

**From:** Rita Coury [mailto:[rita@ritacouryphotography.com](mailto:rita@ritacouryphotography.com)]  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 20, 2012 9:45 AM  
**Subject:** City Council Public Hearing Testimony

Aloha and thank you for an opportunity to share with you why Bill 5 would be devastating to small business owners who serve the community as photographers such as myself. My name is Rita Coury and I am the sole employee at Rita Coury Photography, Inc. I specialize in maternity, newborn and keiki photography 100% on location including community parks and our gorgeous beaches. My production is pretty grass roots and I pride myself on working with limited equipment to offer a fine art photography experience with minimal impact or distraction when I am creating images for my treasured clients. All my photography is created with natural light and utilizing the beautiful ambient glow from the shoreside eliminates the need for me to bring flash equipment to sessions. I am blessed to do what I love for a living and keeping my overhead simple and affordable allows me to work full time as a photographer in addition to participating in many volunteer positions around the community. Bill 5 threatens all of that. Being a small business owner especially one in the field of creative arts is extremely challenging in a balanced economy and almost impossible during the economic state we are currently in. Adding an additional hurdle to an already lengthy and exhausting line of hoops to jump over and through quite honestly brings a very dark cloud over the usually bright future I work hard to maintain.

A little about me and why this is so important: I moved to Hawaii from Oakland, CA in 2009 with literally a single suitcase, a single camera and a loyal pup after losing everything (house, savings, business to name a few) after a traumatic incident that left me homeless. Instead of giving up, I decided that it was time to find my peace and I found it here, in O'ahu. I immediately began my business, filed all the required documents, paid all the fees and opened Rita Coury Photography for the second time in my now 13 years of business. Every day is a challenge and I love it. I love that I get to work with new families every day documenting the most pivotal moments of their lives from the live births of their babies to their first birthdays and beyond. I love that I can offer free services to breast cancer survivors and those still fighting the fight of their lives. My heart shatters with every hospital photo session I have donated to provide a grieving family portraits of a newborn or young child that will not survive. Images no one should have to thank me for, but sadly more necessary than most people realize. Hours, days, weeks, even months of 100% donated time to the community because I am blessed to have a business that allows me to do that - at least for now. This bill will squash all that.

What I am asking and what most of us want is simple: We want to work. All we want is to do our jobs, feed our families, pay our rent, make grandmothers smile, tears in their eyes with pride at a gorgeous photo of their 5 day old newborn granddaughter and make parents hearts fill with love over an image that captures their child's spirit in a single frame. I want to work. I want to thrive in Hawai'i so my future children will know this beautifully spiritual place and I want to continue to share my talent with those who need it the most in the community through volunteer work. I ask you from the bottom of my heart to consider what impact your decision has and I welcome you to see my work and you just may recognize a few or many faces that you know. We photograph your families, your communities and hope to continue for many years to come.

Mahalo nui.

Rita Coury  
Rita Coury Photography  
[www.RitaCouryPhotography.com](http://www.RitaCouryPhotography.com)  
[rita@ritacouryphotography.com](mailto:rita@ritacouryphotography.com)

808-744-8989 Hawaiian Islands  
510-599-6169 Bay Area / Cell



RECEIVED  
SEP 20 10 05 AM '12  
CITY CLERK  
HONOLULU, HAWAII