



STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
KA 'OIHANA HO'ONA'AUAO  
P.O. BOX 2360  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

**Date:** 03/25/2026

**Time:** 03:00 PM

**Location:** CR 225 & Videoconference

**Committee:** LBT/GVO

**Department:** Education

**Person Testifying:** Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

**Title of Bill:** HB2335, HD1, RELATING TO WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT.

**Purpose of Bill:** Establishes that certain participants in state-funded internship and workforce development programs are eligible for internal recruitment. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD1)

**Department's Position:**

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on HB 2335 HD 1. We support the intent of creating pathways for interns to transition into state employment.

However, we have concerns about implementing this through statutory changes to Chapter 76. This bill would allow interns to access internal job announcements before new civil service employees, who must first complete a 6-month probationary period, creating potential inequities in the merit system. Additionally, a 480-hour internship may not satisfy minimum qualification requirements for many positions.

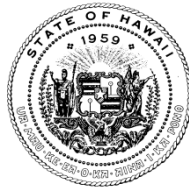
Rather than statutory language, we recommend a skills-based hiring approach implemented through creating new or modifying existing departmental policies and procedures. This would allow us to:

- Recognize internship experience as one of multiple pathways to meet minimum qualifications alongside education, work experience, military service, and other relevant backgrounds;
- Focus qualification requirements on demonstrated competencies rather than rigid credential requirements such as traditional academic degrees;
- Maintain merit principles by applying consistent competency standards to all candidates, whether they come from internships, traditional backgrounds, or alternative pathways; and
- Retain the flexibility to adjust policies based on changing workforce needs without requiring legislative amendments.

A skills-based framework would accomplish what HB 2335 HD 1 intends—valuing the experience interns gain in state service—while also modernizing our hiring practices to attract diverse talent pools and maintain the integrity of our merit system.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on HB 2335 HD 1.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR  
KE KIA'ĀINA



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Wednesday, March 25, 2026  
3:00 PM  
State Capitol, 225

**HB2335, HD1  
RELATING TO WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

Senate Committee on Labor & Technology and Government Operations

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The Department of Transportation (DOT) is in strong support of HB2335 HD1, relating to state-funded internship and workforce development programs.

This bill proposes to amend Chapter 76, Hawaii Revised Statutes, by adding a new section which would make interns who have completed 480 hours of work experience within a department or agency eligible for internal recruitment within that department or agency. The intern will compete, within a smaller pool of internal applicants, satisfying the merit principle. Moreover, the requirement of nine hundred sixty hours versus four hundred eighty hours to be eligible for an internal recruitment seems arbitrary in the larger context of public service recruitment and the development of innovative recruitment methods.

HDOT believes that this legislation will benefit both the state and interns by creating a low-cost benefit that increases the value of state-funded internships and creates a clear pathway from internships to a career in state government. This legislation aligns with HDOT's ongoing commitment to build a strong, skilled, and locally rooted public workforce. By recognizing the value of hands-on experience gained through state-funded programs, the legislation creates a pathway for qualified individuals to transition into full-time roles within government agencies.

Interns applying for positions through internal recruitment allows the subject matter expert department to performing the screening and review. This reduces the amount of time and effort required to apply for and fill a position. Removing this layer of bureaucracy makes the hiring process easier for interns, increasing the likelihood that the state will be able to successfully recruit them. This reduction in recruitment time also allows state departments to compete with other employers because they will have the opportunity to give a quality, qualified intern a timely offer. Often, state departments fail to hire highly desired applicants because they are hired quickly by private companies or other government entities.

Significantly, this legislation limits the priority consideration to instances where the intern is applying for a position in the same department where the intern worked. This is important because this ensures that the hiring department has experience with the intern and the work product produced.

HDOT further believes that pairing this benefit with additional hiring flexibilities for departments will help to address hiring issues. We respectfully suggest that the committee consider amending HRS §76-22.6 to provide certain flexibilities when departments conduct minimum qualification reviews and allowing department heads to directly hire qualified individuals.

**“[§76-22.6] Recruitment; minimum qualification review; state departments, divisions, and agencies.** (a) Notwithstanding any other law to the contrary, a state department, division, or agency, rather than the department of human resources development, may conduct a minimum qualification review of applicants for vacant positions within that department, division, or agency. State departments, divisions, and agencies shall have the following flexibilities regarding minimum qualifications for positions having a salary range at or below SR-10:

- (1) Considering required minimum qualifications as desired qualifications;
- (2) Allowing certain community college development programs to be substituted for required or desired experience; and
- (3) Allowing internships with state departments, divisions, and agencies to be substituted for required or desired experience.

provided that the department of health shall specify any minimum qualification requirement or substitute in the recruitment posting;

(b) A state department, division, or agency that elects to conduct its own minimum qualification review of applicants for a vacancy pursuant to subsection (a) shall notify the department of human resources development, which shall provide to the department, division, or agency:

(1) For positions with a recruitment closing date, the applications received for the vacancy received by the closing date for that vacancy; or

(2) For continuous recruitment positions, the applications received for the vacancy that have been received by a certain date, as determined by the state department, division, or agency; provided that the department of human resources development shall continue to transmit applications for that position on a reasonable rolling basis until the particular vacancy is filled;

provided further that the department of human resources development shall submit the applications received for a vacancy immediately to a state department, division, or agency if requested by the applicable state department, division, or agency.

(c) [Upon completing the minimum qualification review of applicants for a vacancy, the state department, division, or agency shall submit to the department of human resources development the applications for individuals who have met the minimum qualifications for the vacancy; provided that the] The state department, division, or agency may immediately begin interviewing applicants that the department, division, or agency [have been] has determined [to] meet the minimum qualifications for the vacant position. [The department of human resources development shall complete any other tasks necessary to facilitate the hiring of the applicants, including auditing and correcting any errors found in the minimum qualification review, as applicable; provided further that if any errors are found, the department of human resources development shall have five working days to correct the error and notify the state department, division, or agency.] The director or head of the state department, division, or agency

may directly hire an individual who meets minimum qualifications into a civil service position.”

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill.



**JOSH GREEN, M. D.**  
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KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA

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WRITTEN ONLY

Statement of  
**BRENN A H. HASHIMOTO**  
Director, Department of Human Resources Development

Before the  
**SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND TECHNOLOGY**  
**SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS**  
Wednesday, March 25, 2026  
3:00 PM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 225

In consideration of  
**HB2335 HD1, RELATING TO WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

Chair Elefante, Chair McKelvey, and members of the Committee on Labor and Technology and Committee on Government Operations:

The Department of Human Resources Development (HRD) offers comments on HB2335 HD1.

The purpose of this measure is to establish that certain participants in state-funded internship and workforce development programs are eligible for internal recruitment.

HB2335 HD1 amends Chapter 76, Hawaii'i Revised Statutes, to deem an intern eligible for internal recruitment within the same department or agency after completing four hundred eighty hours of work (which equates to 3 months) of experience through a state-funded internship or workforce development program.

HRD supports the goal of retaining individuals who have gained relevant experience within State government. The State invests time and resources in training interns and creating clearer pathways into public service, which supports recruitment, workforce continuity, and institutional knowledge.

However, HRD has concerns with the bill as currently drafted.

Internal recruitment under Chapter 76 has historically been limited to existing civil service employees. Expanding eligibility to interns raises merit and equity concerns and will restrict access for similarly qualified external applicants.

The bill requires only 480 hours of service, or approximately 3 months, of service for an intern or workforce development participant before becoming eligible for internal vacancy announcements (commonly referred to as IVA). In contrast, probationary full-time civil service employees must complete 960 hours of service, or approximately 6 months, before becoming eligible for IVA placement. Probationary employees are appointed through competitive recruitment, placed into classified positions, and subject to formal performance evaluation during the probationary period.

As drafted, the measure allows interns, who are not appointed to civil service positions and are not subject to probationary standards, to access internal recruitment at half the service threshold required of probationary civil service employees. This results in an inequitable outcome and weakens the integrity of the internal recruitment process.

HRD also notes that internship experience is already recognized within the existing framework. When internship experience is relevant to the position being applied for, examiners factor it into the evaluation of minimum qualification requirements. This approach preserves merit principles while acknowledging the value of practical experience.

As discussed previously, HRD supports internship and workforce development programs. We are committed to working with the Department of Transportation to refine the bill language and establish intern requirements that are equitable for all applicants and consistent with merit principles under Chapter 76.

We are available to answer any questions.