# BILL049(25)
# Testimony

**MISC. COMM. 371**

*BUDGET (BUD)

***BUDGET (BUD)  Meeting**

Meeting Date: Jul 22, 2025 @ 09:00 AM

Support: 2

Oppose: 1

I wish to comment: 0

| Name: | Email: | Zip: |
|---|---|---|
| Jacob Wiencek | jacob.m.wiencek@pm.me | 96815 |
| Representing: | Position: | Submitted: |
| Self | Support | Jul 17, 2025 @ 07:23 PM |

Testimony:

Aloha Councilmembers,

I am glad to see this bill advancing through our legislative process. Cost of living rises are out of control in Honolulu and housing costs are a key driver as to why working- and middle-class families are leaving. We've got to do more to get rising costs down.

This bill is part of that solution. I applaud Council Chair Waters and Councilmember Okimoto for introducing this bill to lower property tax costs on our senior citizens. We need to be aggressive in lowering costs. I urge this Committee to SUPPORT this bill!

| Name: | Email: | Zip: |
|---|---|---|
| Ted Kefalas | maliah@grassrootinstitute.org | 96813 |
| Representing: | Position: | Submitted: |
| Grassroot Institute of Hawaii | Support | Jul 21, 2025 @ 08:21 AM |

| Name: | Email: | Zip: |
|---|---|---|
| Natalie Iwasa | iwasajunk@mail.com | 96825 |
| Representing: | Position: | Submitted: |
| Self | Oppose | Jul 22, 2025 @ 05:08 AM |

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Removing barriers to Hawaii's prosperity

July 22, 2025, 9 a.m.
Honolulu Hale

**To: Honolulu City Council Committee on Budget**
**Val Okimoto, Chair**
**Scott Nishimoto, Vice Chair**

**From: Grassroot Institute of Hawaii**
**Ted Kefalas, Director of Strategic Campaigns**

RE: Bill 49 (2025) — RELATING TO PROPERTY TAXATION

Aloha Chair Okimoto, Vice Chair Nishimoto and other members of the Committee,

The Grassroot Institute of Hawaii **supports** Bill 49 (2025), which would increase the real property tax homeowner exemption for those 65 years old and older from $160,000 to $180,000 beginning in fiscal 2028.

Increasing the homeowner exemption by $20,000 would save each homeowner $70 at the current residential tax rate of $3.50 per $1,000 in assessed value.[1]

The exemption was last increased in 2023, for the tax years beginning with fiscal 2024.[2] Passing Bill 49 (2025) now would head off possible increases in property values that could occur in the next two years.

Because many older folks rely on fixed incomes, increasing the amount of property tax relief they receive can reduce the "tax shock" of significant increases in property values.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Ted Kefalas
Director of Strategic Campaigns
Grassroot Institute of Hawaii

[1] "Real Property Tax Rates for Tax Year July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025," City and County of Honolulu, accessed July 3, 2025.
[2] Ordinance 23-33, Honolulu Records Collection, accessed Feb. 21, 2025.

TO: Members of the Budget Committee

FROM: Natalie Iwasa, CPA, CFE
808-395-3233

DATE: Tuesday, July 22, 2025

SUBJECT: Bill 49, Real Property Taxes, Home Exemption - **OPPOSED**

Aloha Chair Okimoto and Councilmembers,

Thank you for this opportunity to testify on Bill 49, which would increase the home exemption for taxpayers 65 or older by $20,000. The proposed CD1 goes further and would increase the exemption from $160,000 to $300,000.

**What about landlords who are over 65?**

What about renters who end up paying higher rent because of the city's unfair tax policy?

As you know, these exemptions are subsidized by other taxpayers who end up pay more. When is the city going to start making its tax system more equitable?

**Please vote "NO" on Bill 49 and especially the CD1 and support removal of unfair exemptions.**