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Press Release by:

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Makawao-Ha'ikū-Pā'ia Residency Area

<http://mauicounty.us/molina/>

Molina urges mayor to allow parents to watch their kids play sports

WAILUKU, Hawai'i—Councilmember Michael J. Molina said today he urges Mayor Michael P. Victorino to reconsider his mandate restricting parents from watching their children play sports.

On Sept. 15, Victorino's "Safer Outside" initiatives went into effect, prohibiting spectators from indoor and outdoor sporting events.

Meanwhile, in other counties spectators have returned to the sidelines with appropriate restrictions to ensure they can safely watch their family and friends play outdoor sports, Molina said.

In a Maui News story on Sept 23, Victorino was quoted as saying that "it's not about the parents, it's about the kids having their time to enjoy themselves."

Molina said he strongly disagrees.

"This mandate is also about parents because a parent's love and guidance for their children, both in their education and youth activities, specifically sports, is key for a child's success and wellbeing," said Molina, who chairs the council's Government Relations, Ethics and Transparency Committee. "It is equally important for parents to be present at practices and games in the event their child is injured or needing assistance."

Molina said the mayor needs to be more receptive to the voices of Maui County's citizens and implement a workable plan that emphasizes mask wearing, social distancing, and other COVID-19 safety protocols in an effort allow parents to return to the sidelines.

Molina said an online petition asking that parents be allowed to watch their children's games and practices in Maui County reached nearly 1,900 signatures as of Tuesday afternoon. The change.org petition, titled "Let Parents Watch Their Kids Play Sports with Mask Wearing and Social Distancing Outdoors," was created by Aaron Ambricio of Pukalani just after the mandate went into effect.

"Beyond the change.org petition, many frustrated parents have reached out to me directly voicing their vehement opposition to this rule," Molina said.

Molina said that extending the mandate to remove parents from participating in their children's sporting activities is only going to create more frustration. The double standard of allowing some activities, but not others of a similar nature, is only adding to government distrust and furthering community divide, he said.

The rules have to make sense, represent consistency and reflect balance for all people of Maui County, Molina said.

"If the mayor can make exceptions for tourists to gather at luaus, why not allow parents, a large majority of whom are tax-paying residents, to watch their children practice and play sports?" Molina asked

The mayor is set to reassess the Public Health Emergency Rules next month, Molina said.

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