

STAND. COM. REP. NO. 2173

Honolulu, Hawaii

**FEB 11 2026**

RE: S.B. No. 2198  
S.D. 1

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi  
President of the Senate  
Thirty-Third State Legislature  
Regular Session of 2026  
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Labor and Technology, to which was referred S.B. No. 2198 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to require the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to study the establishment of a Hawai'i Workforce Excellence Award Program.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations.

Your Committee finds that promoting a diverse marketplace is fundamental to the State's goals of fostering workforce development and sustainable economic growth. A successfully diverse economy includes manual skills and craftwork, which are often overlooked due to social stigmas. France formulated a unique solution to this issue through the *Meilleur Ouvrier de France* competition, which preserves and celebrates French heritage and craftsmanship by awarding titles in dozens of crafts, including woodworking and floristry. Honoring and preserving high standards of craftsmanship, skill, and professionalism in various manual trades is a valuable initiative to meet broader economic goals, as demonstrated by the success of the *Meilleur Ouvrier de France* competition. This measure examines how the State may develop a similar program by requesting the Department of Labor



and Industrial Relations to study the establishment of a Hawaii Workforce Excellence Award Program.

Your Committee has amended this measure by inserting an effective date of January 1, 2077, to encourage further discussion.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Labor and Technology that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of S.B. No. 2198, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 2198, S.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Ways and Means.

Respectfully submitted on  
behalf of the members of the  
Committee on Labor and  
Technology,



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BRANDON J.C. ELEFANIE, Chair



