



*The Judiciary, State of Hawai‘i*  
*Ka ‘Oihana Ho‘okolokolo, Moku‘āina ‘o Hawai‘i*

**Testimony to the Thirty-Third Legislature, 2026 Regular Session**

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

Wednesday, March 4, 2026, 10:00 a.m.  
State Capitol, Conference Room 308 & Videoconference

By

Paul Quick  
Special Assistant to the Administrative Director of the Courts for Judiciary Security

**WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY**

---

**Bill No. and Title:** House Bill No. 2153, H.D. 1, Relating to Law Enforcement

**Purpose:** Establishes, and appropriates funds for, the Kūpa‘a Law Enforcement Retention Bonus Program within the Department of Law Enforcement to provide retention bonuses to Department law enforcement officers for three years. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD1)

**Judiciary's Position:**

The Judiciary supports the intent of this measure, which would ensure the retention of eligible sworn law enforcement officers.

The Department of Law Enforcement (DLE) provides essential law enforcement services for the Judiciary, as well as at the Legislature and for Executive branch locations. The DLE is currently experiencing a higher-than-normal vacancy rate and is experiencing difficulty staffing required assignments throughout the state. In addition, a pay disparity exists between DLE sworn law enforcement officers and similar sworn officers employed by county police departments, complicating retention of DLE sworn law enforcement officers.

Issuance of a retention bonus would allow the DLE to retain sworn law enforcement officers, and at the same time, be useful as a recruitment tool to recruit and retain Hawai‘i’s best



House Bill No. 2153, H.D. 1, Relating to Law Enforcement  
House Committee on Finance  
Wednesday, March 4, 2026 at 10:00 a.m.  
Page 2

for the DLE. The availability of a retention bonus might also help the DLE to recruit the United States' best applicants into a law enforcement career and to bring those best recruits to Hawai'i in order to provide a safe environment for the protection of the Legislature, the Judiciary, and the Executive branches. The retention bonus allows the DLE to potentially build capacity for its core functions of protecting Legislative and Judiciary facilities, as well as public officials in the Legislative and Executive branches.

The Judiciary has a strong interest in ensuring the success of DLE operations, as the administration of justice requires effective protection of Judiciary personnel, facilities, and the public. The Judiciary looks forward to enhancing its partnership with the DLE through this measure, which will improve the DLE's ability to retain sworn law enforcement officers, as well as to use this bonus as a recruitment tool, in order to ensure adequate levels of security resources to protect Legislature and Judiciary operations, employees, and the public.

We respectfully request that any appropriation provided not supplant the Judiciary's existing funding or budget requests.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR  
  
SYLVIA LUKE  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

SETH S. COLBY, Ph.D.  
DIRECTOR  
  
SABRINA NASIR  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM  
HAWAII EMPLOYER-UNION HEALTH BENEFITS TRUST FUND  
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE  
*Ka 'Oihana Mālama Mo'ohelu a Kālā*  
P.O. BOX 150  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96810-0150

ADMINISTRATIVE AND RESEARCH OFFICE  
BUDGET, PROGRAM PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT DIVISION  
FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION DIVISION  
OFFICE OF FEDERAL AWARDS MANAGEMENT

**WRITTEN ONLY**  
TESTIMONY BY SETH S. COLBY, Ph.D.  
DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE  
TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE  
ON  
HOUSE BILL NO. 2153, H.D. 1

**March 4, 2026  
10:00 a.m.  
Room 308 and Videoconference**

RELATING TO LAW ENFORCEMENT

The Department of Budget and Finance (B&F) offers comments on this bill.

House Bill No. 2153, H.D. 1, establishes and appropriates an unspecified amount of funds in FY 27 for the Kūpa'a Law Enforcement Retention Bonus Program within the Department of Law Enforcement, if negotiated through collective bargaining (CB) under Section 89-9, HRS, to provide retention bonuses, beginning July 1, 2026, and ending June 30, 2028, to any law enforcement officer appointed pursuant to Section 353C-4(a), HRS, who meets certain requirements.

B&F would like to note that the bill will appropriate funds for the retention bonus program prior to the completion of CB negotiations, even though the program is explicitly conditioned on negotiation under Section 89-9, HRS. Funding for the retention bonus program should be appropriated only after the program has been negotiated through CB and cost items are formally submitted to the Legislature.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**  
GOVERNOR  
KE KIA'ĀINA



**MIKE LAMBERT**  
Director

**ERNEST J. ROBELLO**  
Deputy Director  
Administration

**SYLVIA LUKE**  
LT GOVERNOR  
KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA

STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII  
**DEPARTMENT OF LAW ENFORCEMENT**

*Ka 'Oihana Ho'okō Kānāwai*

715 South King Street  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

**JARED K. REDULLA**  
Deputy Director  
Law Enforcement

**TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 2153, HOUSE DRAFT 1  
RELATING TO LAW ENFORCEMENT  
Before the House Committee on  
FINANCE**

Wednesday, March 4, 2026, 10:00 a.m.

State Capitol Conference Room 308

Testifier: Mike Lambert

Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and members of the Committee:

The Department of Law Enforcement (DLE) supports House Bill 2153, House Draft 1. This bill establishes the Kūpa'a Law Enforcement Retention Bonus Program within the Department of Law Enforcement and appropriates funds to provide retention bonuses to Department law enforcement officers for a period of three years.

Law enforcement agencies across the nation, and here in Hawai'i, are facing an unprecedented crisis in the recruitment and retention of qualified law enforcement officers, and DLE is no exception. The Sheriff Division continues to experience significant attrition, with approximately 77% of resignations going directly to other law enforcement agencies, including mainland agencies that are actively and deliberately targeting Hawai'i's law enforcement officers with substantial financial incentives. This ongoing exodus of experienced officers poses a serious threat to public safety and the Department's operational readiness.

The reality is that the DLE competes not only with county law enforcement agencies here in Hawai'i, but also with agencies on the mainland that offer substantially higher compensation packages, signing bonuses, and retention incentives. Without competitive retention tools, the DLE is at a severe disadvantage in keeping its trained, experienced, and highly capable officers. Every officer lost to another agency represents a significant investment in training, experience, and institutional knowledge that cannot easily be replaced.

The Kūpa'a Law Enforcement Retention Bonus Program directly addresses this critical need. By providing retention bonuses over a three-year period, this program creates a meaningful financial incentive for DLE law enforcement officers to remain with the Department. Retention bonuses are a proven and widely utilized strategy in both the public and private sectors to stabilize workforces and reduce costly turnover. For the DLE, retaining experienced officers is paramount to maintaining the safety and security of the State's jurisdictional areas, including courts, airports, harbors, and public spaces across the islands.

The DLE respectfully urges the Committee to pass House Bill 2153, House Draft 1, and provide the appropriation necessary to fully fund the Kūpa'a Law Enforcement Retention Bonus Program:

FY 2026-2027: \$5,040,000

FY 2027-2028: \$5,490,000

FY 2028-2029: \$5,940,000

3 YEAR TOTAL: \$16,470,000

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill.

**JOSH GREEN, M. D.**  
GOVERNOR  
KE KIA'ĀINA

**SYLVIA LUKE**  
LT. GOVERNOR  
KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



**J.N. MUSTO, PhD**  
CHIEF NEGOTIATOR  
KE PO'O KŪKĀKŪKA

**STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII**  
**OFFICE OF COLLECTIVE BARGAINING**  
**KE KE'ENA MĀLAMA LIMAHANA AUPUNI**  
**EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR**  
235 S. BERETANIA STREET, SUITE 1201  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-2437

Statement of  
**J.N. Musto, PhD**  
Chief Negotiator, Office of Collective Bargaining

Before the  
**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE**  
Wednesday, March 4, 2026  
10:00AM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 308

In consideration of  
**HB2153 HD1, RELATING TO LAW ENFORCEMENT**

**(WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY)**

Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and the members of the committee:

The Office of Collective Bargaining (OCB) respectfully opposes HB2153 HD1, which establishes and appropriates funds for the Kūpa'a Law Enforcement Retention Bonus Program to provide law enforcement officers retention bonuses.

Wages, hours and other terms and conditions of employment are subject to negotiations as provided in Hawaii Revised Statutes, §89-9.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.

# OFFICE OF INFORMATION PRACTICES

STATE OF HAWAII  
NO. 1 CAPITOL DISTRICT BUILDING  
250 SOUTH HOTEL STREET, SUITE 107  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813  
TELEPHONE: 808-586-1400 FAX: 808-586-1412  
EMAIL: oip@hawaii.gov

To: House Committee on Finance

From: Carlotta Amerino, Director

Date: March 4, 2026, 10:00 a.m.  
State Capitol, Conference Room 308

Re: Testimony on H.B. No. 2153, H.D. 1  
Relating to Law Enforcement

---

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this bill, which would create a kūpa‘a retention bonus program for sworn law enforcement officers. The Office of Information Practices (OIP) testified on the previous version of the bill and recommended an amendment to a confidentiality provision to avoid a conflict with the requirements of chapter 92F, HRS, the Uniform Information Practices Act (UIPA). That amendment was made in the H.D. 1 version of this bill, and OIP has no further concerns regarding this bill.



## UNITED PUBLIC WORKERS

AFSCME Local 646, AFL-CIO

### HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES THE THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE REGULAR SESSION OF 2026

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE  
Rep. Chris Todd, Chair  
Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair

Wednesday, March 4, 2026, 10:00 AM  
Conference Room 308 & Videoconference

**Re: Testimony on HB2153, HD1 – RELATING TO LAW ENFORCEMENT**

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

The United Public Workers, AFSCME Local 646, AFL-CIO (“UPW”) is the exclusive bargaining representative for approximately 12,000 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 HB2153, HD1, which establishes, and appropriates funds for, the Kūpa‘a Law Enforcement Retention Bonus Program to provide law enforcement officers retention bonuses

We recognize the issues that this bill is trying to address and believe that sworn personnel employed by the Department of Law Enforcement should be compensated comparably to their counterparts within county police departments. However, we are concerned by any legislation that could potentially circumvent, or even undermine, the collective bargaining provisions in Chapter 89, Hawaii Revised Statutes. Despite a provision that states the proposed two-year program would be subject to collective bargaining, the criteria prescribed in this measure constrains “good faith” negotiations while prefunding these retention bonuses into the next fiscal biennium. We believe that these types of discussions should remain between an employer and the employees’ exclusive representative.

Mahalo for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

---

**HEADQUARTERS**

1426 North School Street  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96817-1914  
Phone 808.847.2631

**HAWAII**

362 East Lanikaula Street  
Hilo, Hawaii 96720-4336  
Phone 808.961.3424

**KAUAI**

2970 Kele Street, Suite 213  
Lihue, Hawaii 96766-1803  
Phone 808.245.2412

**MAUI**

841 Kolu Street  
Wailuku, Hawaii 96793-1436  
Phone 808.244.0815

1.866.454.4166

Toll Free - *Molokai/Lanai only*