

# Honolulu City Council Bill Proposes Car Impoundment of Prostitute Solicitors

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We've all seen them before. Wearing the telltale clear stilettos walking Kuhio Ave. in Waikiki, shouting catcalls down Nu'uano Ave. Yes, prostitutes. Despite the fact that prostitution is illegal in the Islands, it remains ubiquitous.

That's why the City Council is discussing Bill 4—introduced by Charles Djou—which proposes to impound the car of a person caught with a prostitute inside his vehicle. The bill unanimously passed the first reading but has since stalled in the Public Safety and Services Committee. If passed, an HPD officer arresting a person for soliciting a prostitute may impound the arrestee's vehicle if the person was in the vehicle with a prostitute prior to the arrest, and if the person is the car's registered owner. First-time offenders would have their car impounded for 30 days; if the person has been convicted of the same offense within the past five years, the car would be impounded for 60 days. For two or more convictions, the person's car would be impounded for 90 days.

Last year the Honolulu Police Department made 276 prostitution-related arrests, only 34 men for trying to solicit a prostitute. So far in 2010, officers have made 41 arrests, says HPD spokesperson Michelle Yu.

HPD says the proposed regulation would be hard to enforce. Captain Lester Hite, testified against the bill at a recent hearing, raising four issues with the bill.

For starters, the police department doesn't have any place to keep the impounded cars. Second, officers would only be able to impound the car of a person soliciting services of an undercover cop posing as a prostitute, since officers are required to have probable cause. Hite also said that a co-owner of a car, such as a wife, would be unfairly punished for her husband's indiscretion if the car were impounded. Lastly, the bill mandates that HPD would have to refund the impound fees if the charges were dropped. "The police department has little control over how criminal cases are prosecuted or how other agencies handle the case after the arrest is made."

The bill's propositions cannot be easily executed, and it most likely will not pass. And cars aren't the only places where these activities occur. We'll still see women in Lucite heels walking the streets, men at their sides walking to a nearby motel or alley.