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869 PUNCHBOWL STREET
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-5097

Wednesday, April 1, 2026
10:03 AM
State Capitol, 211

HB2335, HD1, SD1
RELATING TO WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Senate Committee on Ways & Means

The Department of Transportation (DOT) is in strong support of HB2335 HD1, relating to state-funded internship and workforce development programs.

This bill proposes to amend Chapter 76, Hawaii Revised Statutes, by revising language related to minimum qualification review and by adding a new section which would make interns who have completed 480 hours of work experience within a department or agency eligible for internal recruitment within that department or agency. The intern will compete, within a smaller pool of internal applicants, satisfying the merit principle. Moreover, the requirement of nine hundred sixty hours versus four hundred eighty hours to be eligible for an internal recruitment seems arbitrary in the larger context of public service recruitment and the development of innovative recruitment methods.

HDOT believes that this legislation will benefit both the state and interns by creating a low-cost benefit that increases the value of state-funded internships and creates a clear pathway from internships to a career in state government. This legislation aligns with HDOT's ongoing commitment to build a strong, skilled, and locally rooted public workforce. By recognizing the value of hands-on experience gained through state-funded programs, the legislation creates a pathway for qualified individuals to transition into full-time roles within government agencies.

Interns applying for positions through internal recruitment allows the subject matter expert department to perform the screening and review, eliminating DHRD's screening process. This reduces the amount of time and effort required to apply for and fill a position. Removing this layer of bureaucracy makes the hiring process easier for interns, increasing the likelihood that the state will be able to successfully recruit them. This reduction in recruitment time also allows state departments to compete with other employers because they will have the opportunity to give a quality, qualified intern a timely offer. Often, state departments fail to hire highly desired applicants because they are hired quickly by private companies or other government entities.

Significantly, this legislation limits the priority consideration to instances where the intern is applying for a position in the same department where the intern worked. This is important because this ensures that the hiring department has experience with the intern and the work product produced.

HDOT further believes that pairing this benefit with additional hiring flexibility for departments will help to address hiring issues.

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



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STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT
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235 S. BERETANIA STREET
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-2437

WRITTEN ONLY

Statement of
BRENN A H. HASHIMOTO
Director, Department of Human Resources Development

Before the
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
Wednesday, April 1, 2026 at 10:03 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 211

In consideration of
HB2335 HD1 SD1, RELATING TO WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and members of the committee:

The Department of Human Resources Development (HRD) offers comments and concerns on HB2335 HD1 SD1.

The purpose of this measure is to establish that certain participants in state-funded internship and workforce development programs are eligible for internal vacancy recruitment.

HRD strongly supports the goal of strengthening workforce development and creating pathways into public service. The State benefits when individuals who gain experience through internships pursue long-term careers in government.

However, the measure as drafted raises several significant concerns. The SD1 revises HRS 76-22.6, and goes beyond the measure's original intent.

The SD1 allows departments, rather than HRD, to conduct minimum qualification reviews for their own positions. It also allows departments to treat required minimum qualifications as desired qualifications and to substitute internship or workforce development program experience for required experience. Further, the SD1 removes the requirement for departments to submit qualified applicants to HRD and eliminates HRD's role in auditing and correcting errors in the qualification review process. The measure also permits departments to begin interviewing candidates based on their own determinations and authorizes department heads to directly hire individuals into civil service positions, provided minimum qualifications are met.

These changes represent a significant shift in responsibility from HRD to individual departments.

This shift raises several concerns, including:

1. It creates inconsistency across departments in how minimum qualifications are interpreted and applied. Without centralized review, similarly situated applicants may be evaluated differently across departments.
2. It blurs the distinction between meeting minimum qualifications and being selected for hire. Minimum qualifications are intended to establish baseline eligibility to compete, not to serve as the sole basis for appointment into civil service positions.
3. It increases the risk of inequitable hiring practices. Allowing required qualifications to be treated as optional and permitting substitutions without clear standards undermines the merit principles set forth in Chapter 76, including equal opportunity and equal pay for equal work.
4. It weakens quality control. The removal of HRD's role eliminates an important safeguard in the hiring process.

These changes move the State away from a consistent, centralized civil service system and toward a decentralized model without clear standards or accountability.

In addition, in previous testimony, we noted concerns with expanding internal recruitment eligibility to individuals who are not civil service employees and who have not been selected through a competitive process. We also raised concerns with the lower 480-hour threshold, which creates an inequitable standard compared to probationary employees who must complete 960 hours.

We further noted that the measure expands eligibility to workforce development programs without consistent standards, relies on hours worked rather than the relevance of experience, and does not require any form of performance evaluation. Taken together, these provisions weaken qualification standards, create inconsistency across departments, and reduce accountability in the hiring process.

Finally, as discussed in previous testimony, HRD already recognizes internship experience within the current system when it is relevant to the position.

HRD remains committed to supporting workforce development efforts. We welcome the opportunity to work with stakeholders to refine this measure so that it aligns with merit principles, ensures equity, and maintains consistency and accountability across the State's civil service system.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments.



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
KA 'OIHANA HO'ONA'AUAO
P.O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

Date: 04/01/2026

Time: 10:03 AM

Location: CR 211 & Videoconference

Committee: WAM

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

Title of Bill: HB2335, SD1, RELATING TO WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT.

Purpose of Bill: Establishes that certain participants in state-funded internship and workforce development programs are eligible for internal recruitment. Authorizes any state department, division, or agency to make certain determinations regarding an applicant's minimum qualifications in conducting a minimum qualification review. Repeals the requirement that a state department, division, or agency shall submit to the Department of Human Resources Development the applications for individuals who have met the minimum qualifications for a vacant position. Repeals the requirement that DHRD shall complete certain necessary tasks to facilitate the hiring of applications. Authorizes the director or head of a state department, division, or agency to directly hire an individual who meets the minimum qualifications for a civil service position. Effective 1/1/2077. (SD1)

Department's Position:

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on HB 2335, SD 1. We support the intent of creating pathways for interns to transition into state employment. We note the committees' amendments – particularly the expansion of Departmental authority over minimum qualification reviews and direct civil service hiring. If Departments have greater ownership of these processes, creating a framework for exercising that authority becomes essential to preserving merit system integrity.

That being said, we still have concerns about implementing this through statutory changes to Chapter 76. This bill would allow interns to access internal job announcements before new civil service employees, who must first complete a 6-month probationary period, creating potential inequities in the merit system. Additionally, a 480-hour internship may not satisfy minimum qualification requirements for many positions.

We also respectfully reiterate our recommendation that a skills-based hiring approach, implemented through new or modified Departmental policies and procedures, may

better accomplish the intent of this measure.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on HB 2335, SD 1.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR



SIERRA WHITESIDE
CHAIRPERSON

DAINTRY BARTOLDUS
EXECUTIVE ADMINISTRATOR

STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII
STATE COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES
'A'UNIKE MOKU'ĀPUNI NO KA NĀ KĀWAI KULA
PRINCESS VICTORIA KAMĀMALU BUILDING
1010 RICHARDS STREET, Room 122
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April 1, 2026

The Honorable Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
The Thirty-Third Legislature
State Capitol
State of Hawai'i
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Chair Dela Cruz and Committee Members:

SUBJECT: HB2335 HD1 SD1 Relating to Workforce Development

The Hawai'i State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD) **supports HB2335 HD1 SD1**, which strengthens workforce pathways by recognizing internship experience and allowing departments greater flexibility in hiring.

This measure is an important step toward building a stronger, more responsive state workforce pipeline. For individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD), internships are often the most effective pathway to employment. Programs such as Project SEARCH and other state-supported internship initiatives have demonstrated that with the right opportunities, individuals can successfully transition into meaningful employment.

By allowing internship experience to count toward minimum qualifications and enabling internal recruitment, this bill helps remove long-standing barriers that have prevented qualified individuals from entering the state workforce.

The Council also supports efforts to streamline hiring processes. Delays and administrative complexity can result in missed opportunities for both applicants and departments, particularly in a time of critical workforce shortages.

At the same time, the success of this measure will depend on thoughtful implementation. The Council respectfully encourages:

- Ensuring equitable and transparent hiring practices across departments;
- Maintaining consistency in how minimum qualifications are evaluated; and
- Continuing to prioritize inclusive workforce strategies, including pathways for individuals with disabilities and other underrepresented populations.

This measure represents a practical systems improvement—leveraging existing programs, reducing barriers, and strengthening Hawai'i's workforce.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in support.
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Daintry Bartoldus".

Daintry Bartoldus, Executive Administrator

HB-2335-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/30/2026 2:44:40 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2026 10:03:00 AM

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

Comments:

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry, Support

2335 HB RELATING TO WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT.