

Testimony of
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The Outdoor Circle

Subject: City Council Resolution 10-31
Proposing an amendment relating to political signs

Honolulu City Council
Zoning Committee
Tuesday August 31
9:00 A.M.

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The Outdoor Circle wishes to express its support for Resolution 10-31.

First, we fully support creating a maximum size for campaign signs and 2x4 feet is a good number. Most standard campaign signs are smaller than 2x4. This provision would essentially eliminate the use of campaign banners that are posted and left on private property—usually someone’s fence that faces a roadway. Of course banners could still have a multitude of legal uses such as sign waving, rallies, booths, parades and all types of indoor events.

Each day the City and County of Honolulu enforces laws passed by the City Council that are designed to limit visual clutter and bring order to our communities by placing restrictions on all types of commercial and non commercial signs: these include limitations on size, location, lighting, how long they may be posted and so on. Yet when it comes to campaign signs there are virtually no restrictions. And when you look around the island it’s easy to see clutter, distraction and blight that come with no restrictions.

Many candidates accurately say—its free speech. Yes, it’s your constitutional right—but is it the right thing to do?

Legally, the courts say that communities have a right to place reasonable restrictions on campaign signs. You might hear from DPP, Corporation Council or the office of Council Services that passing such restrictions will land the City in court. Maybe. But in other places carefully crafted laws already have withstood legal challenges.

Resolution 10-31 also contains time limits for campaign signs—no signs posted more than 120 days before an election and removed within 30 days after. We believe these time limits are far too long and recommend amending the resolution to read 60 days before an election and 15 days after.

On your way home tonight I challenge you to count the number of campaign signs that you estimate to be larger than 2x4 feet and imagine the positive benefits that removing them from the landscape would bring to the neighborhoods of our beautiful island. And think about how long some of the signs have been up already. Here’s a hint—they started going up in February and were full blown, island wide, before Memorial Day.

The Outdoor Circle knows how difficult it is—how counter intuitive it is for elected officials to change the worsening culture of campaign signs in Hawaii. We’ve been trying for 5 years to get the legislature to step-up....instead they have just stepped aside.

MISC. COM. 1395

Now it’s your turn. Let’s get reasonable, meaningful campaign sign reform moving and set an example that will reduce the negative influence of political campaigns on the beauty of Hawaii.