

Testimony of Richard Ando, Jr., MD.

Chair and Members of the City Council
March 18, 2009
City Council Bill 4, CD1 (09)

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Chairman Apo and members of the Committee, my name is Richard Ando, Jr., MD. I am a Hawaii physician who volunteers medical and communication(amateur radio) services to Boy Scouts of America (Troop 49), Kawananakoa Middle School, Red Cross of Hawaii, Hawaii Medical Association, and Kuakini Medical Center. I am also the Senior Medical Officer/Flight Surgeon in the Hawaii Air National Guard.

I support this bill with amendments, for the purpose of regulating the use of cell phones in vehicles.

We all recognize that cell phone use and texting by drivers is dangerous, but must also acknowledge that other communication devices, such as mobile amateur radios, have been safely used in vehicles for many years.

Amateur radio operators use mobile amateur radios in the volunteer duties in support of medical and hospital services, state and city civil defense services or law enforcement services.

When normal communication channels are disrupted, as in the Power Blackout of Friday, December 26, 2008, amateur radio operators volunteered immediately with emergency set ups of portable, mobile or base stations and handled countless messages between Department of Emergency Management and State Civil Defense. This would not have been possible without allowing mobile amateur radio operators to test their equipment and island wide radio coverage on a regular basis in preparation for such an emergency or disaster.

I strongly request that the City Council add to section (c) The following persons shall be exempt from the provisions of subsection (a): "(3) Amateur radio operators licensed by the Federal Communications Commission"

This addition to exempt amateur radio operators from City Council Bill 4, CD1 (09) is modeled after Washington State's cell phone law which has passed and is being enforced.

These are my personal statements and do not reflect the policies of my volunteer organizations or the Hawaii Air National Guard. I appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony on this bill and your efforts to limit the use of cell phones and texting while driving.

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