



CITY COUNCIL

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COUNCILMEMBER DJOU: COUNCIL'S FAILURE TO ACT ON SIDEWALK SLEEPING BAN IS A MISTAKE

This morning, the Honolulu City Council's Executive Matters and Legal Affairs Committee deferred taking action on Bill 69, introduced by Honolulu City Councilmember Charles K. Djou (Waikiki, East Honolulu). This measure proposed a sleeping ban on City sidewalks.

"If we do not confront and take care of this problem of vagrancy in our community, this problem will take care of us. City sidewalks are simply not designed for sleeping," stated Councilmember Djou. "Our sidewalks are for everyone, not for any select few who want to treat it as their own private property."

In lieu of Djou's bill, several councilmembers proposed to introduce a resolution inviting parties to discuss homelessness. "All I hear from most politicians on this issue is a lot of talk and no substantive action. Yet another meaningless resolution and yet more talk will not solve this problem. The City should encourage those who need substance abuse or mental illness counseling to avail themselves to the free taxpayer-financed assistance available to them. Without an ordinance such as a sleeping ban on City sidewalks, however, there is little incentive to push people who need help to get help."

Djou modeled his proposed sidewalk sleeping ban on similar laws that have already been enacted and survived constitutional court challenges in Seattle and Phoenix.

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