



HAWAII FIRE FIGHTERS ASSOCIATION

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE FIGHTERS LOCAL 1463, AFL-CIO
2305 S. BERETANIA ST., RM. 202, HONOLULU, HAWAII 96826-1493
TEL: (808) 949-1566 FAX: (808) 952-6003
www.hawaiifirefighters.org

The Twenty Fourth Legislature
House of Representatives
Committee on Labor and Public Employment

Testimony by
Hawaii Fire Fighters Association

LATE TESTIMONY

H.B. No. 2710 **Relating to the Re-Employment of Retirees**
H.B. No. 2848 **Relating to Government Employees**

My name is Robert H. Lee and I am the President of the Hawaii Fire Fighters Association, Local 1463, IAFF, AFL-CIO. On behalf of the 1,800 professional and 800 retired fire fighters throughout the State, the Hawaii Fire Fighters Association appreciates the opportunity to comment on these bills and supports the intent of H.B. No. 2710 and H.B. No. 2848, which permits the rehiring of state and county retirees without affecting retirement benefits.

The Hawaii Fire Fighters Association recognizes the situation that the public sector workforce faces in the near future and believes this measure will address some of the challenges that are ahead.

Both measures afford the appointing authority the flexibility to re-employ retirees with no impact on the retirement benefits being received. One of the core functions of the Hawaii Fire Fighters Association is to represent our active members in the workplace which includes conditions of employment, wages and benefits. While we believe this will attract well-experienced and well-qualified retirees to return to public service, it is critical that the filling of positions through this procedure does not impact any promotional opportunities or minimum manning hiring and staffing for our members. As this proposal does not address the definition of "critical to fill or labor shortage" position, we request that some type of definition is reflected. Also, with regard to determining the positions that is being sought to fill, it is important that the employers through good faith consultation with the exclusive bargaining representative engage in discussions regarding the rehiring process and procedure.

As an aside, in 2003, H.B. 569, Relating to Public Employees was introduced on our behalf. H.B. No. 569 would have established a Deferred Optional Retirement Plan (DROP). The DROP is similar to what is being proposed in this bill in that retirees could continue to be employed, receive retirement health benefits, cease to make the contributions to the ERS but in return, the pension amount due to the retiree would be maintained by the ERS for lump sum payout (with interest) upon separation from service.

Recognizing Act 256-07, we do not see this bill as a benefit enhance. Rather it is allowing public employees to receive their well earned and deserved pension while meeting the need to maintain the continuity of excellent public services.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on these bills.



HAWAII GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION

AFSCME LOCAL 152, AFL-CIO

888 MILILANI STREET, SUITE 601 • HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-2991



Randy Perreira *Executive Director*
Tel: 808 543-0011 Fax: 808 528-0922

Nora A. Nomura *Deputy Executive Director*
Tel: 808 543-0003 Fax: 808 528-0922

Derek M. Mizuno *Deputy Executive Director*
Tel: 808 543-0055 Fax: 808 523-6879

The Twenty-Fourth Legislature, State of Hawaii
Hawaii State House of Representatives
Committee on Labor and Public Employment

Testimony by
HGEA/AFSCME, Local 152, AFL-CIO
February 8, 2008

LATE TESTIMONY

H.B. 2710 – RELATING TO THE RE-EMPLOYMENT OF RETIREES

The Hawaii Government Employees Association, AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO supports this measure with certain amendments. H.B. 2710 proposes rehiring state and county retirees into any vacant position without adversely affecting their retirement benefits. Changing demographics and low unemployment rates makes rehiring experienced and well qualified retirees an important consideration.

Nonetheless, we believe the future of civil service depends upon active recruitment of those applicants with the skills, abilities and commitment to a government career. This includes current employees who should be considered for promotional opportunities under the civil service merit system. Reliance upon retirees alone does not encourage the recruitment and promotion of these career employees. For this reason, we believe this bill should be amended to allow hiring of retirees only for “hard to fill” or shortage category positions.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure with the suggested amendment.

Respectfully submitted,

Nora A. Nomura
Deputy Executive Officer