

WASSP Committee

From: County Clerk
Sent: Friday, September 5, 2025 10:40 AM
To: WASSP Committee
Subject: FW: Testimony on Bill 111 – Request for Amendments

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From: Julie Checknita <julienchecknita@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, September 5, 2025 9:58 AM
To: County Clerk <County.Clerk@mauicounty.us>
Subject: Testimony on Bill 111 – Request for Amendments

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Aloha,

My name is Julie Checknita and I am testifying in support of amendments to Bill 111. While I understand the importance of addressing homelessness and public safety concerns, the current bill falls quite short in ensuring due process, providing adequate housing solutions and in protecting the rights of vulnerable individuals, especially Native Hawaiians and other marginalized communities.

Firstly, I want to highlight the critical issue of shelter availability. Before any removal takes place, the County should be required to verify that adequate shelter or safe alternatives are available and that there are no barriers preventing individuals from accessing these resources. It is not humane to just shuffle people around like cattle, confiscating all of the little that they have with no solution for where they will go. The reality is that many do not have meet the requirements for shelter - whether it be from lack of proper documentation and barriers to obtain such documents as well as many individuals do not want to be separated from their families - no space for families or those with pets. I believe if no such alternatives are not available, the removal becomes unlawful and a waste of tax dollars as it's only a matter of time before they create a new camp down the road. Too often, individuals and families are displaced without viable options, further exacerbating their hardship, and increasing their trauma making it harder to get out of the loop of poverty. The County must take responsibility for ensuring that there are sufficient resources and safe places for people to go before any removal is carried out. Many of the people do want help, but have lost faith in the broken system. Family life center is not doing their job from what I've witnessed, as they are so hard to get ahold of and do not make it easy by any means to enter into shelter. nor do they have enough beds to support the islands large houseless population. We need larger facilities or safe

spaces for people to set up camps with policing. The camp at the harbor in Waianae on Oahu is an excellent example of what could be possible here.

Additionally, the bill's language is inconsistent and confusing. One section refers to a 30-day retention period for seized property, while another specifies 45 days. This lack of clarity only contributes to uncertainty and potential chaos in the implementation of this policy. I urge you to standardize the retention period to a minimum of 45 days with more manpower available to help those access their belongings. From what I have witnessed, no one I know from Amala was able to get through when they called to try to reclaim their belongings. There needs to be an easier, more clear process for these individuals—many without working phones that can receive callbacks to retrieve their cherished belongings. It is heartbreaking to see people with already so little, lose what they had. How would you like it if someone gave you little notice to vacate your space with no viable option of somewhere to go, confiscating all that you have with only 30 days to figure out a plan. It's simply cruel.

I also strongly support the creation of an Oversight Panel that includes Native Hawaiian cultural practitioners and individuals with lived experience of homelessness. These voices are essential to understanding the full scope of the issue and ensuring that policies are not only effective but also respectful of cultural values and traditions. This panel should be tasked with reviewing all removals and publishing quarterly reports to ensure accountability and transparency in the process.

Next I ask you to address the issue of due process. The Supreme Court has already made it clear that due process is a constitutional requirement, and that includes providing notice and an opportunity for a hearing before any removal of property. The provision in Bill 111 that allows removals without a hearing, except in narrowly defined life-safety emergencies, is a direct violation of these constitutional protections. No removal should take place unless a minimum of 10 days' notice is provided, along with a clear and accessible opportunity for a hearing. This would ensure that individuals are not unjustly deprived of their belongings or displaced without a fair process.

Finally, I emphasize that the current approach to addressing homelessness—through enforcement-driven removals and sweeps—is not only ineffective and further traumatizing to an already vulnerable population, but it also silences the voices of those most affected. In October 2024, the Family Life Center testified that they do not support sweeps, yet the County continues to rely on this broken model. This is proof that the current plan is not working. We must listen to those who have lived through the experiences of displacement and homelessness, especially Native Hawaiians on their ancestral 'āina, whose voices must lead the process.

I respectfully request that you make the necessary amendments to Bill 111 to ensure due process, clarity, accountability, and, most importantly, respect for the rights and dignity of all individuals affected by this issue. This is our community and could very well be many of us or family members. Mental health issues and addiction should be treated in the same respect as physical illness. It's time to stop vilifying those who are suffering and really just need support. More funding into mental health programs, and support for those stuck in the cycle of poverty and less into these ineffective sweeps and into the pockets of corrupt politicians.

Mahalo for your time and consideration. It's very well time we come into our hearts and do better. I would be happy to discuss any of the above topics further.

Julie

Sent from my iPhone