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LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE BUREAU
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Written Comments

HCR138/HR119

**REQUESTING THE LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE BUREAU TO STUDY THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF A YEAR-ROUND LEGISLATURE**

Charlotte A. Carter-Yamauchi, Director
Legislative Reference Bureau

Presented to the House Committee on Legislative Management

Wednesday, March 20, 2024, 3:00 p.m.
Room 312 & Via Videoconference

Chair Nakamura and Members of the Committee:

Good afternoon, Chair Nakamura and members of the Committee, my name is Charlotte Carter-Yamauchi, and I am the Director of the Legislative Reference Bureau (Bureau). Thank you for providing the opportunity to submit written **comments** on H.C.R. No. 138/H.R. No. 119, Requesting the Legislative Reference Bureau to Study the Implementation of a Year-Round Legislature.

The purpose of these measures is to request that the Bureau study the implementation of a year-round Legislature, including the effects of a year-round Legislature on staff retention, salary and economic support costs, program costs, and financial ramifications of other forms of employment held by legislators. The measures also request that the Bureau submit a report of its study, including findings, recommendations, and any proposed legislation, to the Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2025.

The Bureau takes no position on these measures and submits the following comments for your consideration.

The Bureau would require more specific guidance to conduct such a study. Because the measures provide insufficient guidance regarding any model or standards upon which the

Bureau should base the study, other than that the Legislature should meet year-round, the resulting variations could be extensive.

According on information provided by the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) last updated on July 28, 2021 <https://www.ncsl.org/about-state-legislatures/full-and-part-time-legislatures>, there are four full-time legislatures (California, Wisconsin, New York, and Pennsylvania). Hawaii, along with Alaska, Wisconsin, Illinois, Ohio, and Massachusetts, are categorized by the NCSL as "full-time lite" legislatures . . . legislatures that require more time, staff and resources than part-time legislatures but not as much as full-time legislatures. Because the measures request that the Bureau study not only the implementation of a year-round Legislature, but also the effects of a year-round Legislature on staff retention, salary and economic support costs, program costs, and financial ramifications of other forms of employment held by legislators, it would be necessary to know what the Legislature envisions as an ideal model upon which to base the comparison. In other words, conducting such a study is akin to planning out a potential road map to get from Point A (the current part-time legislature status) to point B (potential full-time legislature status); however, as currently drafted, it is unclear if Point B is one of the states that currently has a full-time legislature or is a different version of a full-time legislature altogether. Furthermore, it is unclear what the phrase ". . . salary and economic support costs, program costs, and financial ramifications of other forms of employment held by legislators" is to encompass. Consequently, the Bureau would require more concrete guidance on the intent of each item to provide any meaningful analysis.

If a specific model of a full-time legislature is provided and the noted issues are clarified, the Bureau believes that it could complete such a study in the stated time period; provided that the Bureau's interim workload is not adversely impacted by too many other studies or additional responsibilities, such as conducting, writing, or finalizing other reports, drafting legislation, or both, for other state agencies, task forces, or working groups that may be requested or required under other legislative measures.

Thank you again for your consideration.

HCR-138

Submitted on: 3/20/2024 7:57:18 AM

Testimony for LMG on 3/20/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ruta Jordans	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

A year round legislative session would allow legislators to take the time to properly and thoroughly investigate bills. It should alleviate the mad dash and scramble happening now. If the 3000+ bills were divided to be heard over a year's time, it would also allow the public to more easily stay up to date on when the bills are to be heard, instead of as it is now. Last minute testimony does not give us much time to prepare and write understandable testimony. Please support this concurrent resolution!

HCR-138

Submitted on: 3/20/2024 8:17:59 AM

Testimony for LMG on 3/20/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nikos Leverenz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I write in strong support of this measure.

Although it was outside of the purview of the Commission to Improve Standards of Conduct, a full-time legislature was discussed as we looked for ways to improve the functionality of the legislative process in a manner that best served the public interest.

While a full-time legislature is not a panacea, the challenges of recent years, as well as ongoing concerns regarding housing and climate change impacts, have demonstrated the need for more protracted deliberation in the lawmaking process as a matter of course.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.