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

February 19, 2025
9:45 A.M.
State Capitol, Room 016 & Videoconference

S.B. 344, S.D. 1
RELATING TO HIGHWAY SAFETY

Senate Committee on Judiciary

The Department of Transportation **supports S.B. 344, S.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, 2 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.

February 17, 2025

Chair Karl Rhoads
Senate Judiciary Committee
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 228
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: SB 344_SD 1 (Rhoads), Helmet Requirements
Position: Support

Dear Chair Rhoads,

AAA Hawaii is pleased to support SB 344_SD1 (Rhoads), 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 SB 344. AAA Hawaii supports SB 344_SD1 as amended.

Respectfully Submitted,



Marianne Kim
Senior Public Policy Specialist

1130 N. Nimitz Highway, Suite A170, Honolulu, HI 96817

Auto Club Enterprises provides service to more than 14 million members



SB-344-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/14/2025 10:37:32 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/19/2025 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ruth Love	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I'm an ER nurse of 35 years. Just make the helmet mandatory for all skateboard riders- regardless of age.

The taxpayers and state often end up paying for the long term care at home and in institutions for those with traumatic brain injuries. Again >80% reduction in head trauma with helmet use.

Thank you

Mrs Ruth Love

LATE

SB-344-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 10:01:57 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/19/2025 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ryan Willis	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I Oppose

Overreach

LATE

SB-344-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 3:34:34 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/19/2025 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ellen Awai	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill SB344 SD1. Skateboard and scooters can be dangerous, like learning to ride a bike, and as youths many depend on parents' guidance and may panic in street situations. I myself wouldn't even trust riding a skateboard without a helmet being unbalanced already as a senior. After acquiring both a skateboard and a scooter, as well as an adult trike, I have yet to get the courage to teach my service dog how he can have fun instead of always being on the lookout for me or other kupuna at my residence. Bambi's 3.75 years old, so in human years, he wouldn't require a safety helmet! Hope that brought a smile to some of you! Life is too serious! 5Ls with aloha! Live, Love, Laugh, Learn, Listen!