

B112

CITY CLERK  
HONOLULU, HAWAII

**BILL 2 (2009) – PUBLIC PARKS.** The purpose of this ordinance is to improve the city's ability to regulate camping at public parks. (Bill passed first reading on 11/28/09)

Dear Committee Members,

My name is Melissa Osowski.

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I wholeheartedly support this committee's effort to resolve the camping in public parks issue. Initiating and enforcing a sleeping ban in public areas within Waikiki and Kapiolani Park is a commendable action that needs to happen sooner than later especially with the recent random stabbings that have occurred on Oahu. I grew up in Hawaii and I still think that Hawaii is a safer place than most big cities in the United States. And, in my younger days, it was enjoyable to spend the day in the sun doing whatever, including taking a nap on the beach. I just hope that any new 'camping' ordinance being enacted takes this lifestyle into account. After all, we don't want to destroy our lifestyle simply because we are trying to 'clean' up the parks by moving out the transients.

Last year, I returned home after living and working in Southern California for 20 years. When I worked in Downtown Los Angeles, the City would every so often make sweeps of Tent City near the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) Headquarters, whereby all the transients were moved out so that the area became a viable street once again. I can tell you that after those sweeps were done and you drove by the area, I would breathe a sigh of relief thinking that I didn't work in such a bad area after all. Honolulu simply needs to follow suit and take action now rather than later. We need to have our Tourists and other Park Users breathing this same sigh of relief.

As daily early morning park user, I am often disheartened by seeing so many adults sleeping and roaming in and around the Waikiki and Kapiolani Park areas. Although it is a sad situation for those affected, I believe that it is even a sadder situation for those of us who are trying to use the facilities and enjoy the open spaces. Often times, my workouts locations are determined by asking the question - Where can I go as to not wake up the homeless sleeping today? On many days though, I feel as though I am intruding into someone's bedroom, but I then remember that this is a public park and I have a right to use it just the same.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

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