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LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE BUREAU  
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State Capitol, Room 446  
415 S. Beretania Street  
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## Written Comments

### **SB1514** **RELATING TO THE LEGISLATURE**

Charlotte A. Carter-Yamauchi, Director  
Legislative Reference Bureau

Presented to the Senate Committee on Judiciary

Friday, February 7, 2025, 9:25 a.m.  
Conference Room 016 & Via Videoconference

Chair Rhoads and Members of the Committee:

Good morning, Chair Rhoads 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 S.B. No. 1514, Relating to the Legislature.

The purpose of this measure is to establish a temporary working group to study the feasibility of transitioning the Hawaii State Legislature's Regular Session from one that meets for three and a half months, from mid-January to early May, to one that meets on a year-round basis.

Specifically, the measure:

- (1) Establishes a temporary working group of at least nine members:
- (2) Authorizes the working group to invite any other persons whom the working group believes have expertise that would be helpful in fulfilling the working group's duties;

- (3) Directing the working group to:
  - (A) Study the feasibility of transitioning the Hawaii State Legislature's Regular Session from one that meets for approximately three and a half months from mid-January to early May, to one that meets on a year-round basis;
  - (B) Analyze the financial impact and necessary costs to operate a year-round legislative session, including staffing requirements, changes to legislative services, operational costs, office space needs, and impacts on legislation;
  - (C) Analyze and recommend any constitutional and statutory changes necessary to implement a year-round legislative session;
  - (D) Examine other states that have transitioned to a year-round legislature and the impact those transitions have had on the states and their communities. For the purposes of this paragraph, the working group shall examine California, Michigan, New York, Pennsylvania, and any other state deemed appropriate by the working group;
  - (E) Consider any findings and recommendations made by the Bureau in its report to the Legislature to be submitted pursuant to House Concurrent Resolution No. 138, Senate Draft 1, adopted during the Regular Session of 2024;
  - (F) Submit a report of its findings and recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2026; and
  - (G) Cease to exist on June 30, 2026.
- (4) Requires the Bureau to:
  - (A) Provide administrative assistance to the working group; and
  - (B) Assist the working group in preparing and submitting its report.

The measure also:

- (1) Authorizes the Bureau to retain a contractor or consultant to assist the working group in performing its duties under the measure;
- (2) Appropriates an unspecified sum to the Bureau for the purpose of the measure; and

- (3) Exempts the Bureau from the requirements of Chapter 103D, Hawaii Revised Statutes (Procurement Code) for any contract executed pursuant to the measure.

The Bureau takes no position on this measure but submits the following comments for your consideration.

As to the requirement that the Bureau provide administrative assistance to the working group, it is unclear what the term "administrative assistance" entails. The Bureau is more than willing and able to provide research and drafting assistance. However, the Bureau has neither the experience nor the clerical staff to provide assistance with meeting planning activities and logistics. In particular, the Bureau notes that it does not maintain any meeting space under its jurisdiction and would need to request any such space from one of the houses of the Legislature. Given these limitations, the Bureau respectfully requests that the measure be amended to change the phrase to read "provide research and drafting assistance to the working group."

Regarding the authorization to allow the Bureau to retain a contractor or consultant to assist the working group in performing its duties under the measure, while the Bureau greatly appreciates this provision and the appropriation of moneys for this purpose, given the short timeframe in which the working group must complete its assignment, it may be very unlikely that, even with the Procurement Code exemption, the Bureau will be able to obtain a qualified contractor or consultant within the limited time provided to the working group.

In such likelihood, the Bureau's existing staff will have to be responsible for supporting the working group. Consequently, to ensure that the Bureau has sufficient time to both fulfill its regular legislative drafting duties and finalize the required report and proposed legislation by the specified deadline, the Bureau respectfully requests that measure be amended to direct the working group to conclude its deliberations and finalize of its findings and recommendations no later than October 15, 2026.

If the term "administrative assistance" is amended and the amendment is made to require the working group to provide the Bureau with a draft of its findings, recommendations, and proposed legislation no later than October 15, 2026, the Bureau believes that the services requested of the Bureau are manageable; provided that the Bureau's interim workload is not adversely impacted by too many other additional responsibilities, such as other conducting studies, writing or finalizing other reports, drafting legislation, or any combination of these for the Legislature or for other state agencies, task forces, or working groups that may be requested or required under other legislative measures.

Finally, the Bureau would be happy to assist the Committee in preparing any draft and Committee Report on this measure.

Thank you again for your consideration.

**SB-1514**

Submitted on: 1/31/2025 6:02:01 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2025 9:25:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
cheryl burghardt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Senator Rhoads and committee

I SUPPORT SB 1514 which establishes a temporary working group to study the feasibility of transitioning the Hawai'i State Legislature's regular session from one that meets for 3.5 months from mid-January to early May, to one that meets on a year-round basis. Requires the Legislative Reference Bureau to provide administrative support to the working group. Requires report to Legislature. Appropriates moneys.

There is so much that needs to be accomplished in the legislature to do the work of the citizens that it seems only logical to have the legislature in session for the entire year. It is also key that moneys be appropriated to this working group. I do not see a timeline for this working group to report back with their findings?

Again, I SUPPORT this bill

C. Burghardt

Kou, Oahu

**SB-1514**

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 11:15:03 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2025 9:25:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Brett Kulbis	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Rhoads and Committee Members,

My name is Brett Kulbis, I'm a 26yr Navy Veteran and Retired Civil Servant. I live in Ewa Beach.

I STRONGLY OPPOSE SB-1514.

This task force is a waste of taxpayer dollars and a back door attempt to justify going from a part-time to full-time legislature.

A year-round legislature will increase costs significantly for taxpayers. The operational costs, including salaries for legislators and staff, maintenance of the Capitol building, and the expenses associated with a year round session, would rise. Honolulu Civil Beat discussed the potential cost implications of extending the legislative session, highlighting that such changes would require additional funding for staff and operational expenses. (Read <https://www.civilbeat.org/2023/02/should-hawaiis-legislature-meet-year-round/>)

The current session length allows for focused public participation where citizens can engage more intensely over a shorter period. Extending the session will dilute public involvement, as it becomes harder for the public to keep up with legislative activities over an extended period. This will also impact the ability of advocacy groups and individuals to effectively lobby or provide testimony on bills. A full-time legislature will shift the balance of power, giving more control to the legislative body at the expense of oversight by the public. Remember, all political power of this State is inherent in the people and the responsibility for the exercise thereof rests with the people.

Hawaii's legislative structure has been part-time for decades, reflecting the constitutional intent of the framers of our constitution to maintain legislators as part-time public servants. This is beneficial for keeping legislators connected to the everyday realities of their constituents.

Respectfully, I STRONGLY encourage you to vote NO on SB-1514 and stop wasting our tax dollars.

**SB-1514**

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 8:13:07 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2025 9:25:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jacob Wiencek	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members,

Our artificially condensed legislative session makes it harder to solicit broader public involvement and engage in robust legislative debate and discussions. Sometimes crucial debates and bills are rushed through because of our limited timeline. While working group on the issue is a step forward, we should just move to year round sessions.

I urge the Committee to SUPPORT this bill!

**Chair Karl Rhoads**  
**Vice Chair Mike Gabbard**

**Senate Committee on Judiciary**

**Friday, February 7, 2025**  
**9:25 AM**

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 1514 RELATING TO THE  
LEGISLATURE**

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary,

My name is Jun Shin and I am testifying as an individual in **SUPPORT** of **SB1514**, Relating to the Legislature. I support efforts to move our legislature from a part-time to a full-time body that meets year-round. With the increase in pay, benefits, etc to match a full-time job, and with temporary staff positions potentially becoming full time positions under this new system, legislators and staffers will not need to take on other means of employment. This will make it easier for everyone to make ends meet, avoiding turnover and growing institutional knowledge, while avoiding any potential conflict of interests. With these new reforms, we could see more legislators and staffers from different economic and social backgrounds who reflect much needed voices in our policy making process.

In terms of the legislative process, a full-time legislature would be able to have ample time to work on bills and to improve it as needed. Alongside having more time to address the long-term needs of the state, a full-time legislature will also be able to quickly address any emergencies that might come up throughout the year. While I would like to see this happen as soon as possible, I support the implementation of a working group because I understand that this would be a monumental shift in how the state government runs. This will require some time to gather information and to establish concrete steps, so I ask that you please **PASS** Senate Bill 1514 out of your committee.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Jun Shin,  
State House District 23 | State Senate District 12  
Cell: 808-255-6663  
Email: junshinbusiness729@gmail.com

**SB-1514**

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 11:07:19 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2025 9:25:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
lynne matusow	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support a year round legislature. Work for the legislators continues all year, 24/7, yet the legislature is in session for less than four months. Many important issues arise in the interim, and basically have to wait until the next January to be addressed. But a working group just wastes time. You need to pass something this year. You can look at the county councils and how they proceed. And pass a bill that moves this forward.