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Statement of
BRENN A. HASHIMOTO
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Before the
SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND TECHNOLOGY
Wednesday, February 5, 2025
3:10 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 224

In consideration of
**SB 631, RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES
DEVELOPMENT**

Chair Aquino, Vice Chair Lee, and members of the committee.

The Department of Human Resources Development (HRD) offers comments on SB 631.

SB 631 requires HRD to allow executive branch departments to select applicants from an applicant pool for initial screening.

This authority was provided to departments through Act 186/24 (HB 1832 "Relating to Hiring")

We are available to provide any further information or answer questions as needed.

SB-631

Submitted on: 1/31/2025 4:29:33 PM

Testimony for LBT on 2/5/2025 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Khoi Vu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Greetings,

Please excuse me if my testimony violates any Hawaii State Ethics for State Employees. I'm writing my testimony in support of SB 631 and the goals that the bill pushes to achieve. I was a member of an Executive Branch Administer Services Office that oversees the budget of the Department. My office and other divisions within the Department have continued to face difficulty in filling our vacancies. The biggest challenge has been receiving a qualified list of applicants from the Department of Human Resources Development (DHRD) in a timely matter, contributing to high vacancy counts, lapse payroll appropriations, and confusion from legislatures. This insufficiency also affects the morale of department staff who continue to do their best with less to service their community, for they find their jobs meaningful.

Often, the Department divisions find themselves hiring candidates as 89-day hires or temporary assigned off-list hires (TAOL) to fill the vacant positions while waiting for DHRD to qualify. The wait to receive a qualification from DHRD can take up to 3 months. While being an 89-day hire or TAOL hire, employees do not receive state benefits such as service time accumulation, insurance benefits, vacation, and sick leave. Sometimes, even after waiting for qualifications, some employees receive rejections stating that they do not meet the qualifications for the positions. Therefore, they will have to either file an appeal, reapply, and continue their status as an 89-day hire or TAOL hire. Please note that filing an appeal must be done within 7 days, and the result of their appeals can take another few months.

The qualification for the position or what level of the positions that employee can be qualified for is based on when they submit their application. Therefore, the employee may have already received enough experience for the position or the next level of the position while working as an 89-day hire or a TAOL while waiting for their application. However, DHRD will only qualify the applicants for the experience that they have based on the date that they submitted their applications.

As an example, there was a job posting for Program Analyst I and II that was opened on September 17, 2024, and listed to remain open for ten (10) days due to the immediate need to fill. This job posting was requested by my Department to officially hire our 89-day hire, who has been working with the department for about 3 months. Although I have already been a civil service member in this position for the department at a higher level, I also applied to see how long it would take DHRD to qualify someone who has already surpassed the minimum

qualifications. It was not until 12/18/2024 that I received a response that I qualified for the position. The 89-day hire who had applied and worked with the department in the position was now qualified to be a level II based on the minimum qualified specialized experience of 6 months. However, the 89-day hire only received qualification for level I because DHRD based the qualification on when the application was submitted. Therefore, if the employee wants to move up to level II, she would (1) reapply with DHRD or (2) pass a 6-month probation with the Department to be redescribed to a level II.

I understand that the Executive Branch is quite big compared to other Government Branches and Government Agencies in Hawaii and has a lot of position listings. However, it is inexcusable to have to wait up to 3 months to receive a qualification list of candidates. After waiting 3 months, these candidates would have already found different job opportunities, thus leaving the hiring department with limited options and sometimes no attainable candidates to interview. The Department would then have to request another list from DHRD, which would take additional time and extend the time that these positions are vacant.

SB 631 would place the responsibility on the hiring Departments to first interview candidates that best fit the purposes of their divisions and offices. Then, with the Departments' selected candidates, DHRD can assess which of the Departments' candidate selections meet the minimum qualifications of the positions. Most of the time, the Departments will have more staff than DHRD to at least conduct the initial stage and filter out what they agree to best qualify for their Departments, lowering the amounts of applications that DHRD would have to initially review. The hiring Departments are responsible for serving the public; therefore, they should be held accountable for their operations, of which hiring for vacant positions is part of continuing to efficiently meet public demands for their services. Explaining not being able to achieve Departments' responsibilities to the public due to failure to hire vacant positions because of DHRD is not appropriate.

Thank you,

Khoi Vu

SB-631

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 7:58:43 PM

Testimony for LBT on 2/5/2025 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Karen Luke	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Members,

I support SB631, so executive branch departments can select applicants from the HR development applicant pool for initial screening to expedite the hiring process. The departments needing a new hire may be able to more quickly find applicants from the pool who may fit the qualifications they seek.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Aloha,

Karen Luke

Resident of Ewa Beach and retired federal government worker.

SB-631

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 8:26:04 PM

Testimony for LBT on 2/5/2025 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ellen Awai	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support SB631 to fill vacant vacancies. I attended several Job Fairs with the state, city, and other agencies. I spoke to a DHRD supervisor, who didn't realize, although my applications along with attachments have been sent to their department, but no one had ever called me for interviews. He learned a lot from our little talk of how various departments can blackball a person, although they have all the credentials. Some positions was even changed to have only licensed professionals which I wasn't going to pay for annually.

But my life just surviving in our islands have been hectic and I'm unable to follow through a lot of issues faced in our communities, especially by individuals that were labeled with disabilities by doctors who needed a diagnosis to be paid by health insurances! Doctors even got paid more if you had more diagnosis and would refer patients to others unqualified to do a treatment or a specialist who was more expensive, but charged even more than a PCP appointment because the doctor didn't have the equipment, example to clean my ears. Since I do not follow the PCP's instructions to take the medications that will ruin my liver and kidneys, they call the Honolulu Police Department as a mental health welfare check. Does this go on my criminal records? We let professionals control too much of our lives with their bad advise that is culturally incompetent and is just a waste of time and money! Rob from the Poor to give to the Rich, reverse Robin Hood!

SB-631

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 1:39:06 PM

Testimony for LBT on 2/5/2025 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jodi Akau	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I SUPPORT!

LATE

SB-631

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 4:56:33 PM

Testimony for LBT on 2/5/2025 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tammi Gumban	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I humbly support this bill. As a state worker with 20+ years of service. This bill will address DHURD's inability to effectively and efficiently respond to applicants (civil service).

DHURD should allow for Director's of their Department the capability and authority to vet out potential applicants, especially for internal hires. Internal hires are required to fill out the LONG and OVERWHELMING application process, and then REQUIRED to submit answers in their SUPPLEMENTAL section, providing redundant information, as laid out in an applicants resume!!

By experience, I have filled out many applications over my years of employment, and the process takes too long, its too tedious, and it takes me with a person of 20 plus years of experience over an hour to fill out the STATE's application!

I literally got denied, because through transparency, DHURD sent me a letter five years ago and notified me that I could not copy and paste the information from my RESUME to the Supplemental section of the application, however, based on the information requested-its the same information I worked hard to put together in my RESUME.

REAL-TIME EXAMPLE: To date: I had currently submitted an application for an internal recruitment, in which I currently am serving in a Temporary Assigned position for almost 3-years, and my application was submitted a year ago and most recently in November of 2024 as an update- my application status, clearly only states 'Application RECEIVED'- with no initial review, as I continue to wait!!.

Recommendations:

1. Allow for Directors of their own Department to vet out potential applicants-Especially for internal recruitment to allow for a quicker response time and review. This will eliminate staffing issues at DHURD that are unable to vet out all the applications they receive on a daily basis.
2. Downsize their application process - online is convenient-however, the application to submit information is redundant and ridiclous. People get frustrated - and finally give up!

3. When recruiting internally, communicate and collaborate with other departments (vice-versa) to ensure applications are received and potential candidates are available after a initial screening, before we lose these candidates to other entities.

Mahalo for allowing me to submit testimony!