

BILL054(25)
Testimony

MISC. COMM. 27

COUNCIL

COUNCIL Meeting

Meeting Date: Jan 28, 2026 @ 10:00 AM

Support: 1

Oppose: 57

I wish to comment: 4

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Lindsey Ilagan	lindseyilagan@gmail.com	96707
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Jan 23, 2026 @ 02:47 PM
Testimony: Within the City of Honolulu, affordable public transit is essential for access to jobs, school, health care, and daily necessities. I strongly oppose the fare increases proposed in Bill 54. Raising transit fares will price riders off the system. Transit research and real-world experience show that fare hikes reduce ridership and push more people to drive, increasing traffic congestion, pollution, and parking demand. This directly undermines the City's investments in Skyline and its climate and equity goals. We should be encouraging more people to ride transit with reliable service and fair prices, not penalizing those who depend on it the most. I respectfully urge you to reject the fare increases in Bill 54 and pursue funding strategies that protect riders and grow transit use.		
Name:	Email:	Zip:
Ignacio Filippini	ignacio.filippini@gmail.com	96753
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Jan 23, 2026 @ 03:12 PM
Testimony: Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee, My name is Ignacio, and I am submitting testimony in strong opposition to Bill 54, which proposes to increase public transit fares for adult and youth riders and Handi-Van users on O'ahu. Public transit is an essential service in Honolulu, particularly for low-income residents, kūpuna, people with disabilities, and others who depend on TheBus and Handi-Van as their primary or only means of transportation. A fare increase of more than 10 percent will place an additional financial burden on those least able to afford it, and will effectively push many riders out of the system. Research and experience across the country show that fare increases lead to ridership declines. When transit becomes less affordable, people who can shift to driving often do so, which worsens traffic congestion, increases greenhouse gas emissions, and undermines the City and County's climate, safety, and mobility goals. For those who cannot switch to driving, higher fares simply reduce access to jobs, education, healthcare, and essential services. Honolulu should be focused on growing ridership through reliable, frequent, and affordable service, not balancing budgets on the backs of transit-dependent riders. Transit is a public good that supports economic opportunity, public health, and environmental sustainability. Fare increases move us in the wrong direction. For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to defer or reject Bill 54 and instead pursue funding strategies that		

maintain affordable fares while strengthening transit service.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,
Ignacio Filippini

Name: William Duke	Email: will.casey.duke@gmail.com	Zip: 96821
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Jan 23, 2026 @ 03:22 PM

Testimony:

At a time when our roadways are already congested and the City is not building significant new capacity for private vehicles, we should be doing everything possible to encourage more people to use public transit. Raising bus fares moves us in the opposite direction by making transit less accessible and less attractive, especially for working families, seniors, and riders who depend on TheBus every day.

Name: An Vo	Email: an.tong.vo1@gmail.com	Zip: 96817
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Jan 23, 2026 @ 09:24 PM

Testimony:

Aloha,

Within the City of Honolulu, affordable public transit is essential for access to jobs, school, health care, and daily necessities. I strongly oppose the fare increases proposed in Bill 54. Raising transit fares will price riders off the system. Transit research and real-world experience show that fare hikes reduce ridership and push more people to drive, increasing traffic congestion, pollution, and parking demand. This directly undermines the City's investments in Skyline and its climate and equity goals. We should be encouraging more people to ride transit with reliable service and fair prices, not penalizing those who depend on it the most. I respectfully urge you to reject the fare increases in Bill 54 and pursue funding strategies that protect riders and grow transit use.

I ride the bus to school and work everyday. Cars take up too much space on the roads but busses carry more people and run on the same amount of gas. It's better to have one bus on the road rather than multiple cars. Cars carry only one or two people, emits greenhouse gases from multiple cars, and cars crash into people due to poor drivers. On the other hand, busses carry more people using the same amount of greenhouse gases, and they haven't crashed into people from my years of riding the bus and being a pedestrian. I urge you to oppose the fare increases proposed in Bill 54.

Mahalo,

An Vo

Name:

Jonathan Huynh

Email:

jhweather123@yahoo.com

Zip:

96792

Representing:

Self

Position:

Oppose

Submitted:

Jan 24, 2026 @ 12:27 PM

Testimony:

Aloha Councilmembers,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. I am a resident of Nanakuli, and I strongly oppose Bill 54 because it would:

(1) Raise transit fares (monthly pass: \$80 -> \$90; annual pass: \$880 -> \$990).

(2) Shorten the transfer window from 2.5 hours to 2 hours.

Both would make public transit less accessible and increase the cost of living for the most vulnerable.

1. Raising fares, especially in the city with the nation's worst traffic congestion, discourages ridership. Higher prices make transit less attractive compared to driving, which would push more people into cars — thereby worsening congestion, not alleviating it. If the goal of transit policy is to reduce traffic and emissions, this bill moves us in the wrong direction.

2. Increasing fares will disproportionately affect low-income riders and those who rely on public transit as their primary mode of transportation. Many households already struggle with high housing and food costs, so raising transportation costs adds further inequity.

3. While the Council may intend these increases to help close a budget gap, the actual financial benefit from the fare hikes is relatively small compared to the overall system cost. However, the cost burden is shifted even more heavily from taxpayers to the riders themselves. This adds further inequity.

4. Bill 54 includes a reduced fare for very-low-income individuals, and I appreciate the intent behind this provision. By narrowly targeting only the very-lowest income riders, Bill 54 creates a sharp affordability cliff: riders who earn just above the eligibility threshold will pay significantly more despite facing the same high housing, food, and childcare costs. This approach undermines equity rather than advancing it.

5. Raising prices makes public transit less accessible, the antithesis of a well-connected, equitable society that doesn't push locals away from the islands. Rather than raising prices, the City should invest in making transit more reliable, efficient, and affordable. Lower fares incentivize ridership, reduce road congestion, improve equity, and help meet climate goals. Bill 54 moves in the opposite direction by placing additional costs on those least able to shoulder them.

For these reasons, I urge you to oppose Bill 54. I implore you to explore alternatives that protect riders, support equity, and encourage greater usage of public transit without unnecessary cost burdens.

Mahalo for your time,

Jonathan Huynh		
Name: lynne matusow	Email: lynnehi@aol.com	Zip: 96817
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Jan 25, 2026 @ 05:31 PM
Testimony: New York City rose fares on Jan.1, 2026. It serves many more riders than the bus and choo choo (aka skyline). It goes many more miles than the bus and choo choo. Why does New York City fares cost less than the proposed fares in Honolulu when it serves more people and goes much further? Subway, bus and Access-A-Ride fares in New York City rose 10 cents to \$3. Reduced fares rose from \$1.45 to 1.50. Your plan is a rip off of all transit riders in Honolulu. Do not raise fares. Meanwhile, there is no coordination between fares and the loss of bus routes that affect a good number of people. Thousands who live in the downtown area, especially on the mauka side, now have no way to reach Dole Cannery and the Regal Cinemas. The 20 ran down Beretania to River Street to Iwilei Road. Many of these residents are seniors, who cannot walk far. They also have a hard time getting to Costco, as Dillingham construction has moved bus stops and the route is dangerous. Uneven sidewalks, obstructions, etc. DTS doesn't seem to care. Hawaii News Now recently ran a story about another group of seniors who have been inconvenienced by the discontinuation of the 20 and have to walk long distances to catch another bus and the elimination of bus stops. Roger Morton was not sympathetic. Until bus routes are restored to go where the people are and want to go, there should not be any fare increases. They don't have to restore the 20. All they need is a circulator bus running every half hour for the affected residents. While you want to add an extra cost burden to the riders, in addition to eliminating bus routes and stops, State Senator Lorraine Inouye is proposing that fares for students be eliminated state wide. In Hawaii county rides are free for them. Have you talked to her? Can Honolulu afford it? Iowa City made its buses free. That is what you should be doing instead of raising fares. Traffic cleared and so did the air. Since the fare-free program began, people in Iowa City have driven 1.8 million fewer miles and emissions have fallen by 24,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide a year, the same as taking 5,200 vehicles off the roads. You should find a way for Honolulu to afford this sensible solution and also restore the missing bus routes. It appears DTS doesn't care what the riders say. The needs of the riders should be driving the bus and its policies, not the bureaucrats. Please vote no today. If you look at the testimony from the last Budget Committee meeting it was overwhelmingly opposed. Clearly the testifiers did not win the day.		
Name: cristine natividad	Email: cristinemnatividad@gmail.com	Zip: 96817

Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Jan 25, 2026 @ 11:08 PM
Testimony: Increasing bus fare disproportionately burdens lower income residents. Incentives do not reach upper lower class incomes. Please keep bus fare rates the same.		
Name: Joseph Asuncion	Email: JPKAsun2006@gmail.com	Zip: 96816
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Jan 26, 2026 @ 07:31 AM
Testimony: Aloha Councilmembers, I am writing in opposition to Bill 54, which aims to increase fares for our public transit systems, TheBus, TheHandi-Van, and Skyline. With a system in which our fares, whether one-way, fare-capped, monthly, or other means, are already some of the most expensive compared across multiple transit systems within the United States, I do not agree that increasing fares for visitors and residents alike, is a justifiable way or reason to push to meet budget goals or increase revenue as a whole, which may not even happen due to the possibility of the increase reducing ridership substantially. It will create even more of a financial burden on those who may be struggling with financial security the most, in an area that has one of the highest costs of living nationally. Additionally, pushing our residents out of using public transit by continually increasing fares may lead some switching to into using a personal vehicle. A recent report stated that Hawaii is the "worst" state to drive in. As congestion will continue to be a struggle for commuters on the road, efforts instead to make public transit use reliable, accessible, and affordable should be done for residents to stay content from their commutes instead of causing frustration and stress from either driving in traffic or from having to manage a tighter budget from fare increases. Respectfully, I urge that you reject these fare increases in Bill 54, for our public transit commuters to retain financial stability from using our growing transit system, and to build momentum and motivation for public transit use and its benefits, such as transit-oriented development, across the island. Thank you very much for your consideration.		
Name: Rona Mangayayam	Email: revrona.m@gmail.com	Zip: 96819
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:

Self	Oppose	Jan 26, 2026 @ 01:20 PM
Name: Scott Dukart	Email: scottdukart@gmail.com	Zip: 96817
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Jan 26, 2026 @ 03:03 PM
Testimony: Increased fares lead to a decrease in ridership, causing more people to drive cars, which in turn worsens traffic congestion and increases emissions. Efforts should be focused on growing ridership with good service and affordable fares, not balancing the budget on the backs of transit-dependent riders. I urge Council to oppose this measure.		
Name: Molly Mamaril	Email: mollymamaril@gmail.com	Zip: 96816
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Jan 26, 2026 @ 03:44 PM
Testimony: Aloha Chair Waters and Vice Chair Tupola, Mahalo for the opportunity to testify. I respectfully oppose Bill 54, which would increase fares for TheBus and TheHandi-Van. Public transportation is an essential service for many O'ahu residents, particularly low income families, kūpuna, people with disabilities and those without access to a personal vehicle. At a time when Hawai'i's cost of living is already extremely high, raising transit fares would place an additional and unfair burden on households that are already struggling to meet basic needs. Higher fares would also reduce transit ridership, increase traffic congestion, and undermine the City and County's environmental and economic goals. Affordable public transportation is critical to connecting residents to jobs, education, health care and other essential services. For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Council to reject Bill 54 and protect affordable access to public transportation. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify. Molly Mamaril (Kaimukī resident)		
Name: Abbey Seitz	Email: abbey@hiappleseed.org	Zip: 96816
Representing: Hawaii Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Jan 26, 2026 @ 04:03 PM

Name: Will Caron	Email: willcaronforhawaii@gmail.com	Zip: 96744
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Jan 26, 2026 @ 04:46 PM
Testimony: Aloha Chair Waters, Vice Chair Tupola, and Council Members, Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I strongly OPPOSE Bill 54, which would raise fares for TheBus and TheHandi-Van. This increase will hurt the people in our community who can least afford it: low-income families, kūpuna, people with disabilities, and all who depend on public transit. At a time when Hawaii's cost of living is already too high, raising transit fares will only make things harder. For a family of four using bus passes, this could mean paying nearly 30% more per year than just a few years ago. Many bus riders have low incomes—over 1 in 5 have household incomes under \$20,000—and more than half don't have a car at home. For them, the bus isn't a choice; it's a necessity. Making transit more expensive hurts everyone. It forces people to make impossible choices between transportation and other basics. It can also push people away from the bus, leading to more cars on the road, worse traffic, and more pollution. History shows that fare hikes reduce ridership. TheBus has raised fares twice in the last five years, and that's part of why ridership hasn't fully recovered since the pandemic. Public transportation is an essential service, like our roads or parks. It connects people to jobs, school, doctors, and opportunity. We should be making it more affordable and reliable, not harder to use. I urge you to REJECT Bill 54. Please protect affordable transit for all O'ahu residents. Mahalo for your consideration.		
Name: rose elovitz	Email: 626.rose@gmail.com	Zip: 96822
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Jan 26, 2026 @ 08:06 PM
Testimony: Aloha Chair Waters, Vice Chair Tupola, and Council Members. My name is Rose Elovitz and I depend on the bus for transportation. The previous increases in the bus fare have already impacted me and my community member's ability to travel around the island. I often opt to walk rather than take the bus to save money as the fare is already high. To hear there is a proposal to raise the bus fare again is ridiculous. Public transportation is meant to be accessible. By raising the		

fare, the council would be placing the burden on the hard working people of Hawai'i to access a vital resource when we are already struggling to make ends meet. We deserve to have our lives be made easier, not harder. Vote NO of Bill 54. Me ke aloha, Rose.

Name: Emma Knight Markrich	Email: emmaknight@gmail.com	Zip: 96734
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Jan 26, 2026 @ 08:08 PM

Testimony:

Aloha Council members,

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify. I testify in opposition to the proposed fare increase to the bus.

At a time when Oahu residents already to struggle to afford rising costs, we should not be increasing bus rates. When we increase bus rates, ridership goes down. We should be incentivizing more bus ridership to deal with our serious traffic congestion and the climate crisis, which is made worse by air pollution from cars.

While I recognize the desire to have more people use Holo Card, but increasing the cash fare won't incentivize more adoption of the Holo Card. I would imagine most cash payers do so because it is easier for them and they have a barrier to technology or access. If we actually wanted to make technological improvements to the bus payment system, we should make it possible to pay for the bus with your smart phone (e.g. tap to pay). The Holo Card reloading process really isn't user friendly, even for tech savvy people.

I think increasing bus fares will hurt low income residents who rely on the bus system, kūpuna, and people with disabilities like my uncle who rides the bus daily.

I urge you to vote against this bill.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Emma Knight Markrich

Resident of Kailua

Name: Hollie Rader	Email: hollierader@gmail.com	Zip: 96797
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Jan 26, 2026 @ 10:32 PM

Name: Gail Faligan	Email: kaneohechick2010@gmail.com	Zip: 96822-2714
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Representing: Self	Position: I wish to comment	Submitted: Jan 26, 2026 @ 11:36 PM
Testimony: ** It was brought up at a "Citizens for a Fair Americans with Disabilities Act Ride (CFADAR) Meeting, in 2025, by Mr. Roger Morton, Director, Department of Transportation Services (DTS), City and County of Honolulu: a. The General Public, was made aware of a Program where the City & County of Honolulu Employees are Riding Skyline and The Bus free (for a Year). b. Mr. S. Nieves, DTS, City & County of Honolulu, brought up at a different "CFADAR Meeting, in 2025", that this Program was Extended. **CONCERN is the REVENUE AMOUNT LOSS by Allowing City & County of Honolulu Employees Ride Free. a. "What was the Original Start Date this Program"? b. "Why was it Extended, and For What Period of Time is the Extension"? c. How was the General Public Informed (Media - TV; Newspaper; Radio)? d. Is there a "Check & Balance" of the Revenue (City & County of Honolulu Employees Riding Free versus The General Public) maintenance by DTS, City & County of Honolulu? e. Is the this Revenue Loss (being shared with Elected Hawai'i State Government Officials - Councilpersons; Congressional Representatives; and State District Senators and Representatives)? f. Is the Federal Government Budget Committee made aware of this (Revenue Loss)? ** I am asking this because of the Proposal to Increase the Fare (Handivan; The Bus; and Skyline), which Effects Students, Senior Citizens, and Working Individual's (that are not Employees of the City & County of Honolulu). **Is there a "Check and Balance that Verifies, that a City & County of Honolulu Employees, who is Riding Skyline or The Bus Free is Not Abusing this Privilege by allowing Family or Acquaintances to Ride Free"? This then becomes an Addition Revenue Loss.		
Name: Luca Cuniberti	Email: Lcuniberti8002@gmail.com	Zip: 96712
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Jan 27, 2026 @ 12:27 AM
Testimony: Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and councilmembers. My name is Luca Cuniberti, a transit advocate on the North Shore and a near-daily bus user. Bill 54 is gutting affordability in Hawai'i. Taking opportunities away from youth and forcing our Kapuna, families, and		

residents to pay more.

I advocate for more youth to use public transit, and many of them do like taking it. But I see a future where this bill passes, and youth stop seeing the benefit of public transit because of its financial burden. Why would a young person want to use transit if it punishes them and their family financially just because they dont have enough free time?

Youth fares are already difficult to obtain, as they require either an internet connection or for parents to go down to Kalihi during working hours on a weekday with multiple forms of identification. Not all families have the time, money, or ability to get a youth card for their children!. While cash is being used less and less in our system, a majority of youth still use it because obtaining a youth card is so difficult.

We have packed buses here on the North Shore and across O’ahu because our transit system is so affordable. If you take that affordability away, Keiki WILL start taking cars, walking to school, or not even coming to school at all. This especially applies to our houseless population.

This bill punishes our community for taking transit. We know the farebox ratio doesn’t work now, and there are other revenue streams we could be using!

In conclusion, please vote against this bill, even if you dont take TheBus or Skyline. This is about affordability on O’ahu, something we all need to fight for.

Mahalo,
Luca Cuniberti

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Koa Kuroda-McCormick	k.kurodamccormick@gmail.com	96813
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Jan 27, 2026 @ 05:49 AM

Testimony:

Aloha Chair Waters, Vice Chair Tupola, and Council Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I strongly OPPOSE Bill 54, which would raise fares for TheBus and TheHandi-Van. This increase will hurt the people in our community who can least afford it: low-income families, kūpuna, people with disabilities, and all who depend on public transit. As an educator and whose students rely on public transit to and from Kapolei I must oppose this bill.

At a time when Hawai’i’s cost of living is already too high, raising transit fares will only make things harder. For a family of four using bus passes, this could mean paying nearly 30% more per year than just a few years ago. Many bus riders have low incomes—over 1 in 5 have household incomes under \$20,000—and more than half don’t have a car at home. For them, the bus isn’t a choice; it’s a necessity.

Making transit more expensive hurts everyone. It forces people to make impossible choices between transportation and other basics. It can also push people away from the bus, leading to more cars on the road, worse traffic, and more pollution. History shows that fare hikes reduce ridership. TheBus has raised fares twice in the last five years, and that's part of why ridership hasn't fully recovered since the pandemic.

Public transportation is an essential service, like our roads or parks. It connects people to jobs, school, doctors, and opportunity. We should be making it more affordable and reliable, not harder to use.

I urge you to REJECT Bill 54. Please protect affordable transit for all O'ahu residents.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Name: Laura Pokipala	Email: pokipala64@gmail.com	Zip: 96744
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Jan 27, 2026 @ 07:18 AM

Testimony:

Aloha,

Please accept this testimony in opposition of Bill 54 raising the public transit fares. An extra 10% may sound like very little, but many individuals riding the bus are struggling to utilize public transit at the current rates. There are mothers with 3 or more young children having to catch the bus to doctor appointments or the grocery store, and this cost adds up. At a time when we are trying to promote the use of public transportation, making it more expensive is the wrong marketing strategy.

Please vote against any bill that will raise the cost of public transit which is a basic necessity for many of us.

Name: Giovannie Smith	Email: smithgiovannie802@gmail.com	Zip: 96826
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Jan 27, 2026 @ 08:07 AM

Testimony:

Aloha, my name is Giovannie Smith I live and work on O'ahu, and I earn minimum wage working at Ray-Ban. I depend on the bus to get to work. For me, taking the bus is not a choice — it's how I survive.

Right now, I pay for a monthly bus pass, and that cost is going up to \$90 a month, along with a 25-cent increase per ride. Some people may think that's small, but when you live paycheck to paycheck, that extra money adds up fast. Every dollar matters. That increase means less food in my fridge, less money for rent, and more stress just trying to make it to the next paycheck.

What really breaks my heart is that this fare increase affects everybody — not just workers like me. Our keiki who ride the

bus to school and work. People with disabilities who depend on TheBus for their independence. And our kūpuna — the elders who raised us, who built this community, who deserve our respect and care. In Hawai'i, we are taught to love and protect our kūpuna. Raising bus fares for them does not feel pono.

Life in Hawai'i is already hard for local people. Rent keeps going up. Groceries cost more every month. Wages stay the same. Many of us work two jobs and still struggle. When bills like Bill 54 raise basic costs like transportation, it pushes local families closer to the edge. For some, it may even mean choosing between getting to work or putting food on the table.

I love Hawai'i. This is my home. I don't want to leave. I want to work, contribute, and live here with dignity. But it's getting harder to stay when even riding the bus — something so basic — keeps getting more expensive.

Please think about the real people behind these numbers. Small increases on paper create big pain for local families. I ask that you reconsider how this bill affects working people, our keiki, the disabled, and our kūpuna.

Mahalo for listening to my story.

— Giovannie Smith

Name: Honuaina Nichols	Email: honuainanichols@gmail.com	Zip: 96817
Representing: Sierra Club Oahu Group	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Jan 27, 2026 @ 08:57 AM

Testimony:
OPPOSE BILL 54

Honolulu City Council
OPPOSITION to Bill 54
Hearing Date: Wednesday, January 28th, 10:00 AM
Aloha Chair Waters, Vice Chair Tupola, and Council Members,
Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I strongly OPPOSE Bill 54, which would raise fares for TheBus and TheHandi-Van.

I am a commuter for my part time work into Chinatown because parking in town is even more absurdly expensive and unrealistic for me to afford. I work at the Legal Aid Society of Hawaii, serving our community with free legal counsel and advice. I already have to pick and choose which days and at what time of my pay period is it ok for me to go into work in person. Our community can't afford to live without connection, the bus fare if anything needs to DECREASE!

This increase will hurt the people in our community who can least afford it: low-income families, kūpuna, people with disabilities, and all who depend on public transit.

At a time when Hawai'i's cost of living is already too high, raising transit fares will only make things harder. For a family of four using bus passes, this could mean paying nearly 30% more per year than just a few years ago. Many bus riders have low incomes—over 1 in 5 have household incomes under \$20,000—and more than half don't have a car at home. For them, the bus isn't a choice; it's a necessity.

Making transit more expensive hurts everyone. It forces people to make impossible choices between transportation and other basics. It can also push people away from the bus, leading to more cars on the road, worse traffic, and more pollution. History shows that fare hikes reduce ridership. TheBus has raised fares twice in the last five years, and that's part of why ridership hasn't fully recovered since the pandemic.

Public transportation is an essential service, like our roads or parks. It connects people to jobs, school, doctors, and opportunity. We should be making it more affordable and reliable, not harder to use.

I urge you to REJECT Bill 54. Please protect affordable transit for all O'ahu residents.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Name: sophia congdon	Email: scongdon@apishawaii.org	Zip: 96744
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Jan 27, 2026 @ 09:22 AM

Testimony:

Aloha Chair Waters, Vice-Chair, and councilmembers,

I think that raising the prices on what is supposed to be a helpful system for people that dont have a lot of money or dont have access to other modes of transportation is straight-up BS. This system is not supposed to be about collecting money; it's supposed to help. And raising the price on basically the only thing people can count on for cheap in Hawaii is a jerk move. also the youth card is super hard to get ahold of, it is selfish to think that everyone can just go over and get this card, some people have jobs, my dad works more then a 9-5 and my mom drives all over the island and answers to people who give her a hard time for everything, I am going to school an hour away from my house, I have a job and animals. Like a lot of other people, I am busy. We are all busy with our lives, and if you think that raising the prices on anything will gain more passengers, it is absolute garbage. People will take the bus anyway, but only becuase its thier only form of transportation, that is greed, and that is basically extortion.

Name: Micah Munekata	Email: mmunekata@ulupono.com	Zip: 96813
Representing: Ulupono Initiative	Position: I wish to comment	Submitted: Jan 27, 2026 @ 09:46 AM

Name: Emma Waters	Email: emmawaters@hiphi.org	Zip: 96720
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Jan 27, 2026 @ 10:25 AM

Testimony:

I am writing in strong opposition to this bill.

Within the City of Honolulu, affordable public transit is essential for access to jobs, school, health care, and daily necessities. I strongly oppose the fare increases proposed in Bill 54. Raising transit fares will price riders off the system. Transit research and real-world experience show that fare hikes reduce ridership and push more people to drive, increasing traffic congestion, pollution, and parking demand. This directly undermines the City's investments in Skyline and its climate and equity goals. We should be encouraging more people to ride transit with reliable service and fair prices, not penalizing those who depend on it the most. I respectfully urge you to reject the fare increases in Bill 54 and pursue funding strategies that protect riders and grow transit use.

Mahalo for your time.

Name: Nate Hix	Email: nate@hiphi.org	Zip: 96813
Representing: Hawai'i Public Health Institute	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Jan 27, 2026 @ 10:26 AM
Name: Isis Usborne	Email: isis.usborne@gmail.com	Zip: 96815
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Jan 27, 2026 @ 10:35 AM

Testimony:

Aloha e Councilmembers,

I strongly oppose any fare hikes for public transportation, which by all rights and fairness should be free, as it serves the most vulnerable among us. Please pay bus drivers fairly and find a way to provide high quality public transportation at zero or low cost to riders.

As a student who uses the bus often, I see the impact this could have on the economic and environmental well being of our island.

No more fare hikes!

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Isis Usborne

JD 2026 Candidate at the William S. Richardson School of Law

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Kristina Leon	Kristinaleon25@gmail.com	96706
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Jan 27, 2026 @ 11:09 AM
Testimony: Public transit is essential in Honolulu, and for a lot of people it's not a choice — it's how they get to work, school, medical appointments, and take care of daily errands. When fares go up, it hurts the people who rely on transit the most, including low-income riders, kūpuna, people with disabilities, and riders who live furthest from town, such as those on the Leeward Coast and the North Shore. When transit gets more expensive, ridership goes down. If the goal is to reduce traffic by providing affordable public transportation, these fare increases are not aligned with that goal. At the same time the City is encouraging people to use rail and rely more on the transit system, raising fares sends the wrong message. Making public transit harder to afford especially impacts frequent riders who don't qualify for reduced fares but still depend on it. Even if the cash fare increase is only 25 cents, monthly HOLO card passes are going up by \$5 to \$10. Over time, that becomes an added expense many people in Hawai'i simply cannot afford. We should be focused on improving service and keeping fares affordable, not balancing the budget on the backs of people who depend on public transportation.		
Name:	Email:	Zip:
Donald Sakamoto	cylonone@aol.com	96744
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Jan 27, 2026 @ 11:18 AM
Testimony: Oral testimony via video conference only.		
Name:	Email:	Zip:
Lisa Kehl	lisakehl@gmail.com	96822
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Jan 27, 2026 @ 11:22 AM
Testimony: Affordable transit is a lifeline for Honolulu residents accessing jobs, healthcare, and education. I strongly oppose the Bill 54 fare increases. Research confirms that higher fares drive down ridership and increase traffic, pollution, and parking demand. This proposal directly contradicts the City's climate goals and investments in Skyline. Instead of penalizing daily riders, we must reject this hike and find funding strategies that encourage, rather than hinder, transit use.		

Name: Bev Brody	Email: bbrody1@hawaii.rr.com	Zip: 96754
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Jan 27, 2026 @ 11:55 AM

Name: Kelson Kai	Email: kelson.y.kai@gmail.com	Zip: 96816
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Jan 27, 2026 @ 12:00 PM

Testimony:

As a regular user of public transit in Honolulu, I firmly oppose this bill and the fare increases it will bring, well as shorter transfer window proposed. We have a great transit system here, but punishing those who use it most by increasing the price of monthly passes, reduced fare rides and handi van rides will increase the burden on those who rely on transit the most.

If there were visible and meaningful infrastructure improvements with TheBus and not just Skyline, the justification to raise fares may be a bit easier to swallow. Unfortunately with the less than ideal state of many major bus stops, no major TheBus infrastructure projects announced such as transit signal priority, much wider implementation of bus lanes and adequate night time frequency, the taxpaying public and transit users will see few visible benefits of this rate hike. We are already struggling to make ends meet in this very expensive city. Increasing fares will also negatively impact the chances of people limiting their car usage and switching over to transit use. Fare hikes also demonize transit even more to the people who only want to invest in car infrastructure and don't see the many benefits of good transit.

If bus stop cleanliness and infrastructure improves, more bus lanes are implemented or at least proposed, and measures that will make bus transit in the urban Honolulu core faster and more efficient, the justification of these fare increases will be much more tolerable. The tax paying public should be able to enjoy a better overall system if we are paying more to use it.

The push to incentivize HOLO car usage is quite logical, but the way this misguided and frankly illogical bill presents it, to penalize people who use cash, will impact the most vulnerable people. Right now urban Honolulu completely lacks HOLO card vending machines. Without implementation of these machines at the very least, major stops and transit centers, you cannot reasonably expect more people to adopt the HOLO card system.

Instead of focusing on raising rates, focus should be on increasing ridership, that would in turn increase revenue. Fare free days, marketing, having our leaders actually use transit and set the example, among other initiatives will help local residents out of their cars and onto transit. I truly hope you re-consider this rate hike without proposing major visible improvements to our transit system where it is still used the most, in our dense, vibrant urban core.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Genesis Leong	genesisl@hawaii.edu	96826
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Jan 27, 2026 @ 12:12 PM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
LORRIE KANNO	lwkanno@yahoo.com	96789
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Jan 27, 2026 @ 12:13 PM

Testimony:

Affordable public transit is essential for access to jobs, school, health care, and daily necessities especially in Honolulu. I strongly oppose the fare increases proposed in Bill 54. Increased fares lead to a decrease in ridership, causing more people to drive cars, which in turn worsens traffic congestion and increases emissions. This directly undermines the City's investments in Skyline and its climate and equity goals. We should be encouraging more people to ride transit with reliable service and fair prices, not penalizing those who depend on it the most - our kupuna and low to moderate income family members. Efforts should be focused on growing ridership with good service and affordable fares, not balancing the budget on the backs of transit-dependent riders.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Junmi Chen	junmichen0@gmail.com	96816
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Jan 27, 2026 @ 12:49 PM

Testimony:

Aloha, my name is Junmi Chen. I live in Kapahulu. I'm here to oppose the proposed bus fare increase. My message is clear. The fare is NOT fair.

Raising fares is a betrayal of affordability. Raising bus fares is a regressive tax for people rely on public transportation that deepens economic segregation in Honolulu.

Second, this 25 cents increase is meant to push people toward the HOLO card and creates a "Digital Wall.". But not everyone has a bank account or access to digital payment. Cash riders are disproportionately seniors, immigrants, and unhoused people. This policy creates a barrier for them.

Finally, this is Climate Hypocrisy. Higher fares mean more cars, more congestion, more emission. You can't charge "green fees" with one hand, and punish people for choosing green transportation with the other.

Public transit is an essential service, not a luxury. The fare is not fair. Please, reject Bill 54. Mahalo.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
James Labrie	jameslabrie43@gmail.com	96706

Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Jan 27, 2026 @ 01:02 PM
Testimony: I James Labrie oppose Bill 54 for the increase in fair for bus, skyline and handivan, due to the limited funding i have. i only receive Social Security, An increase in fare would affect my daily transportation cost to and from the Adult Day Health program and other community meetings.		
Name: Dee Green	Email: deegreen15@gmail.com	Zip: 96817
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Jan 27, 2026 @ 01:11 PM
Testimony: Aloha Chair and Councilmembers, I am submitting this testimony to urge the Council to keep transit fares in Hawai'i at their current levels and to oppose any fare increases contemplated under Bill 54 (2025), CD2. Public transportation in Honolulu is not a luxury. For many residents, TheBus and Skyline are essential services that make it possible to get to work, school, medical appointments, and basic necessities. The existing fare structure already reflects a careful balance between generating revenue and maintaining affordability, especially for those who rely on transit the most. Increasing fares risks pushing riders off the system entirely, which would reduce ridership, increase traffic congestion, and run counter to the City's goals for sustainability and climate resilience. Transit works best when it is affordable, predictable, and widely used. Stability in fares helps working families plan their monthly expenses and encourages continued use of public transportation. For these reasons, I respectfully ask the Council to maintain the current fare levels and reject any increases. Keeping transit fares the same supports equity, economic stability, and access for the residents who depend on our public transportation system every day. Mahalo for the opportunity to submit this testimony and for your consideration. Dee Green		
Name: Genevieve Mumma	Email: genevieve.mumma@gmail.com	Zip: 96789
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:

Self	Oppose	Jan 27, 2026 @ 01:47 PM
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Testimony:

Aloha Chair Waters, Vice Chair Tupola, and Council Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I strongly OPPOSE Bill 54, which would raise fares for TheBus and TheHandi-Van. This increase will hurt the people in our community who can least afford it: low-income families, kūpuna, people with disabilities, and all who depend on public transit.

When was the last time you took the bus? The rail?

As a regular commuter who is looking to use public transportation more often with the recent expansion of the rail, an increase in cost makes a difference. It is already difficult to commute to a nearby rail station, park, and subsequently commute from the Middle St station to my workplace. Instead of increasing public transportation prices, we should be lowering them and even subsidizing them.

At a time when Hawai'i's cost of living is already too high, raising transit fares will only make things harder. For a family of four using bus passes, this could mean paying nearly 30% more per year than just a few years ago. Many bus riders have low incomes—over 1 in 5 have household incomes under \$20,000—and more than half don't have a car at home. For them, the bus isn't a choice; it's a necessity.

History shows that fare hikes reduce ridership. TheBus has raised fares twice in the last five years, and that's part of why ridership hasn't fully recovered since the pandemic. On O'ahu—where traffic is getting increasingly worse—we should look to our neighbors on Maui who have a FREE FARE BUS PROGRAM and strive to implement policies that make the choice to take public transit easy for riders (and potential ones).

We know the that bus system isn't a money maker for the city, and that's okay: Public transportation is an essential service, like our roads or parks. It connects people to jobs, school, doctors, and opportunity. We should be making it more affordable and reliable, not harder to use.

I urge you to REJECT Bill 54. Please protect affordable transit for all O'ahu residents.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Phitsamay Sinhvongsa	psinhvongsa@kkv.net	96819
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Jan 27, 2026 @ 02:01 PM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
cheryl burghardt	burgharc@gmail.com	96817

Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Jan 27, 2026 @ 02:27 PM
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Testimony:

Honolulu City Council

OPPOSITION to Bill 54

(Fare Increase for TheBus & TheHandi-Van)

Hearing Date: Wednesday, January 28th, 10:00 AM

Aloha Chair Waters, Vice Chair Tupola, and Council Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I strongly OPPOSE Bill 54, which would raise fares for TheBus and TheHandi-Van. This increase will hurt the people in our community who can least afford it: low-income families, kūpuna, people with disabilities, and all who depend on public transit.

At a time when Hawai'i's cost of living is already too high, raising transit fares will only make things harder. For a family of four using bus passes, this could mean paying nearly 30% more per year than just a few years ago. Many bus riders have low incomes—over 1 in 5 have household incomes under \$20,000—and more than half don't have a car at home. For them, the bus isn't a choice; it's a necessity.

Our hale often uses public transit. It is one of the reasons that we live downtown in the Nuuanu area. There is easy access to most places on Oahu. In my building, just on my floor at Queen Emma Gardens Apartments, there are at least 3 families that make use of the Handi-Van and others, like us use the regular bus. One of the 3 families does not have a vehicle of their own. I am grateful for the senior bus option as it is convenient but also allows spending \$ on other necessities. In the past, our hale rode from town to Waipahu on bus E for work. It is an example of why the bus is important and why any increase is going to affect our working community.

There have to be other options for financing the bus without increasing the fares. It seems extreme but ridership and funds might increase if there was a tax on vehicles that went directly to public transport? Businesses, people could be rewarded for using public transportation in some way that would motivate the use of bus and rail? Perhaps the city council and state legislators could set an example by using public transportation? I know there are a few that do which gives them insight into the issues that others can not understand. Another idea could be areas of differing prices as they do in Japan? On that, Kyoto bus fares have not risen from 230 yen in many years. Have we explored other cities and areas for how they meet their community's transport needs without huge fee raises?

I urge you to REJECT Bill 54. Please protect affordable transit for all O'ahu residents and look at long-term possibilities. We can.

Mahalo for your consideration.

C. Burghardt		
Name:	Email:	Zip:
Daisha Mahealani Ramos	daisha.ramos@rcoh.org	96707
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Responsive Caregivers of Hawaii	Oppose	Jan 27, 2026 @ 02:49 PM
Testimony: Oppose Bill 54 (Fair Increase for TheBus & TheHandi-Van) Honolulu City Council OPPOSITION to Bill 54 Hearing Date: Wednesday, January 28th, 10:00 a.m. Aloha Chair Waters, Vice Chair Tupola, and Council Members, Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I strongly OPPOSE BILL 54, which would raise fares for TheBus and TheHandi-Van as this increase will financially hurt the people in our community. Hawaii expenses are sky-rocketing and our people, families, loved ones, kupuna, persons with disabilities, and all who depend on public transit will have to bear the additional cumbersome load to their livelihood. Being able to afford and maintain financial stability in Hawaii is an ongoing situation for many across the state. As we strive to keep up with Hawaii's uprising costs, it is nearly impossible at this point. TheBus and TheHandi-Van transportation are part of everyone's daily life and purpose. The increase in fares would make it more of a burden in people's lives. For instance, people that use TheBus and TheHandi-Van transportation daily to get to their jobs and back home, doctor's appointments, meetings, etc. Many do not have their own vehicles and rely on TheBus heavily just to make it to work and receive their income. Not to mention, teenagers and youth's that catch TheBus to and from school. This will be a major impact to our people in the community financially. There are a lot of people that are just trying to make a living and survive. We do not need anymore additional increase in costs. Our participants (adults with disabilities) that we serve receive \$75 a month for personal allowance. They already spend so much on necessities that include, personal hygiene supplies, sometimes medication co-pays, clothing, and out of pocket expenses. Although some of our participants attend our Adult Day Health Program which shoulders the transportation fees like Handi-Van tickets, it will also affect other agencies that uses Handi-Van transportation daily. This will hinder many individuals with disabilities from their independence and limiting their access for transportation. Public transportation is a crucial, essential, and beneficial service that our community relies on. Therefore, we should be making it more affordable and reliable, not harder to use. It should be a beneficial resource for our people to easily have access to without worrying about costly fees. I urge you to REJECT Bill 52. Please protect affordable transit for all O'ahu residents.		

Mahalo for your consideration.

Name:

Raymond Mamea

Email:

raymondmamea75@gmail.com

Zip:

96706

Representing:

Self

Position:

Oppose

Submitted:

Jan 27, 2026 @ 03:17 PM

Testimony:

I Raymond Mamea as a person who has a developmental disability does not want the cost to ride the Handivan to increase. i oppose this bill.

Name:

Adrian Tam

Email:

reptam@capitol.hawaii.gov

Zip:

96815

Representing:

Self

Position:

Oppose

Submitted:

Jan 27, 2026 @ 07:19 PM

Testimony:

I oppose the propose bus fare increase. It baffles me that the City and County is considering this. The City and County of Honolulu will do everything to raise costs for working people instead of going after vacant and empty homes that are NOT being utilized. We already faced an increase in our sewer fees, and now the Council is going support a bill that would increase bus fares for people going to work or buy groceries? Unreal.

Name:

Nicole Balidoy

Email:

nbalidoy26@punahou.edu

Zip:

96782

Representing:

Self

Position:

Oppose

Submitted:

Jan 27, 2026 @ 08:09 PM

Testimony:

Hi, I'm Nicole Balidoy from Pearl City. As someone who has taken the bus to school since 9th grade, I find this bill to be quite unfair to youth who depend on public transit on a daily basis. I personally do not think raising fares will promote using the rail and bus, given that many of us are full-time students who do not have a stable income, assuming we are employed. If we are trying to make Hawaii habitable for those who live here, we should also prioritize equitable ways for people to get to their jobs and their kids to school so they can continue to afford rent at the new condominiums. Please consider this, and if you have time, possibly refer to a resolution passed by the Youth Commission in 2025, condemning the increase in bus fares, which passed unanimously. Thank you.

Name:

Topher George

Email:

Colorbirmeduse@gmail.com

Zip:

96801

Representing:

Self

Position:

Oppose

Submitted:

Jan 27, 2026 @ 08:36 PM

Testimony:

Few things can harm a city in as many ways as raising public transit costs can.

Public transportation is a lifeline to so many, including working-class and low-income families that can't afford a personal vehicle. Raising fares would take money directly out of the pockets of the people who have the least.

That's money that should be going to other things those people need like food, housing, and healthcare; at a time in which costs for those essentials are reaching new extremes - and are only expected to get worse.

No matter how small the change may be, it will add up over time.

One of the most prominent incentives to riding public transit over a personal vehicle is its affordability. Increasing the price obviously decreases affordability, decreasing public incentive to ride public transit.

We've seen how many people ride public transportation when it's fast, accessible, and affordable. Just look as recently as the opening weekend of Skyline segment 2! Fares were made free, and trains were consistently packed from the first car to the last.

Raising transit fare would only do harm to the general public. To your constituents. And for that reason, I urge you not to let this bill pass. Thank you.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Mariel Limos	marielglimos@gmail.com	96817
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Jan 27, 2026 @ 08:39 PM

Testimony:

Honolulu City Council

OPPOSITION to Bill 54

Hearing Date: Wednesday, January 28, 10:00 AM

Aloha Chair Waters, Vice Chair Tupola, and Council Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony. My name is Mariel, and I am writing as a community member who has relied on public transportation for most of my life. I grew up in Liliha using TheBus with my mom to get groceries, commuting to school, and now continuing to depend on it to get to work. For my family and many others in our community, public transit is essential to daily life.

I strongly oppose Bill 54, which would increase fares for TheBus and TheHandi Van. This proposal would place an added

financial burden on those who already face the greatest challenges, including low income families, kūpuna, people with disabilities, and working residents who rely on public transportation because they do not have access to a car.

Hawai'i's cost of living continues to rise, and even small increases can have a significant impact on households living paycheck to paycheck. Raising transit fares forces families to make difficult choices between transportation and basic needs such as food, rent, and healthcare. For those who depend on monthly bus passes, these increases quickly add up and create additional financial stress.

Fare increases also affect the broader community. Higher costs discourage ridership, leading to more cars on the road, increased traffic congestion, and greater environmental impact. Past fare increases have shown that when transit becomes less affordable, fewer people are able to use it.

Public transportation is a vital public service that connects people to jobs, education, medical care, and opportunity. It should remain accessible and affordable for the people who need it most. Rather than raising fares, the City should focus on strengthening and supporting our transit system.

I respectfully urge you to reject Bill 54 and protect affordable public transportation for all O'ahu residents.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Grace Pu	gpu26@punahou.edu	96821
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Jan 27, 2026 @ 08:42 PM

Testimony:

Aloha Chair Waters, Vice Chair Tupola, and Council Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I strongly OPPOSE Bill 54, which would raise fares for TheBus and TheHandi-Van. The price hike will prove most detrimental to the most vulnerable people in our community, including low-income families, kūpuna, and people with disabilities.

My name is Grace Pu, and I am from Niu Valley. Last summer, I used TheBus every morning in order to get to and from my internship downtown. My parents' inflexible hours made TheBus my only source of transportation.

For some, TheBus may be their only form of transportation all year round. Many bus riders have low incomes, and half of those with low incomes don't own a personal vehicle of their own. TheBus is critical for them to go about their daily lives.

As a strong student advocate for sustainability, I believe that TheBus is also important when considering our reduction of greenhouse gases. The Aloha+ Challenge is Hawaii's commitment to achieving Hawaii's social, economic, and

environmental goals by 2030. I believe the price increase for TheBus fares will prove detrimental to our goals for Clean Energy Transformation. Our average fuel use is currently at the “Needs Improvement” status, and increasing TheBus fares will discourage riders who may use personal vehicles instead of public transportation, likely increasing our petroleum use.

I urge you to REJECT Bill 54. Please protect affordable transit for all O’ahu residents.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Name: Jethro Bumanglag	Email: bumanglagjethro@gmail.com	Zip: 96797
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Jan 27, 2026 @ 08:57 PM

Testimony:

Aloha Chair Waters, Vice Chair Tupola, and Council Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I strongly OPPOSE Bill 54, which would raise fares for TheBus and TheHandi-Van. As someone whose family members rely on public transportation, this increase will hurt members in our community, especially low-income families and students

Hawai’i’s cost of living is already too high, and raising transit fares will only make things harder. For a family of four using bus passes, this could mean paying nearly 30% more per year than just a few years ago. Many bus riders are low income. In fact, over 1 in 5 have household incomes under \$20,000, and more than half don’t have a car at home.

Raising transit fares force people to make choices between transportation and basic needs. In addition, it also pushes people away from public transportation, resulting in traffic and pollution. History shows that fare hikes reduce ridership. TheBus has raised fares twice in the last five years, and that’s part of why ridership hasn’t fully recovered since the pandemic.

Public transportation is an essential service, like our roads or parks. It connects people to jobs, school, doctors, and opportunity. We should be making it more affordable and reliable, not harder to use.

I urge you to REJECT Bill 54. Please protect affordable transit for all O’ahu residents.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Jethro Bumanglag

Name: Kate Ozawa	Email: katie.ozawa@gmail.com	Zip: 96789
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:

Self	Oppose	Jan 27, 2026 @ 08:58 PM
Testimony: Past a certain point, when you keep raising prices to use public transportation, you can't really keep calling it public transportation anymore.		
Name: Nixon Lee	Email: nixonlee21@gmail.com	Zip: 96816
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Jan 27, 2026 @ 09:56 PM
Testimony: Good morning Chair Waters, Vice Chair Tupola, and Council Members Mahalo for the opportunity to testify today. As a recent college graduate now working at one of Hawai'i's leading financial institutions, I am writing to express my strong opposition to Bill 54. In my daily professional life, I look at the "bottom line"—but when it comes to our community, the bottom line is that our neighbors are struggling. Bill 54 proposes fare increases for TheBus and TheHandi-Van that would disproportionately impact those with the least financial flexibility: our low-income families, kūpuna, and the disability community. From a financial health perspective, this increase is a significant hit to household stability: Cost Overload: For a family of four, we are looking at a potential 30% increase in transportation costs compared to just a few years ago. In a state where the cost of living is already a primary driver of out-migration, this is a step in the wrong direction. The Necessity Gap: Over 20% of bus riders live in households earning under \$20,000 annually. For these residents, the bus isn't a luxury; it's an essential link to the jobs that keep our economy running. Economic Friction: History shows that fare hikes create a "diminishing return" effect. By making transit more expensive, we risk lowering ridership, increasing traffic congestion, and ultimately hurting the productivity of our workforce. Again as a young professional just starting my career here, I want to see a Hawai'i that is accessible and sustainable. Public transit is a critical piece of our infrastructure—just like the roads our bank's armored trucks use or the parks our families enjoy. We should be investing in making these services more affordable to ensure O'ahu remains a place where everyone can afford to live and work. I respectfully urge you to REJECT Bill 54 and protect affordable transit for all O'ahu residents.		

Mahalo for your time and for your service to our community.

Name: Jared Tsuchiyama-Sando	Email: Jaredtsuchiyama@gmail.com	Zip: 96818
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Jan 27, 2026 @ 10:27 PM

Testimony:

I oppose raising public transit fares-something that many fixed income individuals rely on- at a time when cost of living is a prime concern.

Name: Juliana Ysabelle Solar	Email: julianassolar@gmail.com	Zip: 96706
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Jan 27, 2026 @ 10:47 PM

Testimony:

Aloha Chair Waters, Vice Chair Tupola, and Council Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I strongly OPPOSE Bill 54, which would raise fares for TheBus and TheHandi-Van. This increase will hurt the people in our community who can least afford it: low-income families, kūpuna, people with disabilities, and all who depend on public transit.

At a time when Hawai'i's cost of living is already too high, raising transit fares will only make things harder. For a family of four using bus passes, this could mean paying nearly 30% more per year than just a few years ago. Many bus riders have low incomes—over 1 in 5 have household incomes under \$20,000—and more than half don't have a car at home. For them, the bus isn't a choice; it's a necessity.

Making transit more expensive hurts everyone. It forces people to make impossible choices between transportation and other basics. It can also push people away from the bus, leading to more cars on the road, worse traffic, and more pollution. History shows that fare hikes reduce ridership. TheBus has raised fares twice in the last five years, and that's part of why ridership hasn't fully recovered since the pandemic.

Public transportation is an essential service, like our roads or parks. It connects people to jobs, school, doctors, and opportunity. We should be making it more affordable and reliable, not harder to use.

I urge you to REJECT Bill 54. Please protect affordable transit for all O'ahu residents.

As a sophomore at James Campbell high school, taking the bus is my form of transportation. It is my way of traveling to school and back to home. I've been commuting to places via bus for a long time now. Some of my earlier childhood experiences occurred all because of taking the bus. With the rising cost of the bus, the affordability makes it less available for other passengers which increases the issue of transportation. It is significant to me that prices don't increase,

especially with living in an expensive city.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Name:

Alyssa Salcedo

Email:

afosalcedo@gmail.com

Zip:

96797

Representing:

Self

Position:

Oppose

Submitted:

Jan 27, 2026 @ 11:19 PM

Testimony:

Aloha Chair Waters, Vice Chair Tupola, and Council Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Alyssa Salcedo. I strongly OPPOSE Bill 54, which would raise fares for TheBus and TheHandi-Van. This increase will hurt the people in our community who can least afford it: low-income families, kūpuna, people with disabilities, and all who depend on public transit.

During my time as a UH Mānoa student, I maximized my use of the UPASS, commuting to campus for 1.5 to 2 hours each way from my home in Waipi'o, a community with limited bus routes heading to town. For a class starting at 9:00 am, it would mean waking up at 5:30 and taking the Express bus at 6:20 am, if it means not getting caught up in the worst of traffic.

Hawai'i's cost of living is already too high; raising transit fares will only make things harder. For a family of four using bus passes, this could mean paying nearly 30% more per year than just a few years ago. Many bus riders have low incomes—over 1 in 5 have household incomes under \$20,000—and more than half don't have a car at home. For them, the bus isn't a choice; it's a necessity. This is especially true for students or others who do not have a driver's license. Some may argue that ride-sharing is a valid alternative, yet these services can be extremely expensive. I once took an Uber from my house to Kalihi Valley during rush hour, costing me \$39.95 — a cost that could have been reduced by over 90% had I decided to take the bus instead for \$3.00.

Making transit more expensive hurts everyone. It forces people to make impossible choices between transportation and other basics. It can also push people away from the bus, leading to more cars on the road, worse traffic, and more pollution. History shows that fare hikes reduce ridership. TheBus has raised fares twice in the last five years, and that's part of why ridership hasn't fully recovered since the pandemic.

Public transportation is an essential service, like our roads or parks. It connects people to jobs, school, doctors, and opportunity. We should be making it more affordable and reliable, not harder to use. This infrastructure is essential to connect key parts of the island to Downtown Honolulu, which serves as the main economic and social center of the island. Take, for example, the kids commuting from Waianae to attend classes at Farrington High School in Kalihi or aunties commuting from the North Shore to work in Waikiki hotels. When fare rates increase, it adds another barrier for O'ahu

residents to access career opportunities and more that they deserve.

Additionally, cutting down the free transfer window from two and a half hours to two hours hurts commuters like me who already find it difficult to get to town. It may be like making a small decision between getting that pre-work coffee or breakfast, which may seem like a small deal, but impacts work performance, productivity, and health. I can personally attest to finding myself horribly fatigued after a long bus ride in the morning.

I urge you to please REJECT Bill 54. Please protect affordable transit for all O’ahu residents.

Mahalo for your consideration!

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Cristina Vocalan	cvocalan@gmail.com	96789
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Jan 28, 2026 @ 12:14 AM

Testimony:
Oppose Bill 54
(Fare Increase for TheBus & TheHandi-Van)

Honolulu City Council
OPPOSITION to Bill 54
Hearing Date: Wednesday, January 28th, 10:00 AM

Aloha Chair Waters, Vice Chair Tupola, and Council Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I strongly OPPOSE Bill 54, which would raise fares for TheBus and TheHandi-Van. This increase will hurt the people in our community who can least afford it: low-income families, kūpuna, people with disabilities, and all who depend on public transit.

I am a nurse and have spent most of my career working in community health. We know that transportation is a major barrier to getting care and services. Please don't put up yet another barrier.

At a time when Hawai'i's cost of living is already too high, raising transit fares will only make things harder. For a family of four using bus passes, this could mean paying nearly 30% more per year than just a few years ago. Many bus riders have low incomes—over 1 in 5 have household incomes under \$20,000—and more than half don't have a car at home. For them, the bus isn't a choice; it's a necessity.

Making transit more expensive hurts everyone. It forces people to make impossible choices between transportation and

other basics. It can also push people away from the bus, leading to more cars on the road, worse traffic, and more pollution. History shows that fare hikes reduce ridership. TheBus has raised fares twice in the last five years, and that's part of why ridership hasn't fully recovered since the pandemic.

Public transportation is an essential service, like our roads or parks. It connects people to jobs, school, doctors, and opportunity. We should be making it more affordable and reliable, not harder to use.

I urge you to REJECT Bill 54. Please protect affordable transit for all O'ahu residents. This is not the time to make these increases.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Cristina Vocalan

Registered Nurse, caregiver, mom, and community health advocate

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Justin Menina	jmenina77@gmail.com	96826
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Jan 28, 2026 @ 04:20 AM
Testimony:		
Strongly oppose		

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Gloria Spondike	wanaele@gmail.com	96826
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Jan 28, 2026 @ 05:25 AM

Testimony:

Within the City of Honolulu, affordable public transit is essential for access to jobs, school, health care, and daily necessities. I strongly oppose the fare increases proposed in Bill 54. Raising transit fares will price riders off the system. Transit research and real-world experience show that fare hikes reduce ridership and push more people to drive, increasing traffic congestion, pollution, and parking demand. This directly undermines the City's investments in Skyline and its climate and equity goals. We should be encouraging more people to ride transit with reliable service and fair prices, not penalizing those who depend on it the most. I respectfully urge you to reject the fare increases in Bill 54 and pursue funding strategies that protect riders and grow transit use.

Sincerely,

Gloria Spondike

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Shelby Pikachu Billionaire	presidentbillionaire@gmail.com	96792

Representing: Ohana unity party	Position: Support	Submitted: Jan 28, 2026 @ 06:20 AM
Testimony: ### Pros and Cons Analysis of Bill 3 (2026) – Relating to Incentives for Affordable Rental Housing Based on available legislative records and summaries from the Honolulu City Council website, the document ID 26898 corresponds to Bill 3 (2026), introduced in early January 2026. The bill amends Revised Ordinances of Honolulu (ROH) Chapter 32, Articles 4 and 5, by revising the amounts for post-construction grants and pre-construction subsidies that project owners may receive for affordable rental housing projects. This likely involves adjusting (possibly increasing) the financial incentives to encourage more development of rental units targeted at low- and moderate-income households (e.g., 80% of area median income or below). The change aims to make the program more attractive to developers amid O’ahu’s housing shortage. My analysis incorporates the bill’s summary, Honolulu’s housing context (e.g., 20,000+ unit deficit per state reports), fiscal implications from similar programs, and public feedback from council discussions and news sources like Civil Beat. I evaluated benefits to housing supply, economic impacts, costs, and alignment with city priorities. #### Pros: - Boosts Affordable Housing Supply: Revising subsidy amounts (likely upward) makes it more viable for developers to build affordable rentals, addressing O’ahu’s crisis where median rents exceed \$2,500/month. Similar incentive adjustments have increased unit production in past years, helping low-income families and reducing homelessness. - Economic Stimulation: Enhanced grants and subsidies can stimulate construction jobs and local economy, with ROI through reduced social costs (e.g., \$20K+ per homeless person annually per HUD estimates). This supports the City’s Consolidated Plan for housing. - Targeted Incentives: By focusing on post- and pre-construction phases, the bill encourages completion and maintenance of units, building on successful models in other cities. - Low Administrative Overhead: Adjustments to existing programs avoid new bureaucracy, fitting within FY26 budget allocations for housing. #### Cons: - Increased City Costs: Higher subsidy amounts could strain budgets, potentially requiring more funding from general revenues or fees, amid ongoing expenses like sewer upgrades. - Risk of Inefficiency: If not capped or monitored, subsidies might benefit larger developers disproportionately, with limited units for the truly needy if enforcement is weak. - Short-Term Focus: Adjustments may not address root causes like zoning or land costs, risking dependency on incentives. Overall, the pros outweigh the cons. The bill provides a timely boost to affordable housing incentives in a high-demand		

market, with economic and social benefits justifying the costs. It's a net positive for community stability.

Testimony in Support of Bill 3 (2026) – Relating to Incentives for Affordable Rental Housing

Submitted to: Honolulu City Council

From: Master Shelby "Pikachu" Billionaire, HRM

Kingdom of The Hawaiian Islands, H.I.

Chairman, Ohana Unity Party

Website: www.Ohanaunityparty.com

Email: Presidentbillionaire@gmail.com

Date: January 28, 2026

Position: SUPPORT

Honorable Chair Tommy Waters and Members of the Honolulu City Council,

I am writing in strong support of Bill 3 (2026), which amends Revised Ordinances of Honolulu Chapter 32, Articles 4 and 5, by revising the post-construction grant and pre-construction subsidy amounts for affordable rental housing projects. This legislation represents a strategic enhancement to existing incentives, making it more feasible for developers to create and maintain rental units for low- and moderate-income households.

O'ahu's housing affordability crisis continues to impact thousands of families, with escalating rents and a significant shortage of accessible units. By adjusting these subsidy amounts, the bill will encourage greater private-sector participation in affordable housing development, leading to an increased supply of stable homes and reduced pressure on social services. Such measures have proven effective in stimulating economic growth through job creation in construction and related sectors, while delivering long-term savings by addressing homelessness and housing instability.

This targeted revision aligns with the City's housing priorities as outlined in the Consolidated Plan 2026–2030, without introducing new administrative burdens or excessive costs. It embodies a collaborative approach to building a more equitable community, ensuring that our ohana has access to dignified and affordable living options.

I respectfully urge the Council to advance Bill 3 (2026) and to consider ongoing monitoring to maximize its impact.

Thank you for your commitment to responsible and inclusive governance.

Sincerely,

Master Shelby "Pikachu" Billionaire, HRM

Kingdom of The Hawaiian Islands, H.I.

Chairman, Ohana Unity Party

****Contact Information****

Website: www.Ohanaunityparty.com

Email: Presidentbillionaire@gmail.com

Social Media:

Facebook @Keiki'okalani

Instagram @Ohanaunityparty | @Legendarybillionaire

X @Ohanaunityparty | @AmericanPartyOG

****Support Our Work****

YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/@theXXXfiles>

Venmo: @Presidentbillionaire

CashApp: \$ShelbyBillionaire

BTC Wallet: 1sRfKDphW18hojoyTQVy9qQVSUtQgahYwj

Mahalo nui loa for your leadership in fostering a thriving future for Honolulu.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Trevor Nagamine	tnagamine.nb25@gmail.com	96789
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Jan 28, 2026 @ 08:17 AM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Jacob Shearer	shearer.jacob@outlook.com	96816
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	I wish to comment	Jan 28, 2026 @ 08:23 AM

Testimony:

Aloha nui no kakou,

I am submitting a comment as a person who has recently decided to start using the bus instead of driving for my daily commute. Part of my decision was that, although my commute times would lengthen and I would sacrifice a certain amount of convenience that comes with driving, I would be saving money long-term. I can understand the reason for raising fares to keep up with inflation, but as regular people's income often does not also rise with inflation, this increase is a disincentive for those of us who are trying to make public transportation a regular part of our lives.

Me ka ha'aha'a,

Jacob Shearer

Name:	Email:	Zip:
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Naomi Kahaanaoi	daisha.amos@rcoh.org	96707
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Jan 28, 2026 @ 09:01 AM
Testimony: Aloha, my name is Naomi. Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I am a program participant of Responsive Caregivers of Hawaii. I am an adult with disabilities (ADHD, Autistic) and I strongly OPPOSE Bill 54 because I ride TheBus transit to get to places and go on community outings. This increase will affect me personally because I will not have the funds to do things that is important to me. I am currently in a workforce program and one of my main transportations will be the Handi-Van and with the prices increasing, I will not be able to balance my work life/personal life simply because I cannot afford anymore expenses. Both TheBus and the Handi-Van is my only transportation. Public Transportation is part of my daily life and the increase will limit me from all my opportunities and potential. I urge you to REJECT BILL 54. Mahalo for your consideration, Naomi		
Name: Tabitha Ross	Email: daisha.amos@gmail.com	Zip: 96707
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Jan 28, 2026 @ 09:10 AM
Testimony: Aloha and thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Tabitha Ross and I am an adult with developmental disabilities. I am a regular Handi-Van rider therefore, I strongly OPPOSE Bill 54. This is disappointing because I have goals on saving money and not having a hard time paying for extra costs. I have goals I would like to achieve. I am independent and capable on using public transportation and it is part of my care plan too. I am in the process of being employed with my first time ever job and using the Handi-Van is my only transportation to get to work and back home. I do not want to be struggling just to get to work just because I do not have enough funds to last me a month. I urge you to REJECT Bill 54. Mahalo, Tabitha		
Name: Angela Melody Young	Email: Alohadivinedesign@gmail.com	Zip: 96817
Representing: CARES Community Advocacy Research Education Services	Position: I wish to comment	Submitted: Jan 28, 2026 @ 09:22 AM
Testimony: Wishing to comment, if there is a way to create classifications of payment to target higher income individuals such as		

tourist and lower payment collected for locals & low income individuals.

Since the opening of the Skyline, Kalihi station several of my co-workers who live in the Westside started using it to come to work in Kalihi. That saves them time and money. I also know several friends that work at Waikiki and now take the bus and transferring to the Skyline at Kalihi station as a means of transportation to work and back home in the west side.

On two occasions, youth from one of our programs brought their bikes and rode the Skyline all the way to Kapolei, spent time riding out in that community, took their late lunch and rode back home in Kalihi. The youth enjoyed the experience, learning the name of the different stations, enjoying the view of the island and being able to go to the west side with their bikes.

These two stories speak of how the Skyline was helpful in encouraging people to use public transportation for work and providing ways for young people and others to explore the island for their own health and mental wellbeing.

With the fare increases proposed in Bill 54, it will decrease ridership and diminish Skyline's purpose and services that intended.

Moreover, people are already struggling to make ends meet, there has been increase the cost of basic needs like food, the water bills, etc. If you add to these increasing costs, people will suffer more.

I respectfully urge you to reject this fare increase. Thank you.



HAWAI'I APPLESEED CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

**Testimony for Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice
Opposition for Bill 54
Honolulu City Council
Wednesday, January 28th at 10:00AM**

Aloha Chair Waters and Vice Chair Tupola,

Mahalo for the opportunity to express **OPPOSITION** to Bill 54, which proposes to raise fares for TheBus and TheHandi-Van riders. Hawai'i Appleseed strongly opposes this measure because it will disproportionately harm low-income families, kūpuna, people with disabilities, and other residents who rely most heavily on public transit.

At a time when our community is already struggling with Hawai'i's high cost of living, raising transit fares will only deepen inequities. If Bill 54 is adopted, families of four on O'ahu (assuming two adults and two youth) will pay \$2,970 in annual transit passes—nearly 29 percent more than 2021 costs. Based on a 2021–2022 survey conducted by DTS, 21 percent of TheBus riders had a household annual income of less than \$20,000, and 71 percent had a household income of less than \$60,000.¹ Survey results also showed that 54 percent of TheBus riders did not have a vehicle at home and 53 percent did not have a driver's license.²



TheBus Fare Increases For a Family of Four, 2021–2025 (Bill 54, Proposed)

Transit fare hikes don't just hurt individuals—they undermine our city's economic and climate goals. Affordable and reliable public

¹ Department of Transportation Services, 2025 Public Transit Title VI Program, City and County of Honolulu, accessed September 2025.

<https://www4.honolulu.gov/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-352782/Final%202025%20DTS%20Public%20Transit%20TVI%20Program%20Report%20%20-%202008-2025.pdf>

² Ibid.

transportation is a lifeline that connects residents to jobs, education, health care, and opportunity. Making transit more expensive will reduce ridership, increase reliance on cars, and add to traffic and carbon emissions.

For example, in 2019, former DTS Director Wes Frysztacki informed the Honolulu Rate Commission that for every 10 percent increase in fare, there is a 3 percent decline in ridership.³ Nevertheless, Honolulu's TheBus has increased its fares twice within the last five years, which has likely contributed to its slow post-COVID ridership recovery. This steady increase in transit fares continues a long and unfortunate legacy of regressive taxes that hurt low-income residents the most.

In summary, Hawai'i Appleseed urges the Council to reject Bill 54. Public transportation should be treated as an essential public good, not a luxury. Protecting affordable fares is key to ensuring that all O'ahu residents—especially those with the fewest resources—can continue to rely on transit to meet their daily needs.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.



Abbey Seitz

Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice
Director of Transportation Equity

³ Honore, Marcel, "Honolulu Traffic Is Terrible. So Why Aren't More People Riding TheBus?" Honolulu Civil Beat, November 18, 2019.
<https://www.civilbeat.org/2019/11/honolulu-traffic-is-terrible-so-why-arent-more-people-riding-thebus/>.

Aloha e Chair Waters, Vice Chair Tupola, and Council Members,

My name is Hollie Rader, and I respectfully submit testimony in **opposition** to House Bill 54.

Growing up, I would take the bus with my grandma from Waipahu into town to help her run her errands. Today, I still rely on public transportation as a master's student, and that is why I am deeply concerned about the impacts of HB 54 on affordability, equity, and ridership on O'ahu.

Everyone knows that Hawai'i faces an affordability crisis. Many families struggle to afford housing, food, and basic transportation, and as a result, they leave O'ahu altogether. It is tiring to see family and friends leave and increasing transit fares and shortening transfer times would only add to this burden.

HB 54 would also worsen existing challenges within the transit system. Riders already face difficulties due to limited transfer times, and shortening them further would make multi-leg commutes more expensive and stressful. The removal of paper transfers has already caused problems for riders like myself who forget or lose their HOLO cards; thus, forcing us to pay additional fares that we cannot always afford. At the same time, O'ahu still lacks basic rider conveniences that exist in many major cities, such as tap-to-pay with mobile phones or digital transit cards. It is unreasonable to ask riders to pay more with the way the system currently is.

The City has already recognized the need for affordable transit through the Low Income Transit Fare Program, which is currently in effect. HB 54 would weaken this effort by raising fares and offsetting the limited relief the program provides. In addition, the Legislature is actively considering Senate Bill 2994, which would pilot free public transit for youth and aligns with national trends toward fare-free or reduced-fare access. If the City were to move forward with increases at this time, it would create policy inconsistency and undermine the goal of keeping transportation accessible for all.

While I understand the desire to increase revenue, HB 54 moves O'ahu in the wrong direction. True investment in our communities is improving service, completing the rail, expanding access, and keeping fares affordable. It is not placing additional financial strain on riders who already have few alternatives. For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to oppose House Bill 54 and instead pursue policies that genuinely advance affordability for O'ahu.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Hollie S. Rader
Waipahu, HI 96797



Email: communications@ulupono.com

HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL
Tuesday, January 28, 2026 — 10:00 A.M.

Ulupono Initiative offers comments on Bill 54(25) CD2, Relating to Public Transit

Dear Chair Waters and Members of the Council:

My name is Micah Munekata, and I am the Vice President of Government Affairs at Ulupono Initiative. We are a Hawai'i-focused impact investment firm that strives to improve the quality of life throughout the islands by helping our communities become more resilient and self-sufficient through locally produced food, renewable energy and clean transportation choices, and better management of freshwater resources.

Ulupono offers comments on Bill 54(25) CD2, which updates and amends certain sections of Chapter 15B, Revised Ordinances of Honolulu 2021, as they pertain to the fare structure of O'ahu's Multimodal Municipal Transportation System.

Ulupono respectfully requests the Council to reconsider the proposed fare increases for public transit services. Increasing fares will likely offset ridership gains forthcoming from the opening of Phase 2 of Skyline (both new stations and expanded hours) and increased bus service.

Past reports suggest for every 10% increase in fare, TheBus generally sees [a 3% decline in ridership](#).¹ Absent updated analysis, we remain concerned that, although this aims to simplify the fare structure (one fare policy goal) and address rising costs, it does not support another important fare policy goal of increasing ridership. This could undermine both revenue goals and the broader objectives of expanded public transportation access. It is possible that some of these issues have been explored more recently since the Rate Commission's deliberations, but it is unclear if those have been shared more broadly or could be addressed during this bill's deliberation.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,
Micah Munekata
Vice President, Government Affairs

¹<https://www.civilbeat.org/2019/11/honolulu-traffic-is-terrible-so-why-arent-more-people-riding-thebus/>



HIPHI Board

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Hawai'i Drug & Alcohol-Free Coalitions

Hawai'i Immunization Coalition

Hawai'i Oral Health Coalition

Hawai'i Public Health Training Hui

Healthy Eating + Active Living

Kūpuna Collective/Healthy Aging &
Community Living

Public Health Workforce Development

Date: January 27, 2026

To: Tommy Waters, Chair
Andria Tupola, Vice Chair
Members of the Honolulu City Council

RE: Strong Opposition for Bill 54 (2025) CD2 RELATING TO PUBLIC TRANSIT

Hrg: January 28th, 2026 at 10:00 AM in City Council Chamber

Hawai'i Public Health Institute (HIPHI)¹ and the Healthy Eating + Active Living² (HEAL) Statewide Coalition is in strong opposition to Bill 54 (2025) CD2, which would increase fares for public transit.

Public transportation is essential in Honolulu, serving thousands of residents—including low-income workers, kūpuna, students, people with disabilities, and paratransit users. For many, transit is not a choice but a necessity. Lower-income and disadvantaged travelers are more affected by fare and price changes, due to transit costs consuming a larger share of their limited budgets³. Raising fares places the greatest burden on those who already have the fewest options, and even modest increases can quickly add up for people who rely on TheBus or TheHandi-Van every day.

Increasing fares risks pushing people away from the transit system. Research shows that for every 10% transit fare increase, agencies typically lose about 3-5% of riders in the next few years, and up to around 10-20% over time as people adjust². Lower ridership forces more residents into private vehicles, worsening traffic congestion, increasing demand for parking, and raising greenhouse gas emissions. These outcomes

¹ Hawai'i Public Health Institute's mission is to advance health and wellness for the people and islands of Hawai'i. We do this through expanding our understanding of what creates health of people and place, fostering partnerships, and cultivating programs to improve policies, systems, and the environments where people live, learn, work, age, and play.

² The Healthy Eating + Active Living (HEAL) Coalition, formerly known as the Obesity Prevention Task Force, was created by the legislature in 2012 and is comprised of over 60 statewide organizations. The HEAL Coalition works to make recommendations to reshape Hawai'i's school, work, community, and health care environments, making healthier lifestyles obtainable for all Hawai'i residents.

³ Litman, Todd. (2025). 'Understanding Transport Demands and Elasticities, How Prices and Other Factors Affect Travel Behavior'. Victoria Transport Institute. Available at <https://www.vtpi.org/elasticities.pdf>.



undermine our shared goals for sustainability, climate resilience, and mobility fair access.

Affordable public transit also supports active transportation and public health. People who use transit often walk or bike to and from bus stops, increasing daily physical activity, improving cardiovascular health, and reducing risks for obesity and chronic disease. Fare increases that discourage transit use may reduce these health benefits, particularly for kūpuna and low-income residents who rely on walking or rolling to access essential services.

Fare increases disproportionately impact low-income riders, kūpuna, people with disabilities, and paratransit users. Changes to fare structures or exemptions may unfairly affect those who rely on cash payments, caregivers, or those who lack access to banking or electronic payment. Transit policy should reduce barriers, not create new ones.

I urge the Council to reject Bill 54, CD2, and instead pursue sustainable funding solutions that ensure fair access to public transit. Affordable, accessible transportation benefits everyone in our community by reducing congestion, supporting healthy and active lifestyles, protecting the environment, and helping those who rely on transit the most.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this important measure.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nate Hix".

Nate Hix
Director of Policy and Advocacy

Bev Brody
Kauai
(808) 212-4765

January 27, 2026

Honolulu City Council
Testimony in Strong Opposition to Bill 54
Hearing Date: Wednesday, January 28, 10:00 AM

Aloha Chair Waters, Vice Chair Tupola, and Councilmembers,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I am writing in strong opposition to Bill 54, which would raise fares for TheBus and TheHandi-Van. This proposal would place the greatest burden on those who can least afford it: low-income families, kpuna, people with disabilities, and all residents who rely on public transit as an essential service.

Although I live on Kaua'i, I regularly use TheBus when I visit O'ahu. Every trip reminds me how vital affordable, reliable transit is for everyday mobility — not just for residents, but for anyone navigating the island without a car. When fares rise, the people who depend on transit most feel it first and hardest.

At a time when Hawaii's cost of living is already overwhelming, increasing transit fares will only deepen hardship. For a family of four using bus passes, this change could mean paying nearly 30% more per year compared to just a few years ago. More than one in five bus riders have household incomes under \$20,000, and over half do not have access to a car. For these riders, transit is not optional — it is their lifeline.

Raising fares harms the entire community. It forces people to choose between transportation and other basic needs. It also risks pushing riders away from transit, leading to more cars on the road, heavier traffic, and increased pollution. We have already seen the impact of fare hikes: TheBus has raised fares twice in the past five years, and ridership still has not fully recovered since the pandemic.

Public transportation is a core public service, just like our roads, parks, and schools. It connects people to jobs, education, medical care, and opportunity. We should be working to make transit more affordable and accessible — not less.

I respectfully urge you to reject Bill 54 and protect affordable, reliable transit for all Oahu residents.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Respectfully,
Bev Brody

Oppose Bill 54

(Fare Increase for TheBus & TheHandi-Van)

Honolulu City Council
OPPOSITION to Bill 54
Hearing Date: Wednesday, January 28th, 10:00 AM

Aloha Chair Waters, Vice Chair Tupola, and Council Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I strongly OPPOSE Bill 54, which would raise fares for TheBus and TheHandi-Van. This increase will hurt the people in our community who can least afford it: low-income families, kpuna, people with disabilities, and all who depend on public transit. I live in the Honolulu area and also depend on public transportation. Many of my clients depend on public transportation, like TheBus and TheHandi-Van.

At a time when Hawaii's cost of living is already too high, raising transit fares will only make things harder. For a family of four using bus passes, this could mean paying nearly 30% more per year than just a few years ago. Many bus riders have low incomes—over 1 in 5 have household incomes under \$20,000—and more than half don't have a car at home. And in many cases this is the same people whose incomes have not raised, over the last decade. For them, the bus isn't a choice; it's a necessity.

Making transit more expensive hurts everyone. It forces people to make impossible choices between transportation and other basics. It can also push people away from the bus, leading to more cars on the road, worse traffic, and more pollution. History shows that fare hikes reduce ridership. TheBus has raised fares twice in the last five years, and that's part of why ridership hasn't fully recovered since the pandemic.

Public transportation is an essential service, like our roads or parks. It connects people to jobs, school, doctors, and opportunity. We should be making it more affordable and reliable, not harder to use.

I urge you to REJECT Bill 54. Please protect affordable transit for all O'ahu residents.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Genesis Leong

Date: January 27, 2026

Aloha Honolulu City Council Committee Members,

I strongly oppose the proposed fare increases in Bill 54 and respectfully urge you to reject this measure. Raising transit fares will price riders out of the system and place additional hardship on those who rely on public transportation the most.

As a Community Health Worker serving Kalihi, I work closely with individuals and families who depend on TheBus as their primary mode of transportation. Many are immigrant families, minimum wage workers, and seniors under the age of 65 who do not qualify for senior fare discounts and live on fixed incomes such as Social Security or state benefits.

The families and individuals I assist already face difficult choices every day. A fare increase would force them to decide between getting to work, attending medical appointments, taking their children to school, purchasing medication, or putting food on the table. While this increase may appear minimal from a policy perspective, it would be financially burdensome for the people I serve.

Programs that help offset transportation costs are not a convenience; they are a lifeline. Affordable public transportation is directly linked to better employment outcomes, access to healthcare, and overall quality of life. Studies show that every \$1 invested in public transit returns approximately \$4 in economic and social benefits.

I urge the Honolulu City Council to reconsider any proposal to increase bus fares. Maintaining affordable transportation is essential to the wellbeing of our most vulnerable residents and to the overall health of our community. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony and for your consideration.

Mahalo

Phitsamay Sinhvongsa

Community Health Worker, Kalihi

Address: 2239 N. School Street Honolulu, HI 96819

Phone Number: (808) 791-9400

January 28, 2026

Trevor Nagamine
PO Box 37966
Honolulu, HI 96837
tnagamine.nb25@gmail.com

Councilmember Tommy Waters, Chair
Honolulu City Council
530 S. King St.
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: Bill 54 (2025) — Relating to Public Transit

Dear Chair Waters and Members of the City Council,

My name is Trevor Nagamine, and I am a resident of Mililani. I am also a member of Neighborhood Board No. 25 (Mililani/Waipio/Melemanu); however, I am submitting this testimony as an individual, and this testimony does not reflect an official position of Neighborhood Board No. 25. I am writing today to oppose Bill 54.

Bill 54 would increase fares to ride TheBus and Skyline. In particular, Bill 54 would reduce the transfer window for a single-ride fare from 2 ½ hours to 2 hours. This would effectively increase fares for occasional riders traveling to and from town from distant communities (such as Mililani, where I live). I submit that if the Council wishes to reduce the time for this transfer window, that the daily cap on fares paid be reduced to exactly twice the cost of a single-ride fare, instead of two-and-a-half times the cost of a single-ride fare.

I respectfully ask that the City Council defer Bill 54. Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Mahalo,

Trevor Nagamine