



The Judiciary, State of Hawai‘i

Testimony to the Thirty-Third State Legislature 2026 Regular Session

House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs

Representative David Tarnas, Chair

Representative Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair

Wednesday, February 4, 2026, 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 325 and Videoconference

by:

Brandon M. Kimura
Administrative Director of the Courts

Bill No. and Title: House Bill No. 2095, Relating to the Judiciary.

Purpose: Appropriates supplemental moneys for the Judiciary for the fiscal biennium beginning 7/1/2025 and ending 6/30/2027.

Judiciary’s Position:

The Judiciary strongly urges your support of House Bill No. 2095, which reflects the Judiciary’s supplemental resource requirements for Fiscal Biennium 2025–2027. We acknowledge the economic uncertainty currently facing the State and have carefully considered this context. We respectfully make the following supplemental requests with this in mind, along with the circumstances that underlie each request.

In total, the Judiciary requests for FY 2027 an increase of \$6.4M in operating funds and 4.0 permanent full-time equivalent (FTE) positions, and—due to the requested conversion of positions—a reduction of 3.0 temporary FTE and 1.0 FTE (Special Fund) positions. The Judiciary also requests for FY 2027 a total of \$55.4M in bond funds for capital improvement projects.



Operating Requests:

Operating requests include critical physical and cyber security resources in consideration of recent security related events nationwide and locally, funding to sustain critical services to court-users, and funding and position conversions for critical personnel. This testimony provides detail for each request.

Critical Security Resources

Armed Private Security – The Judiciary requests \$3,250,000 to contract for private, armed security professionals to enhance perimeter security at Judiciary facilities statewide, to supplement the protective services of the Department of Law Enforcement (DLE). Despite best efforts, DLE has consistently struggled to staff “patrol” positions at the public entrances and key fixed locations within Judiciary facilities, usually due to vacant positions and sometimes due to leave, training, or the performance of duties outside courthouses or to support courthouse cellblocks. We make this to enhance the safety of all who enter Judiciary facilities. This includes many whose in-person presence is mandated and where hearings are sometimes contentious, even while we have shifted to remote venues for many hearings or appointments with litigants and clients. Individuals who enter Judiciary facilities are often experiencing among the most difficult period of their lives, while judges and probation officers make decisions that will in many instances change lives going forward. The Judiciary has contracted with private, unarmed security professionals to assist in screening those entering Judiciary facilities, but these individuals provide distinct services and this approach does not address the modern security needs at courthouses.

Cybersecurity – The Judiciary has two requests pertaining to cybersecurity. We request \$188,880 to restore funding for an Information Security Architect and to transfer a position count from the Computer System Special Fund to ITSD general funds for an Identity Architect. These positions are critical to strengthening the Judiciary’s cybersecurity program as courts nationwide face increasingly sophisticated cyber threats. Recent ransomware and malware incidents affecting state and federal court systems—including in Texas, Alaska, Kansas, California, and the federal courts—underscore the growing risk to judicial operations. Currently, fragmented security tools and processes across IT divisions can create gaps in coverage, including delays in deactivating user accounts after employee separations, vulnerabilities that cybercriminals routinely exploit.

The Information Security Architect and Identity Architect will address these enterprise-level cybersecurity gaps by establishing a centralized security architecture and strengthening identity and access management. Together, these complementary roles will improve system oversight, enhance onboarding and offboarding controls, and ensure that new technologies are securely integrated into the Judiciary’s IT environment from inception. As cybersecurity threats continue to evolve, these positions will help safeguard sensitive data, reduce operational risk, and support a secure, resilient Judiciary infrastructure.



Critical Services to Court Users

Purchase of Service (POS) Contracts (First Circuit, O‘ahu) – The Judiciary requests funds to restore First Circuit’s POS contract appropriations that were reduced by \$574,716. The Judiciary requests the restoration of funds for Purchase of Services (POS) contracts that provide substance abuse treatment services. These programs are critical to helping offenders overcome addiction, reduce criminal activity, and lower recidivism. Effectively treating addiction and mental illness significantly reduces reoffending and promotes long-term rehabilitation. Currently, the First Circuit Court’s Adult Client Services Branch (ACSB) supervises approximately 5,250 adult offenders, the majority of whom require substance abuse treatment. In 2024, 2,539 ACSB clients were referred for treatment, increasing to 2,848 referrals in FY 2025. As with other chronic diseases, early intervention leads to better results; immediate access to treatment is essential to recovery and relapse prevention. Delays in access can result in lost opportunities for recovery. The COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted community supervision and treatment services. To ensure health and safety, face-to-face meetings and drug testing were suspended, resulting in fewer referrals and admissions to Judiciary-contracted treatment providers. The pandemic also placed considerable strain on these providers, as budget reductions resulted in decreased service capacity, staffing shortages, and limited admissions. Restoring funding for contracted treatment programs will expand access to essential services, support individuals in achieving recovery, and promote safe communities through reduced recidivism and sustained behavioral change.

Office of the Public Guardian – The Judiciary requests restored funding of \$33,162 in FY 2027 for a part-time Social Worker IV in Kaua‘i’s Office of the Public Guardian (OPG) program. OPG serves as court-appointed public guardian for incapacitated persons, safeguarding their rights, dignity, and quality of life. Referrals are primarily received from hospitals, long-term care facilities, Adult Protective Services, and the Department of Human Services. Upon appointment, OPG must address complex and individualized issues, including medical and mental health needs, financial and legal matters, benefits eligibility, family relationships, and end-of-life planning. Social Workers serving as guardians are responsible for investigations, crisis management, care planning, and ongoing oversight to ensure appropriate services and protections are in place.

The Social Worker IV position serves as the intake worker for Kaua‘i County and is essential for conducting assessments, responding to emergencies, consenting to services, and maintaining direct oversight of wards. Currently, Kaua‘i cases are managed by O‘ahu-based guardians, limiting the ability to conduct in-person visits and build the relationships necessary for effective guardianship. While technology allows for some contact, it is not an adequate substitute for face-to-face interaction, particularly for cognitively impaired individuals.



Critical Staffing Resources

Commission on Salaries – The Judiciary statewide requests \$2,339,845 for FY 2027 for the requisite increases pursuant to the 2025 Commission on Salaries. The 2025 Legislature approved funding at the level required for FY26. Additional funds are required for FY27.

Court Operations Specialist (Third Circuit, Kona) – The Judiciary requests conversion of 1.0 FTE position from temporary to permanent and restored funding to a redescribed and modern need—Court Operations Specialist III, in the Kona Fiscal Office for \$59,532 in FY2027. In 2020, the Legislature removed funding for positions from the Third Circuit due to the economic uncertainty that the State was facing due to the COVID-19 pandemic. One of the positions defunded was a temporary Clerk III in the Fiscal Office at Courthouse in Kona. Although the needs of the Court and the public have evolved since the pandemic, it remains essential to use existing resources efficiently and proactively. Interpreter requests have also increased, particularly in multilingual and rural communities across the Third Circuit. Redescribing the defunded Clerk position into a permanent Court Operations Specialist will help address growing fiscal demands amid ongoing staffing challenges, reduce the challenge of coordinating an increasing volume of interpreter services, and strengthen the Court’s ability to respond to emerging needs throughout Third Circuit.

Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) (First Circuit, O’ahu) – The Judiciary requests a no-cost conversion of two (2) temporary Social Worker IV positions to permanent status for the CASA Program. CASA is staffed by eight (8) social workers, consisting of six (6) full-time permanent positions and two (2) full-time temporary positions. This staffing level is necessary to fulfill program functions and to maintain compliance with legal mandates and national certification standards required of Guardian ad Litem programs that utilize volunteer CASAs. A fully staffed program is essential to sustaining best practices and ensuring consistent, high-quality advocacy highly vulnerable children—those placed in foster care. CASA social workers and volunteers conduct monthly, face-to-face contact with all children served. Each CASA social worker attends court hearings, school and treatment meetings, youth circles, and home visits, and submits a court report at every review hearing. Conversion of the 2 temporary positions to permanent status would substantially improve program stability and continuity of services. Permanent employment would provide greater job security, allowing the CASA Program to retain experienced and qualified staff.

Capital Improvement Requests:

Capital Improvement Project (CIP) requirements continue to remain a major item of concern as the Judiciary’s infrastructure continues to age and deteriorate, and as the population served and services provided by the Judiciary continue to expand. We request CIP bond funds totaling \$55.4 million for FY 2027 to address critical needs, nearly all of which relate to the health and safety of Judiciary employees, the public, and all who enter Judiciary facilities.



House Bill No. 2095, Relating to the Judiciary
House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs
Wednesday, February 4, 2026
Page 5

As the highest priority Judiciary CIP request this year, the Judiciary requests \$30.0 million in construction funds for a new South Kohala District Court. The existing South Kohala District Court presents significant concerns related to safety, space, temperature control, and noise, and is inadequate to meet the court-related needs the community.

The Judiciary also request \$1.2 million each to upgrade and replace aging A/C equipment at Pu'uhonua Kaulike on Kaua'i and Hale Kaulike on Hawai'i Island. The current chillers are nearing the end of their lifecycle, and current manufacturing challenges have resulted in extended lead times for replacement equipment. In addition, the Judiciary requests \$15.0 million to continue to upgrade and replace elevators at Ka'ahumanu Hale, due to longstanding concerns for safety and reliability. Finally, the Judiciary requests \$8.0 million in lump sum bond funds to address both ongoing and emerging building issues statewide.

The Judiciary respectfully requests your support of House Bill No. 2095, the Judiciary's supplemental budget request.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



February 3, 2026

The Honorable Representative David A. Tarnas, Chair
The Honorable Representative Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair
House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: Hearing on Wednesday, February 4, 2026 at 2:00 p.m.,
Via VideoConference, Conference Room #325
Regarding HB No. 2095, "Relating to the Judiciary"

Dear Chair Tarnas and Vice Chair Poepoe and Members of the House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs,

We ask that you **strongly support HB 2095** to appropriate funds to the Judiciary for the fiscal biennium beginning 7/1/2025 and ending 6/30/2027.

Partners in Development Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that inspires and equips families and communities for success and service, using timeless Native Hawaiian values and traditions. Since 1997, PIDF has served more than 171,000 people in over 75 communities across the state (www.pidf.org). PIDF has a strong record of managing complex, multi-year federal and state grants with measurable results in early childhood education, family engagement, and youth justice. PIDF continues to step to the frontline to meet the ever-changing needs of our low-income, remote, and rural families and communities, including operating a COVID quarantine hotel to keep families safe and healthy during the pandemic, to supporting families displaced by the Maui wildfires to heal and rebuild, to continuing to support and strengthen our most vulnerable children, youth and families as they navigate increasing living costs, unemployment, and loss of federal resources.

It is vital that this critical work provided by not only Partners in Development Foundation but the many other nonprofit organizations in our state continue to be supported through sufficient resources to sustainably operate and HB 2095 will accomplish this by increasing the level of funding available to these nonprofit organizations who are stepping in the gap to meet the needs that government entities cannot fully address. **We ask that you support HB 2095 to equip nonprofit organizations to meet our rising expenses to enable us to continue serving the people of Hawai'i.**

On behalf of Partners in Development Foundation and our many nonprofit partners serving tirelessly in our state, mahalo nui loa for your consideration of this request.

Shawn M. Kana'iaupuni, PhD
President and Chief Executive Officer



**Parents And
Children Together**
BUILDING THE RELATIONSHIPS
THAT MATTER MOST

ParentsAndChildrenTogether.org

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 2095 RELATING TO THE JUDICIARY

TO: Chair Tarnas, Vice-Chair Poepoe, & Members,
House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs
FROM: Ryan Kusumoto, President and CEO
Trisha Kajimura, Vice-President of Strategy and External Affairs
DATE: February 4, 2026 at 2:00 PM

Parents and Children Together (PACT) supports HB 2095, which appropriates supplemental funds for the Judiciary budget in the current biennium.

Founded by residents of Kuhio Park Terrace in 1968, PACT is a statewide community-based organization providing a wide array of innovative and educational social services to families in need. Assisting more than 18,000 people across the state annually, we help identify, address, and successfully resolve challenges through our 20 programs. Among our services are early education programs, domestic violence prevention and intervention programs, child abuse prevention and intervention programs, childhood sexual abuse supportive group services, child and adolescent behavioral health programs, sex trafficking intervention, poverty prevention and community building programs.

PACT is contracted by the Judiciary to provide services related to domestic violence in three counties – Honolulu, Maui and Kauaʻi. Through these contracts we help survivors and child witnesses cope through their trauma, heal from abuse, and rebuild safe and self-sufficient households. We also work with individuals who have committed crimes of domestic violence through classes and counseling. These services and the staff dedicated to providing them are specialized and essential to the safety and well-being of our community. PACT's Judiciary contracts do not cover the true cost of providing these services, which is an ongoing challenge for the agency.

We submit this testimony as a member of the Hawaiʻi True Cost Coalition – over 70 community-based non-profit organizations fighting to sustain essential services for our communities. The Coalition supports the appropriation of \$574,716 to restore purchase-of-service contracts in the First Circuit Court that provide substance use disorder treatment for adults on probation on Oahu. These contracts were significantly reduced during the COVID-19 pandemic. This funding must be restored to continue services.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Please contact Trisha Kajimura at (808) 847-3285 or tkajimura@pacthawaii.org if you have any questions.

The Hawai'i True Cost Coalition

February 4, 2026

Hawai'i State Legislature
House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs

Re: Testimony in STRONG SUPPORT of HB 2095, Relating to the Judiciary

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and esteemed members of the committee,

The Hawai'i True Cost Coalition is writing in strong support of HB 2095, relating to the Judiciary. This measure appropriates supplemental moneys for the Judiciary for the fiscal biennium beginning 7/1/2025 and ending 6/30/2027.

In particular, the Hawai'i True Cost Coalition supports the \$574,716 appropriation within the Judiciary's budget to restore funding for purchase-of-service contracts in the First Circuit Court that provide substance use disorder treatment for adult probationers on O'ahu. These contracts were significantly reduced during the COVID-19 pandemic, despite continued and growing need for treatment services. Restoring this funding is critical to ensuring access to effective interventions that promote rehabilitation, reduce recidivism, and strengthen community stability.

Hawai'i's safety net often goes unnoticed—until it begins to fray. It is built on community-based organizations that deliver essential services state agencies cannot provide alone, including shelter for at-risk youth, meals for seniors, behavioral health care, housing assistance, and crisis response for families in need. Yet decades of chronic underfunding have forced many organizations to reduce services, underpay staff, and rely heavily on private fundraising simply to remain operational. Members of the True Cost Coalition report working under contracts that have not received meaningful budget increases for more than ten years, despite rising costs for labor, facilities, and compliance. Without swift action, these pressures will continue to erode programs and leave Hawai'i's most vulnerable residents without the support systems they depend on.

Achieve Zero | Adult Friends for Youth | Aloha Care | Aloha Harvest | Arc of Kona | AUW | Big Brothers Big Sisters | Blueprint for Change | Boys and Girls Clubs of Hawaii | Catholic Charities | Child and Family Service | Coalition for a Drug-Free Hawaii | Community Alliance on Prisons | Community First Hawaii | Connecting Community LLC | DVAC | Easter Seals | Epic Ohana | Family Programs Hawaii | Full Life | Going Home Hawaii | Goodwill Hawaii | Hale Kipa | Hale Na'au Pono | Hale Opio Kauai, Inc. | HANO | Hawaii Afterschool Alliance | Hawaii Children's Action Network | Hawaii Community Benefit Consultants | Hawaii Community Foundation | Hawaii Data Collaborative | Hawaii Foodbank | Hawaii Housing Affordability Coalition | Hawaii Appleseed | Hawaii Public Health Institute | Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies | Helping Hands Hawaii | Hawaii State Coalition for Domestic Violence | Ho'ola Na Pua | Honolulu Habitat for Humanity | Honolulu International Film Festival | IHS | Imua Family Services | Cameron Center | Ka Po'e o Kaka'ako | Kamehameha Schools | Kinai 'Eha | Kui'kahi Mediation Center | Kumukahi Health and Wellness | Lanakila Pacific | Maui Economic Opportunity | Maui Family Support Services, Inc. | Maui United Way | Mediation Center of the Pacific | Mental Health Kokua | Metro YMCA | Mindful Living Group | Na Hale O Maui | Na Maka Haloa O Waipio | Nurturing Wahine | Olelo Community Media | PACT | Care | People Attentive to Children | PIC | PID Foundation | Responsive Caregivers of Hawaii | RYSE | Samaritan Counseling Center | Starting Over in Recovery | Susannah Wesley | The Spirit Horse Ranch Inc. | Transform Hawaii Government | U.S. Vets | Volunteer Legal Services of Hawaii | Women Helping Women | YMCA Honolulu | YWCA of Kauai | YWCA of Oahu

The Hawai'i True Cost Coalition is an alliance of more than 70 community-based nonprofit organizations serving over 500,000 residents statewide. Since its formation in 2020, the coalition has worked to strengthen partnerships between nonprofits and the State of Hawai'i to ensure public funds are allocated equitably, efficiently, and sustainably. By advocating for fair and realistic funding, the coalition helps safeguard critical programs for children, kupuna, individuals experiencing homelessness, people with disabilities, veterans, and survivors of domestic violence—ensuring that nonprofits can continue providing the vital care and support on which so many residents rely.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this important measure.

Achieve Zero | Adult Friends for Youth | Aloha Care | Aloha Harvest | Arc of Kona | AUW | Big Brothers Big Sisters | Blueprint for Change | Boys and Girls Clubs of Hawaii | Catholic Charities | Child and Family Service | Coalition for a Drug-Free Hawaii | Community Alliance on Prisons | Community First Hawaii | Connecting Community LLC | DVAC | Easter Seals | Epic Ohana | Family Programs Hawaii | Full Life | Going Home Hawaii | Goodwill Hawaii | Hale Kipa | Hale Na'au Pono | Hale Opio Kauai, Inc. | HANO | Hawaii Afterschool Alliance | Hawaii Children's Action Network | Hawaii Community Benefit Consultants | Hawaii Community Foundation | Hawaii Data Collaborative | Hawaii Foodbank | Hawaii Housing Affordability Coalition | Hawaii Appleseed | Hawaii Public Health Institute | Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies | Helping Hands Hawaii | Hawaii State Coalition for Domestic Violence | Ho'ola Na Pua | Honolulu Habitat for Humanity | Honolulu International Film Festival | IHS | Imua Family Services | Cameron Center | Ka Po'e o Kaka'ako | Kamehameha Schools | Kinai 'Eha | Kui'kahi Mediation Center | Kumukahi Health and Wellness | Lanakila Pacific | Maui Economic Opportunity | Maui Family Support Services, Inc. | Maui United Way | Mediation Center of the Pacific | Mental Health Kokua | Metro YMCA | Mindful Living Group | Na Hale O Maui | Na Maka Haloa O Waipio | Nurturing Wahine | Olelo Community Media | PACT | Care | People Attentive to Children | PIC | PID Foundation | Responsive Caregivers of Hawaii | RYSE | Samaritan Counseling Center | Starting Over in Recovery | Susannah Wesley | The Spirit Horse Ranch Inc. | Transform Hawaii Government | U.S. Vets | Volunteer Legal Services of Hawaii | Women Helping Women | YMCA Honolulu | YWCA of Kauai | YWCA of Oahu