

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



KEITH A. REGAN
COMPTROLLER
KA LUNA HO'OMALU HANA LAULĀ

MEOH-LENG SILLIMAN
DEPUTY COMPTROLLER
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OMALU HANA LAULĀ

STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF ACCOUNTING AND GENERAL SERVICES | KA 'OIHANA LOIHELU A LAWELAWE LAULĀ
P.O. BOX 119, HONOLULU, HAWAII 96810-0119

WRITTEN TESTIMONY
OF
KEITH A. REGAN, COMPTROLLER
DEPARTMENT OF ACCOUNTING AND GENERAL SERVICES
TO THE
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

FEBRUARY 10, 2026, 3:10 P.M.
CONFERENCE ROOM 225 AND VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE, STATE CAPITOL

S.B. 3332

RELATING TO STATE-FUNDED TRAVEL

Chair McKelvey, Vice Chair Gabbard, and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on S.B. 3332.

The Department of Accounting and General Services (DAGS) offers **comments** on S.B. 3332, which seeks to establish a two-year moratorium on discretionary state-funded travel. While we understand the intent to promote fiscal responsibility, we respectfully submit that this legislation is unnecessary for the following reasons:

- Existing Administrative Rules on Travel:** The Department already has comprehensive administrative rules in place that govern travel for all executive branch departments. These rules, outlined in Hawaii Administrative Rules (HAR) Chapter 3-10, provide clear guidelines for travel approval, cost management, and accountability. These existing regulations ensure that state-funded travel is conducted responsibly and efficiently, making additional legislation redundant. The rules can be reviewed online at: <https://spo.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/HAR310.pdf>
- Potential Administrative Burden:** Implementing a new layer of restrictions, as proposed in S.B. 3332, would create unnecessary administrative complexity for state agencies. The current rules already require agencies to justify travel expenses and ensure they align with the State's priorities. Adding further

requirements could divert resources from critical state functions and create inefficiencies.

3. **Flexibility in Addressing State Needs:** The existing administrative rules provide flexibility for agencies to evaluate travel needs on a case-by-case basis, ensuring that essential travel for professional development, training, and collaboration is not hindered. A blanket moratorium, even with exceptions, may limit the ability of agencies to respond effectively to emerging challenges and opportunities.
4. **Remote Participation Alternatives Are Already Considered:** The current rules emphasize cost-effective travel and departments encourage the use of remote participation when feasible. This demonstrates that the State is already taking steps to minimize travel costs without compromising the quality of work or professional development.
5. **Unnecessary Duplication of Efforts:** The proposed legislation duplicates efforts already addressed by the existing administrative rules, which are designed to ensure fiscal responsibility and accountability. Budget execution policies and instructions, issued via executive memoranda annually, also include reminders on procedures and guidelines that reinforce the applicability of the travel rules. Rather than imposing a moratorium, the Legislature could focus on enhancing compliance with these rules or conducting periodic reviews to ensure their effectiveness.

In light of these considerations, I respectfully urge the committee to reconsider the necessity of S.B. 3332. The existing administrative rules provide a robust framework for managing state-funded travel, and additional legislation may not yield significant benefits while potentially creating new challenges for state agencies.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

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



BONNIE KAHAKUI
ADMINISTRATOR

DAYNA OMIYA
ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR

STATE OF HAWAI'I | KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I
STATE PROCUREMENT OFFICE

P.O. Box 119
Honolulu, Hawaii 96810-0119
Tel: (808) 586-0554
email: state_procurement_office@hawaii.gov
<http://spo.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY
OF
BONNIE KAHAKUI, ADMINISTRATOR
STATE PROCUREMENT OFFICE

TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE
ON
GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS
February 10, 2026, 3:10 p.m.

SENATE BILL 3332
RELATING TO STATE-FUNDED TRAVEL

Chair McKelvey, Vice Chair Gabbard, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on Senate Bill 3332. This measure proposes a two-year moratorium for certain state agencies, permits the Department of Accounting and General Services to adopt rules, and requires reports to the Legislature.

The State Procurement Office (SPO) appreciates the intent to promote fiscal responsibility; however, we respectfully offer the following comments on this bill.

Comments

The Department already enforces detailed Hawaii Administrative Rules (HAR) governing travel for all Executive Branch agencies. HAR Chapter 3-10 sets clear standards for approvals, cost control, and accountability to ensure that state-funded travel is managed responsibly and efficiently. Budget execution policies and instructions, issued via executive memoranda annually, include reminders on procedures and guidelines that reinforce the applicability of the HAR for state-funded travel. Additionally, travel guidelines are provided that complements the Rules.

Reference: HAR 3-10 - <https://spo.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/HAR310.pdf>.

Current rules already require justification of travel expenses and alignment with state priorities. Senate Bill 3332 would place additional administrative burdens on agencies. The additional requirements are likely to divert time and resources from essential functions and reduce overall efficiency.

The existing rules allow agencies to evaluate travel requests individually to ensure that critical activities such as professional development, training, and collaboration are not disrupted. A blanket moratorium, even with exceptions, risks limiting the State's ability to respond quickly to emerging needs and beneficial opportunities.

Current policies emphasize cost-effective travel and encourage remote participation whenever practical. At the same time, policies recognize that engagement with peers is vital for professional growth.

Recommendation

While Senate Bill 3332 has good intentions, the SPO respectfully recommends that this bill is unnecessary as there are Administrative Rules, policies, and procedures already in place that address the legislature's intent.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this measure.



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

Date: 02/10/2026

Time: 03:10 PM

Location: CR 225 & Videoconference

Committee: GVO

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

Title of Bill: SB3332, RELATING TO STATE-FUNDED TRAVEL.

Purpose of Bill: Establishes a two-year state-funded travel moratorium for certain state agencies, with certain exceptions. Permits the Department of Accounting and General Services to adopt rules. Requires reports to the Legislature. Sunsets 6/30/2028.

Department's Position:

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) respectfully provides comments on SB 3332. This measure seeks to impose a two-year moratorium on discretionary state-funded travel with certain narrowly defined exceptions.

The Department is cognizant of the current higher than usual degree of economic and fiscal uncertainty in which this measure is being considered. While we share the goal of careful prioritization of expenditures in light of this uncertainty, the Department offers the following comments and cautions regarding imposing strict spending controls on travel.

Per Section 302A-1303.6, Hawaii Revised Statutes, public schools rely on reasonably predictable and reliable funding support with which they can program based on their student data and in conjunction with their school community. While the Department appreciates that the bill does exempt certain types of travel from the moratorium, restricting spending for travel can be viewed as usurping decision making discretion currently delegated to school leaders and their community.

The following are some common justifications for in-state travel:

1. To attend leadership/principal meetings;
2. To conduct investigations;
3. To attend or conduct training;
4. To inspect or repair schools or offices; and
5. To participate in labor relations hearings.

The following are some common justifications for out-of-state travel:

1. To fulfill federal grant and program commitments and meet emerging professional

- development and technical assistance needs of chief state school officers and state educational agencies (i.e. state-level positions);
2. To attend meetings which are mandatory for federal program administration;
 3. To represent Hawaii for national educator awards ceremonies or meetings (e.g., State Teacher of the Year, Principal of the Year);
 4. To accompany students on student-focused travel (e.g., robotics, band, science fair, other competitions) in compliance with Hawaii State Board of Education Policy No. 2250 Field Trips and Student Travel;
 5. To fulfill responsibilities to students who are placed in mainland facilities;
 6. To obtain certification which is not available in Hawaii and which is required to achieve an objective in the Strategic Plan (e.g. International Baccalaureate program) and the conference brochure or description includes evidence that certification is offered to attendees;
 7. To recruit teachers to fill vacancies in shortage subject areas;
 8. To attend a conference or workshop for professional development; and
 9. To visit colleges and universities to familiarize college and career counselors with campuses and surrounding areas.

In closing, the Department would note that concerns with the fiscal outlook for the State were communicated in writing to school and complex area leaders in the past year, and the Department's travel guidelines already encourage the use of teleconferencing and webinars in place of travel when feasible.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on SB 3332.



The Senate Committee on Government Operations

February 10, 2026

Room 225

3:10 PM

RE: SB 3332, Relating to State-Funded Travel

Attention: Chair Angus L.K. McKelvey, Vice Chair Mike Gabbard, 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 3332**.

While we support the legislature's goal of ensuring fiscal responsibility, this measure represents an unnecessary legislative intrusion into the day-to-day management of state operations. Determining which professional activities require travel is a fundamental management decision that must be based on the specific operational needs and requirements of each department or unit, rather than a broad statutory mandate.

SB 3332 attempts to micromanage these operational decisions through a "one-size-fits-all" approach that imposes arbitrary caps on the frequency of travel and attendance. Limiting travel to "one trip" per employee or capping attendance at "three employees" per event ignores the diverse and varying operational realities of different state departments. Whether travel is necessary to fulfill a specific project requirement, meet federal compliance standards, or ensure workforce development is a determination that requires subject-matter expertise and management discretion. By removing the flexibility to address specific operational needs, this bill creates structural inefficiencies that could hinder the State's ability to execute its functions effectively.

Rather than imposing rigid statutory moratoriums that strip management of its authority to lead, we suggest that the legislature rely on existing administrative mechanisms to ensure fiscal prudence. Departments should retain the autonomy to establish and enforce rigorous criteria for approving travel that weigh the costs against the operational necessity and value of the activity. This approach ensures accountability without sacrificing the operational effectiveness of the workforce.

**University of Hawaii
Professional Assembly**



We respectfully urge the Committee to DEFER SB 3332.

Respectfully submitted,

Christian L. Fern
Executive Director
University of Hawaii Professional Assembly

**University of Hawaii
Professional Assembly**

LATE

SB-3332

Submitted on: 2/9/2026 4:28:12 PM

Testimony for GVO on 2/10/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Terry Chang	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a taxpaying citizen, I strongly support SB3332. I learned about this bill from a recent *Honolulu Civil Beat* article published on Sunday titled “*DOE Travel: \$4 Million, 8,000 Trips And Few Details On Educational Value.*” The article detailed how the Department of Education spent millions on thousands of trips with little transparency. This is unacceptable. Hawai‘i residents are tired of funding a failing department with no accountability. The report revealed that DOE did not provide the positions or job titles of attendees, the justification for the travel, or whether trips involved meetings or training sessions.

I was shocked to learn that DOE employees were sent on expensive trips — including international travel to South Korea — for trainings that could have been conducted here in Hawai‘i or via Zoom at a fraction of the cost. While the article does not specify who attended, teachers are required to be teaching during the school year, so it is reasonable to conclude that many of these trips were likely taken by administrators or other DOE staff not directly connected to classroom teaching. The lack of transparency leaves taxpayers unable to know who benefited from these costly trips. Shame on the Superintendent for approving this and on the Board of Education for failing to provide proper oversight.

The entire state system needs to be held accountable. The Civil Beat article focused on DOE, but what about other departments? There must be real oversight for taxpayer-funded travel, clear justification, and cost-effective alternatives considered first. SB3332 is a necessary step to restore fiscal responsibility and transparency.

Mahalo for your consideration.

LATE

SB-3332

Submitted on: 2/9/2026 10:33:19 PM

Testimony for GVO on 2/10/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gregory Misakian	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in strong support of SB3332.