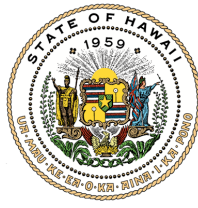


JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR  
KE KIA'ĀINA



JORDAN LOWE  
DIRECTOR

MICHAEL VINCENT  
Deputy Director  
Administration

JARED K. REDULLA  
Deputy Director  
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SYLVIA LUKE  
LT GOVERNOR  
KE KE'ENA

STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII  
**DEPARTMENT OF LAW ENFORCEMENT**

*Ka 'Oihana Ho'okō Kānāwai*

715 South King Street  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 2230, HOUSE DRAFT 1

RELATING TO LAW ENFORCEMENT

Before the House Committee on Finance

Thursday, February 22, 2024; 11:30 a.m.

State Capitol Conference Room 308, Via Videoconference

Testifiers: Michael Vincent or Jared Redulla

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

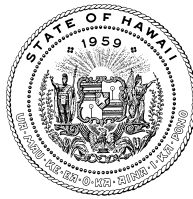
The Department of Law Enforcement (DLE) submits the following **comments** on House Bill 2230, House Draft 1.

This requires the Law Enforcement Standards Board to develop, and each department employing law enforcement officers to implement, a structured health intervention program to support law enforcement officers' physical and mental health.

The DLE is supportive of the health and wellness of law enforcement officer and exploring and implementing measures to improve officer health, wellness, and overall quality of life. As pointed out in the bill, the law enforcement profession sees ". . . high rates of divorce, alcoholism, suicide, post-traumatic stress disorder, heart attacks, and other mental and physical health problems."

The DLE is concerned with the implementation of the goals of this measure. For example, there will be significant costs associated with the program from various sides, the requirement for participation by officers is unclear, there is no provision to address workers compensation related issues or the significant issues that must involve collective bargaining.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments on this bill.



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS  
KE KE'ENA O KE KIA'ĀINA

**Testimony in Support of H.B. No. 2230 HD1, Relating to Law Enforcement**

Representative Yamashita, Chair  
Representative Kitagawa, Vice Chair  
House Committee on Finance

February 22, 2024, at 11:30 am

Room Number: 308

The Office of Wellness and Resilience (OWR) in the Governor's Office **SUPPORTS** H.B. No. 2230 HD1, Relating to Law Enforcement.

Established through Act 291 (Session Laws of Hawai'i 2022), the overall aim of the OWR is to make Hawai'i a trauma-informed state. One of our priority areas focuses on breaking down barriers that impact the physical, social and emotional well-being of Hawai'i's people. We explore avenues to increase access and availability to mental, behavioral, social, and emotional health services and support. We aim to start this with our state workforce.

Law enforcement officers are exposed to various stressors that make them more vulnerable to the onset of mental health disorders. Research shows that when law enforcement officers are provided with mental health professionals support and peer support programs, there are decreased mental health symptoms related to depression and trauma symptoms, better coping skills implemented, and overall improvement in wellness.<sup>1</sup> H.B. 2230 HD1 provides our state's law enforcement officers supports to increase their mental health literacy and gain skills needed to manage stressors and obligations at work and in other domains of life.

The OWR appreciates that the committee recognizes the support our law enforcement officers need to address their wellness. Our office addresses the State's workforce wellness and resilience by providing training and technical support to state departments. We would like to humbly offer these services to our colleagues at the Law Enforcement Standards Board and the Department of Law Enforcement.

Thank you for considering these comments and for the opportunity to provide testimony in support.

Mahalo

Tia L R Hartsock, MSW, MSCJA  
Director, Office of Wellness & Resilience  
Office of the Governor

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<sup>1</sup> Uhl, Alexis, et al. "Mental Health Providers and Peers Help Enhance the Effectiveness of Law Enforcement Mental Health Interventions." *Journal of Police and Criminal Psychology*, vol. 38, no. 3, 2023, pp. 774–81, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11896-023-09604-3>



STATE OF HAWAII ORGANIZATION OF POLICE OFFICERS  
" A Police Organization for Police Officers Only "  
Founded 1971

February 21, 2024

**Via Online**

The Honorable Kyle T. Yamashita  
Chair  
The Honorable Lisa Kitagawa  
Vice-Chair  
House Committee on Finance  
Hawaii State Capitol, Rooms 306, 435  
415 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, HI 96813

Re: **HB 2230 HD1 – Development of Structured Health Program**

Dear Chair Yamashita, Vice-Chair Kitagawa, and Honorable Committee members:

I serve as the President of the State of Hawaii Organization of Police Officers (“SHOPO”) and write to you on behalf of our Union in **strong support** of HB 2230 HD1 which calls for the development and implementation of a structured health intervention program that supports law enforcement officers’ physical and mental health. This bill will further the public interest by addressing the high levels of occupational stress experienced by our law enforcement officers and the impact that can have on officer performance, morale, turnover and public safety.

As you are aware, our officers are regularly exposed to violence, suffering, death, and disturbing situations, which causes high levels of job-related stress, and in turn contributes to the high rates of divorce, alcoholism, suicide, post-traumatic stress disorder, heart attacks, and other mental and physical health problems that law enforcement officers deal with. Moreover, there is potential stigma associated with seeking mental health assistance that may prevent law enforcement officers from receiving help. The health intervention program proposed by this bill would include:

1. Physical training designed to help equip law enforcement officers to apprehend and arrest suspects and to perform other physical aspects of their duties;
2. Fitness classes, martial arts classes, and other activities, to be made available to law enforcement officers during regular business hours;

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The Honorable Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair  
The Honorable Lisa Kitagawa, Vice-Chair  
House Committee on Finance  
February 21, 2024  
SHOPO Testimony Page 2  
Re: HB 2230 HD1 – Development of Structured Health Program

3. Training on best practices for safely restraining a suspect, including training on effectively monitoring the suspect’s vital signs; and
4. Mental health support, including confidential, stigma-free, and trauma-informed therapy; mentoring programs; and peer-to-peer support groups.

We support this bill as it offers critical physical and mental health support to our officers and in turn, benefits the public. This program, when implemented, should be a voluntary benefit made available to our officers.

For our community, it is imperative that our police officers have access to adequate physical and mental health support. Development of a structured health intervention program such as the one described above is one step in that direction.

We thank you for allowing us to be heard on this very important issue and we hope your committee will unanimously support HB 2230 HD1.

Respectfully submitted,

ROBERT “BOBBY” CAVACO  
SHOPO President

RC jmo