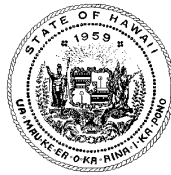


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DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT
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Statement of
BRENN H. HASHIMOTO
Director, Department of Human Resources Development

Before the
SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND TECHNOLOGY
Monday, March 24, 2025
3:00 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 224

In consideration of
**SCR 64/SR 49 REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES
DEVELOPMENT TO ESTABLISH THE HAWAII STATE FELLOWS PROGRAM.**

Chair Aquino, Vice Chair Lee, and Members of the Committee:

The Department of Human Resources Development (HRD) supports the intent of SCR 64 and SR 49 and respectfully requests an amendment to the resolution's current language.

SCR 64/SR 49 requests that HRD:

- Develop the Hawaii State Fellows Program to match talented applicants with full-time, paid fellowship roles in various state agencies for a period of ten to eleven months to attract and retain government workers in the State;
- Establish full-time, paid fellowship roles that offer professional development and hands-on experience in state governance;
- Establish administrative policies and procedures for the implementation of the program and integration of fellowship roles into the state government workflow;
- Promote the program and recruit eligible applicants;
- Establish program eligibility qualifications; and
- Establish program application requirements.

HRD is committed to modernizing and strengthening the state workforce. We believe the Hawaii State Fellows Program is an innovative strategy to address current and projected workforce shortages, provide opportunities for individuals to enter public service, and help agencies achieve mission-critical goals through strategic fellow placements.

We believe SCR 64/SR 49 recognizes the urgent need to attract, develop, and retain high-quality talent in public service by creating a fellowship program that will introduce early- to mid-career professionals to careers in government. The program envisions structured placements in state agencies where fellows can contribute to critical projects while gaining meaningful experience in public administration. This initiative not only supports the state's long-term workforce development strategy but also contributes to improved public service delivery and innovation.

To successfully implement and sustain the Hawaii State Fellows Program, HRD respectfully requests legislative support for **25.0 temporary full-time equivalent (FTE) positions** and \$2,000,000 (\$80,000/fellow) for fellows and **2.0 permanent FTE positions** and \$160,000 for program staff. The fellows would be placed in various departments statewide to provide immediate impact, support cross-agency learning, and contribute to high-priority projects. The two program staff will be responsible for overall program management, including strategic leadership, placement coordination, operational logistics, fellow engagement, and professional development.

If HRD is required to establish and operate the Hawaii State Fellows Program as proposed in SCR 64/SR 49, it is critical that these positions and associated funds be included in the state budget bill (HB300). Without this funding, HRD does not have the staffing or capacity to launch or manage a program of this scale. We also ask that any funding and positions for this program be in addition to our current resources and not take the place of existing department or administration priorities. HRD is already fully committed to meeting its current operational needs and responsibilities.

With the requested resources, HRD is prepared to implement the Hawaii State Fellows Program with the structure, support, and scale needed for success. We appreciate the Legislature's commitment to workforce innovation and respectfully urge your support for this measure with the inclusion of necessary budgetary resources.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. We are available for questions or to provide further information as needed.