

BILL052(26)
Testimony

MISC. COMM. 370

COUNCIL

COUNCIL Meeting

Meeting Date: Sep 9, 2026 @ 10:00 AM

Support: 2

Oppose: 0

I wish to comment: 0

Name: Johnnie-Mae Perry	Email: waianaenb569@gmail.com	Zip: 96792
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Sep 2, 2026 @ 09:33 PM
Testimony: I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry, SUPPORT BILL052(26) RELATING TO STREETS, SIDEWALKS, MALLS, AND OTHER PUBLIC PLACES.		
Name: David Erdman	Email: derdman@rmhawaii.org	Zip: 96816
Representing: Retail Merchants of Hawaii	Position: Support	Submitted: Sep 8, 2026 @ 06:15 AM



September 9, 2026

10:00 a.m.

Honolulu City Council
City and County of Honolulu

**RE: Bill 52 (2026) — Relating to Streets, Sidewalks, Malls, and Other Public Places
CR-236(26) — Second Reading**

Position: SUPPORT

Chair Tommy Waters and Members of the Honolulu City Council:

Aloha. My name is David B. Erdman, Interim President & CEO of the Retail Merchants of Hawai'i (RMH). I am a Honolulu resident living in the 96814 area, Council District V, and the RMH office is located at 3610 Waialae Avenue in Kaimuki, 96816, Council District IV.

I am submitting this testimony on behalf of Retail Merchants of Hawai'i and our members in strong support of Bill 52 (2026), which increases penalties for violations of the City's regulations relating to unlawful peddling on streets, sidewalks, malls, and other public places.

We appreciate the work of the Council's Committee on International & Legal Affairs in advancing Bill 52 and note the supportive testimony provided by the Honolulu Police Department.

For our retailers, this is a practical and recurring issue. Unlawful peddling can take place on public sidewalks, sometimes directly outside established businesses. These activities can obstruct or disrupt pedestrian traffic, create congestion, and interfere with access for customers, employees, residents and visitors.

Of particular concern are repeat violations. When an individual can be cited, pay a relatively small fine and then return to the same location and resume the same unlawful activity, the existing penalty is not providing an effective deterrent. A fine that is too low can simply become a cost of continuing to operate illegally.

Bill 52 appropriately addresses this problem by establishing more meaningful penalties, particularly for repeat violations. Increasing the fines to \$500 for a first violation, \$750 for a

subsequent violation within two years, and \$1,000 for multiple repeat violations provides a stronger deterrent and reinforces the importance of complying with the law.

Sidewalks are public infrastructure. They should remain safe and reasonably accessible for residents, employees, customers and visitors, particularly seniors, persons with disabilities, families with children, and others who may have difficulty navigating around obstructions and congested pedestrian areas.

There is also an important issue of fairness to legitimate businesses. Hawai'i's retailers face significant costs of doing business. They pay rent and property-related expenses, taxes, wages, insurance, utilities, licensing and permitting costs, and comply with numerous City, State and federal requirements.

Those conducting unlawful commercial activity in public spaces should not be allowed to create an unfair competitive environment for retailers that make these investments, provide jobs, contribute taxes to our community, and meet their legal and financial obligations. This is particularly frustrating when unlawful peddling occurs immediately outside a retailer that is paying substantial costs to legally operate at that location.

Our concern is not with legitimate businesses operating legally and in appropriate locations. It is with commercial activity that violates existing City regulations and with repeat violations that continue when the consequences are insufficient to deter the activity.

RMH believes that laws governing our public spaces must be clear, meaningful and consistently enforced. Bill 52 provides the city and law enforcement with a stronger enforcement tool while sending a clear message that repeated violations will have consequences.

RMH supports fair and consistent enforcement, and we appreciate the Council's continued attention to maintaining safe and accessible public spaces while supporting Honolulu's legitimate businesses.

For these reasons, Retail Merchants of Hawai'i (RMH) respectfully urges the Council to support Bill 52 (2026) on second reading.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

David B. Erdman
Interim President & CEO
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