

**Testimony of  
Bob Loy  
Director of Environmental Programs  
The Outdoor Circle**

**Subject: City Council Bill 6 (2011)  
Relating to Signs for Meeting Facilities**

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**Honolulu City Council  
Wednesday February 23, 2011  
10:00 A.M.**

The Outdoor Circle wishes to express its support for most of the concepts in Bill 6, which will give entities that do not own or rent their own buildings the ability to announce their presence through signs.

We agree that it is reasonable for buildings owners who rent space to tenants for the purpose of holding meetings to erect a "Directory Sign" identifying the tenants, as proposed. We also concur that it is reasonable to allow one "Wall Sign" for each of the building's tenants as part of the total sign area permitted on the building side on which it is located.

However, we cannot support the provision for "Meeting Signs." These signs will likely be sandwich boards or "lawn signs" simply stuck into the ground—often in the public right of way. One of the largest groups of entities affected by this change is churches. Churches already are one of the County's most frequent violators of the existing sign code. Numerous churches who do not have their own buildings, and some that do, post temporary signs on Fridays and leave them up through Sunday, and then repeat the process each weekend. Many of them place their illegal signs in the public rights of way. Some actually place their signs on the shoulders of busy roads and highways creating a safety hazard. The churches engage in this illegal and sometimes dangerous activity because they know there will be no County sign enforcement on weekends.

The Outdoor Circle receives dozens of complaints each year about these signs. We have spoken directly to the pastors of several churches who turn a blind eye to the law. They know that they are breaking the law yet seldom if ever stop their illegal actions. By legalizing "meeting signs" the county will be rewarding those who for years have knowingly broken the law.

In addition, by legalizing these types of signs for regular use, the Council will be creating a problem that will lead other entities to demand the right to display their own sandwich boards and other temporary signs—or simply start using them without authorization. This will create more sign clutter in our neighborhoods and an even greater clog in a regulatory system that already is struggling to respond to violations.

The Outdoor Circle annually reports approximately 1000 sign complaints to the County Department of Planning and Permitting. In our nearly 100 years of protecting Hawaii from illegal and inappropriate advertising we have acquired a keen sense of how State and County signs laws impact our communities and how businesses react to them. It is our strong opinion that creating a new sign class—"meeting signs"—will result in widespread violations. The net result will be an ever increasing amount of sign clutter across O'ahu.

Please amend Bill 6 to adopt the Wall and Directory sign elements, but delete "Meeting Signs."

**MISC. COM. 272**

**COUNCIL**