



The Judiciary, State of Hawai‘i

Testimony to the Thirty-Third State Legislature 2026 Regular Session

House Committee on Finance
Representative Chris Todd, Chair
Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair

Thursday, February 26, 2026, 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 308 and Videoconference

by:

Brandon M. Kimura
Administrative Director of the Courts

Bill No. and Title: House Bill No. 2095, H.D. 1, Relating to the Judiciary.

Purpose: Appropriates supplemental moneys for the Judiciary for the fiscal biennium beginning 7/1/2025 and ending 6/30/2027.

Judiciary’s Position:

The Judiciary strongly urges your support of House Bill No. 2095, H.D. 1, which reflects the Judiciary’s supplemental resource requirements for Fiscal Biennium 2025–2027. We acknowledge the economic uncertainty currently facing the State and have carefully considered this context. We respectfully make the following supplemental requests with this in mind, along with the circumstances that underlie each request.

In total, the Judiciary requests for FY 2027 an increase of \$6.4M in operating funds and 4.0 permanent full-time equivalent (FTE) positions, and—due to the requested conversion of positions—a reduction of 3.0 temporary FTE and 1.0 FTE (Special Fund) positions. The Judiciary also requests for FY 2027 a total of \$55.4M in bond funds for capital improvement projects.



Operating Requests:

Operating requests include critical physical and cyber security resources in consideration of recent security related events nationwide and locally, funding to sustain critical services to court-users, and funding and position conversions for critical personnel. This testimony provides detail for each request.

Critical Security Resources

Supplemental Armed Private Security – The Judiciary requests \$3,250,000 to contract for private, armed security professionals to enhance perimeter security at Judiciary facilities statewide, to supplement the protective services of the Department of Law Enforcement (DLE). Despite best efforts, DLE has consistently struggled to staff “patrol” positions at the public entrances and key fixed locations within Judiciary facilities, usually due to vacant positions and sometimes due to leave, training, or the performance of duties outside courthouses or to support courthouse cellblocks. We make this to enhance the safety of all who enter Judiciary facilities. This includes many whose in-person presence is mandated and where hearings are sometimes contentious, even while we have shifted to remote venues for many hearings or appointments with litigants and clients. Individuals who enter Judiciary facilities are often experiencing among the most difficult period of their lives, while judges and probation officers make decisions that will in many instances change lives going forward. The Judiciary has contracted with private, unarmed security professionals to assist in screening those entering Judiciary facilities, but these individuals provide distinct services and this approach does not address the modern security needs at courthouses.

Cybersecurity – The Judiciary has two requests pertaining to cybersecurity. We request \$188,880 to restore funding for an Information Security Architect and to transfer a position count from the Computer System Special Fund to ITSD general funds for an Identity Architect. These positions are critical to strengthening the Judiciary’s cybersecurity program as courts nationwide face increasingly sophisticated cyber threats. Recent ransomware and malware incidents affecting state and federal court systems—including in Texas, Alaska, Kansas, California, and the federal courts—underscore the growing risk to judicial operations. Currently, fragmented security tools and processes across IT divisions can create gaps in coverage, including delays in deactivating user accounts after employee separations, vulnerabilities that cybercriminals routinely exploit.

The Information Security Architect and Identity Architect will address these enterprise-level cybersecurity gaps by establishing a centralized security architecture and strengthening identity and access management. Together, these complementary roles will improve system oversight, enhance onboarding and offboarding controls, and ensure that new technologies are securely integrated into the Judiciary’s IT environment from inception. As cybersecurity threats continue to evolve, these positions will help safeguard sensitive data, reduce operational risk, and support a secure, resilient Judiciary infrastructure.



Critical Services to Court Users

Purchase of Service (POS) Contracts (First Circuit, O‘ahu) – The Judiciary requests funds to restore First Circuit’s POS contract appropriations that were reduced by \$574,716. The Judiciary requests the restoration of funds for Purchase of Services (POS) contracts that provide substance abuse treatment services. These programs are critical to helping offenders overcome addiction, reduce criminal activity, and lower recidivism. Effectively treating addiction and mental illness significantly reduces reoffending and promotes long-term rehabilitation. Currently, the First Circuit Court’s Adult Client Services Branch (ACSB) supervises approximately 5,250 adult offenders, the majority of whom require substance abuse treatment. In 2024, 2,539 ACSB clients were referred for treatment, increasing to 2,848 referrals in FY 2025. As with other chronic diseases, early intervention leads to better results; immediate access to treatment is essential to recovery and relapse prevention. Delays in access can result in lost opportunities for recovery. The COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted community supervision and treatment services. To ensure health and safety, face-to-face meetings and drug testing were suspended, resulting in fewer referrals and admissions to Judiciary-contracted treatment providers. The pandemic also placed considerable strain on these providers, as budget reductions resulted in decreased service capacity, staffing shortages, and limited admissions. Restoring funding for contracted treatment programs will expand access to essential services, support individuals in achieving recovery, and promote safe communities through reduced recidivism and sustained behavioral change.

Office of the Public Guardian – The Judiciary requests restored funding of \$33,162 in FY 2027 for a part-time Social Worker IV in Kaua‘i’s Office of the Public Guardian (OPG) program. OPG serves as court-appointed public guardian for incapacitated persons, safeguarding their rights, dignity, and quality of life. Referrals are primarily received from hospitals, long-term care facilities, Adult Protective Services, and the Department of Human Services. Upon appointment, OPG must address complex and individualized issues, including medical and mental health needs, financial and legal matters, benefits eligibility, family relationships, and end-of-life planning. Social Workers serving as guardians are responsible for investigations, crisis management, care planning, and ongoing oversight to ensure appropriate services and protections are in place.

The Social Worker IV position serves as the intake worker for Kaua‘i County and is essential for conducting assessments, responding to emergencies, consenting to services, and maintaining direct oversight of wards. Currently, Kaua‘i cases are managed by O‘ahu-based guardians, limiting the ability to conduct in-person visits and build the relationships necessary for effective guardianship. While technology allows for some contact, it is not an adequate substitute for face-to-face interaction, particularly for cognitively impaired individuals.



Critical Staffing Resources

Commission on Salaries – The Judiciary statewide requests \$2,339,845 for FY 2027 for the requisite increases pursuant to the 2025 Commission on Salaries. The 2025 Legislature approved funding at the level required for FY26. Additional funds are required for FY27.

Court Operations Specialist (Third Circuit, Kona) – The Judiciary requests conversion of 1.0 FTE position from temporary to permanent and restored funding to a redescribed and modern need—Court Operations Specialist III, in the Kona Fiscal Office for \$59,532 in FY2027. In 2020, the Legislature removed funding for positions from the Third Circuit due to the economic uncertainty that the State was facing due to the COVID-19 pandemic. One of the positions defunded was a temporary Clerk III in the Fiscal Office at Courthouse in Kona. Although the needs of the Court and the public have evolved since the pandemic, it remains essential to use existing resources efficiently and proactively. Interpreter requests have also increased, particularly in multilingual and rural communities across the Third Circuit. Redescribing the defunded Clerk position into a permanent Court Operations Specialist will help address growing fiscal demands amid ongoing staffing challenges, reduce the challenge of coordinating an increasing volume of interpreter services, and strengthen the Court’s ability to respond to emerging needs throughout Third Circuit.

Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) (First Circuit, O’ahu) – The Judiciary requests a no-cost conversion of two (2) temporary Social Worker IV positions to permanent status for the CASA Program. CASA is staffed by eight (8) social workers, consisting of six (6) full-time permanent positions and two (2) full-time temporary positions. This staffing level is necessary to fulfill program functions and to maintain compliance with legal mandates and national certification standards required of Guardian ad Litem programs that utilize volunteer CASAs. A fully staffed program is essential to sustaining best practices and ensuring consistent, high-quality advocacy highly vulnerable children—those placed in foster care. CASA social workers and volunteers conduct monthly, face-to-face contact with all children served. Each CASA social worker attends court hearings, school and treatment meetings, youth circles, and home visits, and submits a court report at every review hearing. Conversion of the 2 temporary positions to permanent status would substantially improve program stability and continuity of services. Permanent employment would provide greater job security, allowing the CASA Program to retain experienced and qualified staff.

Capital Improvement Requests:

Capital Improvement Project (CIP) requirements continue to remain a major item of concern as the Judiciary’s infrastructure continues to age and deteriorate, and as the population served and services provided by the Judiciary continue to expand. We request CIP bond funds totaling \$55.4 million for FY 2027 to address critical needs, nearly all of which relate to the health and safety of Judiciary employees, the public, and all who enter Judiciary facilities.



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As the highest priority Judiciary CIP request this year, the Judiciary requests \$30.0 million in construction funds for a new South Kohala District Court. The existing South Kohala District Court presents significant concerns related to safety, space, temperature control, and noise, and is inadequate to meet the court-related needs the community.

The Judiciary also request \$1.2 million each to upgrade and replace aging A/C equipment at Pu'uhonua Kaulike on Kaua'i and Hale Kaulike on Hawai'i Island. The current chillers are nearing the end of their lifecycle, and current manufacturing challenges have resulted in extended lead times for replacement equipment. In addition, the Judiciary requests \$15.0 million to continue to upgrade and replace elevators at Ka'ahumanu Hale, due to longstanding concerns for safety and reliability. Finally, the Judiciary requests \$8.0 million in lump sum bond funds to address both ongoing and emerging building issues statewide.

The Judiciary respectfully requests your support of House Bill No. 2095, H.D. 1, the Judiciary's supplemental budget request.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

TESTIMONY
Committee on Finance
Hearing: Thursday, February 26, 2026

TO: Rep. Chris Todd, Chair
Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair

FROM: Mark K. Murakami, HSBA President

RE: HB 2095 HD1 - RELATING TO THE JUDICIARY

Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee on Finance:

The Hawaii State Bar Association (HSBA) appreciates the opportunity to offer testimony in **STRONG SUPPORT** of HB 2095 HD1 – RELATING TO THE JUDICIARY.

The State Judiciary plays a vital governmental role in upholding a fair and civil society. Community reports indicate a growing demand for judicial services. It is our firm belief that the Judiciary has demonstrated and continues to exhibit fiscal responsibility. Considering these challenges, supporting the Judiciary's budget requests becomes imperative to ensure its ability to meet the growing demands in a timely and efficient manner.

The Judiciary is tasked with some of the most important of all State responsibilities. Individuals utilize court services during some of the most stressful times of their lives. Families rely on the Judiciary to settle disputes which tear at the fabric of their household. Business owners and entrepreneurs rely on the Judiciary to resolve contract or insurance issues which threaten their livelihoods. Individuals who have been wronged, intentionally or unintentionally, by others, rely on the Judiciary to make them whole. Those accused of crimes rely on the Judiciary to hear their case fairly and impartially, and to enforce speedy trial constitutional rights. Likewise, the government must have an opportunity to present its case on behalf of the public. It is imperative that the Judiciary is supported to ensure our rule of law remains intact.

The Judiciary requests a supplement to its operating budget of \$6.4M to cover expenses such as permanent full time judicial and social worker positions, cybersecurity protection and armed security. Security and safety of our judiciary is critical. They also are requesting \$55.4M for CIP costs including construction funds for the South Kohala District Court, which currently operates in a building inadequate for court use. These requests are critical to the important role the judiciary has in protecting Hawaii's people.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit these comments in **STRONG SUPPORT** of HB 2095 HD1.

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**Parents And
Children Together**
BUILDING THE RELATIONSHIPS
THAT MATTER MOST

ParentsAndChildrenTogether.org

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 2095 HD1 RELATING TO THE JUDICIARY

TO: Chair Todd, Vice-Chair Takenouchi, & Members,
House Committee on Finance
FROM: Trisha Kajimura, Vice-President of Strategy & External Affairs
DATE: February 26, 2026 at 2:00 PM

Parents and Children Together (PACT) supports HB 2095 HD1, which appropriates supplemental funds for the Judiciary budget in the current biennium.

Founded by residents of Kuhio Park Terrace in 1968, PACT is a statewide community-based organization providing a wide array of innovative and educational social services to families in need. Assisting more than 18,000 people across the state annually, we help identify, address, and successfully resolve challenges through our 20 programs. Among our services are early education programs, domestic violence prevention and intervention programs, child abuse prevention and intervention programs, childhood sexual abuse supportive group services, child and adolescent behavioral health programs, sex trafficking intervention, poverty prevention and community building programs.

PACT is contracted by the Judiciary to provide services related to domestic violence in three counties – Honolulu, Maui and Kaua'i. Through these contracts we help survivors and child witnesses cope through their trauma, heal from abuse, and rebuild safe and self-sufficient households. We also work with individuals who have committed crimes of domestic violence through classes and counseling. These services and the staff dedicated to providing them are specialized and essential to the safety and well-being of our community. PACT's Judiciary contracts do not cover the true cost of providing these services, which is an ongoing challenge for the agency.

We submit this testimony as a member of the Hawai'i True Cost Coalition – over 70 community-based non-profit organizations fighting to sustain essential services for our communities. The Coalition supports the appropriation of \$574,716 to restore purchase-of-service contracts in the First Circuit Court that provide substance use disorder treatment for adults on probation on Oahu. These contracts were significantly reduced during the COVID-19 pandemic. This funding must be restored to continue services.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Please contact Trisha Kajimura at (808) 847-3285 or tkajimura@pacthawaii.org if you have any questions.



Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks! is a nonpartisan 501c4 nonprofit committed to advocating for children and their families. Our core issues are safety, health, and education.

To: House Committee on Finance
Re: **HB2095 HD1 – Relating to the Judiciary**
Hawai'i State Capitol & Via Videoconference
February 26, 2026, 2:00 PM

Dear Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Committee Members,

On behalf of Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks!, I am writing in **SUPPORT of HB2095 HD1**. This bill would appropriate supplemental funds for the Judiciary for the fiscal biennium beginning 7/1/2025 and ending 6/30/2027

The supplemental funds in this bill would support Judiciary programs and operations as well as nonprofit partners serving children, youth, and families across Hawai'i. These resources are foundational to the effective functioning of family court, child protective proceedings, and other youth-related services.

Children experience court delays and under-resourced systems most acutely. When family court proceedings move slowly, children can remain in unsafe situations, experience prolonged instability, or face delays in permanency decisions.

Nonprofit organizations provide essential court-connected services such as supervised visitation, family strengthening, youth diversion, domestic violence support, and case management for court-involved families. Strengthening Judiciary funding helps stabilize these programs, improve court efficiency, and promote better outcomes for children.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide this testimony. Please pass this bill.

Thank you,

Nicole Woo
Director of Research and Economic Policy

HB-2095-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 12:23:00 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sarah Fairchild	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill.

HB-2095-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 11:45:55 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Johnnie-Mae L. Perry	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry, Support

2095 HB RELATING TO THE JUDICIARY.