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KE KIA'ĀINA



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KA HOPE 'AKUKANA KENELALA

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KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWA'I
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
KA 'OIHANA PILI KAU'A
OFFICE OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL
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TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 2235
RELATING TO THE MILITARY AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS OFFICE
BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY

BY

BRIGADIER GENERAL WALTER R. ROSS, JR.
DIRECTOR
JOINT STAFF, HAWA'I NATIONAL GUARD

February 6, 2026

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice-Chair Iwamoto, and Members of the Committee:

I am Brigadier General Walter Ross, Director of the Joint Staff, Hawai'i National Guard, State of Hawai'i, Department of Defense.

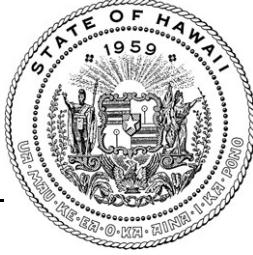
I am presenting this testimony in **SUPPORT** of HB2235.

This important legislation signifies a crucial investment in enhancing intergovernmental coordination for military and defense activities. It allocates funding to the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism for the Military Affairs Community Relations Office (MACRO). MACRO acts as a vital link between Hawai'i's military and civilian sectors by promoting mutual respect and understanding through collaboration on issues significant to both the Department of Defense and the State of Hawai'i.

By providing essential funding, this legislation will enable MACRO to continue fostering collaboration and communication among military, local, state, and federal entities. This investment will help maintain an environment where trust and understanding can flourish, benefiting Hawai'i's residents while supporting national security objectives. Ultimately, this investment will aid MACRO in building a more cohesive relationship between the military and the people of Hawai'i—one that honors shared values and advances the interests of our state and our nation.

For these reasons, I humbly ask for your support with this measure.

Brigadier General Walter R. Ross, Jr., walter.r.ross2.mil@army.mil; 808-844-6087



**DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS,
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM**
KA 'OIHANA HO'OMOHALA PĀ'OIHANA, 'IMI WAIWAI
A HO'OMĀKA'IKA'I

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Statement of
LAURIE MCALLISTER MOORE
Executive Director
Military and Community Relations Office
Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY

Friday, February 6, 2026
8:30 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 411
TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB2235
RELATING TO THE MILITARY AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS OFFICE.

Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto, and Members of the Committee:

The Military and Community Relations Office (MACRO) respectfully submits testimony in support of HB2235. MACRO serves as the State's day-to-day connector between military commands, state and county agencies, schools, businesses, and community stakeholders helping partners navigate issues that rarely fall within a single agency's lane, from installation infrastructure needs and land coordination to workforce alignment and economic opportunity planning. As defense activity and federal investment in Hawai'i continue, this centralized coordination role has become increasingly essential to keeping projects moving efficiently and ensuring the benefits reach local communities.

In practice, this work is highly operational. MACRO has supported efforts that connect local companies with federal buyers and contracting pathways, helped align community college and training programs with shipyard and industrial workforce needs, coordinated with installations and state agencies to address infrastructure and community interface challenges, and convened cross-sector partners to streamline communication during high-impact projects. These examples demonstrate how targeted capacity within one office can remove barriers, accelerate timelines, and translate federal activity into jobs, contracts, and tangible outcomes for Hawai'i residents. Additional resources would allow us to scale these efforts statewide and respond more proactively as opportunities arise.

Specifically, this funding would support:

- (1) business readiness and compliance assistance to help Hawai'i companies navigate federal procurement and cybersecurity requirements;
- (2) strengthened education-to-career pathways through partnerships with schools, community colleges, and training providers that connect residents to internships, apprenticeships, and direct placement in defense and industrial base careers; and
- (3) targeted initiatives that grow in-state manufacturing, repair, and sustainment capacity, reducing reliance on off-island supply chains and keeping federal dollars circulating locally.

We also respectfully submit an amendment for consideration, to update all mentions of our office's

title in the bill to be written as follows: "Military and Community Relations Office (MACRO), as opposed to "Military Affairs and Community Relations Office" as listed in the Report Title.

We are grateful for any support in MACRO's coordination and workforce capacities, as this measure would improve public service, economic resilience, and Hawai'i's ability to capture and retain federal opportunities that benefit our communities statewide. Mahalo for your consideration and for your continued support of efforts that strengthen both our readiness and local economy.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.



Testimony to the House Committee on Public Safety
Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
Representative Kim Coco Iwamoto, Vice Chair

Friday, February 6, 2026, at 8:30AM
Conference Room 411 & Videoconference

RE: HB2235 Relating to the Military and Community Relations Office

Aloha e Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Sherry Menor, President and CEO of the Chamber of Commerce Hawaii ("The Chamber"). The Chamber supports House Bill 2235 (HB2235), which appropriates funds to the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism for the Military Affairs Community Relations Office (MACRO) to strengthen intergovernmental coordination for military and defense activities.

HB327 aligns with our 2030 Blueprint for Hawaii: An Economic Action Plan, specifically under the policy pillar for Military & Defense. The military constitutes a significant portion of the State's economic and workforce landscape, supporting thousands of local jobs, small businesses, and education-to-career pathways. Maintaining strong, consistent community relations is essential to ensuring a positive and productive working relationship between the military and the public.

The Chamber supports the mission of MACRO: "Our mission is to promote positive relationships between Hawai'i's military and civilian sectors by fostering mutual respect and understanding through collaboration on issues important to both the United States Department of Defense and the State of Hawai'i." Given Hawaii's geopolitical importance, the Chamber believes supporting a positive military-community relationship is especially important as international relations, technologies, and workforce needs continue to evolve. MACRO's dedication to finding opportunities of military-civilian overlap create opportunities around workforce development, emergency preparedness, and public school infrastructural improvements. Such efforts in community partnership result in improvements in economic resilience and community resilience at large. The Chamber believes that an investment in MACRO is an investment in a more resilient economic future marked by military partnership.

We respectfully ask to pass House Bill 2235. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

The Chamber of Commerce Hawaii is the state's leading business advocacy organization, dedicated to improving Hawaii's economy and securing Hawaii's future for growth and opportunity. Our mission is to foster a vibrant economic climate. As such, we support initiatives and policies that align with the 2030 Blueprint for Hawaii that create opportunities to strengthen overall competitiveness, improve the quantity and skills of available workforce, diversify the economy, and build greater local wealth.

HB-2235

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 3:32:19 PM
Testimony for PBS on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mike Golojuch, Sr.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB2235.