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TESTIMONY BY JAMES WATARU
HAWAII EMPLOYER-UNION HEALTH BENEFITS TRUST FUND
EUTF BOARD OF TRUSTEE CHAIRPERSON
DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
STATE OF HAWAII
TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LABOR
ON HOUSE BILL NO. 2472

February 19, 2026
9:30 a.m.
Conference Room 309 & Videoconference

RELATING TO THE HAWAII EMPLOYER-UNION HEALTH BENEFITS TRUST FUND
STAFF SALARIES

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

The Hawaii Employer-Union Health Benefits Trust Fund (EUTF) Board of Trustees strongly supports this bill. The EUTF Board currently sets the salary of the EUTF Administrator and Chief Investment Officer (CIO) and respectfully requests the ability to set the salaries of the EUTF Assistant Administrator. This position is currently exempt from civil service and excluded. All EUTF positions, including this position, do not use general funds but are funded through trust funds. The EUTF Assistant Administrator reports directly to the EUTF Administrator, assumes the duties of the EUTF Administrator when the EUTF Administrator is unavailable and oversees the day-to-day operations of the EUTF. In general, pay adjustments for this position are limited to across the board pay increases for bargaining unit 13 members, minimal additional percentage increases or adjustments to the position description of job duties. Providing the EUTF Board with more direct oversight of this position will strengthen EUTF's accountability and having the EUTF Board determine the EUTF

The Hawaii Employer-Union Health Benefits Trust Fund (EUTF), an agency within the State Department of Budget and Finance, provides medical, prescription drug, dental, vision and life insurance coverage to eligible state and county employees, retirees and dependents.

Assistant Administrator salary will ensure the continued strength of the EUTF operations and will help to ensure that EUTF is able to attract and retain the most qualified individual with competitive salaries.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



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TESTIMONY TO THE HAWAI'I HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LABOR

Item: **HB2472 - RELATING TO THE HAWAII EMPLOYER-UNION HEALTH BENEFITS TRUST FUND STAFF SALARIES**

Position: **Support**

Hearing: **Thursday, February 19, 2026, 9:30 a.m., Conference Room 309**

Submitter: **Osa Tui, Jr. – President, Hawai'i State Teachers Association**

Chair Sayama, Vice Chair Lee, and members of the committee,

As a trustee on the board of the Hawai'i Employer-Union Health Benefits Trust Fund, I **strongly support** HB2472 which would authorize the EUTF Board of Trustees to establish the salary for the assistant administrator.

As a trust that oversees the health plans for hundreds of thousands of active and retiree members and their families with and also with a multi-billion dollar trust in our care, the EUTF board needs the flexibility to set the salary for the assistant administrator that is commensurate with the workload of the position.

The board already has the authority to set the salary of the administrator and the chief investment officer. The assistant administrator is deeply involved with the operations of the EUTF and the fund needs to ensure that we have the ability to attract and retain the best people for this critical position.

I ask that you please **support** this measure. Mahalo!