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CITY CLERK  
HONOLULU, HAWAII

Ernest Y. Martin, Chairman  
Honolulu City Council  
Honolulu Hale  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Re: A bill for an Ordinance Relating to Sidewalks and Malls (Bill 6)  
A Bill for an Ordinance Relating to Nuisances on Public Sidewalks (Bill 7)

The Honorable Ernest Y. Martin and Council Members:

I am writing to support the creation and enforcement of rules that restrict nuisances on public streets. This testimony relates to both Bill 6 and Bill 7 currently before the Council.

I have seen many groups of squatters, people living in tents in public spaces in Honolulu. I am most familiar with the ever-growing cluster of tents along Beretania Street because I pass them several times a week, by car, on foot, and bicycle.

The tents are just inches from the curb and span the *mauka* and Diamond Head sides of Thomas Square, creating a danger to people in the tents and to people passing by. As a pedestrian, the tents and their surrounding debris, including chairs, tables, and bookshelves, take up the majority of the sidewalk. Tent residents also enter and exit their tents on the sidewalk, forcing pedestrians to navigate around, often off of the sidewalk. In addition to the danger these tents pose, the visual blight to our City is significant. The Honolulu Museum of Art and Thomas Square are spaces that draw large numbers of visitors and residents. The tents are off-putting and an embarrassment and if left unattended, will begin to paint a negative picture of Honolulu that could have lasting economic and public relations impacts.

Some have said that living in a tent along Beretania is a form of free speech. While I am personally challenged to accept this view, I

support free speech and believe it can be expressed any number of ways without creating a cluster of tents for people to live 24/7, for months on end.

I appreciate the City being proactive and looking for solutions before squatter situations like this one become a bigger problem. Recognizing the City's limited resources to "police" and manage abusers, I would ask that careful consideration be given to balancing the public's needs and the needs of the City agencies that will be responsible for handling violators. Do your best to create fair and streamlined processes that give agencies the latitude and direction to do their job well, but don't create systems that waste more of the City's precious resources than necessary.

Respectfully,

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