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The Twenty-Fourth Legislature, State of Hawaii
Hawaii State Senate
Committee on Judiciary and Labor

Testimony by
Hawaii State AFL-CIO
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S.B. 2594 – RELATING TO LABOR

The Hawaii State AFL-CIO strongly supports the purpose and intent of S.B. 2594 and the proposed amendments to Chapter 377, HRS (The Hawaii Employment Relations Act). As drafted, the bill would allow employees at a company to unionize if a majority signed cards expressing their desire to join a union. Currently, an employer does not have to recognize the majority's signatures and can insist on a secret ballot election. Unfortunately, in a high number of cases, the employer uses the time before the vote to pressure employees not to join a union.

The other suggested additions to Chapter 377, HRS will prevent efforts by employers to stall negotiations indefinitely. The parties are required to make every reasonable effort to conclude and sign a collective bargaining agreement. If the parties are not successful after ninety days of negotiations, either party can request conciliation through the Hawaii Labor Relations Board.

Labor unions have a significant role to play in helping to fix today's economic ills, most notably increasing income inequality. This cause of this problem is due in large part to the difficulty in organizing unions and the worker's resulting lack of bargaining power. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of S.B. 2594.

Respectfully submitted,

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