

Honolulu, Hawaii

MAR 19 2025

RE: H.B. No. 401
H.D. 1
S.D. 1

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President of the Senate
Thirty-Third State Legislature
Regular Session of 2025
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Judiciary, to which was referred H.B. No. 401, H.D. 1, entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO DISTRICT COURT JUDGES,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to establish one additional district court judgeship in the Third Circuit.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Judiciary, Hawaii State Bar Association, West Hawaii Bar Association, Hawaii Financial Services Association, and five individuals.

Your Committee received testimony in opposition to this measure from two individuals.

Your Committee finds that currently, a single district court judge in the Kona District Court is required to handle a caseload of nearly sixteen thousand cases per year. This extraordinary volume of cases handled by a sole district court judge causes significant delays in obtaining trial and hearing dates, with incarcerated individuals waiting longer for their cases to be resolved. These delays result in unnecessary pretrial detention costs and emotional strain on defendants and their families. Additionally, overcrowded court calendars frequently lead to hours



of waiting for hearings, wasting time and resources for attorneys, litigants and their families, and witnesses, including victims. Your Committee further finds that the overburdened court system may also affect the quality of justice, as judges and their staff may be forced to prioritize speed over thoroughness, leaving little time for careful preparation for cases. This measure will add a second district court judge to the Kona District Court, thereby reducing delays, improving scheduling, ensuring timely hearings, alleviating burdens on pretrial detainees, lowering costs for taxpayers, and providing better access to justice for all.

Your Committee has amended this measure by making it effective upon its approval.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Judiciary that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of H.B. No. 401, H.D. 1, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as H.B. No. 401, H.D. 1, S.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Ways and Means.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Judiciary,



KARL RHOADS, Chair



The Senate
 Thirty-Third Legislature
 State of Hawai'i

Record of Votes
Committee on Judiciary
JDC

Bill / Resolution No.:* HB 401, HDI	Committee Referral: JDC, WAM	Date: 3/13/25		
<input type="checkbox"/> The Committee is reconsidering its previous decision on this measure. If so, then the previous decision was to: _____				
The Recommendation is: <input type="checkbox"/> Pass, unamended 2312 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pass, with amendments 2311 <input type="checkbox"/> Hold 2310 <input type="checkbox"/> Recommit 2313				
Members	Aye	Aye (WR)	Nay	Excused
RHOADS, Karl (C)	✓			
GABBARD, Mike (VC)	✓			
CHANG, Stanley	✓			
SAN BUENAVENTURA, Joy A.	✓			
AWA, Brenton			✓	
TOTAL	4	—	1	—
Recommendation: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adopted <input type="checkbox"/> Not Adopted				
Chair's or Designer's Signature: 				
Distribution: Original Yellow Pink Goldenrod File with Committee Report Clerk's Office Drafting Agency Committee File Copy				

*Only one measure per Record of Votes