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HONOLULU POLICE DEPARTMENT
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OUR REFERENCE PB-SM

August 10, 2026

The Honorable Tommy Waters
Chair and Presiding Officer
and Members
Honolulu City Council
530 South King Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Chair Waters and Councilmembers:

SUBJECT: Honolulu City Council Bill No. 53, Relating to Shopping Carts

I am Major Paul Okamoto of District 6 (Waikīkī) of the Honolulu Police Department (HPD), City and County of Honolulu.

The HPD supports Honolulu City Council Bill No. 53, Relating to Shopping Carts.

Hawai'i is known for its natural beauty. We invite people from all over the world to come here to share in the appreciation of the splendor of our islands, and we all have an obligation to keep our communities free of signs of urban blight. The people that live here also have a right to clean and accessible public spaces. We must remain vigilant of urban decay and do what we can to maintain what is beautiful.

Abandoned shopping carts in our public spaces and people pushing them far away from commercial zones in residential areas are one indicator of that deterioration. Past legislative efforts have tried to focus on mandating technology to deter the removal of these carts from private property, but there is little to no consequence for the people committing the theft of these carts. Removing these carts from private property onto public property, exerting unauthorized control over the cart, appropriating it for your own use, and retaining it to deprive its owner of its use is theft. Retailers report a single cart costing several hundred dollars to replace, which ultimately is paid by the customers through higher prices. Retailers have little recourse, other than spending more resources to drive around and collect these unattended carts. Retrieving carts from people pushing them on our sidewalks and parks often leads to confrontation that businesses do not want.

DEPT. COM. 527(26) CCL

Many times, the carts have been defaced or covered in a way to make identification difficult, and the police department can do very little to conduct enforcement and return the carts to their rightful owners. Coordinating prosecution for possession of possible stolen carts is also very difficult for the police department for various operational reasons. Currently, the HPD assists in retrieving identifiable shopping carts through our Sidewalk Property Ordinance Programs and transports them to the Department of Facility Maintenance for return to the retailers without any penalty to the person found to be in possession of the stolen cart.

This theft continues to occur because there is no consequence for taking or being in unlawful possession of them. This bill will disincentivize this behavior and will improve the beauty and safety of our community spaces. I ask for your assistance in creating a way for our police officers to address this long-standing problem.

The HPD strongly urges you to support City Council Bill No. 53. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Paul Okamoto, Major
District 6

APPROVED:

David Lazar
Chief of Police