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COUNCILMEMBER DJOU: POLICE BEGIN ENFORCEMENT OF NEW CAMPING LAW IN KAPIOLANI PARK

Honolulu City Councilmember Charles K. Djou (Waikiki, East Honolulu), who represents the area surrounding Kapiolani Park, reacted to the police department beginning enforcement today of the City's new camping ordinance in Kapiolani Park.

"While I am sympathetic to the plight of homeless, the parks department is not the appropriate agency and Kapiolani Park is certainly not the appropriate place to address our community's homeless issues," stated Councilmember Djou. "Kapiolani Park is meant to be used for recreation; it is not designed for use as a social services encampment. I am happy that the police have begun today enforcing the City's new camping ordinance and remedying the improper use of Kapiolani Park."

In August the Honolulu City Council unanimously passed a new law fixing a flaw in the City's old camping ordinance. Last year, as the result of an ACLU lawsuit, the Hawaii Supreme Court threw out the City's old camping ordinance, finding it unconstitutionally "vague." Consequently, until the City Council's passage of Bill 42 (2008), the City has been unable to enforce its laws regarding illegal camping in City parks. The mayor signed Bill 42 into law earlier this month as Ordinance No. 08-22. All City parks, but Kapiolani Park in particular, saw an exponential growth in illegal camping after the Hawaii Supreme Court's ruling and the City's subsequent inability to enforce illegal camping rules.

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