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Statement of
BRENNA H. HASHIMOTO
Director, Department of Human Resources Development

Before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
Tuesday, February 27, 2024
2:00 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 308

In consideration of
HB1645 HD1, RELATING TO STATE POSITION VACANCIES

Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Garrett, and the members of the committee.

The Department of Human Resources Development (DHRD) offers **comments** on HB1645 HD1.

The purpose of the bill is to require the Department of Human Resources Development to submit an annual report to the Legislature on vacancies in the state executive branch and appropriates funds to conduct the annual survey.

DHRD offers the following comments:

- 1) Pursuant to HRS 26-5 (a) (2) (A), DHRD is already required to submit a report to the Legislature which includes: a list of vacant positions for reclassification or abolishment, the agency each position is attached to, the reasons for reclassifying or abolishing the position, and the duration the position has been vacant. However, there are measures moving forward in both the House (HB2658 HD1) and Senate (SB2352 SD1) to repeal the existing report requirement.
- 2) To date, much of the required information proposed in HB1645 HD1 has voluntarily been included and available in the annual report referenced in item 1.
- 3) The current report on vacancies that DHRD submits pertains to civil service positions only. As departments are delegated responsibility for establishing and filling exempt positions, DHRD does not keep or maintain records regarding

non-civil service vacancies. As such, we request to clarify the scope of this proposed report.

- 4) Several requested data points are department specific information (2D, 2G, 7, 8 and 13) and not available through DHRD's human resources information system. DHRD would need to gather that information from the other executive branch departments.
- 5) Some of the requested information is already available to the Legislature through the budget testimony submitted each year. Depending on the timing of the annual data gathering and preparation, the information from our annual report may be obsolete by the time the Legislature reviews it.
- 6) Proposed budget to complete this annual report: \$300,000 per year
 - a. \$35,000 per year for membership and fees to the Hawaii Employers Council and/or other similar company to obtain local market salary data for salary comparisons, retention incentives ideas, HR best practices, etc.
 - b. \$100,000 - \$250,000 for employee engagement surveys on retention and recruitment, and annual surveys to administrators for some of the required department specific information requested by the proposed report. The range provided allows for variation of the surveys – simple to more in-depth information.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.



HAWAII GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION

AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO

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The Thirty-Second Legislature, State of Hawaii
The House of Representatives
Committee on Finance

Testimony by
Hawaii Government Employees Association

February 1, 2024

H.B. 1645, H.D 1 — RELATING TO THE STATE POSITION VACANCIES

The Hawaii Government Employees Association, AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO strongly supports the purpose and intent of H.B. 1645, H.D 1 which requires the Department of Human Resources Development to submit an annual report to the Legislature on vacancies in the state executive branch.

The State is currently hovering around a 30% vacancy rate in government which has led to a severe reduction, both in quantity and quality, in government services provided to the public. In certain offices, our union members must do the jobs of two or three individuals due to the vacancy rates – our members are tired, burnt out, and frustrated. For example, let's look at the Child Welfare Branch within the State Department of Human Services. In December of 2023, the Civil Beat reported that their vacancy rate has reached a terrifying 40%. The average caseload for a social worker has become unmanageable and through no fault of the workers own, they cannot keep up with the demand of cases which has led to a reduction in services in protecting at-risk children in unsafe homes. This is just one of many examples of the effects on the vacancy rate in state government. With high vacancy the State cannot efficiently and effectively provide the critical services that our taxpayers deserve.

Various metrics on the overall and department vacancy rates, the steps taken to fill each vacant position, essential civil service positions that are hard to fill, and the impact on government operations and delivery of service due to a vacant position is paramount. We also believe it is beneficial for the DHRD to provide policies and strategies that they plan to implement to recruit and retain a modern and competitive workforce. Taxpayers have a right to know about the metrics and the impact of vacancies in state government and what the DHRD is planning to do to fix this issue.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of H.B. 1645, H.D. 1.

Respectfully submitted,


Randy Perreira
Executive Director



UNITED PUBLIC WORKERS

AFSCME Local 646, AFL-CIO

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
THE THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION OF 2024**

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Rep. Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair

Rep. Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair

Tuesday, February 27, 2024, 2:00 PM
Conference Room 308 & Videoconference

Re: Testimony on HB1645, HD1 – RELATING TO STATE POSITION VACANCIES

Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Members of the Committee:

The United Public Workers, AFSCME Local 646, AFL-CIO (“UPW”) is the exclusive bargaining representative for approximately 14,000 public employees, which includes blue collar, non-supervisory employees in Bargaining Unit 1 and institutional, health, and correctional employees in Bargaining Unit 10, in the State of Hawaii and various counties.

UPW **supports** HB1645, HD1, which requires Department of Human Resources Development (“DHRD”) to submit an annual report to the Legislature on vacancies in the state executive branch.

Pursuant to Act 57, Session Laws of Hawaii (“SLH”) 2019, as amended by Act 151, SLH 2023, DHRD, no later than 20 days prior to the legislative session. is required to submit a report to the Legislature that must include a list of vacant positions for reclassification or abolishment, identify the agency each position is attached to, provide reasons for reclassifying or abolishing the position, and state the duration the position has been vacant.

While the annual report provided for in this measure would consist of much of the same vacancy-related information as the report referenced above, this bill would require DHRD to provide greater granularity with respect to the efforts that are being undertaken by each department in the executive branch to fill each position and the impact that each vacancy has on government operations and the delivery of service.

We believe the data in the report prescribed in the bill will provide the Legislature and the people of Hawaii a true understanding of the crisis created by the high percentage of vacant positions statewide.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kalani Werner", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Kalani Werner
State Director

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