



**DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS,
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM**
KA 'OIHANA HO'OMOHALA PĀ'OIHANA, 'IMI WAIWAI
A HO'OMĀKA'IKAI

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Statement of
LAURIE MCALLISTER MOORE
Executive Director
Military and Community Relations Office
Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism
before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TECHNOLOGY

Wednesday, February 18, 2026
9:30 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 423
TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB2235
RELATING TO THE MILITARY AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS OFFICE.

Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, and Members of the Committee:

The Military and Community Relations Office (MACRO) respectfully submits testimony in support of HB2235. MACRO serves as the State's day-to-day connector between military commands, state and county agencies, schools, businesses, and community stakeholders helping partners navigate issues that rarely fall within a single agency's lane, from installation infrastructure needs and land coordination to workforce alignment and economic opportunity planning. As defense activity and federal investment in Hawai'i continue, this centralized coordination role has become increasingly essential to keeping projects moving efficiently and ensuring the benefits reach local communities.

In practice, this work is highly operational. MACRO has supported efforts that connect local companies with federal buyers and contracting pathways, helped align community college and training programs with shipyard and industrial workforce needs, coordinated with installations and state agencies to address infrastructure and community interface challenges, and convened cross-sector partners to streamline communication during high-impact projects. These examples demonstrate how targeted capacity within one office can remove barriers, accelerate timelines, and translate federal activity into jobs, contracts, and tangible outcomes for Hawai'i residents. Additional resources would allow us to scale these efforts statewide and respond more proactively as opportunities arise.

Specifically, this funding would support:

- (1) business readiness and compliance assistance to help Hawai'i companies navigate federal procurement and cybersecurity requirements;
- (2) strengthened education-to-career pathways through partnerships with schools, community colleges, and training providers that connect residents to internships, apprenticeships, and direct placement in defense and industrial base careers; and
- (3) targeted initiatives that grow in-state manufacturing, repair, and sustainment capacity, reducing reliance on off-island supply chains and keeping federal dollars circulating locally.

We also respectfully submit an amendment for consideration, to update all mentions of our office's title in the bill to be written as follows: "Military and Community Relations Office (MACRO), as opposed to "Military Affairs and Community Relations Office" as listed in the Report Title.

We are grateful for any support in MACRO's coordination and workforce capacities, as this measure would improve public service, economic resilience, and Hawai'i's ability to capture and retain federal opportunities that benefit our communities statewide. Mahalo for your consideration and for your continued support of efforts that strengthen both our readiness and local economy.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



STEPHEN F. LOGAN
MAJOR GENERAL
ADJUTANT GENERAL
KA 'AKUKANA KENELALA

PHILLIP L. MALLORY III
BRIGADIER GENERAL
DEPUTY ADJUTANT GENERAL
KA HOPE 'AKUKANA KENELALA

STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
KA 'OIHANA PILI KAUA
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TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 2235 HD1
RELATING TO THE MILITARY AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS OFFICE
BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TECHNOLOGY

BY

BRIGADIER GENERAL WALTER R. ROSS, JR.
DIRECTOR
JOINT STAFF, HAWAII NATIONAL GUARD

February 15, 2026

Aloha Chair Ilagan, Vice-Chair Hussey, and Members of the Committee:

I am Brigadier General Walter Ross, Director of the Joint Staff, Hawaii National Guard, State of Hawaii, Department of Defense.

I am presenting this testimony in **SUPPORT** of HB2235 HD1.

This important legislation signifies a crucial investment in enhancing intergovernmental coordination for military and defense activities. It allocates funding to the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism for the Military Affairs Community Relations Office (MACRO). MACRO acts as a vital link between Hawaii's military and civilian sectors by promoting mutual respect and understanding through collaboration on issues significant to both the Department of Defense and the State of Hawaii.

By providing essential funding, this legislation will enable MACRO to continue fostering collaboration and communication among military, local, state, and federal entities. This investment will help maintain an environment where trust and understanding can flourish, benefiting Hawaii's residents while supporting national security objectives. Ultimately, this investment will aid MACRO in building a more cohesive relationship between the military and the people of Hawaii—one that honors shared values and advances the interests of our state and our nation.

The Hawaii National Guard, Department of Defense, supports this bill provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in the Executive Budget.

For these reasons, I humbly ask for your support with this measure.

Brigadier General Walter R. Ross, Jr., walter.r.ross2.mil@army.mil; 808-844-6087

**Testimony to the House Committee on Economic Development & Technology (ECD)
Representative Greggor Ilagan, Chair
Representative Ikaika Hussey, Vice Chair**

**Wednesday, February 18, 2026, at 8:30AM
Conference Room 411 & Videoconference**

RE: HB2235 HD1 Relating to the Military and Community Relations Office

Aloha e Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Sherry Menor, President and CEO of the Chamber of Commerce Hawaii ("The Chamber"). The Chamber supports House Bill 2235 HD1 (HB2235 HD1), which appropriates funds to the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism for the Military Affairs Community Relations Office (MACRO) to strengthen intergovernmental coordination for military and defense activities.

HB2235 HD1 aligns with our 2030 Blueprint for Hawaii: An Economic Action Plan, specifically under the policy pillar for Military & Defense. The military constitutes a significant portion of the State's economic and workforce landscape, supporting thousands of local jobs, small businesses, and education-to-career pathways. Maintaining strong, consistent community relations is essential to ensuring a positive and productive working relationship between the military and the public.

The Chamber supports the mission of MACRO: "Our mission is to promote positive relationships between Hawai'i's military and civilian sectors by fostering mutual respect and understanding through collaboration on issues important to both the United States Department of Defense and the State of Hawai'i." Given Hawai'i's geopolitical importance, the Chamber believes supporting a positive military-community relationship is especially important as international relations, technologies, and workforce needs continue to evolve. MACRO's dedication to finding opportunities of military-civilian overlap create opportunities around workforce development, emergency preparedness, and public school infrastructural improvements. Such efforts in community partnership result in improvements in economic resilience and community resilience at large. The Chamber believes that an investment in MACRO is an investment in a more resilient economic future marked by military partnership.

We respectfully ask to pass House Bill 2235 HD1. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

The Chamber of Commerce Hawaii is the state's leading business advocacy organization, dedicated to improving Hawaii's economy and securing Hawaii's future for growth and opportunity. Our mission is to foster a vibrant economic climate. As such, we support initiatives and policies that align with the 2030 Blueprint for Hawaii that create opportunities to strengthen overall competitiveness, improve the quantity and skills of available workforce, diversify the economy, and build greater local wealth.



**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 2235 HD1
RELATING TO THE MILITARY AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS OFFICE**

House Committee on Economic Development & Technology
Rep. Greggor Ilagan, Chair
Rep. Ikaika Hussey, Vice Chair

Wednesday, February 18, 2026 at 9:30 AM
Conference Room 423 or via Videoconference

Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii Military Affairs Council ("MAC") supports HB 2235 HD1.

The MAC was established in 1985 when the Chamber was appointed by the State to serve as the liaison to the military. The MAC advocates on behalf of Hawai'i's military, and is comprised of business leaders, academic institutions, State and County officials, members of the CODEL, community leaders, labor unions and organizations and retired U.S. flag and general officers. The MAC works to support Hawai'i's location as a strategic U.S. headquarters in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region which is crucial for U.S. national and homeland security.

Military and Community Relations Office (MACRO) plays an essential role in strengthening coordination between Hawai'i's military commands, state and county agencies, educational institutions, and community partners. As federal investment and defense activity continue to grow, the need for a centralized, trusted point of coordination has become increasingly important to ensure projects advance efficiently and that benefits reach Hawai'i's residents.

MACRO's work directly supports Hawai'i's economic resilience and workforce development. The office helps local companies navigate federal procurement pathways, aligns education and training programs with defense-sector workforce needs, and facilitates communication among agencies during high-impact projects. These efforts translate federal activity into local jobs, contracts, and long-term opportunities for Hawai'i's communities.

HB 2235 HD1 provides the resources needed to expand this work statewide and ensure Hawai'i continues to benefit from its strategic role in the Indo-Pacific. For these reasons, the Hawaii Military Affairs Council respectfully requests your support of HB 2235 HD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.