

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 LIMAHANA

April 10, 2026

To: The Honorable Brandon J.C. Elefante, Chair
The Honorable Rachele Lamosao, Vice Chair, and
Members of the Labor and Technology Committee

Date: Friday, April 10, 2026
Time: 3:00 p.m.
Place: Conference Room 225, State Capitol

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

Re: G.M. 779, Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Hawai'i Workforce Development Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, MARK PHONGSAVATH, for a term to expire 06-30-2030.

The Department of Labor and Industrial Relations **supports** the confirmation of Mark Phongsavath to the Workforce Development Council.

Mr. Phongsavath brings more than a decade of experience in Hawai'i's electrical and construction trades, advancing from apprentice to journeyperson and now serving as a lead organizer with IBEW Local Union 1186. His career path gives him first-hand insight into how workers enter and progress within the trades and the challenges that can interrupt that pipeline. Through mentorship, outreach, and collaboration with contractors and training programs, he has worked to expand access to apprenticeship opportunities and promote high-quality career pathways in industries essential to the state's economic stability.

In his current role, he works directly with labor, employers, and training providers to strengthen Hawai'i's skilled workforce and address persistent shortages in the electrical and construction sectors. He has supported initiatives that build leadership, broaden awareness of trade careers, and improve coordination between workforce partners. His practical, frontline perspective will help the Workforce Development Council craft strategies that reflect the real conditions of Hawai'i's labor market and support the long-term development of the state's skilled workforce.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Governor's Message 779.

DR. JOSH GREEN
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR



JADE BUTAY
DLIR DIRECTOR

WILLIAM KUNSTMAN
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

KEITH DEMELLO
CHAIRPERSON

BENNETTE E. MISALUCHA
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL
Department of Labor and Industrial Relations
830 Punchbowl Street, Suite 317, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
Phone: (808) 586-8815 Web: <http://labor.hawaii.gov/wdc/>

To: The Honorable Senator Brandon Elefante, Chair,
The Honorable Senator Rachele Lamosao, Vice-Chair, and
Members of the Senate Committee on Labor and Technology

Date: Friday, April 10, 2026

Time: 3:00 p.m.

Place: Conference Room 225, State Capitol

From: Keith DeMello
Chair, Workforce Development Council

Re: GM 779: Gubernatorial Nominee, Mark Phongsavath

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL IN STRONG SUPPORT

The Workforce Development Council (WDC) respectfully submits this testimony in **strong support of the confirmation of Mr. Mark Phongsavath** to serve as a member of the Council, representing the labor sector.

Mr. Phongsavath brings an important and valued perspective to the Council through his representation of Hawai'i's workforce and organized labor. His experience and insight ensure that the voice of workers remains central in the development of workforce policies, programs, and strategies across the State.

As a representative of labor, Mr. Phongsavath will play a critical role in helping the Council advance its mission of building a workforce system that is responsive, inclusive, and grounded in real-world conditions faced by working individuals and families. His contributions support the Council's efforts to strengthen career pathways, improve job quality, and ensure that workforce initiatives translate into meaningful opportunities for local residents.

His participation also reinforces the importance of collaboration among employers, labor, education, and government, which is an essential element of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). A strong labor voice helps ensure that workforce strategies are balanced, practical, and aligned with both

industry needs and worker outcomes.

Mr. Phongsavath's perspective, commitment, and representation of the labor community make him well-qualified to serve on the Workforce Development Council.

For these reasons, the Workforce Development Council respectfully asks the Committee to confirm the appointment of Mr. Mark Phongsavath.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Respectfully Submitted,

Keith DeMello

Chair

Workforce Development Council



HAWAII STATE AFL-CIO

888 Mililani Street, Suite 501 • Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
Telephone: (808) 597-1441 • Fax: (808) 593-2149

April 10, 2026

The Thirty-Third Legislature
The Senate
Committee on Labor and Technology

SUBJECT: TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF GM779 - SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION TO THE HAWAII' I WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL, GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE, MARK PHONGSAVATH, FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE 06-30-2030

Chair Elefante, Vice Chair Lamosao, and members of the committee:

The Hawaii State AFL-CIO is in strong support of GM779, confirming Mark Phongsavath to the Hawaii Workforce Development Council.

Mr. Phongsavath began his career in the building trades as an apprentice, advanced to journeyman, and now serves in a leadership role with IBEW Local 1186. That progression gives him firsthand knowledge of how apprenticeship programs connect training to long-term employment and how workforce shortages develop when that pipeline is constrained.

His current work focuses on expanding access to apprenticeship and strengthening the connection between training and industry demand. Both areas are directly relevant to the Hawaii Workforce Development Council's mission and the State's efforts to grow its skilled workforce.

Mr. Phongsavath's perspective will help ensure the Hawaii Workforce Development Council's work remains aligned with industry needs and responsive to workforce challenges.

We urge the committee to advance GM779.

Respectfully submitted,

Randy Perreira
President
Hawaii State AFL-CIO



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 Labor and Technology

Testimony by
Hawaii Government Employees Association

April 10, 2026

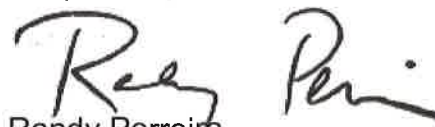
GM779 – SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION TO THE
HAWAII WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL, GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE,
MARK PHONGSAVATH, FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE 6-30-2030.

The Hawaii Government Employees Association, AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO strongly supports the nomination of Mark Phongsavath, to the Hawaii Workforce Development Council.

Mr. Phongsavath is a graduate of the University of Phoenix, where he earned a degree in Business Management. He currently serves as the lead organizer for IBEW Local 1186, where he leads the union's organizing efforts and workforce development initiatives within Hawaii's electrical and telecommunications industries. Mr. Phongsavath has extensive experience in apprenticeship training, contractor relations, and labor-management collaboration, and he is committed to strengthening Hawaii's skilled trades workforce. We believe that Mr. Phongsavath will be a valuable asset to the Council as it plays a vital role in aligning workforce programs with the state's economic development strategies and addressing unmet workforce and economic development needs.

We offer our unequivocal support and endorsement of Mark Phongsavath's nomination to the Hawaii Workforce Development Council and respectfully request the favorable consideration of your committee for his candidacy.

Respectfully submitted,


Randy Perreira
Executive Director



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**SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND TECHNOLOGY
HEARING: APRIL 10, 2026, 3:00 PM, ROOM 225**

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF GM 779 – NOMINEE: MARK PHONGSAVATH

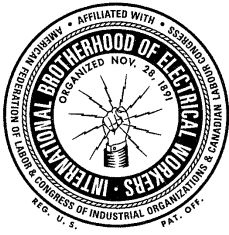
**Honorable Chair Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair Rachele Lamosao, and
Members of the Committee on Labor and Technology:**

Hawaii Electricians Market Enhancement Program (HEMEP) is an organization representing over 100 Hawaii State Licensed Electrical Contractors, the Electrical Contractor's Association of Hawaii, and the Members of IBEW Local 1186.

HEMEP is honored to submit this testimony in **SUPPORT** of the nomination of Mark Phongsavath to serve on the Workforce Development Council (WDC).

This nomination comes at a critical time when the State must address workforce shortages. Mark Phongsavath has a wealth of knowledge and experience that will be valuable assets to serve the WDC. Having completed the rigorous apprenticeship and subsequently taking on leadership roles in the electrical trade, his perspective on workforce programs is unique and will prove to be committed to furthering the development of Hawaii's workforce.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in **SUPPORT** of GM 779 and Mr. Mark Phongsavath.



International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers

LOCAL UNION NO. 1186 • Affiliated with AFL-CIO

1935 HAU STREET, 5TH FLOOR • HONOLULU, HI 96819-5003
TELEPHONE (808) 847-5341 • FAX (808) 847-2224

4/08/2026

TO: SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND TECHNOLOGY

RE: Testimony for Mark Phongsavath GM779, Hearing on April 10, 2026, 3:00PM

Aloha Chair Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair Rachele Lamosao, and Members of the Committee on Labor and Technology:

The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local Union 1186, (IBEW 1186) represents over 2,700 members in the Electrical Construction Industry, Telecommunications, Motor & Marine, Civil Service Employees, and Professional Teachers at Kamehameha Kapalama and Mid Pacific Institute.

I am writing in strong support of Mark Phongsavath's appointment to the Workforce Development Council. I have had the opportunity to work with Mr. Phongsavath through IBEW Local 1186 and can attest to his qualifications, professionalism, and dedication to Hawaii's workforce.

Mr. Phongsavath brings years of experience both in the field and in the union office. His hands-on field experience provides him with a clear understanding of the needs, challenges, and safety standards required of skilled workers. In his role within the union office, he has worked closely with both workers and contractors, demonstrating the ability to effectively communicate, collaborate, and support workforce initiatives that benefit all stakeholders.

His combined experience allows him to offer a balanced and practical perspective on workforce development, including training, apprenticeship programs, and industry alignment. Mr. Phongsavath has consistently shown a commitment to strengthening opportunities for workers while supporting the long-term needs of Hawaii's industries.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to support the appointment of Mark Phongsavath to the Workforce Development Council.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Sincerely,

Damien T.K. Kim
Business Manager/Financial Secretary

In Strong Support of GM 779: Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Hawai'i Workforce Development Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, MARK PHONGSAVATH, for a term to expire 06-30-2030.

Aloha Chair Elefante, Vice Chair Lamosao and Committee Members from the Senate Committee on Labor and Technology,

We are in **strong** support of Mark Phongsavath to serve as a member of the Hawai'i Workforce Development Council.

Mark is currently in a leadership position at IBEW Local 1186 and will bring his expertise to the Council. Entering the workforce from an apprentice position, he understands what it takes and can provide guidance in projects that are aimed at bringing in at early entry levels. As a fellow Union Brother, he also will be looking out for what is best for the workplace and the community.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of GM 779.

Sincerely,

Rosalee Agas-Yuu

Rosalee Agas-Yuu

President, Hawai'i Nurses' Association, OPEIU Local 50

GM-779

Submitted on: 4/6/2026 4:03:42 PM

Testimony for LBT on 4/10/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Justin Puaoi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair,

I am submitting testimony in support of Mark Phongsavath to have a seat on the Work force development council. I work hand in hand with Mark as organizers for the IBEW. Mark is very detailed oriented, a go getter and has great work ethic. I feel he will fit perfectly on the council and is a great representative for Labor to make sure that we as labor have a seat at the table.

Thank you for your time.

Justin Puaoi IBEW member and Lead organizer

GM-779

Submitted on: 4/7/2026 1:22:58 PM

Testimony for LBT on 4/10/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Patrick Max Weisbarth	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support Mr. Phongsavath

April 8, 2026

To: Chair, Vice Chair and Members of the Committee of Hawai'i Workforce Development Council

Re: Testimony in Strong Support of GM779 - Mark Phongsavath, Candidate Consideration and Confirmation for the Hawai'i Workforce Development Council

Aloha Chair and Members of Hawai'i Workforce Development Council,

I am writing in strong support of the consideration and confirmation of Mark Phongsavath to serve on the Hawai'i Workforce Development Council.

Mark brings a wealth of hands-on experience and deep understanding of workforce development through his career as an electrician and his ongoing work with apprenticeship programs. Having come up through the apprenticeship system himself, he understands firsthand the value of structured training, mentorship, and career pathways that lead to sustainable, high-quality employment.

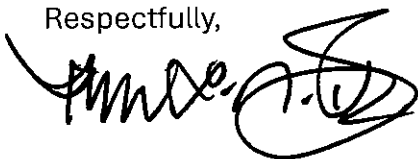
In his current role on staff at the union office, Mark works closely with apprentices and journey level workers, helping to guide, support, and develop the next generation of skilled tradespeople. His experience gives him a unique perspective on both the challenges and opportunities within workforce development, particularly in building strong, locally grounded training programs that meet industry needs.

Mark would bring meaningful value to the Hawai'i Workforce Development Council through his practical experience, commitment to mentorship, and dedication to strengthening apprenticeship pathways. His voice would help ensure that workforce strategies remain connected to real world conditions and continue to support working families across our communities.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge your support for his consideration and confirmation.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kimi Koge', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Kimi Koge
Community Member