



## HAWAII GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION

AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO

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The Thirty-Third Legislature, State of Hawaii  
The House of Representatives  
Committee on Finance

Testimony by  
Hawaii Government Employees Association

February 26, 2026

### **H.B.1131 H.D.1 – RELATING TO AN INTENSIVE MOBILE TEAM PILOT PROGRAM FOR HOUSELESS INDIVIDUALS SUFFERING FROM SERIOUS BRAIN DISORDERS**

The **Hawaii Government Employees Association, AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO** offers **comment on H.B.1131 H.D.1**, which is to exempt positions in the Adult Mental Health Division of the Department of Health from the civil service.

While we have no objections to the establishment of the office, we have concerns about the creation of positions within this office that will be exempt from civil service. Exempt employees do not have the same rights compared to civil service employees as they are considered “at-will” by the employer. We have consistently opposed the creation of more exempt positions in government, and more recently, we have advocated that exempt employees that are included within a collective bargaining unit receive *just-cause* protections, just like civil service employees.

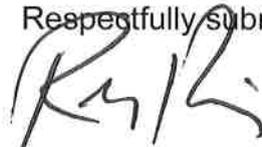
This proposal is part of a larger issue, which is that the civil service system and SOH HR must become more flexible, competitive, and adaptive to the current job market and public demands. There are methods the SOH can implement to streamline its hiring and recruiting while keeping employees within the civil service. Among other things, the SOH should look to adequately price these civil service positions to appropriately reflect a competitive salary, comparable to similar positions within the public and private sector, and in general, the market rate. The SOH should also look to reform its civil service hiring processes to create a more efficient and effective system, so that prospective employees are not waiting to hear back from a job that they applied to months ago. The solution to streamline hiring and recruiting is not to exempt positions which would be at the expense of an employee’s job-security; rather, the solution is to re-think the way we recruit, hire, and compensate civil service positions.

Likewise, exempting positions may hinder the SOH’s ability to recruit and retain employees because the stability and benefits that come with civil service positions are arguably the most persuasive incentives for a prospective employee to seek employment within local government.

Accordingly, while we recognize that this is a pilot program, if the program and its employees become permanent, we suggest that they, and any additional employees that are added to the program, be designated civil service employees.

We appreciate your consideration of our comments regarding H.B.1131 H.D.1.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Randy Perreira". The signature is stylized and written in a cursive-like font.

Randy Perreira  
Executive Director