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**TESTIMONY OF ROBIN K. MATSUNAGA, OMBUDSMAN,  
ON THE BUDGET REQUEST FOR FISCAL YEAR 2008-2009  
FOR THE OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN**

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE**

**JANUARY 7, 2008**

Chair Oshiro and Members of the Committee on Finance:

Thank you for this opportunity to present the budget request of the Office of the Ombudsman for fiscal year 2008-2009.

The Ombudsman is an independent, neutral, and nonpartisan officer of the Legislature, empowered to investigate citizen complaints against State and county executive agencies. We seek to assure the public of fair, reasonable and lawful treatment by government.

The workload of the office is determined primarily by the number and types of inquiries we receive from the public. During the 2006-2007 fiscal year, we received a total of 4,501 inquiries, a 7.6 percent decrease from the 4,870 inquiries received during the 2005-2006 fiscal year. Of the total number of inquiries, 2,973 were complaints against agencies within our jurisdiction. We received 1,097 requests for information (a 13.1 percent increase), and 431 complaints against entities outside our jurisdiction (a 12.4 percent decrease).

Further statistical information regarding our caseload and a sampling of the cases we investigated and closed during the last fiscal year can be found in our annual report for fiscal year 2006-2007, which we submitted to the Legislature on December 21, 2007. The annual report can also be found on our Web site, at <[www.ombudsman.hawaii.gov](http://www.ombudsman.hawaii.gov)>.

For fiscal year 2008-2009, I am requesting a no-growth budget totaling \$1,060,728. By no-growth, I mean that no additional staff positions are being added and the current expenses and equipment budgets will remain at fiscal year 2007-2008 levels. The amount requested reflects an increase of \$48,312 over the total appropriation of \$1,012,416 provided by the Legislature for the current fiscal year through Act 1 and Act 134, Session Laws of Hawaii 2007.

The \$48,312 includes \$10,488 to cover the increases for the ombudsman and first assistant, effective July 1, 2007, as provided by sections 96-2 and 96-3, Hawaii Revised Statutes, and the salary schedule established by the Executive Salary Commission, plus the following amounts to allow the staff of the Office of the Ombudsman, other than the Ombudsman and First Assistant, to maintain parity with employees in the Executive and Judicial branches (appropriations for Executive and Judicial branch employees for fiscal year 2008-2009 are included in Act 137, Session Laws of Hawaii 2007):

1. an additional \$15,074 to cover step/merit increases for 5 employees who are eligible for a step/merit increase, effective July 1, 2008; and
2. an additional \$22,750 to cover the across-the-board increase of 4 percent, effective October 1, 2008.

While I recognize there will be many difficult fiscal decisions that the Legislature must deal with in the upcoming session, I firmly believe that the Office of the Ombudsman provides the citizens of Hawaii a valuable and much needed service, and therefore request your consideration of this budget request for fiscal year 2008-2009.

Thank you, again, for the opportunity to present the budget request of the Office of the Ombudsman. If you have any questions, I will be happy to answer them.

OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN  
OPERATING BUDGET -- FY 2008-2009 vs. FY 2007-2008

	<u>FY 2008-2009</u>	<u>FY 2007-2008</u>
<b>A. PERSONAL SERVICES</b>		
Ombudsman	\$ 114,708 (1)	\$ 109,248 (1)
First Assistant	105,528 (1)	100,500 (1)
Analysts	525,880 (8)	495,490 (8)
Intake/Secretarial	<u>255,212 (5)</u>	<u>247,778 (5)</u>
 SUBTOTAL PERSONAL SERVICES	 1,001,328 (15)	 953,016 (15)
 <b>B. OTHER CURRENT EXPENSES</b>		
Office Supplies & Postage	6,600	6,600
Telephone	3,850	3,850
Intra-state Transportation & Subsistence	220	220
Training/Out-of-state Transportation	5,500	5,500
Printing, Advertising & Publications	7,700	7,700
Maintenance - Office Equipment	5,500	5,500
Equipment Rental	4,950	4,950
Subscriptions/Dues	5,830	5,830
Other Miscellaneous Current Expense	1,100	1,100
Computer Services	14,950	14,950
Risk Management	<u>(included w/Other)</u>	<u>(included w/Other)</u>
 SUBTOTAL OTHER CURRENT EXPENSES	 56,200	 56,200
 <b>C. EQUIPMENT, FURNISHINGS, &amp; BOOKS</b>		
Equipment	2,100	2,100
Furnishings	550	550
Books	<u>550</u>	<u>550</u>
 SUBTOTAL EQUIP, FURNISHINGS, BOOKS	 3,200	 3,200
 <b>TOTAL OPERATING BUDGET REQUEST</b>	 <u><u>1,060,728</u></u>	 <u><u>1,012,416</u></u>