REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY & ECONOMY

Voting Members:
Augie Tulba, Chair; Esther Kia'āina, Vice Chair;
Scott Y. Nishimoto, Val A. Okimoto, Andria Tupola

Committee Meeting Held
July 24, 2025

Honorable Tommy Waters
Chair, City Council
City and County of Honolulu

Mr. Chair:

Your Committee on Public Safety & Economy, which considered Bill 46 (2025) entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ORDINANCE RELATING TO THE HONOLULU POLICE DEPARTMENT,"

introduced on May 28, 2025 and which passed first reading at the June 4, 2025 Council meeting, reports as follows:

The purpose of the bill is to require the Honolulu Police Department to release certain public information to the media and to the public.

Honolulu Police Department Acting Chief Rade Vanic testified in strong opposition to the bill. While he expressed appreciation for the measure's intent to provide timely information to the public and enhance public safety, he emphasized that the bill as currently written raises legal, operational, and ethical concerns. The HPD has serious reservations about releasing the department's dispatch radio communications, as they contain highly sensitive personal information, including names, home addresses, medical conditions, and criminal histories. Additionally, Acting Chief Vanic stated that releasing this information in real time would violate Hawaii Revised Statutes, Chapter 138, as well as federal and state privacy laws related to electronic communication and the Criminal Justice Information Services security policies.

Acting Chief Vanic also clarified that HPD uses an encrypted radio system that transmits continuous streams of communications, criminal justice information, and

ADOPTED ON AUG 6 2025

COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 255

personally identifiable information. As an alternative to providing direct access to radio dispatches, other departments offer public dashboards that deliver timely, curated information such as the time and general location of calls, call priority levels, and final dispositions.

Acting Chief Vanic shared that HPD is expanding its communications team, having recently hired a communications director and a new information specialist to support timely communication. The department has increased its social media updates on cases, alerts, and community engagement, and developed a new media alert system that will promptly notify media outlets about major incidents, including aggravated assaults, homicides, robberies, and bomb threats. HPD is also launching a new media portal on its website, which will include 24-hour call-for-service data, social media feeds, traffic and arrest highlights, wanted persons lists, press event notices, and more.

HPD testified that Bill 46 is not narrowly tailored and places private citizens' information at risk. While the department is committed to transparency, HPD must do so within legal boundaries that protect individuals' privacy. HPD respectfully asked that the council to reconsider the measure and collaborate with the department to develop alternatives that balance public access with responsible safeguards.

Your Committee acknowledges the legal, safety, and privacy concerns raised by HPD and wishes to move the measure forward while committing to work on amendments that address HPD's concerns and improve the city's policies on releasing timely information to the media and public.

KHON2, Hawaii Association of Broadcasters, Island News / KITV Inc., and Hawaii News Now spoke in support of the measure.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY & ECONOMY

Voting Members:
Augie Tulba, Chair; Esther Kia'āina, Vice Chair;
Scott Y. Nishimoto, Val A. Okimoto, Andria Tupola

Your Committee received written testimony in support of the bill from KHON2; Honolulu Star-Advertiser and Oahu Publication Inc.; Island News / KITV Inc.; Hawaii Association of Broadcasters; KKEA/KHKA - FEMA's Primary Entry Point (PEP) Emergency Broadcast Facility; Hawaii News Now; Free Access Coalition; and 8 individuals. One individual submitted written testimony in opposition to the bill and one individual submitted written comments on the bill.

Your Committee on Public Safety & Economy is in accord with the intent and purpose of Bill 46 (2025) and recommends that it pass second reading, be scheduled for a public hearing, and be referred back to Committee. (Ayes: Tulba, Waters [temporary voting member] – 2; Ayes with reservations: Okimoto – 1, Noes: None; Absent: Kia'āina, Nishimoto, Tupola – 3.)

Respectfully submitted,

Committee Chair

HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL
Ke Kanihela o ke Kalana o Honolulu
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

ADOPTED ON AUG 6 2025

COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 255