

SB 2919

Measure Title:

RELATING TO THE HAWAII STATE HOSPITAL

Report Title:

Department of Public Safety; Security of State Hospital

Roy Yanagihara
45-139 Mahalani Circle
Kaneohe, Hawaii 96744

February 3, 2010

Senator Will Espero, Chair
Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs

Senator David Y. Ige, Chair
Committee on Health

Subject: Testimony in Support of SB 2919

Aloha HTH/PSM Committee Members,

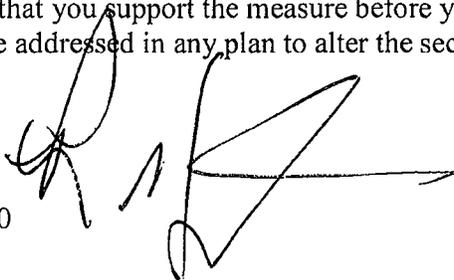
I would like to request your support for the passage of SB2919 that would require the Department of Public Safety to provide security at the Hawaii State Hospital and require the Department of Health to report to the legislature on its plans for providing short and long-term security at that facility.

As chair of the Kaneohe Neighborhood Board and as a resident of this community I am very concerned for the safety and security of our residents due to the danger posed by patients who have psychiatric conditions that may pose a danger to others in the community and leave that facility without authority or supervision. During the past several years a number of patients who were assigned to the state hospital by the court system due to assaultive or dangerous behavior have escaped from that facility and into the surrounding community. Fortunately most were found and returned to that institution within a short period of time and without incident or harm to our community.

Our Neighborhood Board has recently been informed that officers from the Department of Public Safety no longer provide security due to budget cutbacks and that they have been replaced by security guards that are under contract with the state hospital. We are concerned that those security guards hired under contract may not have the requisite training or experience necessary to safeguard our community from the hazard posed to the community by patients who may be suffering from potentially dangerous psychological conditions.

We respectfully request that you support the measure before you in order that the safety of our community can be addressed in any plan to alter the security arrangements at the Hawaii State Hospital.

Roy Yanagihara
Chair Kaneohe
Neighborhood Board #30

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Roy Yanagihara', written over the typed name and title.

TESTIMONY FOR HTH/PSM 2/4/2010 1:15:00 PM SB2919

CONFERENCE ROOM: 229

TESTIFIER POSITION: SUPPORT

TESTIFIER WILL BE PRESENT: NO

SUBMITTED BY: BILL SAGER

ORGANIZATION: INDIVIDUAL

ADDRESS: 44-211 MIKIOLA DR KANEOHE, HI

PHONE: 235-0757

E-MAIL: [REDACTED]

SUBMITTED ON: 2/2/2010

COMMENTS:

AS A MEMBER OF THE KANEOHE NEIGHBORHOOD BOARD, I HAVE BEEN CRITICAL OF THE SECURITY AND POLICIES THAT ALLOW MURDERS AND RAPISTS TO WALK OF THE CAMPUS OF THE WINDWARD STATE HOSPITAL. THE LATEST "FURLOUGH" OCCURED IN DECEMBER SHORTLY AFTER THE SHERIFFS WERE REMOVED AND THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR SECURITY CONTRACTED WITH WIKENHUT. THE GOVERNORS EFFORT TO PRIVATIZE SECURITY AT WSH HAS BACKFIRED BIG TIME. SUCH "FURLOUGH" ENDANGER KANEOHE RESIDENTS AND MUST NOT BE TOLERATED. THE WINDWARD STATE HOSPITAL NEEDS TO BE SECURED BY SECURITY PROFESSIONALS NOT RENT-A-COPS.

Catherine Drouillard

Kaneohe, Hawaii

February 4, 2010

Committee of Public Safety and Military Affairs

Conference Room 229

Senator Will Espero, Chair Senator Robert Bunda, Vice Chair

1:15 p.m.

Committee on Health

Senator David Ige, Chair Senator Josh Green, M.D. Vice Chair

SB 2919 Relating to the Hawaii State Hospital

Dear Senators,

As a resident of Kaneohe, I have a heightened interest in this particular legislation. As a social worker, I acknowledge the fact that the residents of the Hawaii State Hospital are patients and not prisoners. However, that being said, most of the population residing there are criminally insane. The good news is that we know this already and also what hasn't worked. Now is the time to address preventive safety measures. The escape of the seventh resident of the Hawaii State Hospital in 2009 was a man confined to the facility in 2002 after having been acquitted of two counts of first-degree sexual assault and kidnapping of an 8 year old child. On this serious note, can you imagine living in Kaneohe with children and never knowing when the next escape will take place? It's frightening to live in a community where there's been an average of 6 escapes per year over the last 5 years. The Hawaii State Hospital is within a 2 mile radius of 6 daycare centers, 3 elderly care homes, and 4 schools. I strenuously appeal for your support to make certain that every reasonable and appropriate measure is taken to ensure the safety of our community and especially it's most vulnerable citizens.

Thank you for your time and attention to this serious matter.