

Litter, Litter, Litter

There is an old saying that “One man’s trash is another man’s treasure.” Although this saying can be true in some circumstances, the litter that is on our island is nothing but plain, ordinary trash. It won’t ever be anyone’s treasure, only trash. Everywhere you look there is litter. In fact, 75% of our local population has admitted to having littered intentionally or unintentionally at one point. In 50 years the wildlife that lives on our islands, native or non-native species, could be endangered because of the plastic they might eat or the trash lying around which they could step on and injure them in some way. To help convince you that this is a major problem, I will tell you about why I think littering is such a big problem and how it impacts Hawai’i. I will propose my solutions on how to take a step closer to end littering. Finally, the last thing I will tell you is which solution I think will work best to curb this problem. Hopefully, this essay will make you realize how important it is to properly dispose of your trash.

Looking around your neighborhood you’ll see a few random pieces of garbage just lying about. The litter can cause harm to the environment or any living thing. Litter isn’t just plastic, it can be anything that is left where it doesn’t belong. When litter decays it can poison the surrounding plants through the soil. Animals, on the other hand, can die from the trash that is left unattended. Animals will mistake plastic for food even when the plastic is anything but food. Eating plastic will make them feel full and as a result, they will not want to eat. In the end, their refusal to eat will cause them to die of starvation, that is if they don’t die of poison first. The litter can suffocate or choke unsuspecting animals as well. I believe that Clarence T.C. Ching’s belief in ren teaches us not only to love others but also teaches us to love every

living thing and not just people. One plastic bag can take over 100 years to decompose. Now imagine hundreds of plastic bags lying around and how long will it take for these plastic bags to decompose. This is why I believe litter is a problem.

There are many solutions to solve littering. Some solutions aim to enforce the law and fine those that litter. My first solution is to put more trash and recycling bins around parks and on sidewalks. Doing that won't necessarily solve the problem, but at least it will remind people that there are proper places to throw away the trash. According to journalist writer Schultz, "The farther away you are from a trashcan or a recycling container, the more likely you are to litter." Another solution in mind is to collect the trash and hold little workshops where people can turn recyclable materials into something new. By doing workshops we can educate others on the severity of littering and the ways we can turn the trash into something useful. The more use something has, the less likely it is to be thrown away. My final solution is to establish areas where you can turn in anything made of plastic, like bags for money. If you can get money out of things, you will be more likely to keep those items to turn in. Some states, including Hawaii, already do this with glass/plastic bottles and aluminum cans. When you turn in these items you can get 5 to 10 cents. If we up the reward to around a quarter, people will more likely come and recycle, thus keeping the environment free of some litter.

The best solution in my opinion is making little areas that can transform recyclable things into something new and useful. There are plenty of ways to make old things into new things. Plastic can be melted down and formed into something new with the right equipment and training. Some people have a hard time finding jobs. Opening workshops even if it is in your

own house can prove to be useful to others. First, make sure you have the money to pay the people you hire and still make a profit. The shops could give people jobs and kids some excitement for new things to buy from them. The workshops could take requests or help people make their own recycled objects. There may be more people picking up trash after that to turn into newer recycled items that can be sold.

Littering is a problem everywhere. Tons of litter end up on the shores of Hawai'i because of the large mass of trash dumped in the Pacific Ocean. I explained why littering is a problem and the negative impacts it has on our environment and on every living thing. I proposed three detailed solutions which I believed would help in lowering the frequency of the problem. Lastly, I gave my opinion on which of these three solutions would work the best, including ways to do it and the reason why I believe it's the best thing to do. By giving you the facts and the ways to stop the problem of littering, I am hoping that you will join me in taking the initiative and helping to curb the problem in our state. Being conscious of the problem and trying to avoid doing it may be small steps, but these will go a long way in keeping Hawai'i free of litter and in saving our environment, not just for us, but also for all the other living things inhabiting this place we call home.