

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR



JADE T. BUTAY
DIRECTOR

WILLIAM G. KUNSTMAN
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS
KA 'OIHANA PONO LIMAHANA

February 12, 2026

To: The Honorable Jackson D. Sayama, Chair,
The Honorable Mike Lee, Vice Chair, and
Members of the House Committee on Labor

Date: Thursday, February 12, 2026
Time: 9:30 a.m.
Place: Conference Room 309, State Capitol

From: Jade T. Butay, Director
Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR)

Re: H.B. 2335 RELATING TO WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

The **DLIR offers comments** on this measure, which amends Civil Service Law (HRS Chapter 76) to establish eligibility for internal recruitment for interns who have completed at least 480 hours within a department or agency through a state-funded internship or workforce development program. Establishing eligibility for interns is an important step toward strengthening Hawai'i's workforce pipeline and ensuring the State retains talented individuals who have already demonstrated commitment and capability through participation in a state program.

DLIR recommends that six months of experience in a state-funded internship or workforce development program be credited toward the minimum qualification experience for a position, rather than automatically granting eligibility for internal recruitment within a department or agency. DLIR also suggests that policymakers consider allowing this experience to count toward minimum qualification requirements across all departments and agencies within the jurisdiction.

This measure has the potential to address the State's critical workforce shortages by creating a clear bridge from work-based training to state employment. Participants in these programs gain valuable skills and experience tailored to the needs of state agencies.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on this important matter.



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

Date: 02/12/2026

Time: 09:30 AM

Location: 309 VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

Committee: LAB

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

Title of Bill: HB2335, RELATING TO WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT.

Purpose of Bill: Establishes priority consideration for full-time employment in state departments or agencies for certain participants in state-funded internship and workforce development programs by granting them eligibility for internal recruitment.

Department's Position:

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on HB 2335. We support the intent of creating pathways for interns to transition into state employment.

However, we 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 complete a 6-month probationary period first, creating potential inequities in the merit system. Additionally, a 480-hour internship may not satisfy minimum qualification requirements for many positions.

Rather than statutory language, we recommend a skills-based hiring approach implemented through creating new or modifying existing departmental policies and procedures. This would allow us to:

- Recognize internship experience as one of multiple pathways to meet minimum qualifications alongside education, work experience, military service, and other relevant backgrounds;
- Focus qualification requirements on demonstrated competencies rather than rigid credential requirements such as traditional academic degrees;
- Maintain merit principles by applying consistent competency standards to all candidates, whether they come from internships, traditional backgrounds, or alternative pathways;
- Retain the flexibility to adjust policies based on changing workforce needs without requiring legislative amendments.

A skills-based framework would accomplish what HB 2335 intends—valuing the experience interns gain in state service—while also modernizing our hiring practices to attract diverse talent pools and maintain the integrity of our merit system.

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

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



BRENNNA H. HASHIMOTO
DIRECTOR
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

SYLVIA LUKE
LT. GOVERNOR
KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA

BRIAN K. FURUTO
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

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

Statement of
BRENNNA H. HASHIMOTO
Director, Department of Human Resources Development

Before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LABOR
Thursday, February 12, 2026
9:30AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 309

In consideration of
HB2335, RELATING TO WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Chair Sayama, Vice Chair Lee, and the members of the Committee:

The Department of Human Resources Development (HRD) offers comments on HB2335.

The purpose of this measure is to establish priority consideration for full-time employment in state departments or agencies for certain participants in state-funded internship or workforce development programs by granting them eligibility for internal recruitment.

HB2335 would amend Chapter 76, Hawai'i Revised Statutes, to deem an intern eligible for internal recruitment within the same department or agency after completing at least four hundred eighty hours of work experience through a state-funded internship or workforce development program.

HRD supports the goal of retaining individuals who have gained relevant experience within State government. The State invests time and resources in training interns, and creating clearer pathways into public service supports recruitment, workforce continuity, and institutional knowledge.

However, HRD has concerns with the bill as currently drafted.

Internal recruitment under Chapter 76 has historically been limited to existing civil service employees. Designating interns as eligible for internal recruitment raises merit

and equity concerns and may limit access for external applicants who are similarly qualified.

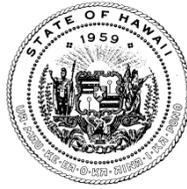
In addition, the bill establishes an eligibility threshold of 480 hours. By comparison, non-member probationary civil service employees must complete 960 hours of service before becoming eligible for internal recruitment. Probationary employees have been appointed through competitive recruitment, placed into classified positions, and are subject to performance evaluation during probation.

As drafted, the bill would allow interns, who are not appointed to civil service positions and are not subject to probationary requirements, to access internal recruitment at half the service threshold required of probationary civil service employees. This creates an inequitable outcome and undermines the integrity of the internal recruitment process.

HRD also notes that, under existing practice, examiners consider relevant non-academic internship experience when evaluating minimum qualification requirements, provided the experience is directly related to the position being filled. This allows internship experience to be recognized appropriately without altering internal recruitment standards.

We are available to answer any questions.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION | KA 'OIHANA ALAKAU
869 PUNCHBOWL STREET
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-5097

EDWIN H. SNIFFEN
DIRECTOR
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

Deputy Directors
Nā Hope Luna Ho'okele
DREANALEE K. KALILI
TAMMY L. LEE
CURT T. OTAGURO
ROBIN K. SHISHIDO

Thursday, February 12, 2026

9:30 AM

State Capitol, 309

HB2335
RELATING TO WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

House Committee on Labor

The Department of Transportation is in strong support of House Bill 2335, which establishes priority consideration for certain interns in state-funded internships and workforce development programs by making them eligible for internal recruitment.

This bill proposes to amend Chapter 76, Hawaii Revised Statutes, 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.

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 performing 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.

We respectfully suggest that the committee consider adding the following subsection:

"(b) Nothing in this section shall be construed to waive minimum qualifications, examination requirements, or other merit-based criteria."

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

HB-2335

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 10:41:37 AM

Testimony for LAB on 2/12/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Megan Blazak	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Honorable Chair Sayama, Vice Chair Lee, and Members of the Committee,

I support this measure. It is well-documented that the State struggles to fill vacancies across many agencies and departments. This measure is a cost-efficient step towards solving this persistent challenge. Please pass this measure.