

OPPOSITION TO INCREASED FEES AND TAXES

TO Councilmember Nestor Garcia, Chair, Budget Committee

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FROM: Robert R. Kessler

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I am astonished at the breadth and audacity of the debt obligations and the tax and fee increases under consideration by this Committee. Last week the State Legislature cavalierly overrode the Governor's vetoes of several State tax increases, firmly establishing Hawaii taxpayers as among those who bear the heaviest tax burden in the Nation. Now, with the increases proposed on this agenda, this Committee is considering adding substantially to that burden for Honolulu taxpayers. Precisely at a time when private sector taxpayers are experiencing stagnant, even decreasing, income. And lost jobs. **Your tax and fee increases target local families, children, small businesses, homeowners, golfers, surfers, even those needing police assistance.**

And you are considering a capital budget that seems to be based on hope for Federal funding for the Mayor's train. Building a budget on hope is something better suited to those who play the lottery. **That Capital budget should not be approved until train funding is fully identified. Nor should the sale of Transit Improvement Bonds be approved until the entire funding plan - a credible funding plan - is in place before the public.**

Our current economic crisis presents you an opportunity to exercise true leadership. This is not the time for acquiring long term debt and obligations on a whim. Nor for adding to the already onerous tax burden on your constituents. Rather, it is the time for hard fiscal decisions that leave money in the hands of the people that actually earned it, taxpayers who will spend and invest that money in our community, producing a home-grown stimulus to economic recovery. **I urge you to disapprove every tax increase before you today.**

Tighten your own belts first.



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