



HAWAI'I CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION

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February 6, 2019
Rm. 325, 2:20 p.m.

To: The Honorable Chris Lee, Chair
The Honorable Joy A. San Buenaventura, Vice Chair
Members of the House Committee on Judiciary

From: William D. Hoshijo, Executive Director
Hawai'i Civil Rights Commission

Re: H.B. No.1357

The Hawai'i Civil Rights Commission (HCRC) has enforcement jurisdiction over Hawai'i's laws prohibiting discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, and access to state and state funded services. The HCRC carries out the Hawai'i constitutional mandate that no person shall be discriminated against in the exercise of their civil rights. Art. I, Sec. 5.

H.B. No. 1357 provides an appropriation for an additional Program Specialist IV position for the HCRC (LBR 153) for FY 2020 and FY 2021.

The HCRC supports H.B. No. 1357.

The HCRC currently has one Program Specialist V, who has coordinated the HCRC's voluntary mediation program. Since its inception nineteen years ago, voluntary mediation of discrimination complaints has been offered through referral to community mediation centers in employment cases, but not in fair housing cases, due to stringent case processing requirements imposed by a cooperative agreement with the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

From 2016-2018, the Program Specialist V played a key role in the planning, implementation, and development of an HCRC Fair Housing Mediation Pilot Program. In addition to developing policies, procedures, and forms with HUD guidance and approval, the Program Specialist V mediates the fair housing cases in-house, due to the exacting requirements of the new program. The fair housing mediation pilot program has been a great success, allowing parties to achieve just resolution without resort to enforcement (investigation, conciliation, and litigation). The success of the program has required the Program Specialist V to devote substantial time to that work, to the detriment of existing work coordinating the non-housing mediation program.

Establishment of a new Program Specialist IV will allow for continued development of the fair housing mediation program, establishing it as an ongoing program that is no longer a “pilot” program, while increasing capacity to effectively coordinate and expand the existing mediation program for non-housing cases. This will result in just resolution of more cases through mediation, and increase effective and efficient use of existing enforcement resources for investigation, conciliation, and litigation. The HCRC estimates that the requested addition of a Program Specialist IV could increase the number of cases referred to voluntary mediation by as much as 50%..

HB-1357

Submitted on: 2/2/2019 12:33:01 AM

Testimony for JUD on 2/6/2019 2:20:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Gerard Silva	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

Waste of Money!!!!!!