



*The Judiciary, State of Hawai'i*

**Testimony to the House Committee on Judiciary**

Representative Scott Y. Nishimoto, Chair

Representative Joy A. San Buenaventura, Vice Chair

Friday, February 3, 2017, 2:00 PM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 325

WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY

by

Judge Ronald Ibarra

Chief Judge, Third Judicial Circuit

---

**Bill No. and Title:** House Bill No. 601 Relating to the Judiciary

**Purpose:** Makes an appropriation to establish driving while impaired courts in Kona and Hilo on Hawai'i island.

**Judiciary's Position:**

The Judiciary supports House Bill 601.

On Hawai'i island, we are keenly aware that we have the highest per capita incidence of impaired driving in the state, as noted in House Bill 601.

On O'ahu, Driving While Impaired (DWI) Court started in 2013 and has shown to reduce recidivism rates for repeat DWI offenders by utilizing intensive probation supervision and alcohol abuse treatment, frequent alcohol and drug testing, and ongoing judicial interaction to change behavior of the DWI offenders.

To implement this program on Hawai'i island, we would need additional positions of 2 (two) probation officers – 1 (one) for Hilo and 1 (one) for Kona/Waimea. Also, while we currently refer DWI offenders to alcohol and drug treatment services and seek to have these services paid for by the offender's medical insurance, there are times when offenders do not have medical benefits at the time they need to have an alcohol and drug assessment and commence the



House Bill No. 601, Relating to the Judiciary  
House Committee on Judiciary  
Friday, February 3, 2017 2:00 PM  
Page 2

treatment; therefore, we would respectfully request an appropriation for treatment funds in the amount of \$10,000 to ensure offenders needing immediate treatment are able to get it.

Although implementation of this program will surely impact court calendars by increasing judicial interaction with offenders, we would not be seeking additional judicial resources to implement a DWI court.

We support House Bill 601 if we are appropriated the necessary resources to implement the program, and also as long as this does not have an adverse impact on our other budget requests.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 601.