BILL049(25)
Testimony

MISC. COMM. 417

*BUDGET (BUD)

***BUDGET (BUD) Meeting**

Meeting Date: Aug 19, 2025 @ 09:00 AM

Support: 2

Oppose: 1

I wish to comment: 1

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Jacob Wiencek	Jacob.m.wiencek@pm.me	96815
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Aug 15, 2025 @ 04:59 PM

Testimony:

Aloha Committee Members,

I am glad to see this bill continue to advance through our legislative system. This property tax relief bill for kupuna introduced by Council Chair Waters and Councilmember Okimoto is what we need to help reduce cost-of-living concerns driving our working- and middle-class families from Honolulu. I strongly urge this Committee to continue SUPPORTING this bill!

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Ted Kefalas	tkefalas@grassrootinstitute.org	96813
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Grassroot Institute of Hawaii	Support	Aug 18, 2025 @ 10:04 AM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Natalie Iwasa	iwasajunk@mail.com	96825
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Aug 18, 2025 @ 09:41 PM

Testimony:

I oppose this bill for reasons I have stated dozens of times over the years. For those who are having a difficult time paying their real property taxes, there's the RPT credit.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Michael Padeken	mspadeken@gmail.com	96717
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
HAUULA KUPUNA TAX REFORM/REDUCTION GROUP	I wish to comment	Aug 19, 2025 @ 07:30 AM

Testimony:

Dear C&C Board Members:

Tommy Waters and Val Okimoto

My name is Michael Padeken, actual nephew of the former Oswald Stender, my mother was his older sister. Uncle Oz has tasked me with the job to continue to fight for the rights of our Hawaiian citizens here and anywhere the blood of our peolple flows in their bodies. Though he is not with us in body, his spirit continues to influence me in his long time goal to fight for the rights of our Hawaiian people. I believe he knew his time was short when he called be to his home to pass on his mission to me handing all of his important papers over to me with the admonition to carry on the fight for Hawaiian

Rights.

It is with that 'kuleana', I cannot pass up the opportunity to comment. Not only in this forum but in every forum allowed by the powers that be who directs the affairs that affect Hawaiian Rights to our 'aina' under threat of loss of land ownership of long time residents of Hawaii, many of which are 'kupuna'.

Therefore, we, the four members of the Hauula Kupuna Tax Reform/Reduction Group, organized for the expressed purpose of finding ways to reform/reduce real property taxes, which as we know all too well, is rising at an alarming rate. As the taxes rise on our property, many of our long time Hawaii residents, especially kupuna who live on meager fixed incomes, continue to struggle to pay their required taxes that take more and more of their liquid funds leaving less and less to live on.

We support any kind of reduction in property tax bills being considered but is it enough! Bill 49 helps but when all is figured out, it only cuts one's tax obligation $70 for the meager change for house exemption of $20K from last year's exemption. Yes, this is a step in the right direction but is it enough! The C&C say, "Well, isn't that great. We saved $70 on people's property taxes!" But, we can't forget to consider proposed Residential A Teir 1, Teir 2, and Teir 3 which adds more tax burden to our people beause their property has gone up year after year in assessed value. Really, is $70 a huge tax savings when compared to the rise in assessed valuation considered by the board for Residential Teir 1, 2, and 3? I think it pales significantly in comparison!

We believe IT IS NOT ENOUGH! However, the following Bills sitting on your desks proposed by Matt Weyer and his cohorts indicate there are people on the City Council that feel empathy and compassion for the needs of our kupuna and long time residents of Hawaii. Let me refresh your memory!- Bill 25-145: Establish a Permitted Interaction Group to discuss RPT matters which I would advise adding a person or organization from 'real' people experiencing RPT shock! (I would love to be a member of this group) Bill 47 (2024): Establishes dedications of real property as "aina kupuna." Bill 45 (2024): Increases the threshold for the low income tax credit from $80K to $100K. Bill 43 (2024): Establishes a program to allow kupuna to pay their taxes in 4 installments instead of 2. Bill 30 (2024): Establish an RPT exemption for properties that are owned by the state and are leased to long time Hawaii residents like the 999 Year Homestead Lease people, many of which live in Hauula, I, Leasee Michael S Padeken Jr. legal owner of 999 Year Homestead Lease 16A. And finally, the other part of Bill 49, which is raising the exemption from $160K to $300K for kupuna living on fixed incomes (This Bill was Bill 34 (2023) but has since expired and we are hoping to be considered in this meeting and every upcoming meeting in the future)

Surely there is more to be said on our part but we, the Hauula Kupuna Tax Reform/Reduction Group, will continue to fight for the rights of our kupuna population in great need of tax relief. We hope these comments will open the hearts of the City Council members that have the power to enact changes in the tax revenue arena that will benefit our kupuna all in the spirit of 'ho'oponopono' as we work together to resolve Real Property Tax issues in the state of Hawaii.

Please be assured that we will continually raise our voices for the sake of our kupuna and the struggles they experience in today's environment but are very optimistic at the possibilities out there to cause a change for the better. Just so you know, we do have possible solutions to the loss of tax revenue as indicated by Andy in his objection to Bill 49 who surprised me with his objection since he was the main person to call a meeting with the city council members, assessment team member, Andy himself, and the Mayor's I think Number 2 Man whose name I don't recall. I understand Andy, you're just doing your job. I consider you a friend since you have been so helpful with all of our communication back and forth. In any case, I, We will continue our fight for the rights of our Hawaiian people, in this case, Real Property Tax Reform/Reduction.

Thank you for listening and we look forward to any further communication on this matter. The following is my contact information: Mike Padeken, Spokesperson

Hauula Kupuna Tax Reform/Reduction Group
Email: mspadeken@gmail.com
Ph. # 1 (801) 592-2054

Mahalo and Aloha,
Mike

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Removing barriers to Hawaii's prosperity

Aug. 19, 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) 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.