



Regular Meeting
City Council Chamber
16th Session
Wednesday, December 7, 2011
10:00 a.m.

RE: Support for Bill 54 relating to Stored Property

Dear Chair Martin and Members of the Council:

My name is Jim Tollefson and I am the President and CEO of the Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii. I am here to state the Chamber's support for Bill 54 relating to Stored Property.

The Chamber is the largest business organization in Hawaii, representing more than 1,100 businesses. Approximately 80% of our members are small businesses with less than 20 employees. As the "Voice of Business" in Hawaii, the Chamber works on behalf of its members, which employ more than 200,000 individuals. Our goal is to improve the state's economic climate and foster positive action on issues of common concern.

The Chamber supports a comprehensive approach to finding solutions to manage the State's homeless population by maximizing the use of Federal, State, County, non-profit, and for-profit entities. Proactive steps must be taken to minimize the problem.

Small businesses are the heart of the community and contribute toward economic growth. We recognize that Bill 54 is not a long-term solution. However, it is a step forward and could lessen the impact on small businesses in Honolulu and other areas on Oahu. The increasing number of homeless individuals residing in close proximity to local businesses affect customer traffic, due to concerns about sanitary conditions and personal safety.

Although Bill 54 will not require homeless individuals seek assistance from community shelters, we hope that it will encourage a higher number to consider this option. By offering food, lodging, and counseling, our homeless shelters provide services that will certainly enhance the quality of life for those who unfortunately now reside on our city streets.

Thank you for considering The Chamber's views on this matter.