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Councilmember Joey Manahan, Chair
Council Budget Committee
Honolulu Hale
530 South King Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Chair Manahan:

Assistive Technology Resource Center (ATRC) is writing in strong opposition to Bill 28- (2017) Relating to Public Transit. ATRC has worked directly with persons with disabilities in our community for over twenty-five years. For many of our clients, the Handi-Van service is their primary source of transportation; We have witnessed first-hand how valuable the service is to those in our island community who find it difficult or impossible to use alternate forms of transportation. Furthermore, we have appreciated the relatively low cost (\$2.00 per ride) Handi-Van charges their clients for this service.

ATRC recognizes that due to increasing budgetary limitations and the high cost of living in our state, prices for goods and services are rising in all sectors of life. We understand that the cost of Handi-Van services will rise as well, but we urge the committee to consider that the community Handi-Van serves is largely low income, and an increase from \$4.00 per round-trip to \$8.00 may be too much of a financial strain for some to continue utilizing the service. If the proposed \$2.00 increase takes effect, a client using the Handi-Van service daily will see an increase from \$80.00 per month to \$160.00 per month. Vice Chair Elefante's proposed CD-1 of Bill 28 of .50 per ride seems like a more appropriate increase, but whatever the figure, we urge the committee to prefer a more methodical, scrutinizing approach to increasing the fee rather than an arbitrary one.

ATRC understands the need to periodically increase costs, but we urge the committee to do so in a way that is sensitive to the limitations of the Handi-Van ridership. Perhaps a study could be performed on exactly how an increase would benefit Handi-Van and impact its ridership. Perhaps the committee could consult with other agencies and organizations, such as the Governor's Disability Communication Access Board to gain a heightened perspective on the impact of such a change.

Again, ATRC wishes to convey our appreciation for Handi-Van and we recognize the hard work and dedication of everyone involved, from the drivers to the office staff. We understand that sometimes costs need to increase to keep the service functioning properly. Though due to the unique situation most riders are in, any increase should be considered carefully before implementation. Thank you for allowing us to submit testimony regarding this bill.

Respectfully,

Barbara Fischlowitz-Leong
Executive Director