



HAWAII FIRE FIGHTERS ASSOCIATION

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE FIGHTERS LOCAL 1463, AFL-CIO
2305 S. BERETANIA ST., RM. 202, HONOLULU, HAWAII 96826-1493
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www.hawaii firefighters.org

The Twenty-Fifth Legislature
House of Representatives
Committees on Labor and Public Employment
February 11, 2009

LATE

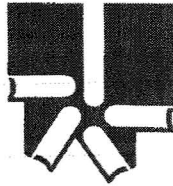
Testimony by
Hawaii Fire Fighters Association

H.B. No. 1718 Relating to Employer-Union Health Benefits

My name is Robert H. Lee and I am the President of the Hawaii Fire Fighters Association, Local 1463, IAFF, AFL-CIO and also an active-duty fire captain with the Honolulu Fire Department. On behalf of the 1,800 active and 1,000 retired professional fire fighters throughout the State, the Hawaii Fire Fighters Association strongly opposes H.B. No. 1718. This proposal is inherently unfair and reneges on a retirement benefit that current public employees were promised would be provided to them when they retired.

H.B. No. 1718 shifts the entire cost of Medicare premiums onto retirees who retire after December 31, 2009. This measure, coupled with the other takeaway proposals being considered, would be extremely detrimental to the welfare of prospective retirees who will be on fixed incomes.

HFFA vehemently opposes this bill which goes back on a promise made to career public servants.



LATE

House Committee on Labor and Public Employment

February 13, 2009

8:30 a.m.

H.B. 1718 Relating to Employer-Union Health Benefits

The University of Hawaii Professional Assembly opposes H.B. 1718. It undermines the longstanding social contract made with public employees to provide for their health and well-being upon retirement. This proposal creates a tiered system of benefits for retirees and increased costs to retirees that do not retire by December 31, 2009. Employees choosing to retire after December 31 will not have Medicare part premiums reimbursed.

The proposed legislation takes costs currently reimbursed through the EUTF and transfers the total cost to retirees. One consequence of this proposal is that employees will retire to protect their benefits. For the University of Hawaii this can create workforce gaps in instruction and research programs difficult to fill.

UHPA requests the bill be filed.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristeen Hanselman
Associate Executive Director

UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII
PROFESSIONAL ASSEMBLY

1017 Palm Drive · Honolulu, Hawaii 96814-1928
Telephone: (808) 593-2157 · Facsimile: (808) 593-2160
Web Page: <http://www.uhpa.org>

yamashita2 - Kristen

From: Larry Moore [Larry.Moore@co.maui.hi.us]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 3:40 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: House Bills

LATE

February 12, 2009

The Honorable Karl Rhoads, Chair
And members
Committee on Labor & Public Employment
House of Representatives
State Capitol
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Rhoads and Members:

SUBJECT: House Bill 1718 Relating to Employer-Union
Health Benefits

House Bill 1719 Relating to Public Employees House Bill 1725 Relating
to the Hawaii Employer-Union Health Benefit Trust Fund

The purpose of these bills appears to be an attempt to solve the economic downturn and financial crises the State of Hawaii and respective Counties are facing. These bills will do nothing but counter their intent as they will undoubtedly hurt the very people who are instrumental in turning our financial situation around.

Public employees are truly dedicated and many have foregone higher salaries because they believe in civil service and trusted the "promise" that they would eventually benefit from a well managed and attractive retirement system. To now propose making them the scapegoat of our financial and economic woes and stripping them of their health benefits and their retirement benefits is simply unconscionable.

In passing legislation such as this, there is no question you will cause a massive influx of employees who will choose to retire now in order to preserve and maintain the benefits they have worked so hard to have. You will also certainly lose the trust of the people you employ and who serve your communities.

To turn around now and renege on promises made at hire is simply not how it's done in Hawai'i. I, therefore, do not support the bills listed above.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Larry E Moore
County of Maui

yamashita1- Kathy

From: chefdevo@gmail.com on behalf of Devan Rosen [rosend@hawaii.edu]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 2:55 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Testimony for HB 1718

LATE

From:
Dr. Devan Rosen
Assistant Professor
University of Hawaii

To: COMMITTEE ON LABOR & PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT

DATE: Friday, February 13, 2009

TIME: 8:30 A.M.

PLACE: Conference Room 309, State Capitol, 415 South Beretania Street

Measure number: House Bill 1718

3 Copies Requested

Testimony:

I do NOT support the passing of HB 1718. If an employee eligible to retire and eligible for Medicare does not retire by December 31, 2009 they will not receive reimbursement for Medicare part B premiums. These premiums for part B which cover doctor's services range from \$96.40 to \$238.40 per month per employee. This appears to be a negative incentive to move retirement eligible employees out of the workforce (See HB 1719). This creates a two tiered system of benefits. Future retirees will be penalized.

yamashita1- Kathy

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 2:45 PM
To: LABtestimony
Cc: JuanitaLauti@aol.com
Subject: Testimony for HB1718 on 2/13/2009 8:30:00 AM

LATE

Testimony for LAB 2/13/2009 8:30:00 AM HB1718

Conference room: 309
Testifier position: oppose
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Juanita Lauti
Organization: Individual
Address: 1440 Ward Avenue Honolulu, HI 96822
Phone: 808-531-4364
E-mail: JuanitaLauti@aol.com
Submitted on: 2/12/2009

Comments:

Rep. Karl Rhoads, Chair
Rep. Kyle T. Yamashita, Vice-Chair
Committee on Labor & Public Employment

LATE

Jeannie Lum, Associate Professor
University of Hawaii
citizen
808- 227-6752

Feb 13, 2009, 8:30am

I object to HB 1718 Relating to Employer-Union Health Benefits

My name is Jeannie Lum. I am an Associate Professor at the University of Hawaii., College of Education. The State has no right to propose a bill which is under the authorization of labor union negotiations.

I strongly do NOT support Bill HB 1718!!!

yamashita2 - Kristen

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 4:48 PM
To: LABtestimony
Cc: ctoguchi@hawaii.edu
Subject: Testimony for HB1718 on 2/13/2009 8:30:00 AM

LATE

Testimony for LAB 2/13/2009 8:30:00 AM HB1718

Conference room: 309
Testifier position: oppose
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Charlotte Toguchi
Organization: Individual
Address: 4303 Diamond Head Rd HI
Phone: 808 734-9179
E-mail: ctoguchi@hawaii.edu
Submitted on: 2/12/2009

Comments:

This bill is punitive to public employees. As a life long resident, responsible taxpayer, and public employee for more than 28 years in higher education, this bill follows the rob Peter to pay Paul principle. I believe that State Legislators need to be more fiscally responsible in spending our taxes so a bill such as this one would never be proposed.

yamashita1- Kathy

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 2:10 PM
To: LABtestimony
Cc: gtatsuyama@yahoo.com
Subject: Testimony for HB1718 on 2/13/2009 8:30:00 AM

Testimony for LAB 2/13/2009 8:30:00 AM HB1718

LATE

Conference room: 309
Testifier position: oppose
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Grady Tatsuyama
Organization: Honolulu Police Department
Address: 801 South Beretania St. Honolulu, HI
Phone: 529-3159
E-mail: gtatsuyama@yahoo.com
Submitted on: 2/12/2009

Comments:

LATE

Testimony re: Take away Bills

Representative Karl Rhoads, Chair Labor Committee
Representative Kyle Yamashita, Vice Chair, Labor Committee,
Members of the Committee on Labor,

HB1718

PLEASE DO NOT PASS THE SIX YEAR RECESSION EXTENSION PACKAGE OF 2009

The proposed take away bills are counterproductive to the philosophy that the government should be doing everything in it's power to stimulate the economy, and not to drag it down.

The numerous attacks that these bills have on government employees pay and benefits are short-sighted and foolhardy.

Let's look at just a few ways that these legislative proposals in question stimulate Hawaii's economy:

- 1) Drastically reduce the take home pay of the 40,000+ government employees in the range through furloughs that equal a 5% reduction in pay per day for each furlough day
- 2) Reduce the workers take home pay by an additional \$250+ monthly to cover an increase to proposed family plan medical insurance premiums. This would also cause a severe reduction in spending by the largest employee group in the state. These draconian reductions are GAURANTEED to further drag down the state's economy as nearly ALL 40,000 employees who are presently scrapping by will restrict their spending.
- 3) Force the workers who retire after 6-30-09 to incur huge increases in the cost of medical insurance premiums due to non-payment by the state. This will result in no spending (economic stimulus) by anyone retiring in the near future due to lack of affordability. This is also a great way to thank workers who have given decades of service to the State of Hawaii who will now be on fixed incomes.
- 4) The state will need to pay out millions of dollars in cash to buy out the exodus of employees that will retire before 6-30-09. The state still owes them their vacation pay, up to 112 days of wages for each forced retirement.

The state and county governments do not produce widgets and gadgets that we sell to the residents and visitors to Hawaii to generate revenue for the government. We provide critical services to the people of Hawaii by taking care of the less fortunate, protecting our food and water supplies, and saving people's lives from criminals and disasters alike. In other words, governments' role is to allow the people of Hawaii to live in a manner to which they have become accustomed. The HGEA had no role in creating any of the governments programs or personnel in State or City government, this was the role of our lawmakers who decided that the people of Hawaii needed some type of service in order to make life in Hawaii better for all our visitors and residents.

Therefore the product we sell is shared by all the people in Hawaii, and we should ALL share in the costs of this economic downturn. This means that all residents and visitors must share equally in the "pain" that the lawmakers speak of.

Balancing the state's budget on the backs of government employees is not "sharing the pain". If the proposed cuts go through all that will be accomplished is to extend the recession in Hawaii until 2015.

Aloha,
Peter Oshiro, HGEA Member
95-1076 Pikokea St.
Mililani, HI 96789

yamashita1- Kathy

From: mmorita@hsta.org
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 1:53 PM
To: LABtestimony; FEAmeeeting@neaalaska.org
Subject: FW: HB 1718 - RELATING TO EMPLOYER-UNION HEALTH BENEFITS

From: Debbie_Anderson/HONOKAHI/HIDOE@notes.k12.hi.us
[mailto:Debbie_Anderson/HONOKAHI/HIDOE@notes.k12.hi.us]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 8:49 AM
To: LABtestimony@hawaii.capitol.gov
Subject: HB 1718 – RELATING TO EMPLOYER-UNION HEALTH BENEFITS

House Committee on Labor & Public Employment
Friday, Feb. 13, 2009
Conference Room 309
8:30 a.m.

My name is Debbie Anderson and I am a teacher at Honoka'a High and Intermediate School. I strongly oppose HB 1718, which transfers to the EUTF to pay for the medicare, part b, premiums reimbursements. Two major logistical problems with the bill as written include:

1. The Employer should reimburse the employee and not EUTF.
2. It gets further complicated if retirees are under VEBA and obtain the age of 65, do we have to go to the EUTF to reimburse them?

Adding layers of complexity to a working system will only serve in the long run to add to medicare costs.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

yamashita2 - Kristen

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 6:20 PM
To: LABtestimony
Cc: silvaboscoe@yahoo.com
Subject: Testimony for HB1718 on 2/13/2009 8:30:00 AM

LATE

Testimony for LAB 2/13/2009 8:30:00 AM HB1718

Conference room: 309
Testifier position: oppose
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Rose
Organization: Individual
Address:
Phone:
E-mail: silvaboscoe@yahoo.com
Submitted on: 2/12/2009

Comments:

do you people realize how much these hard working individuals worked for so many years and you have the audacity to even consider such a thought. Did you ever stop to think this could have been your parent your trying to cut the fat at? Lead by example...I am a state worker but I have a long ways to go. My co-workers who have served the judiciary so faithfully do not deserve their rewards to be snatched away just to save much more less than if you were to cut off the immigrants whom we support through our pay checks. Taking away from the government employee's will have a devastating outcome. Please reconsider.

yamashita2 - Kristen

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 6:23 PM
To: LABtestimony
Cc: roseluecke@yahoo.com
Subject: Testimony for HB1718 on 2/13/2009 8:30:00 AM

LATE

Testimony for LAB 2/13/2009 8:30:00 AM HB1718

Conference room: 309
Testifier position: oppose
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Loke
Organization: Individual
Address:
Phone:
E-mail: roseluecke@yahoo.com
Submitted on: 2/12/2009

Comments:

LATE

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
LABOR & PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT

RE: HB 1718 - RELATING TO PUBLIC EMPLOYEES

February 13, 2009

FROM: Karen Chan

Chair Rhoads and Members of the Committee:

My name is Karen Chan and I am a Resource teacher at the State office and I strongly oppose HB 1718 which would reimburse Medicare Part B only for employees retired prior to 12/31/09.

I have served the State with more than 23 years of service. One of the reasons I decided to take a position with the State is for the retirement benefits. To have these benefits taken away just prior to my retirement is unfair.

If this bill should pass, it would encourage state and county employees to retire before December 31, 2009. This would further burden our pension fund, which posted a \$2.95 billion loss in 2008.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

yamashita2 - Kristen

From: Eva Ponte [epontev@yahoo.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 7:41 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Testimony against measure HB1718

LATE

FROM: EVA PONTE, Assistant Professor, UH Manoa

TO: COMMITTEE ON LABOR & PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT

RE: HEARING TO TAKE PLACE ON Friday, February 13, 2009 AT 8:30 A.M.

MEASURE NUMBER:

* HB1718 Relating to Employer-Union Health Benefits

I am writing this email to express my opposition to measure HB 1718. This measure will significantly limit state employer's health benefits, thus having a negative effect on the state employees and the overall financial health of the system.

yamashita2 - Kristen

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 8:06 PM
To: LABtestimony
Cc: makaneole@yahoo.com
Subject: Testimony for HB1718 on 2/13/2009 8:30:00 AM

LATE

Testimony for LAB 2/13/2009 8:30:00 AM HB1718

Conference room: 309
Testifier position: oppose
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: laurie makaneole
Organization: Individual
Address: p.O. BOX 438 Hanapepe HI
Phone: 808-241-3387
E-mail: makaneole@yahoo.com
Submitted on: 2/12/2009

Comments:

LATE

yamashita2 - Kristen

From: fccadizpal@aol.com
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 8:23 PM
To: LABtestimony; Rep. K. Mark Takai; Lisa Vargas; Rep. Karl Rhoads; Rep. Kyle Yamashita; Rep. Kymberly Pine; Rep. Joey Manahan; Sen. Will Espero
Subject: HB 1718

To: The Honorable Representatives and Senator Espero

Fr: Fred Cadiz
A State Employee

RE: HB 1718

I have had the privilege and honor to work during Legislative Sessions and have insider experience to know that my "voice" can be heard through my elected officials.

Unfortunately, my representative (Representative Takai) is on a greater mission serving with our own National Guard overseas and I am unable to express MY voice through him.

Therefore, I express to each and all of you directly and to all your colleagues, my EXTREME OPPOSITION to ANY and ALL House "takeaway" bills introduced to alter the present conditions and benefits of employment for all State employees.

State employees serves the public in a manner not greatly appreciated, and working for even less than what we now have, will be the "straw that will break the camel's back."

I urge you and all your colleagues to NOT SUPPORT HB1106.

Respectfully,

Fred Cadiz
256-4111
454-0821

Nothing says I love you like flowers! [Find a florist near you now.](#)

yamashita1- Kathy

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 10:16 AM
To: LABtestimony
Cc: michele.ikeda@gmail.com
Subject: Testimony for HB1718 on 2/13/2009 8:30:00 AM

LATE

Testimony for LAB 2/13/2009 8:30:00 AM HB1718

Conference room: 309
Testifier position: oppose
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Michele Ikeda
Organization: Individual
Address:
Phone:
E-mail: michele.ikeda@gmail.com
Submitted on: 2/12/2009

Comments:

yamashita1- Kathy

From: Debbie_Anderson/HONOKAHI/HIDOE@notes.k12.hi.us
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 8:59 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: HB 1718 RELATING TO PUBLIC EMPLOYEES

LATE

House Committee on Labor & Public Employment
Friday, Feb. 13, 2009
Conference Room 309
8:30 a.m.

My name is Debbie Anderson and I am a teacher at Honoka'a High and Intermediate School. I strongly oppose HB 1718, which transfers to the EUTF to pay for the medicare, part b, premiums reimbursements. Two major logistical problems with the bill as written include:

1. The Employer should reimburse the employee and not EUTF.
2. It gets further complicated if retirees are under VEBA and obtain the age of 65, do we have to go to the EUTF to reimburse them?

Adding layers of complexity to a working system will only serve in the long run to add to medicare costs.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

yamashita1- Kathy

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 9:05 AM
To: LABtestimony
Cc: bstricker@hhsc.org
Subject: Testimony for HB1718 on 2/13/2009 8:30:00 AM

LATE

Testimony for LAB 2/13/2009 8:30:00 AM HB1718

Conference room: 309
Testifier position: oppose
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Brent R. Stricker
Organization: Kula Hospital
Address: 100 Keokea Way Kula, HI
Phone: 808-876-4352
E-mail: bstricker@hhsc.org
Submitted on: 2/12/2009

Comments:

If I sign a negotiated agreement w/ the State, and then fail to fulfil it, the State would drag my butt into court, as well they should. It is a disgrace to even hear these bills, and an indication of the level of trust that should not be afforded those that have sponsored/written these bills. It will gut the State Hospital system, and that would be an incredible disservice to all Hawai'i residents. Changes need to be made, for sure, but to saddle civil servants w/ broken promises is a knee jerk reaction, and this is the last thing we need in this economic climate. I will vigorously work to see that ANY elected official that supports ANY of these measures has spent his or her last term in office. What a nice way to make people politically active!