

From: Damian Klein [mailto:djk2fb@yahoo.com]

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Subject: City Council Public Hearing Testimony (In Written Support of Bill 7 CD 1)

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HONOLULU, HAWAII

We live in the City of Honolulu, a city of nearly 400,000 people. Has any member of the city council tried to use a public restroom lately? Well, if you have, you will find them hard to come by. It is shocking the lack of public restrooms in Honolulu. Especially compared to cities of comparable size. The once numerous public restrooms have been closed by businesses, eateries and public facilities. Why is that? As many business owners and facility managers know the homeless will bathe and squat in many an available restroom. This makes restrooms unusable for the citizens of Honolulu. Moreover, business owners and facility managers do not want to deal with the constant clean-up that the homeless leave behind in restrooms. As a result of homeless misbehaviors in public restrooms a large amount of them have been closed to the public. We are suffering with little to no public restrooms. Even if we purchase food we still can't use the restroom. As a community we have largely given up public restrooms because of the homeless. Are there any city council members who deny this? If there are, I challenge them to go to the middle of downtown and find a public restroom. It must be one that does not require a key or for you to purchase something. Good Luck!!

A few years back a local story gained national attention when a bus stop was moved on Kapiolani because a homeless lady had taken over the bus stop. The Bus moved the actual bus stop so that bus patrons could use it without harassment from the homeless lady who was living at the bus stop. Throughout Honolulu homeless have taken over bus stops. Many disabled, elderly and expectant mothers are not able to sit due to homeless taking over bus stop seating and structures. In fact, near Honolulu Community College on Dillingham, two homeless men have transformed the bus stop into makeshift shelter for the two of them. Are these public spaces theirs or do they represent public spaces for all? The homeless of Honolulu have monopolized the bus stops of Honolulu and now they are attempting to do the same thing with our sidewalks and parks. Actually it is already underway. I mention Thomas Square, Nimitz near K-Mart and Kalakua Avenue across from the Convention Center as three examples. How much of our public spaces do we have to give them? I say no more concessions.

Sidewalks and parks are public spaces for everyone. Please keep them available for all, not "service areas" for homeless. We cannot let the parks and sidewalks be dominated by a select few. The activists of Occupy Honolulu claim that they stand against a select few monopolizing the economy, yet, they want public spaces to be monopolized by the homeless. We have already given the homeless bus stops and reduced the number of public restrooms to make up for their current homeless state. I am against giving them our sidewalks and parks, therefore, I support bill 7. Please pass and, importantly, enforce these measures. They will help ensure public spaces for all, and in turn help keep the local economy growing by maintaining the scenic parks and walkways of Honolulu for residents and tourists. The latter drive our economy and prefer picturesque parks and walkways not tents, trash, urine and shopping carts. Isn't a thriving local economy ultimately needed to help the homeless find homes again?

Damian Klein  
Prospect St.  
Honolulu, HI 96822