

BFED Committee

From: County Clerk
Sent: Friday, October 17, 2025 9:19 AM
To: BFED Committee
Subject: Fw: Subject: Testimony Opposing Bill 92 – JTTF Participation Threatens Civil Liberties and Local Control

From: Cheryl Hotta <makaoleviolettheir2@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, October 17, 2025 6:30 AM
To: County Clerk <County.Clerk@mauicounty.us>; councilmembers@mauicounty.us <councilmembers@mauicounty.us>
Subject: Subject: Testimony Opposing Bill 92 – JTTF Participation Threatens Civil Liberties and Local Control

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Aloha Chair Alice Lee and Council Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on Bill 92. I strongly urge you to vote against or postpone this measure authorizing Maui County's participation in the FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF).

This is not a simple law enforcement partnership. Bill 92 would deputize Maui Police Department (MPD) officers under federal authority for extended periods, removing them from local supervision and placing them under FBI control. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) does not include adequate provisions for local accountability, community oversight, civil liberties protections, or public transparency.

The FBI's evolving definitions of "domestic terrorism" have been widely criticized for encompassing constitutionally protected political speech, activism, and even general beliefs. Investigations have shown that advocacy rooted in anti-capitalism, migration justice, racial or gender equity, Indigenous rights, and religious freedom—including views commonly held by Native Hawaiians, Japanese Americans, Buddhists, and other Pacific Islanders—could be interpreted as "extremism." This is deeply concerning in a community as culturally diverse and historically surveilled as ours.

There has been no meaningful public process to determine whether such a federal partnership reflects Maui's unique community values, safety needs, or respect for civil rights. The MOU contains no guarantees of:

- Local supervisory control of MPD officers deputized by the FBI
- Privacy safeguards or civil liberties protections
- Spending limits or transparency on use of County resources
- Community engagement or threat assessment hearings

Authorizing Bill 92 under these vague and opaque conditions would risk chilling free speech, peaceful protest, and community organizing at a time when many Maui residents are engaged in post-fire recovery, mutual aid, and cultural revitalization efforts.

I respectfully ask that the Council table Bill 92 until there is thorough community input, clear oversight provisions, and strong guarantees for civil liberties. Maui should not sacrifice local control or our residents' rights in exchange for participation in a federal task force whose priorities may not align with our community's.

Mahalo for your time, and for standing up for transparency, local accountability, and the constitutional freedoms of Maui's people.

With deep respect, [L] Cheryl Hotta [L]
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