
HOUSE RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A COURT SECURITY AND DEPARTMENT OF LAW ENFORCEMENT CAPACITY WORKING GROUP TO ADDRESS SYSTEMIC STAFFING SHORTAGES, EXPANDED STATUTORY RESPONSIBILITIES, AND THE ESCALATING FISCAL AND ACCOUNTABILITY RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH PRIVATE SECURITY CONTRACTING AT STATE COURTS.

1 WHEREAS, the State established the Department of Law
2 Enforcement as a cabinet-level department with expanded
3 statewide public-safety responsibilities, consolidating and
4 increasing statutory duties without a commensurate, sustained
5 expansion of Deputy Sheriff positions; and

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7 WHEREAS, the Sheriff Division of the Department of Law
8 Enforcement is responsible for securing all state court
9 facilities; transporting persons in custody; executing warrants
10 and court orders; protecting state officials and facilities;
11 supporting agricultural and land enforcement operations;
12 assisting with Department of Education campus safety; responding
13 to disasters and emergencies; and performing other duties as
14 assigned by statute or executive directive; and

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16 WHEREAS, the scope, geographic reach, and complexity of
17 these responsibilities have expanded significantly in recent
18 years, while recruitment pipelines, compensation structures, and
19 training capacity have not grown proportionally; and

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21 WHEREAS, persistent vacancies, extended hiring timelines,
22 academy throughput constraints, compensation disparities
23 relative to county law enforcement agencies, reliance on
24 mandatory overtime, and cross-deployment of deputies away from
25 core judicial assignments have created structural scarcity
26 within the Sheriff Division; and

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28 WHEREAS, this scarcity has directly affected the Hawaii
29 State Judiciary's ability to maintain consistent, publicly



1 staffed security coverage at state court facilities, resulting
2 in operational strain and increased reliance on contracted
3 private security personnel; and
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5 WHEREAS, testimony presented during public hearings before
6 the House of Representatives Committee on Finance earlier in
7 2026 by representatives of the Hawaii State Judiciary detailed
8 drastically increased expenditures for private security services
9 at court facilities, including proposals for armed contracted
10 security at court entrances, reflecting escalating recurring
11 costs attributable to unfilled Deputy Sheriff positions; and
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13 WHEREAS, these expenditures represent a structural
14 budgetary shift in which recurring operating funds are
15 increasingly allocated to private security contracts on a year-
16 to-year basis rather than invested in stabilizing and expanding
17 the public Deputy Sheriff workforce; and
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19 WHEREAS, a continued reliance on vacancy-driven contracting
20 with private-security services risks normalizing a parallel
21 security infrastructure that fragments public accountability,
22 diffuses oversight, and gradually erodes institutional public-
23 sector capacity; and
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25 WHEREAS, private security contractors are not governed by
26 the same constitutional accountability standards, public
27 transparency requirements, disciplinary systems, or collective
28 bargaining frameworks that apply to sworn public officers,
29 raising material concerns regarding use-of-force protocols,
30 incident reporting, liability exposure, and coordination during
31 high-risk court proceedings; and
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33 WHEREAS, state courts are foundational democratic
34 institutions where constitutional rights are exercised and
35 adjudicated, protective orders are issued, criminal proceedings
36 are conducted, and public disputes are resolved, and the
37 protection of state courts is a core sovereign function that
38 requires stable and accountable public stewardship; and
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40 WHEREAS, the failure to align expanded mission scope with
41 sufficient staffing capacity undermines access to justice,
42 increases fiscal inefficiency over time, and shifts risk from



1 structural workforce investment to reactive contracting
2 expenditures; now, therefore,

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4 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
5 Thirty-third Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session
6 of 2026, that a Court Security and Department of Law Enforcement
7 Capacity Working Group is requested to be established to address
8 systemic staffing shortages, expanded statutory
9 responsibilities, and the escalating fiscal and accountability
10 risks associated with private security contracting at state
11 courts; and

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13 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Court Security and
14 Department of Law Enforcement Capacity Working Group is
15 requested to evaluate and recommend structural solutions to:

- 16
17 (1) Realign Department of Law Enforcement staffing levels
18 with expanded statutory responsibilities;
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20 (2) Stabilize Deputy Sheriff recruitment and retention;
21 and
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23 (3) Reduce long-term fiscal dependence on private security
24 contracting at state court facilities; and
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26 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Court Security and
27 Department of Law Enforcement Capacity Working Group include:

- 28
29 (1) The Chief Justice of the Hawaii Supreme Court, or the
30 Chief Justice's designee;
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32 (2) The Director of Law Enforcement, or the Director's
33 designee;
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35 (3) The Director of Human Resources Development, or the
36 Director's Designee;
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38 (4) The Director of Finance, or the Director's designee;
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40 (5) The Attorney General, or the Attorney General's
41 designee; and
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1 (6) The exclusive representatives for any affected
2 bargaining units; and
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4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Court Security and
5 Department of Law Enforcement Capacity Working Group is
6 requested to invite and include additional individuals with
7 relevant expertise or operational responsibilities to serve as
8 working group members as the chair or co-chairs deem
9 appropriate; and
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11 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Court Security and
12 Department of Law Enforcement Capacity Working Group is
13 requested to collaborate in good faith, using existing
14 departmental data and resources, to review and discuss the
15 following matters:
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17 (1) Mission Scope and Resource Alignment: An overview of
18 the statutory and operational responsibilities
19 assigned to the Department of Law Enforcement and a
20 general assessment of whether current authorized and
21 filled positions appear sufficient to meet court
22 security obligations without recurring reliance on
23 private contracts;
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25 (2) Facility-Level Court Security Needs: A discussion of
26 minimum safe staffing considerations for state court
27 facilities and identification of where contracted
28 services are currently being used due to Deputy
29 Sheriff vacancies;
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31 (3) Workforce Stabilization Considerations: An examination
32 of recruitment and retention challenges, including
33 compensation competitiveness, hiring timelines,
34 training throughput, vacancy duration, and overtime
35 dependency;
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37 (4) Private Contracting Fiscal Overview: A high-level
38 summary of current and projected expenditures for
39 private security services at state court facilities
40 and general comparison of the costs associated with
41 restoring public staffing capacity;
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1 (5) Accountability and Risk Considerations: Identification
2 of policy considerations related to training
3 standards, reporting protocols, coordination with
4 sworn officers, transparency, and liability when
5 private security contractors are used; and
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7 (6) Preliminary Recommendations: Any suggested
8 administrative, budgetary, or legislative actions that
9 may help improve long-term alignment between the
10 mission scope of the Department of Law Enforcement and
11 staffing capacity; and
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13 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Court Security and
14 Department of Law Enforcement Capacity Working Group is
15 requested to prepare and submit to the Legislature a report of
16 its findings and recommendations, including any proposed
17 legislation, no later than twenty days prior to the convening of
18 the Regular Session of 2027; and
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20 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Hawaii State Judiciary is
21 requested to provide any necessary administrative support to the
22 Court Security and Department of Law Enforcement Capacity
23 Working Group, including preparing and drafting the report; and
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25 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
26 Resolution be transmitted to the Chief Justice of the Hawaii
27 Supreme Court; Director of Law Enforcement; Director of Human
28 Resources Development; Director of Finance; and Attorney
29 General.
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