR-131-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 2:32:08 PM

Testimony for EDN on 4/1/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shannon Bragg	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Woodson, Vice Chair La Chica, and members of the education committee,

As a teacher at Kipapa Elementary School, I strongly support this resolution. My concern is for the safety of our students as well as the adults who volunteer as crossing guards. I have seen cars speeding on Kuahelani throughout the school day. I have witnessed a car driving into the fire hydrant across the street. I also park on the street during the school day and worry that my car may be involved in a hit and run. Something has to be done to ensure the safety of our students.

Mahalo,

Shannon Bragg

LATE

HR-131-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 8:22:55 PM

Testimony for EDN on 4/1/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Seryna Ko	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Education Committee,

I am in strong support of HCR 137/HR 131 regarding visibility enhancement measures on the Kuahelani Avenue crosswalk at Kipapa Elementary School.

My both children kindergarten and 4th grader cross this crosswalk every morning.

Sincerely,

Seryna Ko 808-398-1088

LATE

HR-131-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 10:37:56 PM
Testimony for EDN on 4/1/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michael Dinneen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Woodson, Vice Chair La Chica and Members of the Education Committee,

I have only been working at Kīpapa Elementary School for the last 5 years. I have heard of previous accidents and near accidents at, or near the pedestrian crossing on Kuahelani Ave. Crossing guards must wear high visibility vests, use whistles and hold stop signs, to help control the cars traveling down the road. Some cars are moving in excess of the posted speed, drivers are not paying attention, or they are trying to maneuver around parked cars and they create a hazard for students crossing the road. Some drivers don't seem to care and are rude to crossing guards when they try to get them to maintain a safe environment.

I would like your support in a study that would show the need for all or some of these measures:

Flashing school zone speed limit signs installed in both directions with enough space from the crosswalk to give drivers plenty of advance warning.

A speed hump before or at the crosswalk.

No parking on the far side of the street from the school, or on both sides of the street around the times school begins and ends.

I would also hope that this study doesn't drag on and the corrective measures can be in place before the next school year.

Mahalo,

Michael Dinneen

Kīpapa Student Council Advisor

LATE

HR-131-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 7:01:58 AM

Testimony for EDN on 4/1/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rudy Domingo Jr.	Kipapa Elementary School	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a primary crossing guard and an administrator, I believe it is essential that we consider adding safety measures to protect our pedestrians on Kuahelani Ave. It not only benefits our students but also the other community members in that area. As the crossing guard, it is very discouraging that several people have almost hit me because of the lack of situational awareness during the school hours. I have been yelled at because I stopped traffic to allow students to cross. I protect our students, you must consider my testimony as the primary source. The last thing I want to do is to make a phone call to the parent of a student who was hit by a vehicle.