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2010-03-11 News



LC Watch
Dance Bill Stumbles

by Jacob Shafer

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Rep. Joe Bertram

March 10, 2010 | 01:52 PM

"Hundreds of bills are introduced each year, and most of them don't make it," attorney Lance Collins told me recently. He was responding to a question about HB2818, a bill spearheaded by Maui Rep. Joe Bertram that would have forced County Liquor Commissions to "adopt or amend rules regarding the expression or conduct of patrons in premises licensed to sell liquor for consumption thereon... [and to] include a definition of the term 'dancing.'"

The bill was introduced on behalf of Maui Dance Advocates (MDA), the scrappy little group that Collins represents pro bono. When I first heard about the bill, I confess I was skeptical: given the weight of this year's legislative agenda and the indifference the LC and the courts have shown this issue in the past, HB2818 seemed destined for a quick and quiet death.

So I was pleasantly surprised when it passed un-amended through the Economic Revitalization, Business & Military Affairs Committee in mid-February. But its next stop—the Consumer Protection & Commerce and Judiciary Committees—proved to be its last. The bill failed to gain traction by the "crossover" cutoff date, and stumbled like a drunk on his way to the legally demarcated dance floor.

Asked why HB2818 failed, Rep. Bertram gave the same answer as Collins. But, he said, he plans to "continue to try to make it easier for people to dance." Especially, he added, people like MDA co-founder Ramoda Anand, who is in a wheelchair.

Whether a dance bill will succeed next year is an open question. Chances are the LC will be watching. But Bertram's hopeful: "one more time," he said.

For more info on Maui Dance Advocates, visit their MySpace page: www.myspace.com/mauidanceadvocates



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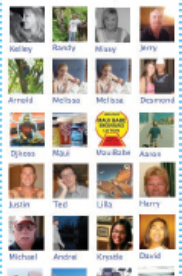
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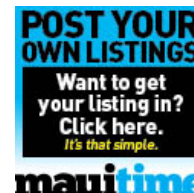
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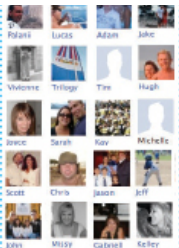
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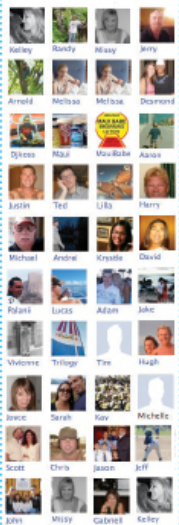




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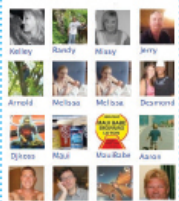
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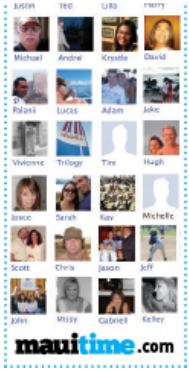
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