



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT
235 S. BERETANIA STREET
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-2437

April 5, 2009

TESTIMONY TO THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
For Hearing on Monday, April 6, 2009
5:00 p.m., Conference Room 308

BY
MARIE C. LADERTA, DIRECTOR

Senate Bill No. 1122, S.D. 2, H.D. 2 (Proposed)
Relating to Public Employment

TO CHAIR OSHIRO AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE:

The purpose of S.B. No. 1122, S.D. 2, Proposed H.D. 2 is to protect the rights of public employees by preserving health, retirement, leave, and other benefits if furloughs are implemented in fiscal years 2009 to 2013.

The Department of Human Resources Development strongly supports Proposed H.D. 2. This is an important bill that needs to be passed for the well-being of our employees and we greatly appreciate that the Committee is hearing it today.

The present and immediately foreseeable condition of our State's economy has been well-documented in recent months. As the State undertakes efforts to address the projected budget shortfall, employee furloughs provide a viable option which would cause the least amount of disruption to public services and can potentially postpone or avert layoffs. This bill is necessary to ensure that employees' rights, privileges, and benefits are not inadvertently adversely impacted.

To ensure that all public employees enjoy the same level of protection, we recommend that the bill be amended to include all employees of the counties, the Judiciary, and the Hawaii Health Systems Corporation as well.

Because of the dynamics of collective bargaining discussions on this matter, we may need to recommend other amendments to the bill as it moves forward.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.



The Judiciary, State of Hawaii

Testimony to the Twenty-Fifth Legislature, Regular Session of 2009

House Committee on Finance
The Honorable Marcus R. Oshiro, Chair
The Honorable Marilyn B. Lee, Vice Chair

Monday, April 6, 2009, 5:00 p.m., Agenda # 4
State Capitol, Conference Room 308

by
Sharen M. Tokura
Human Resources Director

WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY

Bill No. and Title: Senate Bill No. 1122, S.D. 2, Proposed H.D. 2, Relating to Public Employment.

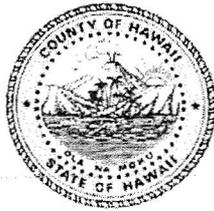
Purpose: Protects the rights of public employees by preserving health, retirement, leave, and other benefits if furlough is implemented in fiscal years 2009 to 2013.

Judiciary's Position:

The Judiciary supports the preservation of employee benefits should a furlough program be implemented. We respectfully request that the Judiciary be included in this proposed legislation so that our employees may also have the same protection as executive branch employees in the event furloughs are similarly instituted by the Judiciary.

Thank you for your consideration of our request to be included in this bill.

William P. Kenoi
Mayor



Michael R. Ben, SPHR
Director of Human Resources

Ronald K. Takahashi
Deputy Director of Human Resources

County of Hawai'i Department of Human Resources

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February 13, 2009

The Honorable Marcus R. Oshiro, Chair
And Members of the Committee on Finance
House of Representatives
State Capitol
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Chair Oshiro and Members of the Committee:

Re: SB 1122 SD 2 HD 1 Relating to Public Employment

I am Michael R. Ben, Director of Human Resources for the County of Hawai'i.

SB 1122 SD 2 HD 1 is intended to protect the rights of public employees by preserving health, retirement, leave, and other benefits if furloughs are implemented in fiscal years 2009 to 2013. As written, it is only the rights of State employees which will be protected.

This bill is very similar to Act 283, SLH 1996, except for the fact that Act 283 also extended to County employees, the office of Hawaiian affairs, the judiciary, and the legislative bodies of the State and counties.

The County of Hawai'i, like the State, faces fiscal and economical challenges in the coming years and the possibility of furloughing our employees may be a consideration for us in the future. We are experiencing declining real property values which will affect our property tax revenues in the near future. We know too that declining visitors will mean a reduction in the amount we share in the transit accommodations tax revenues.

Considering our current and predicted economic conditions, we would like to keep furloughs as one available option to us, and we would like our employees, to be treated in the same manner as State employees if our need to furlough ever arises.

Hawai'i County is an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer.

The Honorable Marcus R. Oshiro, Chair
And Members of the Committee on Finance
April 6, 2009
Page 2 of 2

Thus, we ask that the County of Hawai'i, both its executive and legislative branches, be included in the coverage of the bill. We ask for the same preservation of certain rights afforded State employees in the event of a furlough.

We suggest then, that the definition of "Department," under SECTION 2, Definitions, be amended to read as follows:

"Department" means any department, board, commission, or agency, or other body of the state executive branch, including the department of education and the University of Hawai'i, and the County of Hawai'i, both its executive and legislative branches of government.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michael R. Ben".

Michael R. Ben, SPHR
Director of Human Resources