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Carol Fukunaga, Chair
Kymberly Marcos Pine, Vice-Chair
Committee on Public Safety and Economic Development
City Council
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Re: Bill 7

Dear Chair Fukunaga, Vice-Chair Pine and Committee members:

I support Bill 7. The City Council should expend such funds, and take such actions, as may be necessary to vindicate its control over public sidewalks, parks and other lands.

The ACLU of Hawaii "urges the City Council [in recent testimony] to consider spending additional funds on critical projects to address homelessness, rather than spending hundreds of thousands of dollars each year on a band-aid measure to seize, store, and dispose of homeless individuals' personal property." Others in the community doubtless urge the Council to take immediate, effective action to recover control over public lands.

Many would agree that there should be a social safety net. Government and private charitable organizations have a role to play in providing opportunities to the most vulnerable members of society.

That, however, has almost nothing whatever to do with able-bodied individuals squatting on public lands at and/or near Thomas Square. It is nearly comical to suggest that there is any meaningful "political" component to the wholesale, overt and hostile takeover of public lands by people who fail, neglect or refuse to respect the rights of others.

The ACLU will presumably litigate if Bill 7 passes. The ACLU is committed to a particular vision of society.

That vision may not correspond perfectly to the preferences of most taxpayers, however, and the Council should honor the call to get control of the public lands even if it has to litigate long and hard to do so.

Very truly yours,
Philip S. Nerney
Philip S. Nerney

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