



UNITED PUBLIC WORKERS

AFSCME Local 646, AFL-CIO

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
THE THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION OF 2026**

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
Rep. Chris Todd, Chair
Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair

Thursday, February 26, 2026, 10:00 AM
Conference Room 308 & Videoconference

Re: Testimony on HB1656, HD1 – RELATING TO INDEBTEDNESS TO THE STATE

Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee:

The United Public Workers, AFSCME Local 646, AFL-CIO (“UPW”) is the exclusive bargaining representative for approximately 14,000 public employees, which includes blue collar, non-supervisory employees in Bargaining Unit 1 and institutional, health, and correctional employees in Bargaining Unit 10, in the State of Hawaii and various counties.

UPW **strongly supports** HB1656, HD1, which amends the amount that a disbursing officer may deduct from an employee’s salary, wage, or compensation based on the employee’s gross income.

From time to time, the State and counties will mistakenly overpay an employee over a period of time or through a lump sum payment. This overpayment effectively becomes a loan with a burdensome repayment plan that the affected employee often cannot afford. §78-12, Hawaii Revised Statutes, currently provides that the minimum payment amount is \$100 per pay period or 25% of an employee’s compensation until the indebtedness is paid in full. This statutory provision is a bit antiquated given the rising cost of living and unfairly punishes a public employee for a payroll error committed by the employer.

While UPW understands that indebtedness must be repaid, the current repayment schedule is simply too costly for many of our members who earn \$2,000 or less per pay period and are living paycheck to paycheck. The legislation attempts to address the inequity of the current repayment plan by establishing a cap of five percent of an employee’s gross income per pay period. Additionally, the elimination of the “swipe” provision, which allows DAGS to recover an indebtedness equal to or less than \$1,000 in a single pay period, would further help alleviate the financial burden created by an employer’s payroll error.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify in support of this measure.

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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.1656, H.D. 1 — RELATING TO INDEBTEDNESS TO THE STATE

The Hawaii Government Employees Association, AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO strongly supports the purpose and intent of H.B. 1656, H.D. 1, which amends the amount that a disbursing officer may deduct from an employee's salary, wage, or compensation based on the employee's gross income.

At times, the state and counties will mistakenly overpay an employee on a continual basis or in one lump sum amount. Through no fault of their own, these employees are stiffed with a loan and a hefty repayment plan that they cannot afford due to a department's failure to accurately pay an employee – it's the departments fault, not the employee's. As currently written, Hawaii Revised Statutes Chapter 78-12, the minimum repayment amount is either \$100 per pay period or 25% of an employee's salary with no consideration to how much an employee earns. It also doesn't require prior notification to an employee before wages are garnished – which leaves many employees caught by surprise when they receive a reduced paycheck.

By creating a more lenient repayment process, it will help provide financial flexibility to these employees, particularly employees on the lower end of the salary schedule who may fall into financial hardship because they cannot support the additional constraint. It is the employer's responsibility to pay their employees accurately. We understand that mistakes happen, but it is unacceptable to have a strict repayment process that may subject employees to financial hardship due to the employer's inability to properly calculate wages. The statute should be more lenient to repay the balance in the least destructive way possible. Employees are not asking for these overpayments, and they will pay the balance back, but many of them ask for a more tolerable repayment schedule.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of H.B. 1656, H.D. 1.

Respectfully submitted,

Randy Perreira
Executive Director



The House Committee on Finance
February 26, 2026
Room 308
10:00 AM

RE: **HB 1656 HD1, Relating to Indebtedness to the State**

Attention: Chair Chris Todd, Vice Chair Jenna Takenouchi, Members of the
Committee

The University of Hawaii Professional Assembly (UHPA), the exclusive bargaining representative for all University of Hawai'i faculty members across Hawai'i's statewide 10-campus system, **supports HB 1656 HD1.**

Faculty compensation is uniquely complex due to grant funding, stipend processing, varying contract periods (9-month vs. 11-month), and overload pay. These complexities increase susceptibility to administrative payroll errors through no fault of the employee.

By capping recovery deductions at 5% of gross income and mandating a 30-day written notice, this bill establishes necessary financial safeguards, ensuring faculty can sustain their essential living expenses while affording them the due process needed to verify complex payroll records before their wages are reduced.

UHPA supports the passage of HB 1656 HD1.

Respectfully submitted,

Christian L. Fern
Executive Director
University of Hawaii Professional Assembly

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



KEITH A. REGAN
COMPTROLLER
KA LUNA HO'OMALU HANA LAULĀ

MEOH-LENG SILLIMAN
DEPUTY COMPTROLLER
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OMALU HANA LAULĀ

STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF ACCOUNTING AND GENERAL SERVICES | KA 'OIHANA LOIHELU A LAWELAWE LAULĀ
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WRITTEN TESTIMONY
OF
KEITH A. REGAN, COMPTROLLER
DEPARTMENT OF ACCOUNTING AND GENERAL SERVICES
TO THE
COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

FEBRUARY 26, 2026, 10:00 A.M.
CONFERENCE ROOM 308 AND VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE, STATE CAPITOL

H.B. 1656, H.D. 1

RELATING TO INDEBTEDNESS TO THE STATE.

Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this measure.

The Department of Accounting and General Services (DAGS) offers **comments** on H.B. 1656, H.D. 1 which sets the time requirement within which a disbursing officer must notify an employee of indebtedness to the government resulting from salary or wage overpayment and amends the amount a disbursing officer shall deduct to begin immediate recovery of indebtedness based on an employee's gross income.

We are concerned that limiting the per pay period deduction to five percent of an employee's gross income will significantly increase the amount of time necessary for a department to track and collect overpayments. The impact of this change may place undue administrative burden because of the extended amount of time necessary to

collect the overpayment. It is likely that departmental resources will need to be re-directed to manage the extended recovery period.

As an example, based on the proposed legislation, a department tasked with collecting an overpayment to an employee in the amount of \$1,000 would be allowed to collect up to \$50 ($\$1,000 \times .05 = \50) per pay period. This would require approximately 20 pay periods or 10 months to recoup the overpayment. Departmental resources will need to track and record the deduction over the 10-month period instead of a much shorter period under the current statute. The current statute allows for a minimum amount of \$100 per pay period which, using the above example, would result in a much shorter five-month administrative impact.

As it relates to the notification by the disbursing officer to the employee, we have no objection to providing a written statement to the employee at least thirty (30) calendar days before the deduction.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter.

JOSH B. GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR



STACEY A. ALDRICH
STATE LIBRARIAN
Ke Po'o Hale Waihona Puke Moku'āina

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House Committee on Finance
February 26, 2026, 10:00 a.m.
State Capitol, Room 308

HB 1656 HD1 – Relating to Indebtedness to the State

To: Rep. Chris Todd, Chair
Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair
Members of the House Committee on Finance

The Hawai'i State Public Library System (HSPLS) **provides comments** on HB1656 HD1 which amends the amount that a disbursing officer may deduct from an employee's salary, wage, or compensation based on the employee's gross income.

The HSPLS respectfully requests that the required notification to the employee be more clearly defined. The HSPLS has spent significant time and effort trying to notify employees of an overpayment via certified mail. In almost all cases, the employees have not accepted the certified mail, making it difficult for HSPLS staff to determine that the employee had been properly notified.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB1656 HD1 and for your continued support of the Hawai'i State Public Library System.