

# OFFICE OF INFORMATION PRACTICES

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To: House Committee on Judiciary

From: Carlotta Amerino, Director

Date: February 18, 2026, 2:00 p.m.  
State Capitol, Conference Room 325

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

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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) takes no position on the substance of this bill, but is concerned that the confidentiality provision in bill section 2(e), which would bar disclosure of personally identifiable information about the bonuses, would conflict with the requirements of chapter 92F, HRS, the Uniform Information Practices Act (UIPA).

Specifically, section 92F-12(a)(14), HRS, requires specified information about government employees to be public notwithstanding the UIPA’s exceptions to disclosure. That public information includes employee compensation (exact salary or, for civil service and union employees, salary range), hours worked, leave time taken, and dates of service, among other things. Since the type of information used to determine eligibility for the bonus is required to be public information, and employee compensation is required to be public information, the prohibition against disclosing personally identifiable information about bonus recipients sets up an apparent conflict of law.

If this Committee's intent is to ensure that the department's reports on the program include only aggregated information and the department does not proactively publish individually identifiable information, **OIP recommends adding the phrase "except as required under chapter 92F" to the end of bill section 2(e), on bill page 5, line 3**, so it ends ". . . and shall not disclose personally identifiable information except as required under chapter 92F."

Thank you for considering OIP's testimony.

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



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

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

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

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

Before the  
**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS**  
Wednesday, February 18, 2026  
2:00PM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 325

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

**(WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY)**

Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and the members of the committee:

The Office of Collective Bargaining (OCB) respectfully opposes HB2153, which establishes and appropriates funds for the Kupa'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.



*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 Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs**  
Representative David A. Tarnas, Chair  
Representative Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair

Wednesday, February 18, 2026, 2:00 p.m.  
State Capitol, Conference Room 325 & Videoconference

By

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

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

**Purpose:** Establishes, and appropriates funds for, the Kūpa‘a Law Enforcement Retention Bonus Program to provide law enforcement officers retention bonuses.

**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 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

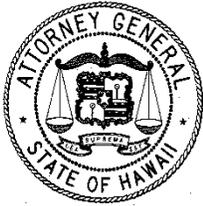


House Bill No. 2153, Relating to Law Enforcement  
House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs  
Wednesday, February 18, 2026 at 2:00 p.m.  
Page 2

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.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



TESTIMONY OF  
THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL  
KA 'OIHANA O KA LOIO KUHINA  
THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE, 2026

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**ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:**

H.B. NO. 2153, RELATING TO LAW ENFORCEMENT.

**BEFORE THE:**

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

**DATE:** Wednesday, February 18, 2026      **TIME:** 2:00 p.m.

**LOCATION:** State Capitol, Room 325

**TESTIFIER(S):** Anne E. Lopez, Attorney General, or  
Ryan Endo, Deputy Attorney General

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Chair Tarnas and Members of the Committee:

The Department of the Attorney General provides the following comments regarding this bill.

The bill establishes a retention bonus program for sworn law enforcement officers employed by the Department of Law Enforcement (DLE) and requires DLE to pay \$15,000 retention bonuses to officers who meet specified eligibility criteria. The bill also appropriates an unspecified amount of general funds to DLE for the program.

Sworn law enforcement officers employed by DLE are members of bargaining Unit 14 and are therefore subject to chapter 89, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS). The bill may conflict with section 89-9(a), HRS, which requires public employers and exclusive bargaining representatives to engage in good faith negotiations over wages, hours, and other terms and conditions of employment. Compensation-related matters, including incentives or bonuses, are generally subject to collective bargaining under chapter 89, HRS.

To ensure consistency with chapter 89, HRS, we recommend amending section 2(b) of the bill on page 3, lines 9 through 12, to read as follows: (suggested amendments Ramseyered against the bill and in bold)

(b) **[Beginning] Notwithstanding any law to the contrary, if negotiated through collective bargaining under section 89-9, Hawaii Revised Statutes, beginning** on July 1, 2026, the program shall provide a retention bonus of \$15,000 to any law enforcement officer appointed pursuant to section 353C-4, Hawaii Revised Statutes, who:

(continue with paragraphs (1) – (3)).

We recommend a similar amendment to section 2(c) on page 4, lines 1 through 3, to read as follows: (suggested amendments Ramseyered against the bill and in bold)

(c) **[The] Notwithstanding any law to the contrary, if negotiated through collective bargaining under section 89-9, Hawaii Revised Statutes, the** department of law enforcement may change any of the requirements established pursuant to subsection (b) each fiscal year for the duration of the program.

We further recommend a similar amendment to section 2(d) on page 4, lines 4 through 5, to read as follows: (suggested amendments Ramseyered against the bill and in bold)

(d) **[The] Notwithstanding any law to the contrary, if negotiated through collective bargaining under section 89-9, Hawaii Revised Statutes, the** retention bonus awarded pursuant to this section shall be a:  
(continue with paragraphs (1) and (2)).

Finally, we recommend a similar amendment to section 2(f) on page 5, lines 4 through 6, to read as follows: (suggested amendments Ramseyered against the bill and in bold)

(f) **[The] Notwithstanding any law to the contrary, if negotiated through collective bargaining under section 89-9, Hawaii Revised Statutes, the** department of law enforcement may adopt rules, pursuant to chapter 91, Hawaii Revised Statutes, necessary to administer the kūpa‘a law enforcement retention bonus program.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony.

**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  
RELATING TO LAW ENFORCEMENT  
Before the House Committee on  
JUDICIARY & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS  
Wednesday, February 18, 2026, 2:00 PM  
State Capitol Conference Room 325  
Testifiers: Mike Lambert

Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and members of the Committee:

The Department of Law Enforcement (DLE) supports House Bill 2153, which establishes, and appropriates funds for, the Kūpa'a Law Enforcement Retention Bonus Program to provide law enforcement officers retention bonuses.

This bill aims to establish the Kūpa'a Law Enforcement Retention Bonus Program, which would provide much-needed retention bonuses to DLE's sworn law enforcement officers across the state. The program represents a crucial investment in our law enforcement workforce, acknowledging the challenges faced by officers and the importance of maintaining experienced personnel within our agencies. It also helps address ongoing compensation and retention disparities between state and county law enforcement agencies, as county departments have increasingly been able to offer more competitive pay incentives and recruitment benefits. Ensuring parity across Hawai'i's law enforcement community is essential to preventing the loss of experienced state officers to other jurisdictions and maintaining a strong statewide public safety workforce.

The law enforcement profession faces significant retention challenges nationwide, and Hawai'i is no exception. Officers regularly encounter high-stress situations, unpredictable work environments, and increasing job demands. These factors, combined with competitive employment opportunities elsewhere, have created substantial workforce retention issues within law enforcement agencies.

The DLE recognizes that experienced officers are invaluable assets to our communities. They possess institutional knowledge, refined skills, and community relationships that take years to develop. The proposed retention bonus program would serve as a tangible recognition of officers' commitment to public service and provide a meaningful incentive for them to continue their careers in law enforcement.

Furthermore, retention of experienced officers has significant financial benefits for agencies and taxpayers. The costs associated with recruiting, hiring, and training new officers far exceed the investment in retention bonuses. By maintaining a stable workforce, agencies can reduce turnover costs and maintain operational effectiveness.

The DLE believes this program aligns with our commitment to supporting officer wellness and quality of life. Financial recognition through retention bonuses complements other efforts to address the overall well-being of law enforcement professionals, who face numerous challenges including high rates of stress-related health issues.

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



**HAWAII GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION**  
AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO

**RANDY PERREIRA**, Executive Director • Tel: 808.543.0011 • Fax: 808.528.0922

Thirty-Third Legislature, State of Hawaii  
House of Representatives  
Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs

Testimony by  
Hawaii Government Employees Association

February 18, 2026

H.B. 2153 — RELATING TO LAW ENFORCEMENT

The Hawaii Government Employees Association, AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO supports H.B. 2153, which establishes, and appropriates funds for, the Kūpa‘a Law Enforcement Retention Bonus Program to provide law enforcement officers retention bonuses.

Our organization represents state law enforcement officers organized into Bargaining Unit 14. This idea would help with the retention of our law enforcement officers, especially at a time when the department faces a shortage of officers and struggles to compete with the respective county police departments.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of H.B. 2153.

Respectfully submitted,

Randy Perreira  
Executive Director



## UNITED PUBLIC WORKERS

AFSCME Local 646, AFL-CIO

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

#### COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

Rep. David A. Tarnas, Chair  
Rep. Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair

Wednesday, February 18, 2026, 2:00 PM  
Conference Room 325 & Videoconference

#### Re: **Testimony on HB2153 – RELATING TO LAW ENFORCEMENT**

Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, 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, 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 gravely concerned by any legislation that could potentially circumvent, or even undermine, the collective bargaining provisions in Chapter 89, Hawaii Revised Statutes. 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.

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**HB-2153**

Submitted on: 2/13/2026 11:07:33 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Alan Urasaki	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

in support

**HB-2153**

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 10:16:51 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
M. Leilani DeMello	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I KĀKO‘O this bill.

Mahalo,

M. Leilani DeMello

‘Ōla‘a, Puna, Hawai‘i