

LATE TESTIMONY COMMITTEE ON
PUBLIC SAFETY
&
COMMITTEE ON
JUDICIARY & LABOR

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF:
SCR 102 AND SR57

Aloha, Chair Espero, Chair Taniguchi, Vice Chairs Nishibara and Hee, and members of the committees.

I am Lieutenant Albert Cummings of the State Sheriff's Division, and would like to submit testimony in SUPPORT of Senate Concurrent Resolution 102 and Senate Resolution 57.

As a law enforcement officer for the past 28 years, I have seen little progress in the way of wages and/or benefits as compared to that of the Honolulu Police Department. Based on the language provided in this resolution, Sheriff Deputies are directly involved in the criminal justice system. Sheriffs are no different than any other law enforcement entity. Deputy sheriffs are sworn law enforcement officers for this great State of Hawaii, tasked to provide the same duties and responsibilities as that of county police officers, yet are forgotten by those that govern and/or negotiate our wages and benefits.

As a result of this disparity in wages and benefits, we have lost several members to other law enforcement agencies here and abroad, some deputies fresh from our graduating recruit class. The cost of living here in Hawaii, as we all know, does not add up when looking at dollars and cents. For this reason, there has to be open dialog between responsible State agencies, including but not limited to Public Safety, Human Resources, Judiciary, and Hawaii Government Employees Association.

In closing, deputy sheriffs deserve additional compensation and better benefits commensurate with county police officers in Hawaii and abroad. I wish to thank all of you for taking the time to read my testimony.

LATE TESTIMONY COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY & COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY AND LABOR

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF: SCR 102 AND SR57

Aloha, Chair Espero, Chair Taniguchi, Vice Chairs Nishihara and Hee, and members of the committees.

I am Deputy Sean NEILSON of the State Sheriff's Division and I would like to submit testimony in SUPPORT of Senate Concurrent Resolution 102 and Senate Resolution 57.

I have been with the Department of Public Safety, Sheriff's Division for 6 years. I believe Hawaii is a community like no other in the world. I was born and raised here and want to serve my community and State for the betterment of all. I am a law enforcement officer and I take my oath very seriously. The expectations the public has for my conduct is great. The responsibility entrusted to me is even greater.

I have been deeply affected by the disparity of pay between our county and federal officers versus state deputies. When a Police Officer starts their career and passes all probationary requirements, they will earn \$53,268.00. A Deputy, having completed comparable training will earn \$36,504.00. As time progresses the gap of pay AND benefits widens at an ever-increasing rate. I, along with many of my co-workers, have been carefully considering various offers from other agencies on the west coast. We love Hawaii but are left with few options when the most basic needs (shelter) cannot be addressed.

I do believe that a person willing to:

- Defend their government from all enemies "foreign and domestic"
- Sacrifice personal comfort and safety for the safety and well being of the greater group
- Expose their personal assets, and professional credibility to attack from anyone able to fill in the blank on a court form
- Pin a star on their shirt and announce through actions and words, "I will do my best to stop all the bad people from doing bad things."

Anyone willing to take these and a multitude of other risks should have a chance to purchase a home in the community they have helped to build and protect.

This resolution does not cost the taxpayers one cent. It simply requests two sides to come to the table and address the concerns of Deputy Sheriff's that have long been dismissed and ignored. I strongly encourage you and your co-workers to pass this measure to begin to stem the flow of yet another part of Hawaii's profession job pool being forced to relocate to realize modest, attainable dreams.

I would like to conclude by thanking all of you for hearing these measures.

LATE TESTIMONY

Committee of Public Safety
Committee on Judiciary and Labor

SCR-102

SR-57

Greeting and Aloha to the members of the Committee of Public Safety and the Committee on Judiciary and Labor. My name is Blair Wulfert and I am testifying on SCR-102 and SR-57 regarding the pay increases for the Deputy Sheriffs of the Department of Public Safety. The authority of the Hawaii State Deputy Sheriffs is derived from Hawaii Revised Statutes 353 C-4 in which they are defined as State Law Enforcement Officers with full police powers. Today, Deputy Sheriffs are fully tasked State Police Officers performing the same duties as our City and County Police and mainland Police and Sheriffs.

Currently, Deputy Sheriffs are in the Hawaii Government Employees Association Unit 3. Unit 3 State employees are comprised of mostly clerical staff, numbering over 13,000.

With approximately 326 Sworn Deputy Sheriffs, in a collective bargaining unit 3 of 13,000 clerical staff and clerks we are unable to negotiate independently through binding arbitration. If any negotiations are conducted, they are then referred as supplemental agreements that are not binding.

Since these negotiations are not binding, and are not collectively bargained for in our particular class of workers, Deputy Sheriffs fall far behind our City and County Police Officer counterparts with regard to pay and benefits. Currently, the starting pay of a Deputy Sheriff is \$33,720.00 per year as compared to a City and County Police Officer starting at \$43,000. This is a deficit of just over 22%, for a new Deputy. This is fundamentally unfair, as Deputy Sheriffs maintain 24 hour motorized police patrol responding to 911 calls, intervening in street crime, and effecting misdemeanor and felony on-view arrests. Deputy Sheriffs are also responsible for the dangerous duties of felony warrant execution and tactical team operations.

In September of 2007, Deputy Sheriffs of Hawaii Government Employees Association Unit 3 attempted to reach a supplemental agreement with the State to bring the Deputies closer out city and County law enforcement counterparts. In October of 2007, the State and the Hawaii Government Employees Association met for the first time and our proposal was presented. On April 01, 2008, the State informed the Hawaii Government Employees Association that they valued our service to Hawaii however, the State was unable to fund our pay increases due to budgetary restraints.

To further exacerbate this dilemma, Hawaii Deputy Sheriffs are being aggressively recruited by mainland law enforcement agencies. Within the last two years, 40 Deputy Sheriffs have left our Department of Public Safety in favor of higher paid law enforcement positions for which they were recruited. This equates to 12% of our work force. The time and cost constraints of running a six month Deputy Recruit class have

only allowed 24 new Deputies to graduate and join our forces within the last two years. Overtime expenses soar and Officer safety suffers as a result of this severe understaffing. This number does not reflect the deputies have retired and one particular deputy shot to death while foiling an armed robber who had become an active shooter.

Currently, Deputy Sheriff Recruits must pass a six month Basic Law Enforcement Recruit Class, which costs the State of Hawaii over \$100,000.00 per recruit for quality training in the techniques, tactics, legal duties and legal constraints required by modern law enforcement. After another 6 months of probationary field training, these recruits become full fledged Deputy Sheriffs. With only a few years of experience under their belts these deputies are targeted by mainland state law enforcement agencies who offer employment packages nearly twice what they receive from the State of Hawaii. These employment packages include moving expenses, signing bonuses, and direct lateral employment. These mainland state law enforcement agencies benefit from the savings of not having to train their new experienced officer, as our Deputies have now gained the reputation of being well trained and seasoned enough to hit the mainland streets as fully functional police officers from their first day on the job. All of this lost talent is paid for by the State of Hawaii and is sacrificed due to severely inadequate compensation. This sudden migration of our deputies to other agencies leaves our current force dangerously under staffed, and necessitates the constant expenditure of further monies for recruit training.

This same dilemma was experienced by the Honolulu Police Department in the late 1990's. The Honolulu Police Department lost many officers to mainland law enforcement agencies leaving them in an over 300 vacant positions short. By dramatically increasing the salaries and compensation of the city and county police officers, employee retention was facilitated and the loss of trained personnel was minimized. Severely inadequate salaries now place the Hawaii State Sheriff's Division in the same position that the City and County police once faced. This sudden migration will only be stifled when our salaries become comparable to our city and county counterparts.

After the tragic days of September 11, 2001, the Sheriff Division was tasked with dramatically increasing law enforcement and security services to the State and its visitors. These efforts include doubling the number of deputies assigned to the Honolulu International Airport, and the creation of a State tactical response team called the Rapid Reaction Force. With the recent walk off of contract security personnel at the Honolulu International Airport, the Department of Transportation has considered the need to expand the role of Deputies to include full law enforcement responsibility for all State airports and State harbors. Such an expansion, while of great benefit to the public, will be hindered if substantially lower pay for Deputies results in a lack of interested applicants, and the continued loss of well trained our seasoned Deputies to mainland and County agencies.

Within the last year, Deputy Sheriffs have been called upon by the State of Hawaii to solve a great number of public safety and policing problems. The tactical coverage that

was required by the introduction of the Superferry fell to the State Rapid Reaction Force. Rampant drug distribution, prostitution, gambling and firearms activity in Keehi Lagoon park were stopped cold by months of meticulous investigation and countermeasures initiated and executed by Deputy Sheriffs. When drug trafficking became a threat to tourism in Iwalei, Deputy Sheriffs stopped this activity through a precise and rapidly executed operation that resulted in numerous felony arrests. The island-wide problem of large scale copper theft from public facilities was thwarted in West Loch by the ongoing investigative operations of Deputy Sheriffs.

As State Deputy Sheriffs, we willingly put our personal safety at risk on a daily basis in order to enforce Hawaii's laws constitutionally, tactically and efficiently for the citizens of our State. We ask that the State of Hawaii, whose public we serve, only compensate us in a manner that is fair to the standards of our honorable profession.

LATE TESTIMONY

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY & COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY AND LABOR

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF: SCR 102 AND SR57

Greeting, Chair Espero, Chair Taniguchi, Vice Chair(s) Nishihara and Hee, and members of the committees.

I am Deputy Joseph B. FINNEY, with the Department of Public Safety, Sheriff Division. I would like to submit written testimony in SUPPORT of Senate Concurrent Resolution 102 and Senate Resolution 57.

My family and I ventured to Hawaii as a result of a military transfer. We fell in love with Hawaii and decided not to transfer back to the mainland at the end of our tour; instead we decided to leave active duty, join the reserve and make Hawaii our home.

All my adult life I have served my country and when I got the chance to serve the people of the State of Hawaii I did not hesitate. I've been employed with the Department of Public Safety, Sheriff Division for six and a half (6½) years.

I did not enter this profession merely for the pay nor is it compelling for me to stay because of the pay. I find it disheartening that a state level law enforcement entity harbors such inconsistency in earnings among its first responders. This stands to reason why so many of our highly trained deputies has left our ranks and joined law enforcement agencies on the west coast and immediately doubling their earnings.


In May of 2007, I completed my Master's Degree in Public Administration. My thesis was based on the Department of Public Safety Sheriff's Division. Hundreds of hours were spent researching its splintered history. And I submit to you, that the iniquities of this department is embedded in it's framers deprivation of proper structure, funding and investment in its most valuable resources, it's employees.

Hence, in retrospect, a conclusion of my own personal survey of the past performance of the Sheriffs and the role of the department has changed over the years. No longer is the Sheriff Division considered a glorified security force. It is and always has been embodied with law enforcement powers to act responsibly for the benefit of the community it serves. Now more than ever, the deputies are displaying superior judgment, conducting better-quality investigations, more vigilant in the community, and

supporting city, state and federal law enforcement task force efforts. Sheriffs Deputies are doing the same work that its counterparts are doing; yet Sheriffs Deputies earn considerably less. Glorified security force is a cliché of the past.

Therefore, I feel that it is inconceivable for the disparity to be so great among the State of Hawaii's first responders. No longer can the state allow for such disproportion in earnings. Moreover, no longer can the State of Hawaii permit other state(s) law enforcement recruiter(s) to drain its trained law enforcement personnel at a savings to them and a great cost to us.

In conclusion, I thank you for considering this most important matter. Because, you are devoting your time to hear our concern(s) it is a positive step in the right direction. I urge that you conclude in the affirmative and thereby, both, the Department of Public Safety and Department of Human Resources Development work to resolve these issues.



JOSEPH B. FINNEY, I #582
Deputy Sheriff II
Department of Public Safety
Sheriff Division

LATE TESTIMONY

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SCR 102 AND SR 57

Requesting the Departments of Public Safety and Human Resources Development to increase the salaries and improve the benefits that are provided to Deputy Sheriffs

My name is Patrick Lee. I am employed as a Sheriff Lieutenant for the Department of Public Safety, assigned to the Honolulu International Airport. I have been with the Department for almost 19 years. Earlier in my career, I was offered a chance to relocate to the mainland for double my salary doing the same work. After months of deliberating, I decided to stay in Hawaii and dedicate myself to the Sheriff Division and the State of Hawaii.

My current assignment at the Honolulu International Airport has given me the opportunity to build the Sheriff Division into a professional group of law enforcement officers. Since being assigned to the Airport, I realize the importance of the airports to the State of Hawaii. Tourism is often regarded as the economic engine for the State. The Airports serve as the "fuel" for that engine, bringing in over 33 million passengers per year and almost 600,000 tons of cargo to the state. Keeping the airport safe means keeping it operational. A catastrophic event such as 9-11 would devastate the State and it's economy should the airport have to close for any reason.

The Sheriffs duties have evolved over the last 15 years, from basic court security to an expanded warrant service, traffic enforcement, drug enforcement, and federal task force

initiatives. We have also taken on major projects that affect the community such as Harbor security for the launching of the Superferry, Keehi Lagoon Park clean-up, and the Iwilei / Nimitz Highway clean up. We work hand in hand with the police departments enforcing the same laws as they do. As such, I believe that the doctrine of equal pay for equal work should apply. I ask that you consider this resolution and monitor the progress of the Departments of Public Safety and Human Resources Development on this matter.

**COMMITTEE ON
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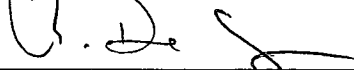
I am a Deputy employed by the State Sheriff's Division and I would like to submit testimony in SUPPORT of Senate Concurrent Resolution 102 and Senate Resolution 57.

I believe Hawaii is a community like no other in the world. I want to serve my community and State for the betterment of all. I have been deeply affected by the disparity of pay between our county and federal officers versus state deputies. The gap of pay AND benefits widens at an ever increasing rate. I, along with many of my co-workers, have been carefully considering various offers from other agencies on the west coast. We love Hawaii but are left with few options when the most basic needs (shelter) cannot be addressed.

Anyone willing to take the risks a Deputy Sheriff take while doing their job should be compensated at a rate commiserate with others in the SAME COMMUNITY doing the SAME JOB. We, as Deputies want to live and work in the community they have helped to build and protect.

I strongly encourage you and your collogues to pass this measure to begin to stem the flow of yet another part of Hawaii's profession job pool being forced to relocate to realize modest, attainable dreams.

I would like to conclude by thanking all of you for hearing these measures.

Printed Name	Signature	Address
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