



HAWAII GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION

AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO

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The Twenty-Fifth Legislature, State of Hawaii
House of Representatives
Committee on Public Safety

Testimony by
Hawaii Government Employees Association
March 12, 2009

H.C.R 92 – REQUESTING THE AUDITOR TO
CONDUCT A MANAGEMENT AND
FINANCIAL AUDIT OF THE DEPARTMENT
OF PUBLIC SAFETY, SHERIFF DIVISION,
AND TO REPORT ON THE SUITABILITY OF
THE ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION OF
THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
AND THE SHERIFF DIVISION

The Hawaii Government Employees Association supports the purpose and intent of H.C.R. 92, which requests the Auditor to conduct a management and financial audit of the Department of Public Safety (PSD) and the Sheriff Division. The HGEA is particularly interested in the Auditor examining what responsibilities of the Sheriff Division are not adequately achieved due to insufficient resources, as well as considering alternative administrative structures for the department's law enforcement and corrections functions.

We agree that the mission of the Sheriff Division is significantly different from the Corrections Division, and that the Director of PSD is forced to establish budgetary priorities for each function without adversely impacting the other. However, this is not possible if the Corrections Division typically receives between 60-80% of the funds appropriated to PSD.

Perhaps the most serious problem within the Sheriff Division is the compensation provided to deputy sheriffs. Despite their first responder status, deputy sheriff pay and benefits are no longer competitive in comparison with the county police officers in Hawaii or deputy sheriffs on the west coast. Law enforcement agencies from the Mainland have actively recruited well-trained Hawaii deputy sheriffs with more attractive compensation and benefit packages.

It makes no sense to invest valuable resources training deputy sheriffs only to have them leave for higher pay and better benefits elsewhere. For example, at the recruit

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level, county police officers earn about 30% more, effective July 1, 2008, and almost 25% more at the independent worker level. The pay differences exceed 35% at the sergeant and lieutenant levels.

Other forms of compensation such as standard of conduct pay, uniform allowance, longevity pay, and educational pay are also lagging in comparison to county police officers and west coast jurisdictions. Therefore, it is imperative that the Departments of Public Safety and Human Resources Development provide higher salaries and increased benefits with the Hawaii Government Employees Association that are competitive with the four county police officers and west coast deputy sheriffs.

HGEA thought it had an agreement with PSD to increase deputy sheriff salaries and differentials, but the department did not follow through as promised.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of H.C.R. 92.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nora A. Nomura', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Nora A. Nomura
Deputy Executive Director