The Senate

S T A T E C A P I T O L
H O N O L U L U, H A W A I ‘ I 9 6 8 1 3

September 11, 2020

The Honorable David Ige
Governor, State of Hawaii
Executive Chambers
415 South Beretania St., 5th Floor
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Governor Ige:

Re: Restoration of Training Funds for Unemployed

The Committee appreciates the candid discussion at our September 4 meeting. We understand your concerns and hope you can understand ours. We hope that DOH’s new leadership will be more open and transparent in sharing data and plans, obviating the need to call upon the Auditor to obtain information.

We were glad to have the opportunity to discuss the UI “plus up” and Oceanit’s rapid test initiatives. We look forward to your decision on Oceanit’s proposal.

We also request a reconsideration of your decision to reduce CARES Act funding for retraining and workforce development. The legislature acted quickly to appropriate funds to help the current jobless connect with retraining and employment. As of September 3, over 180,000 unemployed are receiving unemployment benefits or have pending claims.

We, therefore, need more funding, not less, to assist the unemployed train for new careers, and ask that you restore funding to DBEDT or release $19.6 million directly to DLIR to fund the two initiatives which previously proposed to DBEDT, i.e., $3.1 million for “RUDDER” and $16.5 million for “Seasonal Opportunity Initiatives, which are attached.

Going forward, we look forward to working collaboratively with you and your departments. With the delay in reopening, each day brings more jobless. We must act quickly or face losing talented workers to other states and crippling our local businesses and economy.

The Committee requests that you provide documentation of the requested information by **4:00 p.m., Thursday, September 17, 2020.** Please email your response to all Senate Special Committee COVID-19 members. Should you have any questions, please contact Duncan Osorio at 586-6800 or via email at d.osorio@capitol.hawaii.gov.

Sincerely,

Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz
Senator Jarrett Keohokalole
Senator Michelle N. Kidani
Senator Donna Mercado Kim
Senator Sharon Moriwaki
Senator Kurt Fevella