

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 11, 2026

To: The Honorable Brandon J. C. Elefante, Chair,  
The Honorable Rachele Lamosao, Vice Chair, and  
Members of the Senate Committee on Labor and Technology

Date: Wednesday, February 11, 2026

Time: 3:00 p.m.

Place: Conference Room 225, State Capitol

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

**Re: S.B. 2014 RELATING TO PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT**

**I. OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED LEGISLATION**

The **DLIR opposes** this measure, which would require the Director of Human Resources Development (DHRD) to abolish any state position that has been vacant for more than five years and to lapse the associated funds to the general fund. DLIR has serious concerns about both the abolishment requirement and the lapsing of funds. Eliminating long-vacant positions could unintentionally reduce the department's ability to respond to critical needs, especially in programs supported by federal funding.

Federal grants and cooperative agreements carry strict terms and conditions. States must use federal funds solely for the specific program or activity for which they were awarded. Redirecting these funds to the state general fund would violate federal requirements.

Additionally, many DLIR positions are funded by special, revolving, or trust funds. Lapsing the funds for these positions to the general fund would likely conflict with the statutes that restrict how those funds may be used.

**II. CURRENT LAW**

§26-5(a) gives the DHRD Director the authority to reclassify and abolish vacant positions within state departments and agencies after sixty days of providing an annual report to the Legislature twenty days before the start of each Regular Session. The funding supporting those positions would immediately lapse to the general fund.

### **III. COMMENTS ON THE SENATE BILL**

DLIR has serious concerns about the potential impact of this measure. With the support of successive Administrations and Legislatures, DLIR has maintained federally funded vacancies to ensure the department can respond quickly when additional capacity is required. These vacancies allow DLIR to deploy staff rapidly when federal funding and programs become available, avoiding delays associated with creating and filling new positions. For example:

- During the COVID-19 pandemic, this “capacity in waiting” enabled DLIR to significantly expand operations without undergoing lengthy approval and hiring processes,
- The U.S. Department of Labor routinely relies on the public workforce system to deliver supplemental resources during economic downturns,
- During the Great Recession, DLIR utilized \$3,630,777 in ARRA supplemental funding for workforce services, including \$2,918,025 for a Summer Youth Work Experience Program and \$601,873 for a National Emergency Grant to expand On-the-Job Training, and
- DLIR also facilitated temporary disaster recovery jobs in response to the Maui Wildfires.

DLIR likely could not have delivered these programs quickly and efficiently without the flexibility provided by maintaining federally funded vacancies. In addition, while long-term vacancies may appear unnecessary, automatic abolishment raises several concerns:

- Some positions remain vacant due to recruitment challenges, including circumstances beyond the department’s control, not due to the lack of need, and
- Specialized or hard-to-fill roles often require extended search periods.

Moreover, as noted above, the Department has significant concerns about the impact on its federally funded programs. Approximately 60% of DLIR’s operations rely on federal funds and federally supported positions. If the State were to violate the terms and conditions of these federal grants, DLIR would be required to seek tens of millions of dollars in general funds to replace the lost federal support.

Similarly, many DLIR positions are funded through special, revolving, or trust funds. Lapsing the funds for these positions to the general fund would either require the State to supplant those funds with general funds or amend the underlying statutes that authorize DLIR to expend those dedicated revenues for their intended purposes.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this vital matter.



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

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

**BRENN A H. HASHIMOTO**  
DIRECTOR  
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

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

Before the  
**SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND TECHNOLOGY**  
Wednesday, February 11, 2026  
3:00PM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 225

In consideration of  
**SB2014, RELATING TO LABOR**

Chair Elefante, Vice Chair Lamosao, and the members of the committee:

The Department of Human Resources Development (HRD) supports SB2014.

The purpose of SB2014 is to:

1. Require the Director of Human Resources Development to abolish vacant positions within state departments and agencies under its jurisdiction that have been vacant for more than 5 years.
2. Require a list of positions abolished to be included in the Director's annual report to the Legislature; and
3. Require funds for abolished positions to immediately lapse to the credit of the general fund.

HRD understands the impact that long-term vacancies have on departmental operations and budgets. To this end, HRD already identifies long-standing vacancies in its annual vacancy report (as required under Act 57, SLH 2019). SB2014 strengthens this effort by automatically abolishing positions vacant for five years or more.

This policy change will encourage departments and hiring managers to develop a hiring plan, rather than maintain vacancies. We believe this measure can help to improve workforce management across departments.

HRD respectfully requests the following amendments:

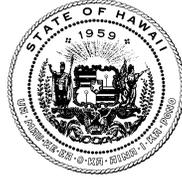
- 1) Page 3, line 5, revise current language to:
  - a. created or vacated by a regular civil service or probationary state employee;

- 2) Page 3, line 11, revise current language to:
  - a. credit of the appropriate [~~general~~] fund; and

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on SB2014. We are available to answer any questions or provide additional information as needed.

JOSH B. GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR



STACEY A. ALDRICH  
STATE LIBRARIAN  
Ke Po'o Hale Waihona Puke Moku'āina

STATE OF HAWAII  
HAWAII STATE PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM  
'OIHANA HALE WAIHONA PUKE AUPUNI O KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII  
OFFICE OF THE STATE LIBRARIAN  
44 MERCHANT STREET  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813  
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**Senate Committee on Labor and Technology**  
**February 11, 2026, 3:00 p.m.**  
**State Capitol, Room 225**

**SB 2014 – Relating to Public Employment**

To: Sen. Brandon J.C. Elefante, Chair  
Sen Rachele Lamosao, Vice Chair  
Members of the Senate Committee on Labor and Technology

The Hawai'i State Public Library System (HSPLS) **opposes** SB2014 which requires the Director of Human Resources Development to abolish vacant positions within state departments and agencies under its jurisdiction that have been vacant for more than 5 years; requires a list of positions abolished to be included in the Director's annual report to the Legislature; requires funds for abolished positions to immediately lapse to the credit of the general fund.

The HSPLS shares the following comments regarding SB2014 as written:

- Abolishing positions that have been vacant for more than 5-year will greatly impact HSPLS. HSPLS has 567 positions and one classifier, who reviews all position descriptions and redesigns. Until the State's personnel system is simplified, imposition of artificial deadlines to fill vacancies ignores the underlying issue many departments struggle with. Abolishing positions only negatively impacts our ability to provide service to the communities of the State of Hawaii.
- HSPLS recruitment is currently managing approximately 60 recruitments simultaneously, making it difficult for some positions to meet the 5-year deadline. Once a vacancy goes into recruitment, several weeks if not months, are spent waiting to receive a list of eligible candidates from DHRD. Frequently, we go through entire lists of candidates without success in hiring and must begin again, waiting weeks or months for the next list of eligible candidates. For some hard to fill positions, there are even longer waits for lists; DHRD screeners have not identified or approved any qualified candidates.

- During the pandemic, for three fiscal years or 36 months, HSPLS did not have funding to fill 64 positions almost doubling our normal vacancy rate. It is unfair to apply the same standard against HSPLS vacancies; the inability to fill the positions was not due to inaction by HSPLS.

Lack of funding also does not eliminate the need for the position. Instead, it requires us to prioritize one communities' needs over another. Unlike other departments or agencies, the HSPLS provides public services in 51 distinct communities on six islands. Eliminating vacancies could permanently reduce services in certain communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on SB2014 and for your continued support of the Hawai'i State Public Library System.



The Senate Committee on Labor and Technology

February 11, 2026

Room 225

3:00 PM

**RE: SB 2014, Relating to Public Employment**

Attention: Chair Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair Rachele Lamosao, Members of the Committee

The University of Hawaii Professional Assembly (UHPA), the exclusive bargaining representative for all University of Hawai'i faculty members across Hawai'i's statewide 10-campus system, **opposes SB 2014**.

While we appreciate the intent to identify wasteful spending, this measure penalizes agencies for systemic hiring delays caused by the current centralized system under the Department of Human Resources Development (DHRD).

**We urge the Legislature to pass and implement SB 2137 first.** Many civil service positions remain vacant not because they are unnecessary, but because of administrative bottlenecks within DHRD. SB 2137 addresses the root cause of this issue by allowing agencies to assume hiring functions and expedite recruitment. Passing SB 2014 before SB 2137 effectively punishes the University for DHRD's inefficiencies by permanently abolishing positions that are stalled in a broken pipeline.

Arbitrarily stripping the University of position counts and funding ignores periods of hiring freezes or budget restrictions that may have paused recruitment. Once these funds lapse to the general fund, re-establishing them requires a massive legislative lift, permanently shrinking the University's capacity to support students.

The State should focus on streamlining the hiring process through **SB 2137** before imposing the "use it or lose it" mandate of **SB 2014**.

**We respectfully urge the Committee to DEFER SB 2014.**

University of Hawaii  
Professional Assembly



Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. Fern".

Christian L. Fern  
Executive Director  
University of Hawaii Professional Assembly

**University of Hawaii  
Professional Assembly**

1017 Palm Drive ♦ Honolulu, Hawaii 96814-1928  
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## UNITED PUBLIC WORKERS

AFSCME Local 646, AFL-CIO

THE SENATE  
KA 'AHA KENEKOA

THE THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE  
REGULAR SESSION OF 2026

### COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND TECHNOLOGY

Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Chair  
Senator Rachele Lamosao, Vice Chair

Wednesday, February 11, 2026, 3:00 PM  
Conference Room 225 & Videoconference

#### Re: Testimony on SB2014 – RELATING TO PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT

Chair Elefante, Vice Chair Lamosao, and Members of the Committee:

The United Public Workers, AFSCME Local 646, AFL-CIO (“UPW”) is the exclusive bargaining representative for approximately 14,000 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 SB2014, which requires the Director of Human Resources Development to abolish vacant positions within state departments and agencies under its jurisdiction that have been vacant for more than 5 years.

We are concerned about the long-term impact the proposed authorization to abolish positions that have been vacant for more than 5 years will have on existing public employees and government operations. UPW shares the Legislature’s frustration with departments and agencies that continue to struggle with filling their vacant positions. However, we believe the abolishment of positions without will ultimately punish hard-working public servants who continue to perform their duties despite significant staffing shortages.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide comments on this measure.

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Feb. 11, 2026, 3 p.m.  
Hawaii State Capitol  
Conference Room 225 and Videoconference

**To: Senate Committee on Labor and Technology**  
**Sen. Brandon J.C. Elefante, Chair**  
**Sen. Rachele Lamosao, Vice Chair**

**From: Grassroot Institute of Hawaii**  
**Ted Kefalas, Director of Strategic Campaigns**

RE: TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB2014 — RELATING TO PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT

Aloha chair, vice chair and other committee members,

The Grassroot Institute of Hawaii **supports** [SB2014](#), which would require the Hawaii Department of Human Resources Development to abolish any state job that has been for more than five years. All funding from these abolished positions would immediately lapse to the general fund. The bill would also require DHRD to report on the number of funds abolished in this manner in its annual report to the Legislature.

As of Nov. 1, 2025, the state had 4,273 vacant civil service positions, 485 of which had been vacant for four years or more.<sup>1</sup>

Tying down state general funds for vacant positions inhibits the Legislature's ability to respond to fiscal pressures such as the ones the state is currently facing.

Grassroot has estimated that abolishing all of the state's more than 4,000 vacant positions would free up more than \$350 million in tax dollars that could be allocated elsewhere.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> ["Report to the 2026 Legislature as Required by Act 57, Session Laws of Hawaii 2019,"](#) Hawaii Department of Human Resources Development, updated Jan. 8, 2026, pp 1-2 and Appendix A. Note that this figure does not include Hawaii Department of Education positions.

<sup>2</sup> Keli'i Akina, ["Alternatives to 'pausing' Hawaii's income tax cuts,"](#) Grassroot Institute of Hawaii, Jan. 19, 2026.

If the bill resulted in the abolition of only 10% of those positions, it would free up \$30 million that could be put to better use or returned to taxpayers in the form of a refund.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Ted Kefalas  
Director of Strategic Campaigns  
Grassroot Institute of Hawaii



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

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

The Thirty-Third Legislature, State of Hawaii  
The Senate  
Committee on Labor and Technology

Testimony by  
Hawaii Government Employees Association

February 11, 2026

S.B. 2014 — RELATING TO PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT

The Hawaii Government Employees Association, AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO wishes to provide comments on S.B. 2014, which requires the Director of Human Resources Development to abolish vacant positions within state departments and agencies under its jurisdiction that have been vacant for more than 5 years and requires funds for abolished positions to immediately lapse to the credit of the general fund.

We caution the legislature to broadly abolish vacant positions if they haven't been filled within a certain time frame. A more established framework should be considered to limit unintended consequences against our state workforce and the core services that they provide. However, we have been advocating for years that vacant position money be used to increase the salary for the incumbents. Therefore, if the legislature looks to implement a framework to abolish vacant positions, then that vacant position money should solely be used to increase the salary for the incumbents within those positions, since those employees are already doing the work that was intended for the positions that remain vacant.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on S.B. 2014.

Respectfully submitted,

Randy Perreira  
Executive Director

**SB-2014**

Submitted on: 2/9/2026 3:01:30 PM

Testimony for LBT on 2/11/2026 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Glen Kagamida	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**STRONG SUPPORT!**

**SB-2014**

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 10:12:57 AM

Testimony for LBT on 2/11/2026 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Megan Blazak	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Honorable Chair Elefante, Vice Chair Lamosao, and Members of the Committee,

As a constituent of Senate District 1, I support the intent of the proposed measure.