

BILL053(22)
Testimony

MISC. COMM. 522

COUNCIL

COUNCIL Meeting

Meeting Date: Dec 7, 2022 @ 10:00 AM

Support: 2

Oppose: 0

I wish to comment: 0

Name: Bryan Mick	Email: bryan.mick@doh.hawaii.gov	Zip: 96826
Representing: Disability and Communication Access Board	Position: Support	Submitted: Dec 2, 2022 @ 04:25 PM

Name: Zhizi Xiong	Email: alohadivinedesign@gmail.com	Zip: 96817
Representing: CARES Community Advocacy Research Education Services	Position: Support	Submitted: Dec 6, 2022 @ 11:35 PM

Testimony:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair & Members of the Committee,

My name is Zhizi Xiong and I'm testifying in strong support on behalf of CARES, Community Advocacy Resources Exchange Services for the City's paratransit resolution. When coordinating paratransit services, it is imperative to truly get to know the concerns of this vulnerable population.

Disabled people are at a severe disadvantage because of health & medical reasons. Disabled people do not get special privileges. The accommodations provided to disabled people are because disabled people suffer significantly and the accommodations bring equity to the situation. At the federal level, many lawyers and legislators worked on the ADA to declare that it is a civil right to provide for the disabled.

When the Handivan presented in November, there were questions brought up about if trips were canceled due to unavailable cars. And how does the Handivan keep up with the demands? Why did Ford stop making these specialty vehicles? These questions about coordination, logistics & the economics of the Handivan are the type of leading questions that will help to solve the problem for disabled people, blind veterans & senior parents who ride the Handivan. The solutions should implement the criteria established from a federal civil rights law, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 because the ADA prohibits discrimination against disabilities and it also provides & protects disabled people's rights.

There is a reason why on buses & airplanes, seniors & disabled people have priority seating. In parking lots, disabled people & seniors with a handicap pass can park in the priority parking spots. It's difficult to disseminate medical information to people who have never suffered a medical condition so these examples should paint a clear picture to the public of why disabled people need to have accommodations. Disabled people's health conditions are like that of seniors.

There are those who say disabled people are a burden. Why should we have to give up good seating for the disabled? Why should disabled people get prioritized? There is a gap in educating the general public that needs to be addressed because the public is not aware about the sufferings of disabled people and that disability rights are protected by federal law. Most disabled people do not know their rights as constituted by the ADA. If there is a shortages of Handivan accommodations, if there is no seating for disabled people, if there is no handicap access in a building that is being built, a disabled person can refer to the ADA because there should be reasonable accommodations provided with no discrimination.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Zhizi Xiong
CARES



DISABILITY AND COMMUNICATION ACCESS BOARD

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December 7, 2022

The Honorable Tommy Waters, Chair
and Members
Honolulu City Council
530 South King Street
Room 203
Honolulu, HI 96813

Regarding: Bill 53 CD1 (2022) – Relating to Public Transit

Dear Chair Waters and Members of the Honolulu City Council:

The Disability and Communication Access Board (DCAB) supports Bill 53 CD1 (2022).

DCAB has adopted Guiding Principles on Public Transit Fixed Route Bus and Paratransit Services. Principle 3 states “[s]ubsides should be provided to those who qualify as extremely low income.”

Bill 53 CD1 (2022) amends the Revised Ordinances of Honolulu (ROH) 13-2.10 by adding a second method by which an applicant may qualify for the low income bus fare: by providing a letter from the Social Security Administration showing eligibility to receive Supplemental Security Income. This will reduce the number of applications the Department of Community Services currently reviews to determine whether an applicant meets the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development guidelines for extremely low income households within the City for the applicable family size.

In addition, Bill 53 CD1 (2022) amends ROH 13-4.5 by establishing a new low income fare category for paratransit passengers who meet either of the two methods applicants may use to qualify for the low income bus fare. DCAB has advocated for a low income paratransit fare category for several years. This allows the paratransit standard fare to be raised in the future without harming those with limited fixed incomes who would be forced to reduce their number of trips.

Both of these proposed amendments align with our Guiding Principles.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Bill 53 CD1 (2022).

Respectfully submitted,

KIRBY L. SHAW
Executive Director