

TESTIMONY

SB 201



HAWAII COUNTY ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY COUNCIL

47 Rainbow Drive
Hilo, Hawaii 96720-2013
Tel: (808) 961-2681 / Fax: (808) 935-9213

To: Committee on Labor
Date: Thursday, February 12, 2009
Time: 2:45 p.m.
Place: Conference Room 224 – State Capitol

Re: TESTIMONY OF GEORGE YOKOYAMA IN SUPPORT OF SB 201 – MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR THE HAWAII COUNTY ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY COUNCIL

Honorable Chairperson and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of Hawaii County Economic Opportunity Council (HCEOC), a community action agency, I testify in support of Senate Bill 201 which makes an appropriation for 10 buses to continue providing transportation to the needy low-income elderly, the disabled, and low-income preschool children in Hawaii County.


HCEOC Transportation Program enables low-income elderly, mentally and physically disabled individuals and pre-school children access to public and private service agencies and resource centers, which improve their economic and social independence. I strongly believe the following factors emphatically contribute to passing of this Bill.

- Hawaii County is the largest of the 4 counties with 6,424 square miles, nearly 3 and a half times larger than the other 3 counties combined, Maui, 728 square miles; Oahu, 599 square miles; and Kauai, 551 square miles, total of 1,878 square miles.
- There are 24 off highway former plantation communities along the 260 mile geographic perimeter where no transportation services are available except for our human service type transportation which includes 8 wheel chaired lift equipped buses.

- Our transportation program uses 28 mini-buses to serve our clients and 10 of the buses are more than 10 years old with mileage reading ranging from 250,000 to more than 300,000 miles.
- The wear and tear of buses is evident. The aging bus fleet requires constant maintenance and repairs, encounter difficulties meeting DOT safety check, increase in use of gas and oil resulting in high operational costs.

For the facts mentioned, we respectfully request your esteemed committee to assist us in obtaining the necessary funding.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



George Yokoyama
Executive Director