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March 25, 2015

TESTIMONY TO THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LABOR & PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT

For Hearing on Friday, March 27, 2015
10:10 a.m., Conference Room 309

BY

JAMES K. NISHIMOTO
DIRECTOR

House Concurrent Resolution No. 215
And
House Resolution No. 150

**Requesting the Director of Human Resources Development to Equalize Transit
Benefits and Subsidies for All State Employees Regardless of Mode of
Transportation**

WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY

TO CHAIRPERSON MARK NAKASHIMA AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE:

The purpose of HCR 215 and HR 150 is to request the Director of Human Resources Development, in consultation with the Department of Accounting and General Services as necessary, to develop and implement a comprehensive pre-tax public transportation benefit program for various modes of transportation that equalizes the transportation benefits, including subsidies, available to all state employees, regardless of mode of transportation and to submit a report to the Legislature no later than twenty days before the convening of the Regular Session of 2016 on the progress made toward implementing the program.

The Department of Human Resources Development (DHRD) **HAS CONCERNS** with the proposed resolutions.

DHRD appreciates the intent to encourage commuter benefits programs and recognizes the burden transportation costs have on our employees; however, the State is concerned the potential impact H.R. 150 and H.C.R. 215 will have on state finances. The State does not have funding to support such an initiative. As such, we feel that it would not be prudent to pursue enactment at this time and recommend that these resolutions be held.

It is proposed that in lieu of requiring the development and implementation of a program for which the program design and implementation details are not known, that H.R. 150 and H.C.R. 215 request a study be conducted to determine the impact of the proposed statewide program for consideration in determining the appropriateness of developing the proposed program.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this resolution.



HAWAII GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION
AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO

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The Twenty-Eighth Legislature, State of Hawaii
House of Representatives
Committee on Labor and Public Employment

Testimony by
Hawaii Government Employees Association
March 27, 2015

**H.C.R. 215/H.R. 150 – REQUESTING THE
DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES
DEVELOPMENT TO EQUALIZE TRANSIT
BENEFITS AND SUBSIDIES FOR ALL STATE
EMPLOYEES REGARDLESS OF MODE OF
TRANSPORTATION**

The Hawaii Government Employees Association supports the purpose and intent of H.C.R. 215 and H.R. 150. These resolutions request the Director of the Department of Human Resources Development to develop and implement a comprehensive pre-tax public transportation benefit program that equalizes the transportation benefits, including subsidies, available to all state employees regardless of which mode of transportation they rely upon to get to work.

Currently, state employees who use public transportation do not receive a subsidy to purchase a bus pass. Considering the serious traffic congestion problems, especially in Honolulu, we should be encouraging state employees to take public transportation to work and reduce the cost of a monthly bus pass, which is \$60.

A subsidy for bus transportation must be extended to the rail system once it is completed and there is a fully integrated mass transit network in place. As public transportation systems are further developed on the neighbor islands, such subsidies would be applicable there as well.

We appreciate the opportunity to speak in support of H.C.R. 215 and H.R. 150.

Respectfully submitted,

Randy Perreira
Executive Director