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STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT
KA 'OIHANA HO'OMŌHALA LIMAHANA
235 S. BERETANIA STREET
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Statement of
BRENNA H. HASHIMOTO
Director, Department of Human Resources Development

Before the
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
Wednesday, February 25, 2026
10:57AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 211

In consideration of
SB2014 SD1, RELATING TO PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and members of the committee:

The Department of Human Resources Development (HRD) supports SB2014 SD1.

The purpose of SB2014 SD1 is to:

1. Require the Director of Human Resources Development to abolish vacant positions within state departments and agencies under its jurisdiction that have been vacant for more than 5 years with certain exceptions.
2. Require a list of positions abolished to be included in the Director's annual report to the Legislature; and
3. Require funds for abolished positions to immediately lapse to the credit of the appropriate fund.

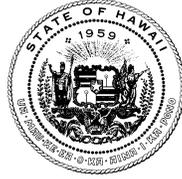
HRD understands the impact that long-term vacancies have on departmental operations and budgets. To this end, HRD already identifies long-standing vacancies in its annual vacancy report (as required under Act 57, SLH 2019). SB2014 SD1 strengthens this effort by automatically abolishing positions vacant for five years or more, with exceptions.

This policy change will encourage departments and hiring managers to develop a hiring plan, rather than maintain vacancies. We believe this measure can help to improve workforce management across departments.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on SB2014 SD1. We are available to answer any questions or provide additional information as needed.

JOSH B. GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR



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

STATE OF HAWAII
HAWAII STATE PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM
'OIHANA HALE WAIHONA PUKE AUPUNI O KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII
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Senate Committee on Ways and Means
February 25, 2026, 10:57 a.m.
State Capitol, Room 211

SB 2014 SD1 – Relating to Public Employment

To: Sen. Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Sen. Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means

The Hawai'i State Public Library System (HSPLS) **opposes** SB2014 SD1 which requires the Director of Human Resources Development to abolish vacant positions within state departments and agencies under its jurisdiction that have been vacant for more than 5 years; requires a list of positions abolished to be included in the Director's annual report to the Legislature; requires funds for abolished positions to immediately lapse to the credit of the general fund.

The HSPLS shares the following comments regarding SB2014 SD1 as written:

- Abolishing positions that have been vacant for more than 5-year will greatly impact HSPLS. HSPLS has 567 positions and one classifier, who reviews all HSPLS position descriptions and redescriptions. Until the State's personnel system is simplified, imposition of artificial deadlines to fill vacancies ignores the underlying issue many departments struggle with. Abolishing positions only negatively impacts our ability to provide services to communities, particularly our rural neighbor island communities where 50% of our public libraries are located.
- HSPLS recruitment is currently managing approximately 60 recruitments simultaneously, making it difficult for some positions to meet the 5-year deadline. Once a vacancy goes into recruitment, it will take several months to go through a slow and bureaucratic hiring process. Frequently, we go through entire lists of candidates without success in hiring and must begin again, spending weeks or months identifying a new candidate. For some hard to fill positions, there are even longer waits for lists as we are reliant on

DHRD screeners to identify individuals that they deem eligible and qualified for the position.

- During the pandemic, for three fiscal years or 36 months, HSPLS did not have funding to fill 64 positions almost doubling our normal vacancy rate. Lack of funding, not inaction by HSPLS, prevented HSPLS from filling some of the positions over the last five years.
- If there is a temporary or 89-day hire filling a position, DHRD still considers the position as “vacant”, even if the temporary hire is attempting to apply for a full-time position. This interpretation ignores the difficulties in navigating the State’s hiring process.

Lack of funding due to budget restrictions also does not eliminate the need for the position. Instead, it requires us to prioritize one communities’ needs over another. Unlike other departments or agencies, the HSPLS provides in-person public services in 51 distinct communities on six islands. Eliminating vacancies could permanently reduce services in some rural neighbor island communities, where public libraries are the only resources available to the community.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on SB2014 SD1 and for your continued support of the Hawai’i State Public Library System.



The Senate Committee on Ways and Means
February 25, 2026
Room 211
10:57 AM

RE: SB 2014 SD1, Relating to Public Employment

Attention: Chair Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Sharon Moriwaki, 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, **offers comments on SB 2014 SD1.**

While we appreciate the intent to identify wasteful spending, this measure penalizes agencies for systemic hiring delays caused by the current centralized system under the Department of Human Resources Development (DHRD).

We urge the Legislature to pass and implement SB 2137 SD1 first. Many civil service positions remain vacant not because they are unnecessary, but because of administrative bottlenecks within DHRD. While SB 2137 SD1 attempts to address the root cause of this issue by allowing agencies to assume hiring functions, it has been amended to only apply to recruitments initiated after June 30, 2027. This means agencies cannot use this new authority to clear out current backlogs. Passing SB 2014 SD1 now effectively punishes the University for DHRD's inefficiencies by permanently abolishing support positions that are stalled in a broken pipeline they are not yet legally allowed to fix.

Arbitrarily stripping the University of position counts and funding ignores periods of hiring freezes or budget restrictions that may have paused recruitment. Once these funds lapse to the general fund, re-establishing them requires a massive legislative lift, permanently shrinking the University's capacity to support students.

The State should focus on streamlining the hiring process through SB 2137 SD1 before imposing the "use it or lose it" mandate of SB 2014 SD1.

We respectfully urge the Committee to DEFER SB 2014 SD1.

University of Hawaii
Professional Assembly



Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. Fern".

Christian L. Fern
Executive Director
University of Hawaii Professional Assembly

**University of Hawaii
Professional Assembly**

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UNITED PUBLIC WORKERS

AFSCME Local 646, AFL-CIO

THE SENATE
KA 'AHA KENEKOA

THE THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION OF 2026

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

Wednesday, February 25, 2026, 10:57 AM
Conference Room 211 & Videoconference

Re: Testimony on SB2014, SD1 – RELATING TO PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, 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 provides comments on SB2014, SD1, which requires the Director of Human Resources Development to abolish vacant positions within state departments and agencies under its jurisdiction, with certain exceptions, that have been vacant for more than 5 years.

We are concerned about the long-term impact the proposed authorization to abolish positions that have been vacant for more than 5 years will have on existing public employees and government operations. UPW shares the Legislature’s frustration with departments and agencies that continue to struggle with filling their vacant positions. However, we believe the abolishment of positions without will ultimately punish hard-working public servants who continue to perform their duties despite significant staffing shortages.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide comments on this measure.

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SB-2014-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 11:58:48 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/25/2026 10:57:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lynn Murakami Akatsuka	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support SB 2014, SD 1 passage this legislative session. I agree with outcome of this bill and its amendments in the SD 1 version. It will release funds of positions not filled for many years and the funds to be used for current residents' needs instead of increasing taxes to fund existing state needs.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support of SB 2014, SD 1.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR



JADE T. BUTAY
DIRECTOR

WILLIAM G. KUNSTMAN
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS
KA 'OIHANA PONO LIMAHAHA

February 25, 2026

To: The Honorable Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair,
The Honorable Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair, and
Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Date: Wednesday, February 25, 2026
Time: 10:57 a.m.
Place: Conference Room 211, State Capitol

From: Jade T. Butay, Director
Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR)

Re: S.B. 2014 S.D.1 RELATING TO PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT

I. OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED LEGISLATION

The **DLIR offers comments** on this measure, which requires the Director of the Department of Human Resources Development (DHRD) to abolish state positions that have been vacant for more than five years, subject to certain exceptions, and to lapse associated funds to the appropriate account.

The DLIR appreciates that the measure excludes federally funded positions from automatic abolishment and lapsing requirements. However, the Department respectfully requests that the Legislature extend a similar exemption to positions supported by special, revolving, and trust funds.

The Department opposes granting the DHRD Director authority to automatically abolish non-federally funded positions.

II. CURRENT LAW

§26-5(a) gives the DHRD Director the authority to reclassify and abolish vacant positions within state departments and agencies after sixty days of providing an annual report to the Legislature twenty days before the start of each Regular Session.

III. COMMENTS ON THE SENATE BILL

The Department appreciates the intent of this measure to address long-standing vacancies and improve efficiency in public employment. We also appreciate the measure's exclusion of federally funded position from automatic abolishment and

lapsing requirements.

However, the Department has significant concerns regarding the abolishment of positions funded through the special, revolving, and trust funds. The DLIR respectfully request that the Legislature extend similar exemptions to these categories.

These funds and positions are statutorily authorized for specific programmatic purposes and often work in tandem with other functions supported by different Means of Financing (MOF). Applying a broad-brush approach may directly impede the ability to deliver the essential services and negatively affect programs that safeguard public safety, labor standards, and complaint obligations. Abolishing these positions based solely on vacancy duration fails to account for operational realities and could severely disrupt critical functions.

Special, revolving, and trust funds are self-sustaining and earmarked for specific purposes. Eliminating positions funded by these sources does not reduce general fund expenditure and undermines the financial structure designed to support vital services.

For example, in 2021, the Legislature abolished the revolving-funded Elevator Supervisor position along with elevator inspectors in an across-the-board action during the COVID emergency, even though the integrity of the revolving fund was not at risk. Post-COVID, DLIR had to expend significant time and resources to re-establish the supervisor position as sound management practices dictate. Allowing centralized abolishment of specialized positions funded through non-general means would require subject matter expertise not available at the executive branch level, create numerous spillover effects, and demand additional staff time and resources.

Vacancies often result from recruitment challenges beyond DLIR's control. Rigid minimum qualification requirements and inflexible standards—such as narrowly defined experience criteria—limit the ability to consider candidates with relevant, transferable skills.

Additionally, the measure does not account for temporary-term positions that may appear vacant for extended periods but are filled intermittently through 89-day hires. These positions provide critical flexibility for departments to meet short-term operational needs without lengthy recruitment processes. Automatically abolishing such positions based solely on vacancy duration would undermine this flexibility and negatively impact service delivery rather than addressing the root cause of vacancies.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this vital matter.

To: Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair
Committee on Ways and Means

From: Veronica Moore, Individual Citizen

Date: February 24, 2026

RE: Senate Bill 2014 SD1
Measure Title: RELATING TO PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT.
Report Title: DHRD; Vacant Positions; Reclassification; Abolishment; Report;
Lapsing of Funds

To All Concerned,

My name is Veronica Moore and I support Senate Bill 2014 SD1. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Veronica M. Moore



HAWAII GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION
AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO

RANDY PERREIRA, Executive Director • Tel: 808.543.0011 • Fax: 808.528.0922

The Thirty-Third Legislature, State of Hawaii
The Senate
Committee on Ways and Means

Testimony by
Hawaii Government Employees Association

February 25, 2026

S.B. 2014, S.D. 1 — RELATING TO PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT

The Hawaii Government Employees Association, AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO wishes to provide comments on S.B. 2014, S.D. 1, which requires the Director of Human Resources Development to abolish vacant positions within state departments and agencies under its jurisdiction that have been vacant for more than 5 years.

We caution the legislature to broadly abolish vacant positions if they haven't been filled within a certain time frame. A more established framework should be considered to limit unintended consequences against our state workforce and the core services that they provide. However, we have been advocating for years that vacant position money be used to increase the salary for the incumbents. Therefore, if the legislature looks to implement a framework to abolish vacant positions, then that vacant position money should solely be used to increase the salary for the incumbents within those positions, since those employees are already doing the work that was intended for the positions that remain vacant.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on S.B. 2014, S.D. 1.

Respectfully submitted,

Randy Perreira
Executive Director