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

Before the
SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND TECHNOLOGY
Friday, March 27, 2026 at 3:01 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 225

In consideration of
**SR76 REQUESTING THE OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR TO EVALUATE AND MAKE
RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE DECENTRALIZATION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF
HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT'S HIRING AND RECRUITMENT
FUNCTIONS TO STATE DEPARTMENTS, DIVISIONS, AND AGENCIES.**

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

The Department of Human Resources Development (HRD) respectfully opposes this measure.

SR76 requests that the Office of the Governor evaluate the decentralization of key hiring and recruitment functions from HRD to departments, citing delays and operational challenges in the current system.

HRD shares the goal of improving hiring speed and reducing vacancies. However, the premise of this resolution does not reflect the current operational structure of the State's civil service system.

Pursuant to section 76-13, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), HRD is responsible for the administration of the civil service system, including the establishment of uniform classification, recruitment, and selection standards across the Executive Branch. These responsibilities are grounded in the merit principles set forth in section 76-1, HRS, which require that employment decisions be based on fitness and ability, and that equal pay be provided for equal work.

Consistent with this statutory framework, HRD has already implemented a delegated model that provides departments with substantial operational authority. Four of the five

functions identified in the resolution are already delegated, in practice, to departments through existing programs and authorities. Departments currently have the ability to:

- Develop and contribute to position descriptions;
- Participate in recruitment and applicant evaluation processes;
- Conduct interviews; and
- Make hiring decisions from certified lists.

The remaining function, minimum qualification review, is not broadly delegated in order to maintain consistency, ensure compliance with merit principles, and protect against inequities in hiring. However, this function can be delegated upon request under existing authority and has been implemented in appropriate cases.

Because these authorities already exist, this measure risks duplicating work that has already been completed and may create confusion regarding roles and responsibilities across departments.

Further decentralization without a consistent statewide framework would be inconsistent with HRD's statutory responsibility under section 76-13, HRS, to administer a uniform system. Fragmenting these functions across departments may result in:

- Inconsistent application of minimum qualifications;
- Inefficiencies by requiring applicants to submit multiple applications for similar jobs;
- Confusion for job applicants;
- Inequities in hiring practices across departments; and
- Reduced transparency and accountability in recruitment decisions.

HRD has taken a balanced approach by expanding delegation where appropriate while maintaining centralized oversight where consistency and compliance are required under chapter 76, HRS. Current initiatives, including expedited hiring programs and targeted delegation models, already provide departments with increased flexibility while preserving the integrity of the merit system.

Rather than pursuing further study of decentralization, HRD recommends continued refinement of existing hiring programs, investments in technology to help administer State human resources, and targeted process improvements that address hiring timelines while maintaining compliance with sections 76-1 and 76-13, HRS.

HRD respectfully opposes this measure.

We are available to answer any questions or provide further information as needed.



HAWAII GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION
AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO

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LATE

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

Testimony by
Hawaii Government Employees Association

March 27, 2026

S.R. 76 – REQUESTING THE OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR TO EVALUATE AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE DECENTRALIZATION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT'S HIRING AND RECRUITMENT FUNCTIONS TO STATE DEPARTMENTS, DIVISIONS, AND AGENCIES.

The Hawaii Government Employees Association, AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO supports S.R. 76, which requests the Office of the Governor to evaluate and make recommendations on the decentralization of the Department of Human Resources Development's hiring and recruitment functions to state departments, divisions, and agencies.

We appreciate this resolution, which continues the conversation on decentralizing the recruitment and hiring of civil service positions. There has been no improvement in our state's vacancy rate over the past few years, and many of our members continue to be overworked. The current centralized recruitment process is not adaptable or flexible at meeting the needs of the line departments and the current market demands. We urge the Legislature to continue focusing its efforts on improving the state's recruitment process, as we continue to see high vacancy rates that have led to reduced services to the public and an increase in the use and the abuse of exempt positions within state government.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of S.R. 76.

Respectfully submitted,

Randy Perreira
Executive Director

Committee on Labor and Technology
Hawaii State Senate
Friday, March 27, 2026

LATE

Testimony on SR 76

Chair Elefante and Vice Chair Lamosao, my name is Linda Chu Takayama, and I am testifying in strong support of SR 76.

Over the course of my career, I have served in several management positions within state government. In those roles, I found that recruiting and hiring under a centralized system was often slow, inefficient, and frustrating.

In the past, when recruiting for clerical and secretarial positions, the Department of Human Resources Development (DHRD) would post a notice on the state website and compile a single list of applicants. That same list would then be distributed to all requesting departments. Departments were effectively placed in competition with one another, racing to interview candidates. Frequently, by the time a department acted, the most qualified applicants had already been hired elsewhere. In other cases, departments were forced to wait months for a new list to be issued, further delaying critical hires.

Additionally, the state has historically been slow to adopt modern recruitment strategies. Today's job seekers do not rely primarily on government websites to find opportunities. Yet, for many years, departments were restricted from conducting their own outreach. I recall, as a department director, advocating to use widely used recruitment platforms such as Indeed. It took years before that flexibility was granted.

While I hope improvements have been made, the underlying issue remains: departments are best positioned to understand their specific workforce needs. They are more motivated to conduct proactive and targeted searches and are better equipped to identify where to find the right candidates.

For these reasons, it makes sense to delegate recruitment authority to individual departments.

Thank you for your consideration.