

From: Dr. Jane Freeman Moulin, University of Hawai'i
To: Committee on Labor & Public Employment
Rep. Karl Rhoads, Chair
Rep. Kle T. Yamashita, Vice Chair
Hearing date: Friday, Feb. 13, 2009, 8:30 am
Re: HB 1536, HB 1106, 1718, HB 1719, HB 1725.
Copies required (including original): 3

LATE

Dear Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, and member of the committee:

I am writing in opposition to HB 1536, HB 1106, 1718, HB 1719, HB 1725 – all of which affect the health care benefits of future state retirees.

When I became a state employee over 20 years ago, I made that decision partially on the retirement benefits that were offered, including continued health benefits for my later years in life. As I approach my 63rd birthday, however, I am informed of the above house bills that would either expect me to retire by December 2009 in order to retain my health benefits or to suddenly have to figure out how to factor in a substantial and unexpected increased cost into my retirement budget.

I am a very good planner, but frankly I was not prepared for the State to suddenly “let me down” at the last minute—and this on top of an already dismal outlook for retirement savings caused by the current economic crisis. For those of us caught in a demographic crunch (too young to retire this year, but too old to really make up for this *unexpected extra cost for the rest of our retired lives*), this creates additional stress and hardship that will darken the golden years considerably. For those of us who have faithfully given so much to the state, I must say that it feels like a real slap in the face. For those of us who have made sacrifices over the years, often at the expense of our health, do you seriously propose to drop your obligation to us when we need it most?

There are protocols in place for dealing with negotiations that concern contract benefits. I do not feel it is the place of legislators to suddenly be usurping power over these rights. It is up to the state and union negotiators to do their job and to come up with fair solutions that the majority of workers can live with.

I must say, however, that the notion of “honoring one’s word” keeps coming to my mind. Had I accepted my job without these benefits, I would feel very differently. But I accepted a job that promised retirement assistance and now—at the 13th hour—I am being told “too bad!” Why wasn’t the State doing its job in preparing itself for potential shortfalls instead of passing this on to the workers? I seriously doubt this is all new information; it would have been possible to have rewritten the benefits for incoming workers gradually over the years while keeping one’s commitment to those who already had expectations grounded in contractual obligations. Sorry, but this does not inspire faith in our elected officials. And it does not strike me as a fair way to treat the elders of this state. This is simply not an acceptable solution to the problem.

Aloha,
Dr. Jane Freeman Moulin

yamashita2 - Kristen

From: Carbon-X [carbonxhawaii@gmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 9:19 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Please vote NO

LATE

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning. My name is John P. de Jesus. As a public employee for 2 years, I am deeply upset by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say. Specifically: HB _____
HB 1106 is supposed to 'protect the rights of public employees' in the event of a furlough. Speaker Say has said that a furlough would cause the "least amount of disruption to public service."

I pose this question to the Speaker: What about the disruption to us as residents of this state? A reduction in our salaries is hugely disruptive at a time when we find ourselves more and more the sole breadwinners for our entire families. How can we afford a reduction to our salaries when we are some of the last remaining wage earners in this unstable economy? We also strongly disagree with Section 4 of HB 1106. The Governor does not have the authority to unilaterally furlough state employees.

HB 1719 is also of concern to me. As a civil servant, I chose to work for less pay to be able to contribute to the community. On balance, I believed that I would be able to count on a safe retirement. Speaker Say's bill, which disregards my years of service and reduces medical benefits until the Medicare retirement age, is irresponsible. Instead of supporting public service, Speaker Say is telling us that public employees don't mean much and promises to us can be broken mid-stream.

This bill is a thinly veiled attempt to force people into early retirement. Plans I may have made to ensure that my children graduated from college before I retire are suddenly up in the air. I now have to make the choice - get out now so that I can afford to stay healthy during my retirement, or stay even longer to provide for my family during these tough economic times and risk losing my current level of care during my retirement.

Speaker Say is backing us into a corner, and it's not irresponsible for him to suggest that this economic crisis should be resolved by sacrificing the health and well being of me and my family. Also, by forcing people into retirement before July 1, 2009, we are gambling with the future of state programs. The loss to institutional knowledge and expertise that we could experience is putting our families in Hawai'i at risk. State programs that protect Hawai'i's children, elderly and public will loose a wealth of knowledge that is not easy to recover when state hiring freezes are overburdening our already overburdened workforce. I strongly encourage this committee to vote "no" on HB 1719 and to send a strong message to Speaker Say, that he cannot punish civil servants for their dedication and commitment to the state of Hawai'i.

HB 1725 says that from July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2015, public employees will have to bear THE ENTIRE burden of prescription drug coverage. This is literally a bill that is playing with the life and death of public workers. Although the bill is only temporary, we

are gambling with six years of prescription medication. With rising chronic diseases that require medication, this bill, coupled with talk of salary cuts and rises in our premiums is like a death sentence for our elderly, sick, or recovering public workers and retirees. It will deter some employees and retirees from accessing medicine that is essential to long and healthy lives. This is a regressive bill when the rest of the nation is talking about improvements to our health care coverage.

Please vote "no" on all of these bills that take away benefits from public employees.

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Sincerely,

John P. de Jesus

I am opposed to the bills being proposed:

LATE

- HB 1106 - Furloughing employees
- HB1718 - Halt reimbursement for Medicare part B premiums for employees retiring after 12/31/09
- HB1719 - Stop employer contribution for health benefits for those retiring after 7/1/09
- HB1725 - Halt prescription drug coverage under EUTF
- HB 1723 - Limit employer contribution to 55% and make it non-negotiable;
- HB1715 - Increase, for new employees, the age and service time requirement to retire;
- HB 1726 - Curtail EUTF payment for life insurance benefits;
- HB 1727 - Prohibits provision of dental and vision coverage.

I feel that these bills are prejudice and are a prelude to discrimination. These bills target only state and public employees who pay the same taxes and are subject to the same bills as the rest of the public. By limiting benefits, the costs to pay for medical needs would become unbearable for many and lead to more individuals being placed on the strained welfare system.

Instead I believe that the State of Hawaii needs to look into innovative ways to generate revenues in order to improve our states economy. By taxing already strained households the problem will only get worse.

Due to Hawaii's centralized location, Hawaii should be the hub of incoming and outgoing technologies and trends. We should welcome business from foreign countries and maintain the money making events that help to boost Hawaii's economy and provide jobs for residence such as the Pro Bowl and Professional Surfing.

Another way to improve our economy in the long term would be to invest in our students that are in school now. Instead of eliminating programs, as has been the case, schools should be in the process of being repaired and improved and study materials updated to reflect current events and global conditions.

I do not think that it would have been possible for Brian Clay or Clay Stanley to win Olympic Gold Medals if, at the time that they attended school, sports activities were a program that was cut from their curriculum.

In summary it is my point of view that by implementing these bills that the state worker will be singled out and subject to unfair penalties that other employees (Tax payers) will not be subject to. Also the State Government needs to look into other means of generating income for the State. Lastly programs such as education should not be penalized for government's lack of foresight and inability to plan for the future.

Thank you,

Frederick M. Wong

yamashita2 - Kristen

From: Godoy, Jocelyn [jgodoy@honolulu.gov]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 3:16 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Hearings

LATE

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning. My name is Jocelyn G. Godoy. As a public employee for 2 years, I am deeply upset by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say. Specifically: HB 1723, HB 1715, HB1726, HB 1727, HB 1106, HB 1718, HB 1719, and HB 1725.

HB 1106 is supposed to "protect the rights of public employees' in the event of a furlough. Speaker Say has said that a furlough would cause the "least amount of disruption to public service."

I pose this question to the Speaker: What about the disruption to us as residents of this state? A reduction in our salaries is hugely disruptive at a time when we find ourselves more and more the sole breadwinners for our entire families. How can we afford a reduction to our salaries when we are some of the last remaining wage earners in this unstable economy?

We also strongly disagree with Section 4 of HB 1106. The Governor does not have the authority to unilaterally furlough state employees.

HB 1719 is also of concern to me. As a civil servant, I chose to work for less pay to be able to contribute to community. On balance, I believed that I would be able to count on a safe retirement. Speaker Say's bill, which disregards my years of service and reduces medical benefits until the Medicare retirement age, is irresponsible. Instead of supporting public service, Speaker Say is telling us that public employees don't mean much and promised to us can be broken mid-stream.

This bill is a thinly veiled attempt to force people into early retirement. Plans I may have made to ensure that my children graduated from college before I retire are suddenly up in the air. I now have to make the choice – get out now so that I can afford to stay healthy during my retirement or stay even longer to provide for my family during these tough economic times and risk losing my current level of care during my retirement.

Speaker Say is backing us into a corner, and it's not irresponsible for him to suggest that this economic crisis should be resolved by sacrificing the health and well being of me and my family. Also, by forcing people into retirement before July 1, 2009, we are gambling with the future of state programs. The loss to institutional knowledge that is not easy to recover when state hiring freezes are overburdening our already overburdened workforce. I strongly encourage this committee to vote "no" on HB 1719 and to send a strong message to Speaker Say, that he cannot punish civil servants for their dedication and commitment to the state of Hawai'i.

HB 1725 says that from July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2015, public employees will have to bear THE ENTIRE burden of prescription drug coverage. This is literally a bill that is playing with the life and death of public workers. Although the bill is only temporary, we are gambling with six years of prescription medication. With rising chronic diseases that require medication, this bill, coupled with talk of salary cuts and rises in our premiums is like a death sentence for our elderly, sick, or recovering public workers and retirees. It will deter some employees and retirees from accessing medicine that is essential to long and healthy lives. This is a regressive bill when the rest of the nation is talking about improvements to our health care coverage.

Please vote "no" on all of these bills that take away benefits from public employees.

Aloha,

Jocelyn G. Godoy
City & County of Honolulu
Department of Planning and Permitting

LATE

Re: Personal testimony of Dennis L. Vanairsdale with regard to HB 1718, HB 1719, HB 1725 and similar measures.

Committee on Labor & Public Employment Hearing: February 13, 2009, 8:30 AM

Dear Chairman Rhoads and Members of the Committee on Labor & Public Employment

I have been a faculty member at Kapi`olani Community College for 24 years and am approaching but have not yet reached retirement age.

After all these years of faithful service to the campus, the University, the State and especially the community, I am extremely dismayed that the legislature is even considering bills that will significantly reduce these specific benefits that represent a significant portion of the commitment of my employer to me over these past decades.

I teach Accounting, Business Law, and Income Taxation, and also hold 3 professional licenses in the State of Hawai'i, so I appreciate full well that the State faces significant financial issues.

I am also acutely aware that I have been receiving a salary for 24 years that is significantly below market level, and this fact is only partially compensated for by the package of benefits that have been committed to me as a State employee.

I firmly believe that the most appropriate way for the legislature meet its fiscal obligations and at the same time keep faith with the employees of the State is to respect and encourage the bargaining process set forth in State statutes.

I am familiar with the positions of my union, the University of Hawai'i Professional Assembly, and am fully confident that the optimal solution with regard to our situation is for the employer and the union to bargain in good faith, with both parties fully cognizant of the current economic situation.

I ask the members of your committee to encourage the State of Hawai'i, as the employer, to immediately resume good-faith bargaining with UHPA and the other unions.

I further implore you to disapprove bills HB 1106, HB 1718, HB 1719, HB 1725.

The Members of the Legislature need to realize that the passage of any of these measures will result in great damage to the University.

I have no doubt that a number of highly qualified and underpaid faculty will simply leave for better opportunities. This exodus will cause immediate and long-term damage to the economy of the State and the welfare of its residents, especially the young.

Sincerely,

Dennis L. Vanairsdale
1433 Kewalo Street, #301
Honolulu, HI 96822

Cell: 808-255-8831

yamashita2 - Kristen

From: James Robinson [robinson@hawaii.edu]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 3:19 PM
To: LABtestimony
Cc: kris@uhpa.org
Subject: Comment on HB1106, HB1718, HB1719, HB1725

LATE

Committee on Labor & Public Employment

Committee Members:

I do not support these four proposals:

HB1106
HB1718
HB1719
HB1725

James Robinson

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Dr. James Robinson  
Associate Professor, English  
Department of Languages,  
Linguistics and Literature  
Kapi'olani Community College  
University of Hawaii  
~~~~~


yamashita2 - Kristen

From: Barbara Watanabe [worm1959@gmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 3:20 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: HB1536,HB1106,HB1718,HB1719,HB1725,HB1723,HB1715,HB1726,HB1727

Hi, my name is Barbara Watanabe and I live in on the island of Maui. I work for the County of Maui and my husband Richard is a local farmer for over 30 years. We have raised 3 children 2 of which are still in college.

I spend money at local businesses every day to buy food, clothing and other needs. I have always done this to support the local families with businesses like my husband. If the local community doesn't help each who will.

I decided to work for the county, besides having children going to college, due to the fact the county had wonderful benefits. Even though the pay was less than the private sector, it was off set with the benefit package.

I know times are hard. I have watched the expenses to run our home as well as our farm continues to increase with no end in sight. There are many different areas for the House to look at to help with the expenses without touching the benefits of state and county employees I feel you are putting a very big burden on the public employees. We are the back bone of the government.

I know the the public employees will probably not yet raises. Yet to find out there are bills to either take away benefits or increase the cost of the benefits on to the employees is very disheartening. Money is tight for everyone. I for one know my family can not survive now or when I retire if these bills pass. It is a burden to great especially now.

There are many areas that can and should be cut first. Like the private sector, maybe the "executives" and their benefits should be cut first. Why does private and public sector always think of cutting the bottom of their employee before the top. The top is where most of the money is being spent. This has been shown to be true, examples being the car industry, the banking industries.

Please look into other areas and leave the benefits to the public employees alone.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Barbara Watanabe

yamashita2 - Kristen

From: jian z [jianzhu_99@yahoo.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 2:55 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Regarding Bills HB 1106. HB 1719, HB 1737

LATE

JIAN YOU ZHU
876 CURTIS ST. 3304
HONOLULU, HI 96813

Dear Committee,

I am writing to you regarding the above bills that will reduce the benefits of public employees. I have been working for the State of Hawaii for over 8 years now. I enjoy working with fellow employees and the decent benefits the State has provided so far.

If these bills were to be passed by the Committee, it will create a bigger burden on me to survive in this tough economic time. I will have to save extra money to pay for medical coverage and retirement. Given the lesser pay that public employees receive compared to private workers, it will definitely be much tougher to meet everyday needs. Please understand that the current economic situation is not the fault of public employees and I feel we are being targeted by the State.

The State budget needs to be balanced but not at the expense of public employees. The State is already cutting costs by implementing 'hiring freeze'. Now public employees are doing more work but with the same benefits. By introducing these bills the State is adding 'salt to the wound'. Public employees should not be the ones that will suffer more due to the current economic downturn. The legislators need to find other ways to balance the budget.

Please DO NOT pass these bills for they do more bad than good.

Your support is greatly appreciated.

Much Mahalos,
Jian You Zhu

LATE

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to voice my concerns. My name is Naomi Motoshige and a public employee for 32 years. I do not agree with Speaker Calvin Say and the bills he introduced against public employee.

HB 1106 - Furloughing employees.

HB 1718 - Halt reimbursement for Medicare part B premiums for employees retiring after 12/31/09

HB 1719 - Stop employer contribution for health benefits for those retiring after 7/1/09

HB 1725 - Halt prescription drug coverage under EUTF

HB 1723 - Limit employer contribution to 55% and make it non-negotiable

HB 1726 - Curtail EUTF payment for life insurance benefits

HB 1727 - Prohibits provision of dental and vision coverage.

When I started as a public employee my salary was so small that my children qualified for reduced lunch. It was an understanding that when you worked for the City, you are not working for the money (salary) but for the benefit when you retire.

If you vote in favor of Speaker Say bills you are allowing him to take away everything that I have worked so hard for in the last 32 years.

PLEASE, PLEASE, vote "NO" on all of these bills that take away benefits from public employees

yamashita2 - Kristen

From: James D. Brown [jdbrowns@ yahoo.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 3:01 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: HB 1536, 1106, 1718, 1719, 1725

LATE

To whom it may concern,

I must express my strong opposition to the following bills: HB 1536, 1106, 1718, 1719, 1725. I have worked for 28 years for the state of Hawaii with certain understandings and expectations with regard to my pay, benefits, and retirement. For the state to now unilaterally change the rules without properly negotiating in good faith with the appropriate unions would be un-ethical, unprofessional, unfair, and a major breach of faith with the employees and the public. Worse yet, these bills are downright sneaky.

Sincerely,

James D Brown

46-109 Ipuka Place

Kaneohe, HI 96744

LATE

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning. My name is Nemy Carriaga, I am 29 years old and have worked as a public employee for 5 years. I am deeply upset by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say. Specifically HB 1106, HB 1725, HB 1727, and actually I protest against majority of his Bills.

HB 1106, I see what it supposedly protects in Section 3 but your other Bills seem to just cancel what you are supposedly helping us protect. How exactly does that work?

HB 1725 and HB 1727. Words against each specific Bill would wind up being repetitive so I would rather combine my thoughts on all these Bills into one lump sum. I lost my job at JCPenney's when they pulled their stores out of the State and at the time I was uncertain of my future, this ended up being a blessing in disguise otherwise I never would have pursued a career with the County. You always hear how good it's supposed to be to work for the County because your future will be secure...a job for life & good benefits. With these proposed Bills I have to wonder if those beliefs, for lack of a better word, are true.

I recently got married and added my husband to my medical because it was a better plan than what he got through his workplace, to even contemplate the possibility of having to pay the entire cost of a family medical plan that does not include vision, I have glasses. Dental, my daughter will one day need a retainer. Drugs, we all get sick at some time or another and it is required for my child to get certain shots at certain points in her life. Should I divorce so that I can seek assistance? Should I enroll my daughter in Quest after you pass this to ensure she gets the medical care a growing child needs? With everything you are proposing I sincerely doubt that I will be able to provide for her as I should.

I already live paycheck to paycheck with the knowledge that some of the monies that I don't get to take home are going towards medical, my retirement, as well as to Social Security and taxes just as they should be according what our "leaders" dictate, I've accepted that this is how it goes. But if the Bills you are asking for are passed then that means that for about five years one paycheck each month will go towards medical alone, if I'm lucky. It means that there will be times when I won't even bring home a regular paycheck because I won't be going in to work. There will be times where I decide not to see a doctor because I know that the medicine that they would prescribe will be unaffordable to me. And who is to say that if these Bills are passed that you won't bring up another Bill extending this time of period, prolonging the suffering that we are sure to have to endure. As a public servant I ask you how this helps? You may be trying to help the deficit, but we are not the ones that put us there. Please do not walk all over us and expect us to bear these burdens and think that we will not suffer for them, it is not our place. By bringing forth these Bills you are pointing the finger at us, your public servants, as if we are the ones that have done the wrong and can fix it, please remember that when you point a finger at us, you are pointing four fingers at yourself. Please be an example of what you are asking of us and take a cut yourselves, as Mr. Say said, "everyone should share in some pain."

yamashita2 - Kristen

From: Le, Chau [Chau.Le@doh.hawaii.gov]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 3:29 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Proposed Bills

LATE

Dear House representatives on the Labor Committee:

I am writing to you today because I could not be present at the hearings being held on Friday, February 13th and Tuesday, February 17th, 2009, for proposed Hawaii bills:

HB1536 - Freezing salaries of Governor, Lt Governor
HB 1106 - Furloughing employees
HB1718 - Halt reimbursement for Medicare part B premiums for employees retiring after 12/31/09
HB1719 - Stop employer contribution for health benefits for those retiring after 7/1/09
HB1725 - Halt prescription drug coverage under EUTF
HB 1723 - Limit employer contribution to 55% and make it non-negotiable
HB1715 - Increase, for new employees, the age and service time requirement to retire
HB 1726 - Curtail EUTF payment for life insurance benefits
HB 1727 - Prohibits provision of dental and vision coverage

I understand that our economy is bad, and that we must all take cuts in order to help balance the budget. Honestly, though, I can't see how cutting our benefits will help us in the long run. I am a fairly recent employee with the state, and I am still young, and even though some of the bills will not affect me for a long time, it does not mean I am not concerned about them. Most public employees do not get paid very highly. Compared to the private sector, most of us get paid very minimally. On top of that, the cost of living in Hawaii is not cheap. Thus, one of the incentives for public employees to remain with the state is because of the benefits. HB 1725 and 1727 would affect me immediately. I have systemic lupus with symptoms of nephritis, rheumatoid arthritis, dermatitis, fibromyalgia, Reynaud's syndrome, and more. Although I am young and active, it's my prescription, medical, dental, and vision benefits that keep me that way. Every month, the cost of my prescriptions alone is over \$1000. If I did not have prescription coverage, I could not afford my medication. Without medication, I would not be able to function. If I can't work, then I will have to apply for disability. I am 28 years old; I would prefer it if I were not dependent on disability benefits. I have a lot to contribute, and I want to do it. I just can't without certain things, like medication and healthcare. Lupus is a debilitating disease that requires a lot of maintenance. Part of that maintenance includes having a great team of doctors like ophthalmologists and dentists to oversee my health.

Also, addressing HB 1106, 1718, 1719, 1723, and 1726: I think it is unacceptable for the state to withdraw once-promised benefits to public employees. Some of these people have worked most of their lives for the State of HI, hoping that if they can hang in long enough, they will be able to retire and be taken care of. They signed contracts and were made to believe the state would keep its promise to them. For those benefits to be withdrawn now, especially for those who have no choice but to retire in a few years, due to age, would be unfair and intolerable.

How can lawmakers happily look forward to a 36% increase in their salaries this year, when a lot of people worse off are supposed to get their benefits cut? Please reconsider this. Everyone wants to make more money, but in light of the economy and budget cuts, can we afford to give a 36% raise to people that are probably living comfortably? I am pleading with you to not take away our health benefits; instead, please look elsewhere for extra funds. There are many highly qualified people that work for the public sector, and if you take away our benefits, we will have to find work elsewhere. I for one, cannot remain with the state if I no longer am able to sustain my health. At least the executives that are getting paid well can afford health care. Shouldn't we all at least get the insurance of our health?

Sincerely,

Chau Le

yamashita2 - Kristen

From: toshiro@hawaii.rr.com
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 3:29 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Bills Targeting Public Employees

LATE

Hi,

In regards to the following bills:

HB1536 - Freezing salaries of Governor, Lt Governor HB 1106 - Furloughing employees
HB1718 - Halt reimbursement for Medicare part B premiums for employees retiring after 12/31/09

HB1719 - Stop employer contribution for health benefits for those retiring after 7/1/09

HB1725 - Halt prescription drug coverage under EUTF HB 1723 - Limit employer contribution to 55% and make it non-negotiable;

HB1715 - Increase, for new employees, the age and service time requirement to retire; HB 1726 - Curtail EUTF payment for life insurance benefits; HB 1727 - Prohibits provision of dental and vision coverage.

My name is Teresa and I live in your district and voted for you. I work for the Department of the Attorney General and am a member of HGEA. I have a family, with 2 toddlers under the age of 2.

I'm also a taxpayer. I spend money at local businesses every day to buy food, clothing and other needs.

I don't believe it's fair for the House to be looking at ways to balance the budget on the backs of public employees.

I work hard at my job (even performed overtime work with NO overtime pay or reimbursement of time) and things are even harder now since vacancies have been frozen and demands for services have increased. I've made a career in public service knowing that my pay may not be as good as in the private sector but I could rely on retirement and health benefits for myself and my family.

I think it's wrong for representatives to take these benefits away from me and my family's future.

Please look for other ways to balance the budget. Raising the excise tax would be a fairer way to address the state's revenue problem. Everyone paying a little more will mean sharing the burden during these tough times. The burden of balancing the budget should NOT be put on the public employees ONLY, this will NOT solve your budget problems.

We can BEARLY make ends meet with 2 full-time working parents. This will GREATLY affect the future for my sons, so please take CAREFUL consideration of how this will affect public employees and the future of their families.

Sincerely,
Teresa Oshiro

yamashita2 - Kristen

From: Kurt.K.Sarne@hawaii.gov
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 3:30 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Opposed to the bill HB1719 & HB1725

LATE

I Wendy Spallone opposed to the bill because I am a single parent every two weeks as an (SR 8) get's paid \$670.00. How can I afford \$400.00 now for medical, and if it increase how would I survive!

Thank you,

Wendy Spallone

yamashita2 - Kristen

From: Martha Chantiny [chantiny@lava.net]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 3:31 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: FOR: COMMITTEE ON LABOR & PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT

LATE

FOR: COMMITTEE ON LABOR & PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT
Re: HEARING scheduled for DATE: Friday, February 13, 2009
TIME: 8:30 A.M.
PLACE: Conference Room 309

Re: HB1718 Relating to Employer-Union Health Benefits

This appears to be a negative incentive to move retirement-eligible employees out of the workforce and will create a two tiered system of benefits. Future retirees, such as myself, will be penalized.

Organizations and agencies will be negatively impacted when their most experienced employees are forced to retire leaving a knowledge gap that will certainly result in poor service and functionality of those organizations. The Library experienced this during the mid-90's golden parachute retirements and it was a disservice to the students and discouraging to remaining staff. Not to mention it ultimately did not save the state any money - which will almost surely be the same outcome this time around. I strenuously object to this proposed legislation.

Re: HB 1719 Relating to Public Employees

This undermines the employees who have made career decisions based on access to health care upon retirement. I count myself in that group. I have considered other jobs but made a decision to stick with my state position based very much on the retirement health benefit. This bill is clearly an attempt to force employees into immediate retirement (which will be a bad thing, see above) while creating a two tiered system of benefits for future retirees. This will make recruiting and retention even more difficult. The Library has had difficulty finding willing applicants for department-head level positions because of the cost - career and financial - of taking a job in Hawaii. If retirement benefits are diminished it will be even more difficult to find qualified librarians and ultimately students, other faculty and the state will suffer because of it. I strenuously object to this proposed legislation.

Re: HB1725 Relating to the Hawaii Employer-Union Health Benefit Trust Fund

The prescription drug coverage of the EUTF health program is THE most IMPORTANT part of the plan for me and my spouse. If I were forced to find my own drug coverage plan and pay for it totally out of pocket this would be a very severe financial problem for my family. It could mean that my husband's diabetes would go un- or at least under-treated and my health might suffer to the point that I would not be able to work.

Multiply this effect across all state workers and it should be clear that this will NOT be a good thing for those individuals and their families and ultimately for serving all people of the state who rely on services provided by state workers. I strenuously object to this proposed legislation.

-Martha Chantiny, Librarian
University of Hawaii at Manoa

yamashita2 - Kristen

From: Laura_Walker/KAUH/HIDOE@notes.k12.hi.us
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 3:31 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: kill bills 1723, 1719, 1725, & 1727

LATE

To whom it Concerns,

I need you to know that I am a DOE employee (School Counselor) and I strongly oppose bills 1723, 1719, 1725, & 1727 which will cut our benefits for vision, dental, drug so that we will have to pay the FULL premium on our own, and pay for 50% of our health coverage. The bills also propose that NO coverage will be given to retirees no matter when you were hired or how long you have worked. If these bills pass, it will cost each employee a chunk of our paycheck to retain our current coverage. As a single parent I am barely making ends meet as it is.

Mahalo,
Laura Walker

yamashita2 - Kristen

From: Neil Frazer [neil@soest.hawaii.edu]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 3:35 PM
To: LABtestimony
Cc: kris@uhpa.org
Subject: against HB1718, HB1719, HB1725

LATE

House Committee on Labor and Public Employment
Rep. Karl Rhoads, Chair

Aloha Chairman Rhoads and Members,

It seems to me that...

HB1718 and HB1719 are a transparent attempt to penalize employees for not retiring early.

HB1725 is a transparent attempt to shift medical premiums from employer to employees.

I have always carefully maintained my health with exercise and good nutrition so as to minimize the cost to the state and myself. I believe that most other faculty members at UH do the same - for example, the incidence of obesity is nearly zero among faculty - and that, as a group we cost the state much less than other state employees. It is disheartening to think that the legislature would seek to punish a loyal group of employees by removing benefits in this underhanded way.

At an institution like UH Manoa, where faculty work for wages much lower than they could make in industry, faculty morale is terribly important. Morale is what makes us compete to make our institution the best in the nation and the world. It is what keeps us here at night and on weekends writing proposals to bring money to UH from federal funding agencies. It is what makes us drop whatever we are doing in order to assist when a state agency needs help or advice on scientific matters. It is what makes us steer our research in directions we think will benefit the people of Hawaii directly. It is what makes us testify in the legislature on matters where science is important.

It is not reprehensible to negotiate different benefits with new employees who have not invested their lives in the service of our state - they have choices. It is reprehensible to do so with employees who are close to retirement.

Mahalo for your service to the people of our state.

Neil Frazer
Professor of Geophysics
Department of Geology and Geophysics
School of Ocean and Earth Science and Technology (SOEST)
University of Hawaii at Manoa
Honolulu, HI 96822, USA
808-956-3724
"Professors are not hired to echo the conventional wisdom."
<http://www.soest.hawaii.edu/asp/GG/people/people.asp?ID=2215>

yamashita2 - Kristen

From: Kim Williamson [kwilliamson143@gmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 3:39 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: HB1723 and HB1719; also HB1725 and HB1727

LATE

Dear Committee Members,

My name is Kim Williamson and I am a teacher on the Big Island. The current state of the economy is dire, but through careful management during these times of crisis, we will get through. To that end, each of you have been charged with the heavy duty of finding ways to cut spending and to find a solution to our state's budget shortfall. Inflicting these four bills on the public employees who help to maintain the state as a solution to a hopefully short term problem is a horrible idea.

I moved here two years ago knowing that it was expensive to live in paradise, but it was a sacrifice my wife and I were willing to make. Our salaries barely cover our needs now and we are OK with that. Both of us came to education knowing that we would not become wealthy in these careers, but we do expect that we will have a salary that we can live with and that we will eventually be able to retire with some assurance from our employer that we will have something for our old age. By taking away our dental, vision, and prescription benefits, we could not afford to pay for them ourselves.

I write to you today in hopes that you will not pass these bills from committee. Would cutting these items provide money to the state? Absolutely - this is almost irrefutable. However, the pain that would be inflicted on people who provide the most back to the state is also incalculable. As a teacher, I know it is hard to attract and keep people in this profession; taking away basic insurance will make it that much harder.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Kim Williamson
PO Box 1416
Hilo, HI 96721
(mailing address)

11-1732 Akala Road
Mountain View, HI 96771
(Physical Address)

yamashita1- Kathy

From: Liane_Takara/MAEMAE/HIDOE@notes.k12.hi.us
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 2:58 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Bills 1719, 1723, 1725, 1727

LATE

Dear Karl Rhoades,

I am writing to voice my opposition to Bills 1719, 1723, 1725, 1727.

I have been a teacher in Hawaii for 30 years. These bills will have a negative impact on my retirement income after serving and dedicating myself to educating young children for so many years.

I hope that we will be able to retain our medical benefits.

Thank you,

Liane Takara

yamashita2 - Kristen

From: Daniel N L Boulos [boulos@hawaii.edu]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 3:43 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Healthcare measures

LATE

I do not support the following:

HB1106

HB1718

HB1719

HB1725

Aloha and Mahalo,

Daniel Boulos

UHPA member

yamashita1- Kathy

From: David Hammes [dlhammes@gmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 2:57 PM
To: LABtestimony
Cc: kris@uhpa.org
Subject: Testimony for Feb.13, 8:30AM, HBs 1106, 1718, 1719 and 1725

LATE

To the Honorable Members of the State of Hawai`i House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON LABOR & PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT

Rep. Karl Rhoads, Chair
Rep. Kyle T. Yamashita, Vice Chair

Dear Members of the Committee:

My name is David Hammes, a professor of economics at the University of Hawai`i-Hilo, where I have been since August 1988. I reside at 155 Alohalani Drive, Hilo, HI 96720; phone # 808-959-2426.

I wish to have these comments considered in your meeting Friday 13, 2009, 8:30AM.

Specifically, I comment on House Bills

HB 1106-RELATING TO PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT.,
HB 1718-RELATING TO EMPLOYER-UNION HEALTH BENEFITS., HB 1719-RELATING TO PUBLIC EMPLOYEES.,
and HB 1725-RELATING TO THE HAWAII EMPLOYER-UNION HEALTH BENEFITS TRUST FUND.

Taken as a package these bills are a frontal, cynical, and dangerous assault on the sanctity of contracts and the faith and goodwill of the State of Hawai`i. The result of these being passed will be to reduce the credibility of the State government in the eyes not only of its own employees, but any agency assessing the honesty and credibility of this State. Therefore, bond-rating agencies would be very likely to reconsider their ratings of this state's debt obligations, lowering them significantly, at great cost to the state's taxpayers.

Each of the benefits in these provisions was bargained in good faith by labor and management. People have planned on these provisions in the same way they plan on their monthly wages and salaries (also negotiated sometimes at high cost). For these benefits now to be altered by fiat exposes the State to charges of, at worst, dishonest bargaining, and, at best, using short-term economic exigency to cynically manipulate agreements in their favor when the will of the people is being ignored.

Of course, any savings will only be temporary at best, if at all. Consider anyone negotiating with the State in the future. All future 'promised' benefits will be ignored because their existence is now highly doubtful, and an attitude of "Pay up-front" will be enforced.

The state consequently, will see payments rise and lose the ability to smooth wage and benefits packages through time to better mediate the business cycle. Passage of these bills will worsen, not lessen, our exposure to cyclical, economic swings.

Your responsibilities and duties obligate you to hear these bills, but your duties and obligations also require you to uphold contracts honorably entered in to. By considering passage of these bills you abrogate any pretence at upholding the honor and credibility of the State therefore doing grievous damage to its economic future.

While this appears to affect only state employees, I submit to you that anyone dealing with this state for any purpose, think Lenders, will be twice shy to purchase any obligation of this State. If they do, they will only purchase it at great discount reflecting

what they know to be State renegeing as a common policy. In the future, anyone considering working for the State, will think twice and require payment and expenses up-front.

Short term economic exigency, that will be made worse, not better, by passage of these bills, should not be a cover for attacks on labor, state employees, the bargaining process and the credibility of the state.

Thank you for your time and kind consideration.

Sincerely,

David Hammes, Ph.D.
155 Alohalani Drive
Hilo, HI 96720

yamashita1- Kathy

From: Kevin Cochran [kcochran2u@gmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 2:56 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Benefit Bill Testimony

LATE

Pease find below testimony that I would like to introduce at the FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 13 & FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 17 House Labor & Public Employee Committee meetings.

**Mahalo,
Kevin Cochran**

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning. My name is Kevin Cochran. As a public employee for 8 years, I am deeply upset by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say. Specifically: HB 1106, 1723, 1725, 1727, 1719, 1726.

HB 1106 is supposed to 'protect the rights of public employees' in the event of a furlough. Speaker Say has said that a furlough would cause the "least amount of disruption to public service."

I pose this question to the Speaker: What about the disruption to us as residents of this state? The possible impact of this bill to my family and our ability to maintain our household and probably our residence in this state would be devastating. With the current economy we barely make ends meet. As a mental health worker for the state I know that Hawaii can not afford to lose more providers. What is the cost on the other end when services have to be contracted because the State workers left?

We also strongly disagree with Section 4 of HB 1106. The Governor does not have the authority to unilaterally furlough state employees.

Also for the above reasons I do not support HB1723, 1725 & 1727. As a young professional with a family part of my decision to work for the State is affordable health coverage; **complete** health coverage. The burden of losing prescription, dental and vision coverage mixed with the cost of having to provide it on my own in addition to any increases I would see as a result of HB1723 would not be an acceptable situation. Again, maybe it's the State's way of getting rid of good employees so they can pay out less not just in medical benefits but in positions? Again, can our state really afford a continued exodus of professionals?

HB 1719 is also of concern to me. As professional counselor, I chose to work for less pay to be able to contribute to the community. On balance, I believed that I would be able to count on a safe retirement. Speaker Say's bill, which disregards my years of service and reduces medical benefits until the Medicare retirement age, is irresponsible. Instead of supporting public service, Speaker Say is telling us that public employees don't mean much and promises to us can be broken mid-stream.

Lastly regarding HB 1726 I am disturbed at this attempt to balance the budget on the backs of the beneficiaries of deceased state employees. It's just plain wrong. Again where is the loyalty and gratitude to the thousands of state workers who have chosen to work for the betterment of the State of Hawaii.

Thoughtfully,
Kevin Cochran

yamashita2 - Kristen

From: Kaluhiwa, Juelle [jkaluhiwa@honolulu.gov]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 3:47 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Regarding HB1106, HB1718, HB1719, HB1723, HB1725, HB1726, HB1727

To the Labor & Public Employment Committee :

The above subject bills in the House Committee are causing grievous agitation among the rank and file of public employees.

With all due respect, those of us who are still engaged in government service and have accumulated extensive skills and intensive knowledge to apply to our job functions are currently dismayed at the audacity of the Legislature to introduce the entire gamut of Bills that would undermine the integrity of the loyal body of employees and discredit the Hawaii State government in their practice of hiring capable persons only to disregard the initial credibility in hiring practices. Furthermore, the majority of all government employees were enticed by the benefit package. Wherein they entrusted the government employer to maintain these benefits.

I solemnly believe that the introduction of these House Bills are rash and premature. To attain the proposed ends through legislative measures will create an atmosphere of distraught government employees heaping unnecessary stress and aggravation in the work place.

If the employer has foresight, they should choose to appreciation the masses of employees who have shown their dedication by increasing the desired and anticipated results in their daily service to the public.

In retrospect, the EUTF has already been strained due to the last change in medical benefits by altering the medical plans that were offered. The government withheld funding on their part and relied solely on employee contributions to create an administrative medical plan whereby the employees only had an administered medical plan not health insurance. **The government did not pay any premiums towards the employee medical fund.** As a result, a tremendous amount of monies was saved over the past two years by government.

How can government justify their actions and still hope to maintain a cohesive working environment for their employees when trust has been tampered with and promises broken? How has it come to pass that their mindset is focused on utter disregard for those employees who have shown their commitment towards their employers through their years of service and have gained public trust?

In closing, the committee must weigh all incoming testimonies as acts of faith that will culminate in restraining these Bills which would ultimately create chaos in the lives of their devoted employees.

Sincerely,
Juelle Kaluhiwa
City & County
Dept of Planning and Permitting, Building Division

yamashita1- Kathy

From: hirohataj001@hawaii.rr.com
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 2:53 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: HB 1106, Section 4 of HB 1106, HB 1719 & HB 1725

LATE

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning. My name is Jeffrey Hirohata. As a public employee for 12 years, I am deeply upset by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say.

HB 1106 is supposed to 'protect the rights of public employees' in the event of a furlough. Speaker Say has said that a furlough would cause the "least amount of disruption to public service."

I pose this question to the Speaker: What about the disruption to us as residents of this state?

A reduction in our salaries is hugely disruptive at a time when we find ourselves more and more the sole breadwinners for our entire families. How can we afford a reduction to our salaries when we are some of the last remaining wage earners in this unstable economy?

We also strongly disagree with Section 4 of HB 1106. The Governor does not have the authority to unilaterally furlough state employees.

HB 1719 is also of concern to me. As a civil servant, I chose to work for less pay to be able to contribute to the community. On balance, I believed that I would be able to count on a safe retirement. Speaker Say's bill, which disregards my years of service and reduces medical benefits until the Medicare retirement age, is irresponsible. Instead of supporting public service, Speaker Say is telling us that public employees don't mean much and promises to us can be broken mid-stream.

This bill is a thinly veiled attempt to force people into early retirement. Plans I may have made to ensure that my children graduated from college before I retire are suddenly up in the air. I now have to make the choice - get out now so that I can afford to stay healthy during my retirement, or stay even longer to provide for my family during these tough economic times and risk losing my current level of care during my retirement.

Speaker Say is backing us into a corner, and it's not irresponsible for him to suggest that this economic crisis should be resolved by sacrificing the health and well being of me and my family. Also, by forcing people into retirement before July 1, 2009, we are gambling with the future of state programs. The loss to institutional knowledge and expertise that we could experience is putting our families in Hawai'i at risk. State programs that protect Hawai'i's children, elderly and public will lose a wealth of knowledge that is not easy to recover when state hiring freezes are overburdening our already overburdened workforce. I strongly encourage this committee to vote "no" on HB 1719 and to send a strong message to Speaker Say, that he cannot punish civil servants for their dedication and commitment to the state of Hawai'i.

HB 1725 says that from July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2015, public employees will have to bear THE ENTIRE burden of prescription drug coverage. This is literally a bill that is playing with the life and death of public workers. Although the bill is only temporary, we are gambling with six years of prescription medication. With rising chronic diseases that require medication, this bill, coupled with talk of salary cuts and rises in our premiums is like a death sentence for our elderly, sick, or recovering public workers and retirees. It will deter some employees and retirees from accessing medicine that is essential to long and healthy lives. This is a regressive bill when the rest of the nation is talking about improvements to our health care coverage.

Please vote "no" on all of these bills that take away benefits from public employees.

yamashita1- Kathy

From: hirohataj001@hawaii.rr.com
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 2:53 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: HB 1106, Section 4 of HB 1106, HB 1719 & HB 1725

LATE

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning. My name is Jeffrey Hirohata. As a public employee for 12 years, I am deeply upset by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say.

HB 1106 is supposed to 'protect the rights of public employees' in the event of a furlough. Speaker Say has said that a furlough would cause the "least amount of disruption to public service."

I pose this question to the Speaker: What about the disruption to us as residents of this state?

A reduction in our salaries is hugely disruptive at a time when we find ourselves more and more the sole breadwinners for our entire families. How can we afford a reduction to our salaries when we are some of the last remaining wage earners in this unstable economy? We also strongly disagree with Section 4 of HB 1106. The Governor does not have the authority to unilaterally furlough state employees.

HB 1719 is also of concern to me. As a civil servant, I chose to work for less pay to be able to contribute to the community. On balance, I believed that I would be able to count on a safe retirement. Speaker Say's bill, which disregards my years of service and reduces medical benefits until the Medicare retirement age, is irresponsible. Instead of supporting public service, Speaker Say is telling us that public employees don't mean much and promises to us can be broken mid-stream.

This bill is a thinly veiled attempt to force people into early retirement. Plans I may have made to ensure that my children graduated from college before I retire are suddenly up in the air. I now have to make the choice - get out now so that I can afford to stay healthy during my retirement, or stay even longer to provide for my family during these tough economic times and risk losing my current level of care during my retirement.

Speaker Say is backing us into a corner, and it's not irresponsible for him to suggest that this economic crisis should be resolved by sacrificing the health and well being of me and my family. Also, by forcing people into retirement before July 1, 2009, we are gambling with the future of state programs. The loss to institutional knowledge and expertise that we could experience is putting our families in Hawai'i at risk. State programs that protect Hawai'i's children, elderly and public will lose a wealth of knowledge that is not easy to recover when state hiring freezes are overburdening our already overburdened workforce. I strongly encourage this committee to vote "no" on HB 1719 and to send a strong message to Speaker Say, that he cannot punish civil servants for their dedication and commitment to the state of Hawai'i.

HB 1725 says that from July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2015, public employees will have to bear THE ENTIRE burden of prescription drug coverage. This is literally a bill that is playing with the life and death of public workers. Although the bill is only temporary, we are gambling with six years of prescription medication. With rising chronic diseases that require medication, this bill, coupled with talk of salary cuts and rises in our premiums is like a death sentence for our elderly, sick, or recovering public workers and retirees. It will deter some employees and retirees from accessing medicine that is essential to long and healthy lives. This is a regressive bill when the rest of the nation is talking about improvements to our health care coverage.

Please vote "no" on all of these bills that take away benefits from public employees.

yamashita1- Kathy

From: patchoy@hawaii.rr.com
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 2:51 PM
To: LABtestimony; Rep. Marcus Oshiro
Subject: HB 1715, 1719, 1723, 1725, 1727

LATE

I am opposed to the following bills:
HB1715, HB1719, HB1723, HB1725, HB1727.

I'm very much opposed to any bill that takes away from medical, dental, vision, and retirement benefits. You cannot change the rules in the middle of the game. If you want to decrease these benefits it should be for new hires, not those who have been working for many years. We work hard for the state, this is not how you treat your employees.

Patrick Choy
384-3029

yamashita1- Kathy

From: Roy Takara [roytakara@yahoo.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 2:46 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: *****SPAM***** House Bills Testimony

LATE

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning. My name is RoyTakara.

As a retired public employee who worked for 32 years, I am deeply upset by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say, specifically HB 1725.

HB 1725 says that from July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2015, public employees will have to bear THE ENTIRE burden of prescription drug coverage. This is literally a bill that is playing with the life and death of public workers. Although the bill is only temporary, we are gambling with six years of prescription medication. With rising chronic diseases that require medication, this bill, coupled with talk of salary cuts and rises in our premiums is like a death sentence for our elderly, sick, or recovering public workers and retirees. It will deter some employees and retirees from accessing medicine that is essential to long and healthy lives. This is a regressive bill when the rest of the nation is talking about

improvements to our health care coverage. Furthermore, this bill would be devastating to retirees on fixed income who cannot afford the additional costs of paying for their prescription drugs at a time in their life when they need the drugs the most. This bill will strip the benefits promised us for the many years of lower salaries that we worked for.

HB 1106 is supposed to 'protect the rights of public employees' in the event of a furlough.

Speaker Say has said that a furlough would cause the "least amount of disruption to public service."

I pose this question to the Speaker: What about the disruption to us as residents of this state?

A reduction in our salaries is hugely disruptive at a time when we find ourselves more and more the sole breadwinners for our entire families. How can we afford a reduction to our salaries when we are some of the last remaining wage earners in this unstable economy?

We also strongly disagree with Section 4 of HB 1106. The Governor does not have the authority to unilaterally furlough state employees.

HB 1719 is also of concern to me. As civil servants, we chose to work for less pay to be able to contribute to the community.. On balance, I believed that I would be able to count on a safe retirement.. Speaker Say's bill, which disregards our years of service and reduces medical benefits until the Medicare retirement age, is irresponsible. Instead of supporting public employees, Speaker Say is telling us that public employees don't mean much and promises to us can be broken mid-stream.

This bill is a thinly veiled attempt to force people into early retirement. Plans we may have made to ensure that our children graduated from college before we retire are suddenly up in the air. we now have to make the choice - get out now so we can afford to stay healthy during our retirement, or stay even longer to provide for our families during these tough economic times and risk losing our current level of care during our retirement.

Speaker Say is backing us into a corner, and it's irresponsible for him to suggest that this economic crisis should be resolved by sacrificing the health and well being of me and my family. Also, by forcing people into retirement before July 1, 2009, we are gambling with the future of state programs. The loss of institutional knowledge and expertise that we could experience is putting our families in Hawai'i at risk. State programs that protect Hawai'i's children, elderly and public will lose a wealth of knowledge that is not easy to recover when state hiring freezes are overburdening our already overburdened workforce. I strongly encourage this committee to vote "no" on HB 1719 and to send a strong message to Speaker Say, that he cannot punish civil servants for their dedication and commitment to the state of Hawai'i.

Please vote "no" on all of these bills that take away benefits from public employees.

Yours truly,
Roy Takara

Feb. 12, 2009

LATE

To the Legislative Committee on Labor & Public Employment:

I am writing to register my strong opposition to measures (HB 1718, 1719, 1725) being considered Friday, 13 February 2009 that would severely undermine the health – medically and more generally – of public employees in the state of Hawaii. I will address these from my point of view as a University of Hawaii employee.

The punitive two-tiered system of benefits proposed in HB 1718 and 1719 would preclude recruitment and retention of competitive faculty, which the University must invest in to preserve its role as a multidisciplinary research institution. Passing these legislations would be a step in the opposite direction. Furthermore, these legislations pressure near-retirement age faculty to retire for financial benefit and create a two-tier system of retirement that also punishes those near retirement age who continue to work for the University.

Failing to provide prescription drug coverage is risky and irresponsible. Please do not pass HB 1725. In light of the high costs of medications, employees may be forced to not purchase them when they need to, and wind up incurring worse financial and medical problems and consequences as a result, for example if a small problem that could be solved through medication turns into a serious condition because the employee cannot afford the necessary medication.

Finally, eliminating competitive benefits will also discourage potential hires from accepting jobs here, and ultimately lead to a state of impoverishment in the public sector.

If the Legislature cannot invest in a basic level of coverage and support for its public employees, there is little hope for the state's future, as it depends heavily on public sector employees for its foundation.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Katherine McQuiston,
Assistant Professor of Musicology
Department of Music
University of Hawaii at Manoa
2411 Dole Street
Honolulu, HI 96822

LATE

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning. My name is Debbie Tanakaya. As a public employee for 5 years, and the proud daughter of two parents who devoted their working lives to public service, I am deeply upset by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say. Although the financial costs were great, I knowingly went through years of schooling on the mainland and moved back to Hawaii in order to have a career in public service. I knew, when I was fortunate to get a job with the State, that my pay was not/would not be as good as in the private sector, but I knew that I could rely on retirement and health benefits for myself and my family. As a daughter who saw first hand all that public service provided for my parents, my siblings, and I, I wanted to make sure to provide the same for my family. NOT only do I look at all the personal benefits that working for the State offers me, but I also take comfort in knowing that my services are benefiting everyone in our State. However, if the State cannot understand or see all the dedication that the State's employees offer, and in my opinion "mocks" our dedication by wanting to take away our benefits, what is the incentive for any of us to stay? I may not be one of the great ones, but I know that there are many great ones working for the State that share my opinion and will leave if our benefits are stripped from us. I am constantly "ridiculed" for not taking the opportunities that the private sector would offer me, but I felt that the State was there to "back me up," or at least I thought the State was there, up until these bills were introduced.

HB 1719. Speaker Say's bill, which disregards our years of service and reduces medical benefits until the Medicare retirement age, is irresponsible. Instead of supporting public service, Speaker Say is telling us that public employees do NOT mean much and promises to us can be broken mid-stream.

HB 1725. This is literally a bill that is playing with the life and death of public workers. We are gambling with six years of prescription medication. If you think about it, it will also cost more in the long run because it will deter some employees and retirees from accessing medicine that is essential to long and healthy lives, and costing the State more in medical bills for ailments that could have been treated earlier with proper medication. This is a regressive bill when the rest of the nation is talking about improvements to our health care coverage.

PLEASE VOTE **"NO"** ON ALL BILLS THAT TAKE AWAY BENEFITS FROM PUBLIC EMPLOYEES. Do NOT punish us for our dedication and commitment to the state of Hawaii.

Thank you,
Debbie Tanakaya

yamashita1- Kathy

From: Dzung Thai [dtthai@ymail.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 2:37 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: 2/13/09 hearing testimony

LATE

Testifier: Dzung Thai
Epidemiological Specialist III
Dept. of Health - Tuberculosis Branch
Committee: Labor & Public Employment
Hearing date and time: 2/13/09, 8:30 am
Measure numbers: HB1536, HB1106, HB1718, HB1719, HB1725

Dear Representatives:

I am writing to express my outrage and disappointment in regards to the following House bills that would affect state worker salaries, benefits and retirement: HB1536, HB1106, HB1718, HB1719, HB1725.

These bills would place an unfair burden on the backs of state workers. There are many of us state workers, and we provide invaluable experience and service to the public. For all the important work that we do, we depend on the state's benefits because we are not compensated at the rate of those working in the private sector. By limiting our health care benefits, and expecting us to pay for our own prescription drug coverage, many of us will not be able to make ends meet or support our families.

Many of my coworkers close to retirement are planning on retiring early after hearing about these proposed changes to their retirement benefits. This will place more of a burden on the staff who are left behind, who are already stretched to the limit due to the current hiring freeze. I work at the Health Department - Tuberculosis Branch. Contrary to popular opinion, in general my co-workers are dedicated, hardworking and do care about the clients we serve. Our branch provides an important public health service to the community, preventing and controlling the spread of tuberculosis. There could be disastrous consequences to the health of the public if we are expected to do more with even less staff and resources.

I am extremely disappointed in the state legislators who proposed and support these bills; I am hopeful that you will find alternate ways to balance our budget.

Thank you for your time and consideration.
Dzung Thai

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning. My name is Roberta Pale. As a public new employee for 6 months, I am deeply upset by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say. Specifically: HB 1106, HB 1719, and HB 1725.

HB 1106 is supposed to 'protect the rights of public employees' in the event of a furlough. Speaker Say has said that a furlough would cause the "least amount of disruption to public service."

I pose this question to the Speaker: What about the disruption to us as residents of this state? A reduction in our salaries is hugely disruptive at a time when we find ourselves more and more the sole breadwinners for our entire families. How can we afford a reduction to our salaries when we are some of the last remaining wage earners in this unstable economy?

We also strongly disagree with Section 4 of HB 1106. The Governor does not have the authority to unilaterally furlough state employees.

HB 1719 is also of concern to me. As a civil servant, I chose to work for less pay to be able to contribute to the community. On balance, I believed that I would be able to count on a safe retirement. Speaker Say's bill, which disregards my years of service and reduces medical benefits until the Medicare retirement age, is irresponsible. Instead of supporting public service, Speaker Say is telling us that public employees don't mean much and promises to us can be broken mid-stream. (This can start a very bad trend to the private sector.)

This bill is a thinly veiled attempt to force people into early retirement. Plans I may have made to ensure that my children graduated from college before I retire are suddenly up in the air. I now have to make the choice - get out now so that I can afford to stay healthy during my retirement or stay even longer to provide for my family during these tough economic times and risk losing my current level of care during my retirement.

Speaker Say is backing us into a corner, and it's not irresponsible for him to suggest that this economic crisis should be resolved by sacrificing the health and well being of me and my family. Also, by forcing people into retirement before July 1, 2009, we are gambling with the future of state programs. The loss to institutional knowledge and expertise that we could experience is putting our families in Hawai'i at risk. State programs that protect Hawaii's children, elderly and public will lose a wealth of knowledge that is not easy to recover when state hiring freezes are overburdening our already overburdened workforce. I strongly encourage this committee to vote "no" on HB 1719 and to send a strong message to Speaker Say, that he cannot punish civil servants for their dedication and commitment to the state of Hawai'i.

HB 1725 says that from July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2015, public employees will have to bear THE ENTIRE burden of prescription drug coverage. This is literally a bill that is playing with the life and death of public workers. Although the bill is only temporary, we are gambling with six years of prescription medication. With rising chronic diseases that require medication, this bill, coupled with talk of salary cuts and rises in our premiums is like a death sentence for our elderly, sick, or recovering public workers and retirees. It will deter some employees and retirees from accessing medicine that is essential to long and healthy lives. This is a regressive bill when the rest of the nation is talking about improvements to our health care coverage.

Please vote "no" on all of these bills that take away benefits from public employees.

Just a suggestion if you will:

The State of Hawaii General Excise tax pays 4 1/2% (Oahu). Why don't we raise the taxes to 5% across the board (entire island chain), instead of targeting only government workers. This will cover pensions, medical, etc. It may also allow for hiring new permanent positions in the Hawaii state system.

Please think about it.

yamashita1- Kathy

From: Linda_Rivera/LEIHOKU/HIDOE@notes.k12.hi.us
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 2:40 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Broken Trust

LATE

Hi, my name is Linda Rivera and I live on the Island of Oahu. I work for Leihoku Elementary School as a clerk-typist/registrar and am a member of HGEA.

I'm also a taxpayer. I spend money at local businesses every day to buy food, clothing and other needs.

I object to this legislation on the basis that it is an issue of "Broken Trust" between the State of Hawaii and their employees. As an employee who entered service 20 years ago, I understood that as a result of negotiations between the State of Hawaii and its public employee unions, that I would receive certain retirement benefits, which medical coverage was a part of. I don't believe it's fair for the House to be looking at ways to balance the budget on the backs of public employees. I work hard at my job and things are even harder now since vacancies have been frozen and demands for services have increased. I've made a career in public service knowing that my pay may not be as good as in the private sector but I could rely on retirement and health benefits for myself and my family. Now suddenly, rules of the game change. Are agreements no longer honored? Or are we still a society and nation of integrity and trust, where we honor and uphold commitments made?

I think it's wrong for representatives to take these benefits away from me. I oppose HB 1719, 1106, 1718, 1725, 1723, 1715, 1726, 1727. I appeal to your sense of fairness, trust, respect, responsibility, and honor. Please do not support any of the House Bills as mention above, or any other legislation that undermines commitments and responsibilities made decades ago to public employees.

Please look for other ways to balance the budget. Raising the excise tax would be a fairer way to address the state's revenue problem. Everyone paying a little more will mean sharing the burden during these tough times.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Linda Rivera
84-490 Makaha Vly. Rd.
Waianae, HI 96792

Ph: 497-2847

yamashita1- Kathy

From: Sue Okada [sueann@hawaii.edu]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 2:39 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: opposition of bills

LATE

Dear Labor and Public Employment Committee,

I have been a proud State worker for over 20 years. It has been an honor working for the State of Hawaii, and a privilege. I work on Kauai, at Kauai Community College. It's been a wonderful job, and I have spent many a happy and good bunch of years being employed here.

However, the news about these bills that may affect our health and retirement benefits are very harsh. Please, please do not allow these bills to be passed.

The bills are:

HB 1106 - Furloughing employees
HB1718 - Halt reimbursement for Medicare part B premiums for employees retiring after 12/31/09
HB1719 - Stop employer contribution for health benefits for those retiring after 7/1/09
HB1725 - Halt prescription drug coverage under EUTF
HB 1723 - Limit employer contribution to 55% and make it non-negotiable;
HB1715 - Increase, for new employees, the age and service time requirement to retire;
HB 1726 - Curtail EUTF payment for life insurance benefits;
HB 1727 - Prohibits provision of dental and vision coverage.

We have worked and served with good faith. Please help us, and do not pass these bills.

with best regards, Sue Okada

yamashita1- Kathy

From: carole carvalho [pakewoman@hotmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 2:38 PM
To: Rep. Mark Nakashima; LABtestimony
Subject: House Bills proposed for Hearing

LATE

Respectfully submit testimony with regard to the above.

Chair Rhoads, vice chair Yamashita, Rep. Mark Nakashima and members of the committee:

It appears that government workers have been targeted to be a scapegoat and a primary target to solve the current fiscal woes that our state is experiencing. I have been a county employee for almost twelve years and cannot help but feel that Speaker Say's introductions of certain House Bills relegates my public service to a status of a person with no identity, a person of no consequence. These bills are in essence attacking my right to life; the "wholeness" of it is in question.

It is not only proposing to take away essential and critical benefits previously contractually agreed upon, it is pronouncing, without saying, that our state government can give and take away at whim; or, at least initiate legislation to. It gives the appearance and perpetuates a sense of hopelessness and loss of control within our State Government; visually, a cutting and slashing of the "legs and arms" of a body that in reality cannot function without its parts; something totally opposite to the idea of what our new President is promoting.

Ludicrously it proposes health care without providing vision, dental and prescription coverage for six years! Does it serve to hear a doctor diagnose you with cancer only to face a reality that you cannot afford the medication to combat the disease? It meanders into areas where literally lives will be affected and altered based on unsubstantiated prediction, overwhelming dependence on Medicare and conjecture. Even those employees in the private sector are offered better health care than that!

Please vote "no" on all of these bills that take away benefits from public employees:
HB 1106, 1718, 1719, 1725, 1723, 1715, 1726, 1727.

Carole Carvalho
Police Operations Clerk, Hawaii Police Dept.
Hawaii County
HGEA member, BU 3

The United States Declaration of Independence, which was primarily written by Thomas Jefferson, was adopted by the Second Continental Congress on July 4, 1776. The text of the second section of the Declaration of Independence reads:

We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.

Windows Live™: Keep your life in sync. [Check it out.](#)

yamashita1- Kathy

From: Erik Shuman [erikshum67@yahoo.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 2:32 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: House Bills Relating to Benefits

LATE

House Labor and Public Employee Committee,

Aloha,

My Name is Erik Shuman and I am a writing you regarding House Bills HB1106, HB 1718, HB 1719, HB1725, HB1723, HB1715, HB1726, HB1727 which your committee is scheduled to consider on 2/13/09 and 2/17/09.

I urge each and every member of your committee to vote NO on these bills. There is no doubt that these are tough times financially for everyone in the State. However, targeting the the benefits of the State's working class peoples is a "knee jerk" reaction to problems that call for thinking out of the box and thoughtful solutions. The long term ramifications of the passing of this bill will be felt by our Kupuna long after these hard times have come and gone. Thank you for your time and consideration regarding this manner.

Mahalo,

Erik Shuman

yamashita2 - Kristen

From: Debra Sakai [sakaidebbie@yahoo.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 3:53 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: HB 1719 and HB 1725

LATE

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning. My name is Debra Sakai and as a public employee for the past 32 years, I am very disturbed by the bills proposed by Speaker Calvin Say. Specifically HB 1719 and HB 1725. Please vote "NO" on all the bills that take away the hard earned benefits from public employees.

HB 1719 disregards my years of service and reduces medical benefits until the Medicare retirement age and is a slap in the face of every public employee. One of the reasons that I chose to work for the public sector was because the State offered these benefits that these bills want to eliminate. I had put my trust in the State of Hawaii that these benefits would be there when I needed them. However, if these bills pass, I will be forced to take retirement earlier than I planned because I need to protect my medical benefits. And I believe that I will not be the only one to be forced to take retirement earlier than planned.

The implications of this mass exodus of employees will insure inefficiency and mediocrity in the running of the government. You will lose the expertise and wisdom of many dedicated and talented individuals. You will lose me. I am one of the two bankruptcy collectors for the Department of Taxation. That's right, there are only two bankruptcy collectors for the entire State of Hawaii. I've trained all the others who have either retired, moved to another job, or are still in training. I've done what I needed to do the job through my own initiative throughout the years and it has been very stressful and very hard. When the economic situation improves do you really think that good people will opt to work for the State of Hawaii when they cannot no longer trust the State of Hawaii to do the right thing. I've seen what happens when you employ "warm bodies" to fill positions.

As for HB 1725 that says that from July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2015, public employees will have to bear THE ENTIRE burden of prescription drug coverage. You play games with my life and my health. This bill punishes me for being an employee of the state and this is while the rest of the nation is trying to improve the health care situation. Did you know that many people file for bankruptcy just because of medical bills?

Again I ask you to please vote "NO" on these bills

Sincerely yours,

Debra Sakai

From: Victoria Ng [vmn96720@yahoo.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 3:29 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION OF HB1106, HB1719, HB1725, AND HB1727

LATE

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, and Members of the Committee:

Aloha kakou. I thank you for giving me the opportunity to submit testimony with regards to the above-mentioned bills. My name is Victoria Ng. I am a civil servant employee and have worked for the County government for the past seven years. I am greatly distressed about the bills introduced by Calvin Say and feel I must voice my opposition. I am outraged at the continuous attacks and burdens being placed upon the hardworking middle-class employees. We are faced daily with budget cutbacks, rising costs of utilities, food and every basic commodity needed to just "live", gas prices are going back up, we now have to worry about making less money as well as being penalized financially with higher medical, dental, and educational costs. How much more can we shoulder? Legislation has already been addressed regarding raising vehicle registration costs adding to our further frustrations and feelings of hopelessness. Our government legislators seem to be more interested in fixing "their" woes with how "we, the people" are going to have to pay to fix it. Would you, Mr. Say, consider taking less pay than what you're currently making with a freeze on any and all raises indefinitely? Would you, Mr. Say, happily consent to a mandatory furlough without pay? Would you, Mr. Say, be willing to carry the same medical/dental/drug plans that we, the everyday civil servants have? Would you, Mr. Say, be able to survive in this economy today if you had the same pay wage that we do? Would you, Mr. Say, be able to adjust to living on \$30,000 a year without any government perks and other contingencies? Are you, Mr. Say, under the fear that you could lose your job at any given second? Are you, Mr. Say, willing to put more people on the streets or living in parks or beaches? Are you, Mr. Say, able to face the elderly, handicapped or sick people that are forced to sleep on park benches or roaming the city streets? Will you, Mr. Say, be able to face the children who will also ultimately lose because we, the parents, cannot afford or provide for their basic needs? I am and have always been proud to be called a "civil servant" and I take great pride in the work I do for the County of Hawai'i. I can only hope and pray that you as well as all our elected officials would look at themselves in making adjustments, taking pay cuts, furloughing legislative meetings and sessions, decreasing the number of legislators, tightening your belts, foregoing luxuries, bonuses/perks, traveling, contingency funds, etc., as well instead of looking only to burden us, the people of these islands, more and more. Again, Mahalo Nui for allowing me this opportunity. Who knows, should these bills pass, I may not be able to afford even this luxury. Your Humble Civil Servant ~ VNg

yamashita2 - Kristen

From: Barbara Lee Lee [bayul25@yahoo.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 3:50 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: prooposed health, insurance cuts

LATE

2.12.2009

Aloha Labor Committee members,

Hi, my name is Barbara Lee and I live on the Big Island. I work for the DOE in the Ka'u District and am a member of HGEA.

Being a tax payer, I purchase goods and services from local businesses e.g., food, clothing, gas etc. I am quite concerned about the proposed cuts - HB 1723, HB 1715, HB 1726, HB 1727, HB 1719, AND HB 1725. I would like for alternative methods to be considered such as raising the excise tax as a more equitable way to address the state's revenue problems, freezes and increase demand for services.

I want to preserve my benefits for which I've worked 25 yrs. as a state employee.

Thank you for seriously considering my request.

Barbara Lee
School Based Specialist

yamashita2 - Kristen

From: miles murakoshi [milesmurakoshi@yahoo.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 3:30 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Public Employees Benefits Testimony

LATE

My name is Miles Murakoshi.

As a public employee for 12 years, I am deeply upset by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say. Specifically: HB1725, HB1723, HB1727, HB1106, HB1718, HB1719, HB1715, and HB1726

HB 1106 is supposed to 'protect the rights of public employees' in the event of a furlough. Speaker Say has said that a furlough would cause the "least amount of disruption to public service."

I pose this question to the Speaker: What about the disruption to us as residents of this state? A reduction in our salaries is hugely disruptive at a time when we find ourselves more and more the sole breadwinners for our entire families. How can we afford a reduction to our salaries when we are some of the last remaining wage earners in this unstable economy? We also strongly disagree with Section 4 of HB 1106. The Governor does not have the authority to unilaterally furlough state employees.

HB 1719 is also of concern to me. As a civil servant, I chose to work for less pay to be able to contribute to the community. On balance, I believed that I would be able to count on a safe retirement. Speaker Say's bill, which disregards my years of service and reduces medical benefits until the Medicare retirement age, is irresponsible. Instead of supporting public service, Speaker Say is telling us that public employees don't mean much and promises to us can be broken mid-stream.

This bill is a thinly veiled attempt to force people into early retirement. Plans I may have made to ensure that my children graduated from college before I retire are suddenly up in the air. I now have to make the choice - get out now so that I can afford to stay healthy during my retirement, or stay even longer to provide for my family during these tough economic times and risk losing my current level of care during my retirement.

Speaker Say is backing us into a corner, and it's very irresponsible for him to suggest that this economic crisis should be resolved by sacrificing the health and well being of me and my family. Also, by forcing people into retirement before July 1, 2009, we are gambling with the future of state programs. The loss to institutional knowledge and expertise that we could experience is putting our families in Hawai'i at risk. State programs that protect Hawai'i's children, elderly and public will loose a wealth of knowledge that is not easy to recover when state hiring freezes are overburdening our already overburdened workforce. I strongly encourage this committee to vote "no" on HB 1719 and to send a strong message to Speaker Say, that he cannot punish civil servants for their dedication and commitment to the state of Hawai'i.

HB 1725 says that from July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2015, public employees will have to bear THE ENTIRE burden of prescription drug coverage. I personally have diabetes, high blood pressure and chronic back pain that require maintenance medication daily. My wife has just been diagnosed with a possibly cancerous lung mass and Calvin Say wants to reduce the medical benefits at such trying time as this for my

family. After years of dedicated service is it fair for the medical benefits to be reduced just when I need them the most? This is literally a bill that is playing with the life and death of myself, my spouse and the entire public worker set. Although the bill is only temporary, we are gambling with six years of prescription medication. With rising chronic diseases that require medication, this bill, coupled with talk of salary cuts and rises in our premiums is like a death sentence for our elderly, sick, or recovering public workers and retirees. It will deter some employees and retirees from accessing medicine that is essential to long and healthy lives. This is a regressive bill when the rest of the nation is talking about improvements to our health care coverage.

Please vote “no” on all of these bills that take away benefits from myself and the rest of the public employees that were promised to us upon the acceptance of our employment.

yamashita1- Kathy

From: Alissa.Sabate@hawaii.gov
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 2:34 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Testimony

Importance: High

LATE

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning. My name is Alissa Sabate. As a public employee for 16 years, I am deeply upset by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say.

Specifically: HB1106, HB1719, HB1725, HB 1723, HB1715, HB1726, HB1727

HB 1106 is supposed to "protect the rights of public employees" in the event of a furlough. Speaker Say has said that a furlough would cause the "least amount of disruption to public service."

I pose this question to the Speaker: What about the disruption to us as residents of this state? A reduction in our salaries is hugely disruptive at a time when we find ourselves more and more the sole breadwinners for our entire families. How can we afford a reduction to our salaries when we are some of the last remaining wage earners in this unstable economy?

We also strongly disagree with Section 4 of HB1106. The Governor does not have the authority to unilaterally furlough state employees.

HB 1719 is also of concern to me. As a civil servant, I chose to work for less pay to be able to contribute to the community. On balance, I believed that I would be able to count on a safe retirement. Speaker Say's bill, which disregards my years of service and reduces medical benefits until the Medicare retirement age, is irresponsible. Instead of supporting public service, Speaker Say is telling us that public employees don't mean much and promises to us can be broken mid-stream.

This bill is a thinly veiled attempt to force people into early retirement. Plans I may have made to ensure that my children graduated from college before I retire are suddenly up in the air. I now have to make the choice - get out now so that I can afford to stay healthy during my retirement, or stay even longer to provide for my family during these tough economic times and risk losing my current level of care during my retirement.

Speaker Say is backing us into a corner, and it's not irresponsible for him to suggest that this economic crisis should be resolved by sacrificing the health and well being of me and my family. Also, by forcing people into retirement before July 1, 2009, we are gambling with the future of state programs. The loss to institutional knowledge and expertise that we could experience is putting our families in Hawaii at risk. State programs that protect Hawaii's children, elderly and public will lose a wealth of knowledge that is not easy to recover when state hiring freezes are overburdening our already overburdened workforce. I strongly encourage this committee to vote "no" on HB 1719 and to send a strong message to Speaker Say, that he cannot punish civil servants for their dedication and commitment to the state of Hawaii.

HB 1725 says that from July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2015, public employees will have to bear THE ENTIRE burden of prescription drug coverage. this is literally a bill that is playing with the life and death of public workers.

Although the bill is only temporary, we are gambling with six years of prescription medication. With rising chronic diseases that require medication, this bill, coupled with talk of salary cuts and rises in our premiums is like a death sentence for our elderly, sick, or recovering public workers and retirees. it will deter some employees and retirees from accessing medicine that is essential to long and healthy lives. This is a regressive bill when the rest of the nation is talking about improvements to our health coverage. I myself is on medication to control my diabetes and cholesterol.

Please vote "no" on all of these bills that take away benefits from public employees.

yamashita1- Kathy

From: Alissa.Sabate@hawaii.gov
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 2:34 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Testimony

Importance: High

LATE

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning. My name is Alissa Sabate. As a public employee for 16 years, I am deeply upset by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say.
Specifically: HB1106, HB1719, HB1725, HB 1723, HB1715, HB1726, HB1727

HB 1106 is supposed to "protect the rights of public employees" in the event of a furlough. Speaker Say has said that a furlough would cause the "least amount of disruption to public service."

I pose this question to the Speaker: What about the disruption to us as residents of this state? A reduction in our salaries is hugely disruptive at a time when we find ourselves more and more the sole breadwinners for our entire families. How can we afford a reduction to our salaries when we are some of the last remaining wage earners in this unstable economy?

We also strongly disagree with Section 4 of HB1106. The Governor does not have the authority to unilaterally furlough state employees.

HB 1719 is also of concern to me. As a civil servant, I chose to work for less pay to be able to contribute to the community. On balance, I believed that I would be able to count on a safe retirement. Speaker Say's bill, which disregards my years of service and reduces medical benefits until the Medicare retirement age, is irresponsible. Instead of supporting public service, Speaker Say is telling us that public employees don't mean much and promises to us can be broken mid-stream.

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Speaker Say is backing us into a corner, and it's not irresponsible for him to suggest that this economic crisis should be resolved by sacrificing the health and well being of me and my family. Also, by forcing people into retirement before July 1, 2009, we are gambling with the future of state programs. The loss to institutional knowledge and expertise that we could experience is putting our families in Hawaii at risk. State programs that protect Hawaii's children, elderly and public will lose a wealth of knowledge that is not easy to recover when state hiring freezes are overburdening our already overburdened workforce. I strongly encourage this committee to vote "no" on HB 1719 and to send a strong message to Speaker Say, that he cannot punish civil servants for their dedication and commitment to the state of Hawaii.

HB 1725 says that from July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2015, public employees will have to bear THE ENTIRE burden of prescription drug coverage. this is literally a bill that is playing with the life and death of public workers.

Although the bill is only temporary, we are gambling with six years of prescription medication. With rising chronic diseases that require medication, this bill, coupled with talk of salary cuts and rises in our premiums is like a death sentence for our elderly, sick, or recovering public workers and retirees. it will deter some employees and retirees from accessing medicine that is essential to long and healthy lives. This is a regressive bill when the rest of the nation is talking about improvements to our health coverage. I myself is on medication to control my diabetes and cholesterol.

Please vote "no" on all of these bills that take away benefits from public employees.

yamashita2 - Kristen

From: Darlene M. Lucas [waikolene@yahoo.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 3:39 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Oppose HB1719, HB1737, HB1725 & HB1727

LATE

Dear Honorable Chairs,

I am writing to you to oppose HB1719, HB1737, HB1725 & HB1737, ALL introduced by Calvin Say.

How can these bills even be considered when they are against the Constitution of the State of Hawaii (paragraph in blue):

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE STATE OF HAWAII

ARTICLE XVI

GENERAL AND MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

CIVIL SERVICE

EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM

Section 2. Membership in any employees' retirement system of the State or any political subdivision thereof shall be a contractual relationship, the **accrued benefits of which shall not be diminished or impaired.**

[Ren Const Con 1978 and election Nov 7, 1978]

Years ago, I left working for the private sector and accepted the low pay of a government job. I left benefits, namely, the retirement health benefits for my spouse and I.

I find it reprehensible to take away benefits and not grandfathering those of us who accepted government benefits were the only way the State could even attract competent employees and even the playing higher paying private sector and the low paying jobs at the State.

When we accept this job based on everything offered (low pay + benefits) it is a contract between workers. Now Calvin Say wants to change the rules and balance the budget on the backs of the low

What is ironic is that this bad economy is **TEMPORARY**, but this reduction in benefits will be **PERM** economy rebounds. That is appalling and totally unfair.

Thank you for your time,

Darlene Lucas

Oppose: House Bills 1719, HB1725, HB1727 & 1737

HB1719:

Report Title: EUTF; Retirement Prior to Medicare Age; Suspend Coverage

HB1737:

Report Title: ERS; Compensation

HB1727:

Report Title: Public Employees' Health Benefits Plan; Exclusion of Dental and Vision Coverage

HB1725:

Report Title: Public Employees' Health Benefits Plan; Exclusion of Prescription Drug Coverage

yamashita1- Kathy

From: SRogers@dhs.hawaii.gov
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 9:13 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: bills to reduce my benefits/income

LATE

Aloha. Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony and how the following bills, HB 1727, HB 1723, and HB 1106 will directly and immediately affect my family.

I am a vocational rehabilitation counselor and have been working in this capacity for the past 5 years. This is a professional position that required me to get a Master's degree while working full time with the State. Although I obtained my Master's degree in May of 2008 while raising two young children, I did not get the reallocation promised to me for earning my degree. I was understanding of this due to the freezes in pay and the current economic climate.

However, I am hearing more and more that I am expected to reduce my earnings and contribute more to health care costs. As the sole bread winner for our family due to my husband staying home with our young children, I am feeling that I can no longer provide for my family. I am already not able to provide health insurance to my husband since that is an extra \$300.00 per month, so I am only insuring myself. My children are covered under the State medical which I am grateful for, however, I feel that as a professional, I should have been earning enough to provide medical benefits to my family. If I had been given the initial reallocation, I would have used the pay increase to pay for my share of the costs to cover my entire family.

It has been increasingly difficult this past year to support my family due to rising food costs and inflation. Already we are financially strapped and dip into very little savings we have left which is tax returns I have saved up from last year's tax filings. I feel disappointed that I am not able to provide but the bare bones basics for my family with a Master's degree. **If the following bills pass, HB 1727, HB 1723, and HB 1106, which puts further financial burden to the State employee, I will have to take myself off the medical coverage provided. I can not afford increased contribution requirements on my part.** This will leave the State with two uninsured adults.

I am ashamed and disappointed that I can not provide adequately for my family. My husband would like to work, but his very important duties calls for him to stay at home with our two young boys, ages 9 months and 3 years. I have pulled my son out of preschool due to not being able to pay for his tuition. I have been making many sacrifices during the past year and feel that I am in survival mode. Please say no to the bills proposed to take away the benefits for State workers. These benefits are why we as vocational rehabilitation counselors get paid less than rehabilitation counselors in the private sector.

I appreciate your time in listening to my testimony.

Sincerely,

Sandra Fitzgerald

Sandra Fitzgerald, M.S., C.R.C.
Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor

Department of Human Services
Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)
75 Aupuni Street, Rm 110
Hilo, HI 96720
Phone: (808) 974-6444 V/T
Fax: (808) 974-6450
Email: srogers@dhs.hawaii.gov

LATE

February 12, 2009

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning. My name is Joel Kelley. As a public employee for 9 years, I am deeply upset by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say. Specifically: HB 1106 and HB 1719.

HB 1106 is supposed to 'protect the rights of public employees' in the event of a furlough. Speaker Say has said that a furlough would cause the "least amount of disruption to public service."

I pose this question to the Speaker: What about the disruption to us as residents of this state? A reduction in our salaries is hugely disruptive at a time when we find ourselves more and more the sole breadwinners for our entire families. How can we afford a reduction to our salaries when we are some of the last remaining wage earners in this unstable economy? We also strongly disagree with Section 4 of HB 1106. The Governor does not have the authority to unilaterally furlough state employees.

HB 1719 is also of concern to me. As a civil servant, I chose to work for less pay to be able to contribute to the community. On balance, I believed that I would be able to count on a safe retirement. Speaker Say's bill, which disregards my years of service and reduces medical benefits until the Medicare retirement age, is irresponsible. Instead of supporting public service, Speaker Say is telling us that public employees don't mean much and promises to us can be broken mid-stream.

This bill is a thinly veiled attempt to force people into early retirement. Plans I may have made to ensure that my children graduated from college before I retire are suddenly up in the air. I now have to make the choice - get out now so that I can afford to stay healthy during my retirement, or stay even longer to provide for my family during these tough economic times and risk losing my current level of care during my retirement.

Speaker Say is backing us into a corner, and it's irresponsible for him to suggest that this economic crisis should be resolved by sacrificing the health and well being of me and my family. Also, by forcing people into retirement before July 1, 2009, we are gambling with the future of state programs. The loss to institutional knowledge and expertise that we could experience is putting our families in Hawai'i at risk. State programs that protect Hawai'i's children, elderly and public will lose a wealth of knowledge that is not easy to recover when state hiring freezes are overburdening our already overburdened workforce. I strongly encourage this committee to vote "**no**" on HB 1719 and to send a strong message to Speaker Say, that he cannot punish civil servants for their dedication and commitment to the state of Hawai'i.

HB 1725 says that from July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2015, public employees will have to bear THE ENTIRE burden of prescription drug coverage. This is literally a bill that is playing with the life and death of public workers. Although the bill is only temporary, we

are gambling with six years of prescription medication. With rising chronic diseases that require medication, this bill, coupled with talk of salary cuts and rises in our premiums is like a death sentence for our elderly, sick, or recovering public workers and retirees. It will deter some employees and retirees from accessing medicine that is essential to long and healthy lives. This is a regressive bill when the rest of the nation is talking about improvements to our health care coverage.

Please vote **“no”** on all of these bills that take away benefits from public employees. Please vote **“no”** to a supposed “solution” that will cause more harm than good. The “solution” that Calvin Say is suggesting in these Bills, does not “solve” the economic situation we ALL face, it’ll only shift it in a different direction with public employee’s having to seek help from other government programs. Calvin Say needs to shift his focus from the bottom line to the faces of our children who will be affected if these bills should pass.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

LATE

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning. My name is Marilyn Umetsu. As a public employee for 30 years, I am deeply upset by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say. Specifically: HB 1718, 1719

HB 1106 is supposed to 'protect the rights of public employees' in the event of a furlough. Speaker Say has said that a furlough would cause the "least amount of disruption to public service."

I pose this question to the Speaker: What about the disruption to us as residents of this state? A reduction in our salaries is hugely disruptive at a time when we find ourselves more and more the sole breadwinners for our entire families. How can we afford a reduction to our salaries when we are some of the last remaining wage earners in this unstable economy?

We also strongly disagree with Section 4 of HB 1106. The Governor does not have the authority to unilaterally furlough state employees.

HB 1719 is also of concern to me. As a civil servant, I chose to work for less pay to be able to contribute to the community. On balance, I believed that I would be able to count on a safe retirement. Speaker Say's bill, which disregards my years of service and reduces medical benefits until the Medicare retirement age, is irresponsible. Instead of supporting public service, Speaker Say is telling us that public employees don't mean much and promises to us can be broken mid-stream.

This bill is a thinly veiled attempt to force people into early retirement. Plans I may have made to ensure that my children graduated from college before I retire are suddenly up in the air. I now have to make the choice - get out now so that I can afford to stay healthy during my retirement, or stay even longer to provide for my family during these tough economic times and risk losing my current level of care during my retirement.

Speaker Say is backing us into a corner, and it's not irresponsible for him to suggest that this economic crisis should be resolved by sacrificing the health and well being of me and my family. Also, by forcing people into retirement before July 1, 2009, we are gambling with the future of state programs. The loss to institutional knowledge and expertise that we could experience is putting our families in Hawai'i at risk. State programs that protect Hawai'i's children, elderly and public will loose a wealth of knowledge that is not easy to recover when state hiring freezes are overburdening our already overburdened workforce. I strongly encourage this committee to vote "no" on HB 1719 and to send a strong message to Speaker Say, that he cannot punish civil servants for their dedication and commitment to the state of Hawai'i.

HB 1725 says that from July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2015, public employees will have to bear THE ENTIRE burden of prescription drug coverage. This is literally a bill that is playing with the life and death of public workers. Although the bill is only temporary, we are gambling with six years of prescription medication. With rising chronic diseases that require medication, this bill, coupled with talk of salary cuts and rises in our premiums is like a death sentence for our elderly, sick, or recovering public workers and retirees. It will deter some employees and retirees from accessing medicine that is essential to long and healthy lives. This is a regressive bill when the rest of the nation is talking about improvements to our health care coverage.

Please vote "no" on all of these bills that take away benefits from public employees.

From: Charles Torigoe [cktorigoe@hotmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 2:34 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Testimony for Committee on Labor and Public Employment, February 13, 2009 , 8:30AM

TESTIMONY
Of
Charles K. Torigoe
Administrative Services Assistant,
Department of Education

TO: House Committee on Labor and Public Employment

RE: HB 1718 Relating to Employer-Union Health Benefits;

HB 1719 Relating to Public Employees; and

HB 1725 Relating to the Hawaii Employer-Union Health Benefits Trust Fund.

Chair Rhoads, Vice-Chair Yamashita and Members of the Committee:

My sense is that each of these measures is meant to force people into retirement. Where even the banks that fail are offered incentives, we public employees, who work for salaries that are largely inferior to similar positions in the private sector are to be penalized. In part, we willingly consent to make a lesser public employee salary in order to receive retirement and health benefits that are provided. To suspend or eliminate any benefits is a breach of trust and a total disregard for the welfare of state and municipal employees.

I oppose HB 1718 because it discriminates against employees who are currently employed by government and essentially forces retirement of its workers by threatening loss of some retirement benefits which are needed most when we are on fixed incomes. Is this how we run our governments, with threats?

Once again we are threatened with penalties in HB 1719. I oppose being told that we must retire by July 1, 2009 or the rules for retirement will change to our disadvantage while we also experience, a pay cut of at least \$6,000 annually which represents elimination of our health coverage that we will pay for 100%. Whoever proposed this alternative to budget cuts has no concern for the public welfare that were instituted wisely by community leaders who have gone before us.

Please recognize that the greatest cause of homelessness in the United States is due to the cost of medical care. Are we being "a penny rich and a pound foolish"? Do we want to have an exodus of good, experienced employees which will create a void in our ability to provide essential government services? Do we want to experience an increase of homeless families with countless health issues?

HB 1725 is just another one of the "takeaways" being proposed which I once again oppose.

One final consideration is, what of the persons who have subscribed to the Hybrid program who are being forced out of the program because of these actions?

Thank you for allowing me to express my concerns.

Charles K. Torigoe

yamashita2 - Kristen

From: Cyn [cyen691@yahoo.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 4:00 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Testimony

LATE

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

My name is Cynthia D. Yen and have been a faithful public servant for over twenty five years.

I am deeply upset by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say.

HB 1106 is supposed to 'protect the rights of public employees' in the event of a furlough. Speaker Say has said that a furlough would cause the "least amount of disruption to public service." I pose this question to the Speaker: What about the disruption to us as residents of this state? A reduction in our salaries is hugely disruptive at a time when we find ourselves more and more the sole breadwinners for our entire families. How can we afford a reduction to our salaries when we are some of the last remaining wage earners in this unstable economy?

I also strongly disagree with Section 4 of HB 1106. The Governor does not have the authority to unilaterally furlough state employees.

HB 1719 is also of concern to me. As a civil servant, I chose to work for less pay to be able to contribute to the community. **I believed that I would be able to count on a safe retirement.** Speaker Say's bill, which **disregards my years of service** and reduces medical benefits until the Medicare retirement age, is irresponsible. Instead of supporting public service, Speaker Say is telling us that **public employees don't mean much and promises to us can be broken mid-stream.**

I strongly encourage this committee to vote "no" on HB 1719 and to send a strong message to Speaker Say, that he cannot punish civil servants for their dedication and commitment to the state of Hawai'i.

HB 1725 says that from July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2015, public employees will have to bear THE ENTIRE burden of prescription drug coverage. This is literally ***a bill that is playing with the life and death of public workers and their families.*** We are gambling with six years of prescription medication. With rising chronic diseases that require medication, this bill, coupled with talk of salary cuts and rises in our premiums is like a **death sentence** for our elderly, sick, or recovering public workers and retirees. It will deter some employees and retirees from accessing medicine that is essential to long and healthy lives. This is a regressive bill when the rest of the nation is talking about improvements to our health care coverage.

Please vote "no" on all of these bills that take away benefits from public employees.

Cynthia Diaz-Yen

Confidentiality notice:

This e-mail message, including any attachments, may contain legally privileged and/or confidential

yamashita1- Kathy

From: QUINCIE BURGESS [tunta31@yahoo.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 2:04 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Please think about the peoples that you are affecting

LATE

Aloha Representatives,

HB1536 - Freezing salaries of Governor, Lt Governor

HB 1106 - Furloughing employees

HB1718 - Halt reimbursement for Medicare part B premiums for employees retiring after 12/31/09

HB1719 - Stop employer contribution for health benefits for those retiring after 7/1/09

HB1725 - Halt prescription drug coverage under EUTF

These bills here i am against because my future, my families future, and the future of my co workers and their families are at risk. We need all the benefits we can get especially if we put in the years, time, sweat, and dedication. I love my job and i very passionate about it. I dont think I deserve what you are trying to give me or do to me.

We are educators and educating the future of the United States children of Hawaii. As times have changed the children are changing....

Do you want what you see in the movies happen us here in Hawaii...and the Mainland. Where the rich get richer and the poor get poorer...and the nation gets divided...between the people with money and the people without. And you see it in the movies the people without really wins in the long run.

We gotta keep Hawaii and the Mainland pure by standing together...and pray that the rich have hearts.

Help...rich people...Help!

All that money aint going do you no good ... if us little people dont do our jobs! Because Lord knows you dont know how to do it!

If you ask me Why dont everyone in the government positions... should give up some of their salaries...to help get us out of debt. You all get lots of money...getting bonuses 18 thousand and 27 thousand...thats about 3 peoples salary at minium wage.

Take from the poor and give to the rich no make no sense to me!

Mahalo...God Bless, Quincie Burgess

LATE

yamashita2 - Kristen

From: Hiapo Perreira [hiapo@leoki.uhh.hawaii.edu]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 4:09 PM
To: Rep. Karl Rhoads; Rep. Kyle Yamashita; Rep. Henry J.C. Aquino; Rep. Karen Awana; Rep. Faye Hanohano; Rep. Gilbert Keith-Agaran; Rep. Marilyn Lee; Rep. Mark Nakashima; Rep. Scott Saiki; Rep. Joseph Souki; Rep. Roy Takumi; Rep. Kymberly Pine; LABtestimony
Subject: DO NOT SUPPORT!!!

Distinguished Representatives:

My name is Hiapo K. Perreira and I am an Assistant Professor of Hawaiian Studies at UH Hilo. I am emailing to express my complete opposition to the bills listed below and urge you to vote likewise:

HB1106 Relating to Public Employment
HB1718 Relating to Employer-Union Health Benefits HB 1719 Relating to Public Employees
HB1725 Relating to the Hawaii Employer-Union Health Benefit Trust Fund

VOTE TO OPPOSE!

Sincerely,
Hiapo K. Perreira
PO Box 6225
Hilo, HI 96720

From: Cheryl Ball [cheryl7@hawaii.edu]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 4:10 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: apposed HB 1106, 1719 & 1725

LATE

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning. My name is Cheryl Ball. I have sacrificed a 5 year career that ensured me and my family's stability to become a public employee for the past 7 months; I am deeply upset by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say. Specifically: HB 1106, 1719 & 1725

HB 1106 is supposed to 'protect the rights of public employees' in the event of a furlough. Speaker Say has said that a furlough would cause the "least amount of disruption to public service."

I pose this question to the Speaker: What about the disruption to us as residents of this state? A reduction in my salary is hugely disruptive at a time when we find ourselves more and more the sole breadwinners for our entire families. I am the only breadwinner for my family and I cannot afford a reduction to my salary.

We also strongly disagree with Section 4 of HB 1106. The Governor does not have the authority to unilaterally furlough state employees.

HB 1719 is also of concern to me. As a civil servant, I chose to work for less pay to be able to contribute to the community. On balance, I believed that I would be able to count on a safe retirement. Speaker Say's bill, which disregards my sacrifice of stability and to provide for my family and reduces medical benefits until the Medicare retirement age, is irresponsible. Instead of supporting public service, Speaker Say is telling us that public employees don't mean much and promises to us can be broken mid-stream.

This bill is a thinly veiled attempt to force people into early retirement. Plans I may have made to ensure that my children graduated from college before I retire are suddenly up in the air. I now have to make the choice - get out now so that I can afford to stay healthy during my retirement or stay even longer to provide for my family during these tough economic times and risk losing my current level of care during my retirement.

Speaker Say is backing us into a corner, and it's irresponsible for him to suggest that this economic crisis should be resolved by sacrificing the health and well being of me and my family. Also, by forcing people into retirement before July 1, 2009, we are gambling with the future of state programs. The loss to institutional knowledge and expertise that we could experience is putting our families in Hawai'i at risk. State programs that protect Hawai'i's children, elderly and public will lose a wealth of knowledge that is not easy to recover when state hiring freezes are overburdening our already overburdened workforce. I strongly encourage this committee to vote "no" on HB 1719 and to send a strong message to Speaker Say, that he cannot punish civil servants for their dedication and commitment to the state of Hawai'i.

HB 1725 says that from July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2015, public employees will have to bear THE ENTIRE burden of prescription drug coverage. This is literally a bill that is playing with the life and death of public workers. Although the bill is only temporary, we are gambling with six years of prescription medication. With rising chronic diseases that require medication, this bill, coupled with talk of salary cuts and rises in our premiums is like a death sentence for our elderly, sick, or recovering public workers and retirees. It will deter

some employees and retirees from accessing medicine that is essential to long and healthy lives. This is a regressive bill when the rest of the nation is talking about improvements to our health care coverage.

Please vote “no” on all of these bills that take away benefits from public employees.

Sincerely,

Cheryl Ball

yamashita2 - Kristen

From: Matsuda, Howard [hmatsuda@honolulu.gov]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 4:10 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Requesting Your Help!

LATE

Hi, my name is Howard Matsuda and I work for the Department of Planning and Permitting at the City and County of Honolulu.

I am speaking to bills HB1106, HB1718, HB1719, HB1725, HB1723, HB1726, HB1727.

I'm also a taxpayer. I spend monies at local businesses every day to buy food, clothing and other needs.

I don't believe it's fair for the House to be looking at ways to balance the budget on the backs of public employees. I work hard at my job and things are even harder now since vacancies have been frozen and demands for services have increased. I've made a career in public service knowing that my pay may not be as good as in the private sector but I could rely on retirement and health benefits for myself and my family.

I think it's wrong for representatives to take away these benefits from me.

Please look for other ways like excise tax which is a broader base tax to address the state's revenue problem. Everyone paying a little more will mean sharing the burden during these tough times.

Thanks you for taking this time to read these concerns,
Howard Matsuda

yamashita1- Kathy

From: John Mahoney [jmahoney@hawaii.edu]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 2:24 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: testing

LATE

Please KILL HB 1718, 1719, and 1725. They are badly, badly misguided. We remember that the State raided our retirement fund when it was doing well. Now, the House wants to cripple employees by taking away benefits that are absolutely crucial to many. The message is clear that employees (and voters) cannot rely on our leaders to play fair. These bills are just plain wrong.

John Mahoney

yamashita1- Kathy

From: Marbeth Aquino [akau_aquino96795@yahoo.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 2:16 PM
To: LABtestimony
Cc: Lucy Akau; Rogelio Aquino; Paul Akau; Kamakana Aquino; Robert Akau
Subject: AGAINST HB 1106, 1719, 1725, 1723, 1726. 1727

LATE

Aloha Kakou,

I am a state employee for 20 years and am against the above bills because it will create more advoc to Hawaii and its people. Some of us already felt the hardship of Aloha Airlines and other companies shutting down. Some of our family has to endure more problems due to these negative changes to our lives. What do you hope to accomplish when we are the core of the servicing part of government? Just because we are government employees that you can treat us like 2nd class citizen. That's not right. We are just as human like you. We have rights, too! We have family that we need to care for and buy food, bills to pay, mortgage etc... You will create more people being homeless. Is that what you want, more homelessness? The last riff, lots of your government people lost their homes, unable to pay there bills, etc...Now you want to stop our medical, dental, vision, drug coverage payments even if we don't get paid as much, furlough, take away from the retiree what they earn for their many years of service. Why do we have to pay for their mistakes? Spending and not budgeting correctly!! THAT'S NOT FAIR !!!!!

Calvin Say states that he has family, friends and himself that are affected by these bills, then why can't they find other solutions. The taxes that is suppose to go to the rail, should be given to balance the budget until we are back up to par. The rail need to be put on hold till everything is back up and running again. THAT WOULD BE A HELPFUL SOLUTION.

You as our representatives, MUST FIND BETTER SOLUTIONS NOT EASY SOLUTIONS. REMEMBER WE ALSO VOTED FOR YOU EVEN IF WE ARE GOVERNMENT WORKERS. All of you are suppose to be servants to all our people, not your escape goats.

PLEASE FIND OTHER ALTERNATIVES!!!!!!

MAHALO AND GOD BLESS

yamashita1- Kathy

From: Among, Delene [damong@honolulu.gov]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 2:27 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: HB 1106, HB 1718, HB 1719, HB 1725, HB 1723, HB 1715, HB 1726, HB 1727

Thank you for the opportunity to submit my comments. My name is Delene Among, As a public servant for 19+ years. I am deeply concerned by all of the above named bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say. I do not think that you understand the destructive impact that the our city and state will have if you pass any of these bills, especially the bills that will force many law enforcement and civilian employees to retire, prior to June 30, 2009. Why should we be responsible for the budget shortfall, we did not make the decisions to get into this problem in the first place. Isn't this America, The land of the free? Where is the responsibility to protect, and give us our free financial choices, rather than limit it to either force us into an early retirement, or stay in the system while our paychecks are at your mercy to be dwindled away by your devistating ideas in which you make laws thinking this plan will fix our money problems. There can only be a successful solution if there is true accountability for the past financial failures for this state, the one that is suppose to be the state of ALOHA.

February 12, 2009

To: Members of the Committee on Labor and Public Employment
For: Hearing of Friday, February 13, 2009, 8:30 am
Re: HB 1106, 1718, 1719, and 1725

Honorable Members of the Committee:

Please accept this testimony voicing my strong opposition to HB 1106, 1718, 1719, and 1725, which seek to reduce and eliminate employee health and retirement benefits.

As a public employee who would be negatively affected by such legislation, my opposition is no surprise. Nonetheless, it is important to note that these measures are shortsighted and are likely to produce long-term negative impact on the economy and quality of life in Hawaii.

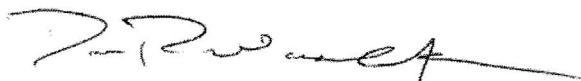
If adopted, this legislation will place a significantly increased burden on state employees, and, as a result, ultimately lessen the state's revenue stream. When people must pay more for health care, they have less with which to participate in the state's economic activity.

A more direct result though will be a lowering of Hawaii's standard of living. Many people will simply become unable to afford health care. The resulting increase in illness will likely prove much more costly in terms of lost productivity than any savings to be created by reduced health care benefits. A society that is physically unhealthy yields an unhealthy economy as well.

Another debilitating result would be to discourage quality potential employees from working for the state of Hawaii. Speaking from the standpoint my own institution, the University of Hawaii, I can say without doubt that any reduction of benefits would severely limit the University's ability to attract quality applicants. In a global economy it is essential to be competitive and to produce a well-educated workforce, with instruction from professionals who are among the best in their fields. Yet University of Hawaii salaries continue to rank low in comparison to other institutions nationwide – dramatically so when cost of living is factored in. To further erode them by reducing benefits is to take away investment from our future.

Although these bills may seem beneficial and even necessary at this juncture, I urge you to consider the short-term gain vs. the long-term cost. While we all recognize the seriousness of our present economic situation and the need to act, I hope you will recognize that what is needed is sound fiscal judgment, with the wisdom and will to invest in the things that create a solid foundation for our future.

Aloha nui loa,



Dr. Donald Reid Womack
Composer and Professor of Composition/Theory
University of Hawaii-Manoa

yamashita2 - Kristen

From: Elaina A Malm [elaina@hawaii.edu]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 4:28 PM
To: LABtestimony
Cc: kris@uhpa.org
Subject: Testimony on HB1106, HB1718, HB 1719 and HB1725

LATE

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the proposed bills related to worker health and retirement benefits (HB1106, HB1718, HB1719 and HB1725) currently proposed by the House Committee and Labor and Public Employment. Employees are already struggling with the high cost of medical care as they watch their personal retirement funds disappearing. I believe that the proposed bills will have a devastating effect on employees and will lead to greater financial demands on the State in the long run. It will increase the number of middle class residents having to choose between food and medication. It will degrade the quality of health care available to employees and their quality of life as retirees. Please vote against these bills.

Testifier's name with position/title and organization; Elaina Malm, Assistant Professor at Kapiolani Community College

- The Committee the comments are directed to; House Committee and Labor and Public Employment
- The date and time of the hearing; February 13, 2009 at 8:30 am
- Measure number; HB1106, HB1718, HB1719 and HB1725
- The number of copies the Committee is requesting. (3)

yamashita2 - Kristen

From: Jennifer Arashiro [jarashiro@kauai.gov]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 4:30 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Takeaway bills

LATE

Dear Labor Committee Members:

I'm writing to you regarding your decision on the "takeaway" bills (HB1723, HB1715, HB1726, HB1727, HB1718, HB1719, HB1725, HB1106). I am a Victim Witness Advocate with the Kaua'i County Prosecutor's Office, and a member of HGEA. I don't think it's fair for the House to be looking at ways to balance the budget on the backs of public employees. I'm also a taxpayer. I spend my money at local businesses every day to buy food, clothing and other necessities.

I work hard at my job and things are even harder now that two of my colleagues' jobs were recently terminated and demands for services have increased. I've made a career of public service knowing that my pay may not be as good as in the private sector but I could rely on retirement and health benefits for myself and my family.

I think it's wrong for representatives to take these benefits away from me.

I urge you to look for other ways to balance the budget. Raising the excise tax would be a fairer way to address the State's revenue problem. Everyone paying a little more will mean sharing the burden during these tough times.

Thank you for your time and the job that you do ensuring that the people of Kaua'i have their voices heard and concerns addressed.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Arashiro

TESTIMONY

LATE

Chair Rhoads and Members of the Committee:

Hi, my name is Dyann Tonaki and I am and have been a State employee for 18+ years and I oppose the following measures. I am a taxpayer and I support the State's economy by patronizing local businesses every day to buy food, clothing and other needs to provide for my family.

I understand the fiscal situation that the State is facing, however, the House should not penalize public employees by taking away their benefits to balance the budget. I work hard at my job and things are even harder now since vacancies have been frozen and workloads have increased. We have taken on more work with less resources.

HB 1106 proposes to furlough public employees. This would cause disruption to public services and would anger the public who require these services. How can State agencies properly service the public when there would be less staff on any given day to provide the service?

HB 1719 proposes to take away retirements benefits for public employees with no regard to years of dedicated service. I've made a career in public service knowing that my pay may not be as good as in the private sector, but I knew that I could rely on retirement and health benefits.

HB 1725 proposes to take away prescription drug coverage for public employees for a period of six years. This is not a good fix for the fiscal situation. It will deter public employees from getting the proper medication due to the high costs and will cause a chain reaction where employees will be out on sick leave more frequently thus leaving agencies short staffed for longer periods of time.

Please look for other ways to balance the budget. Raising the excise tax would be a fairer way to address the state's revenue problem.

I respectfully request that these measures be held.

yamashita1- Kathy

From: Kevin_Diminyatz/KAUH/HIDOE@notes.k12.hi.us
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 2:19 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: NO On HB1723 and HB1719; also HB1725 and HB1727

LATE

To whom it may concern,

ARE you guys trying to destroy education,
and force teachers to seek other professions?

its bad enough we work for near poverty wages now.
You want to me to pay my medical out of pocket as well?!

You have no shame,

especially after your most recent raise you gave yourselves,

I'm appalled

Kevin Diminyatz
Teacher
Kau High School

yamashita1- Kathy

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 2:18 PM
To: LABtestimony
Cc: saiakase@yahoo.com
Subject: Testimony for HB1719 on 2/13/2009 8:30:00 AM

LATE

Testimony for LAB 2/13/2009 8:30:00 AM HB1719

Conference room: 309
Testifier position: oppose
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Jacqueline K. Stone-He
Organization: Individual
Address: 7505 Kamehameha V Highway Kaunakakai, Hawaii
Phone: 808336-0897
E-mail: saiakase@yahoo.com
Submitted on: 2/12/2009

Comments:

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning. My name is Jacqueline K. Stone-He. As a public employee for 11 years, I am deeply upset by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say. Specifically: HB 1106.

HB 1106 is supposed to 'protect the rights of public employees' in the event of a furlough. Speaker Say has said that a furlough would cause the "least amount of disruption to public service."

I pose this question to the Speaker: What about the disruption to us as residents of this beautiful state? A reduction in our salaries is hugely disruptive at a time when we find ourselves more and more the sole breadwinners for our entire families. How can we afford a reduction to our salaries when we are some the last remaining wage earners in this unstable economy?

We also strongly disagree with Section 4 of HB 1106. The Governor does not have the authority to unilaterally furlough state employees.

HB 1719 is also of concern to me. As a civil servant, I chose to work for less pay to be able to contribute to the community. On balance, I believed that I would be able to count on a safe retirement. Speaker Say's bill, which disregards my years of service and reduces medical benefits until the Medicare retirement age, is wrong. Instead of supporting public service, Speaker Say is telling us that public employees don't mean much and promises to us can be broken mid-stream.

Speaker Say is backing us into a corner, and it's not irresponsible for him to suggest that this economic crisis should be resolved by sacrificing the health and well being of me and my family. Also, by forcing people into retirement before July 1, 2009, we are gambling with the future of state programs. The loss to institutional knowledge and expertise that we could experience is putting our families in Hawai'i at risk. State programs that protect Hawai'i's children, elderly and public will loose a wealth of knowledge that is not easy to recover when state hiring freezes are overburdening our already overburdened workforce. I strongly encourage this committee to vote "no" on HB 1719 and to send a strong message to

Speaker Say, that he cannot punish civil servants for their dedication and commitment to the State of Hawai'i.

HB 1725 says that from July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2015, public employees will have to bear THE ENTIRE burden of prescription drug coverage. This is literally a bill that is playing with the life and death of public workers. Although the bill is not only temporary, we are gambling with six years of prescription medication. With rising chronic diseases that require medication, this bill, coupled with talk of salary cuts and rises in our premiums is like a death sentence for our elderly, sick, or recovering public workers and retirees. It will deter some employees and retirees fro accessing medicine that is essential to long and healthy lives. this is a regressive bill when the rest of the nation is talking about imporvements to our health care coverage.

Please vote "no" on all of these bills that take away benefits from public employees.

Mahalo for your time. Vote "no" to these bills.

yamashita1- Kathy

From: Heipua Kaopua [heipua@hawaii.edu]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 2:17 PM
To: LABtestimony
Cc: kris@uhpa.org
Subject: testing

LATE

I strongly oppose any efforts to pass HB1106 Relating to Public Employment, HB 1718 Relating to Employer-Union Health Benefits, HB 1719 Relating to public Employees, or HB1725 Relating to the Hawaii-Employer Union Health Benefit Trust Fund. As a counselor with Windward Community College, I have invested the last 23 years promoting higher education in the State of Hawaii. State employees, like myself, are tax-paying citizens dedicated to making life better for all of Hawaii's people. After years of service, we have earned the right to have our health care benefits continue through retirement.

If you remove these benefits, the University of Hawaii will no longer be a flagship research university capable of attracting talented professors and researchers. While I understand the current economic hardships faced by the State of Hawaii, you must not sacrifice higher education and quality health care benefits for the faculty and staff of the University of Hawaii and its community colleges.

I urge you to vote NO.

yamashita2 - Kristen

From: Shanti Devi [sdevi@hawaii.edu]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 4:35 PM
To: LABtestimony; LABtestimony
Subject: HB 1106; HB1718;HB1719;HB1725

LATE

Karl Rhoads, Chair

Committee on Labor & Public Employment:

Re: HB 1106; HB 1718; HB1719;HB 1725

These bills are antagonistic towards dedicated faculty in the UH system. I have been employed in the UH system as a lecturer for 20 years but with a union, UHPA, that takes care of lecturers better than most university systems. I am dismayed to see these bills come up at a time when the Governor is refusing to negotiate with UHPA.

These bills are an insult to long term faculty nearing retirement. Confronting a potential loss of benefits is a breach of trust and significantly hurts faculty that choose to be a part of the University community. After years of contributing to the Retirement System, you are acting with the intent to punish those who have contributed unless they retire right now. What are you thinking about? Are you trying to get rid of the faculty of the state university?

Sincerely,

Shanti Devi, PhD

UH Center W. Hawaii

sdevi@hawaii.edu

yamashita1- Kathy

From: Jeffrey_Smith/WAIMEAH/HIDOE@notes.k12.hi.us
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 2:11 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Testimony

LATE

Name: Jeffrey B. Smith, Teacher
Department of Education, Waimea High School
Waimea, Kauai, Hawaii

Committee: Labor and Public Employment

Hearing: Friday, February 13, 2009

Measures: HB 1719, HB 1725

Testimony:

Aloha! I am a teacher at Waimea High School, live in Eleele Nani, and returned to teaching in 1995, spending three years at Waimea Canyon School for three years prior to moving to Waimea High School. In the midst of my eleventh year at Waimea High School, and approaching my 60th birthday this summer, I am concerned with a number of House Bills which, according to status reports, are in committee in the House.

HB 1719 Suspends state and county contributions to the EUTF for all state and county employee-beneficiaries who retire after 7/1/09, regardless of date of hire and years of service, if the employee retires before the employee's medicare retirement age. Resumes coverage after medicare retirement age. Allows employees to retain health coverage through the EUTF by paying the respective state or county share of premiums until medicare retirement age.

Currently, my personal plans are to work until age 64 as I desire to pay off my mortgage prior to retirement. We are all aware that medical costs and coverage have become the primary "cost consideration" for those approaching retirement age, in addition to concerns about Social Security's stability. I find it especially troublesome that some politicians feel it necessary to remove the medical costs and contributions from the collective bargaining process. For those personnel who have dedicated and committed decades of work to state, county, and city departments, removal of health benefits at the time when we can first retire and receive Social Security payments, it would be tantamount to saying "Thanks for nothing!" For some, that perk alone has motivated employees to continue to perform their duties faithfully and with trust in the "system" to honor its commitment. Passage of this bill will precipitate an avalanche of retirements come May and June. How will you replace the anticipated retiring workers, especially the essential ones in fire and police departments? Has any thought been given to instituting the reduced benefits from future hires so they know exactly what they are agreeing to?

You do not change the rules half-way or near the end of the game, that is what this attempt is and it is unconscionable.

HB 1725 From 07/01/09 to 06/30/2015: (1) prohibits health benefits plan of the employer-union health benefits trust fund from providing prescription drug coverage; and (2) allows board of trustees to make prescription drug benefits available through drug coverage plans that are paid for entirely by employee-beneficiaries.

What makes legislators believe they can legislate and take away benefits which are part of the collective bargaining process? Just because they can? Is this a blatant attempt at union-busting? Government employees have worked long and hard to gain benefits which make life easier-now politicians are going to make things harder for the populace?

It is my desire the members of the Labor and Public Employment committee oppose moving the two above bills out of committee to the House floor. I find it hard to understand how any legislator can propose bills which remove the protection, security, and concerns the workers have spent years achieving. Again, you don't change the rules when it's convenient to do so. I would rather legislators spend their time addressing cost-cutting measures in other areas and not those which would put many at hardship.

Aloha,
J. Smith

HB 1718 Relating to Employer-Union Health Benefits
HB1719 Relating to Public Employment

I have been an employee of the State Department of Taxation for over 33 years. I am concerned about the loss or reduction of benefits contained in the bills before you but I will leave comments relating to that to others coming before you today.

Of greater concern to me is the mass exodus from State service that these changes will cause. I don't like the feeling that I am compelled to retire now in order to protect the retirement benefits promised me when I started working for the State. Many employees will choose to leave State service to protect their promised retirement health benefits. The departure of very experienced, long-time employees will leave many State departments and agencies short staffed and lacking the historical knowledge these valuable employees take with them. Many of these employees came to work for the State rather than private companies because of the benefits, often receiving less salary than they could have earned in the private sector for the promise of a secure retirement.

Our Department has had a difficult time finding, and retaining, qualified employees as it is. With the current hiring freeze, State Departments and agencies will not be able to hire qualified people if they can find them to replace the employees who have left. State services will suffer and the public will suffer.

Also of concern is the amount of vacation leave these departing employees will have to be paid. It will not be cheap.

If you decide to move HB 1718 out of this Committee, I respectfully suggest you consider changing "...retire prior to December 31, 2009." on page 2, lines 17 and 18 of the bill, to "... retire prior to January 1, 2010." for the reason that State employees may retire only on the first of a calendar month or on December 31st.

Thank you,
Linn Garcia

yamashita2 - Kristen

From: Janet [jay@mail.admrec.hawaii.edu]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 4:42 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Requesting Your Help

LATE

Hi:

My name is Janet Mizuha. I wish to provide a written testimony regarding the following bills:

HB 1106, HB 1718, HB 1719, HB 1725 (February 13, 2009) and
HB 1723, HB 1726, and HB 1727

I would like for all the committee members listening to these bills to vote no on them. I have worked hard and diligently for over 30 years as a state employee and feel that I am entitled to all my benefits that are being taken away from us. The economic crisis the State of Hawaii was not caused by only state the city & county officials. Everyone in the State of Hawaii should be responsible for the economic shorfall. Why do you punish only government workers?

Some solutions to our economic problems may be solved by raising the retail state tax to 5% (This should have been done a long time ago).
In this way, everyone would be affected by the increase and not only government workers.

Also, I do not feel right when you allow former retirees with only 5 or 10 years of service to get free medical premiums. Some of these people may not even be government workers, but spouses of employees who worked for the government. Does it make sense for a government employee with over 20 - 40 years of service to have to pay for medical premiums, while spouses of employees with 5 - 10 years of service to have free medical premiums for their spouses who never even worked for the government.

Also, since the freeze of employees who have left their positions due to promotions or retirements, we have had to work even harder. We work for the government knowing that we at least had good medical and retirement benefits. The public sector may have paid a higher salary, however, our benefits were more attractive to us.

Please look for other ways to balance the budget. As mentioned before, the shortfall in our budget was not caused by the government workers, so why are you punishing only them. I feel that everyone should be held for the shortfall from the executive branch, legislators. all government workers (state, city & county, even federal), teachers, and the PUBLIC SECTOR.

Another possible solution would be possibly bring gambling to Hawaii.

Many people travel to Las Vegas to spend lots of dollars there.

Maybe if Hawaii provided incentives for the local people, they would possibly spend money here rather than take it elsewhere. I think more people just might spend their vacations here and on the neighbor islands, if the airfare as well as hotel accomodations and car rentals weren't exorbitantly high.

Thank you very much for taking the time to listen to my testimony.

Janet Mizuha
A government employee

yamashita1- Kathy

From: Venus_Abihai/CAMPBELL/HIDOE@notes.k12.hi.us
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 2:10 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Health and Retirement Benefits

LATE

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit my testimony. My name is Venus M. Abihai. As a public employee for 10 years, I am deeply upset by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say. Specifically: HB 1719, HB 1725, HB 1718, HB 1727, HB 1726

I pose this question to the Speaker: What about the disruption to us as residents of the State of Hawaii? A freeze in our salaries is already huge disruption at a time when we find ourselves more and more the sole breadwinners for our entire families. How can we afford a reduction to our health benefits and retirement when we are some of the last remaining wage earners in this unstable economy?

I am a taxpayer who not only contributes to the State and Federal, but one who also spends money at our local businesses to buy food, clothing, and all the other necessities that my family needs on a daily basis.

As a civil servant, I chose to work for less pay to be able to contribute to my community. I believed that I would be able to count on a safe retirement and health benefits for myself and my family. Speaker Say's bill, which disregards my years of service and reduces medical benefits until the Medicare retirement age, is irresponsible. Instead of supporting public service, he (Speaker Say) is telling me that public employees don't mean much and promises made can be broken mid-stream.

Speaker Say's bill is a thinly veiled attempt at forcing people into early retirement. Making public servants choose between getting out now to afford staying healthy during retirement, or staying even longer in order to provide for their family during these tough economic times and risk losing the current level of care during their retirement. He (Speaker Say), is backing us into a corner, and it's irresponsible for him to even suggest that this economic crisis should be resolved by sacrificing the health and well being of me and my family.

HB 1725 says that from July1, 2009 to June 30, 2015, public employees will have to bear THE ENTIRE burden of prescription drug coverage. This is literally a bill that is playing with the life and death of public workers. Although the bill is only temporary, we are gambling with six years of prescription medication. With the rising chronic diseases that require medication, this bill, coupled with talk of salary cuts and rises of our premiums is like a death sentence for our elderly, sick, or recovering public workers and retirees. It will deter some employees and retirees from accessing medicine that is essential to long and healthy lives. This is a regressive bill when the rest of the nation is talking about improvements to our health care coverage.

I strongly encourage this committee to vote "NO" on all of these bills and to send a strong message to Speaker Say that he cannot punish civil servants for their dedication and commitment to the state of Hawaii.

Thank you,
Venus M. Abihai

yamashita1- Kathy

From: Constance Tucker [Constance.Tucker@co.maui.hi.us]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 2:12 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: HB 1718 1719 1725

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 misplaced attempts to solve the current economic downturn upon the backs of the workers who can least afford to be thus afflicted.

If anything, those who earn less should be valued more, because even a small increase in benefits or income will undoubtedly be immediately returned to the marketplace. It is those who already have sufficient resources that have little reason to increase spending. The working class always is waiting to be able to pay just to take care of necessities. It is a disservice to these workers and to our community to try to further limit these people's resources.

It is also my opinion that the starting place to reduce costs is to look at the benefits and incomes of those who, while charged with the responsibility to protect and grow the ERS, where somehow unable to do so.

I, while having no particular financial training but the highs and lows of personal investing, somehow managed to pull and safeguard 80% of my personal funds about a year ago because the signs were indicating that something nasty was in the works. When investments dropped 10% in December 2006, it was time to act. The ERS Fund managers could have saved 15 to 20% of losses if they had simply acted practically at that time. Looking at their compensation should be the starting place for cost reduction since their poor performance resulted in the losses that have become the scapegoat for worker's benefits.

I do not support the bills listed above and ask that you respond to my concerns.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Constance Tucker
Maui Planning Department
County of Maui

LATE

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT
TESTIMONY OF RICKY WATANABE
HB 1719 AND 1725
February 13, 2009
8:30 a.m., Conference Room 309

Dear Chairman Rhoads and Committee Members:

Thank you for this opportunity to submit my written comments in opposition to HB 1719 and HB 1725 relating to Public Employment. My comments are submitted in my individual capacity as President of the Kauai Chapter HGEA/AFSCME-MCEC unit and Vice-President of the HGEA/AFSCME-MCEC State Board.

Prior to reducing any benefits for public employees I believe that proposed State budget (County budget) reductions should be thoroughly scrutinized and all programs should be considered.

Secondly, and more importantly, I believe that reducing or eliminating benefits of public employees may be unconstitutional as the State Constitution protects many employee benefits.

For the reasons stated above I am in opposition to the bills cited herein, and any other bills that propose to reduce public employee benefits.

Sincerely,



Ricky Watanabe
PO Box 1014
Lawai, HI 96765

Cc: House Finance Committee Members

NAME: Judith Lemus, Asst. Specialist, UH Manoa
COMMITTEE: Labor & Public Employment
HEARING DATE: Friday, February 13, 2009
HEARING TIME: 8:30 A.M.
MEASURE NUMBERS: HB 1106, HB 1718, HB 1719, HB1725

LATE

I do not support the aforementioned proposed measures because they represent unfair labor practices and institute inequitable benefits among unionized employees. Moreover, the measures seek to unethically circumvent the State's constitutional obligation to bargain with unions in matters of labor negotiations, of which health benefits are a major component.

yamashita2 - Kristen

From: Bryan Kim [bryankim@hawaii.edu]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 5:01 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Opposition to HB1106, HB1718, HB1719, HB1725

LATE

Dear Hawaii State Representatives:

I'm writing to express my most strong opposition to HB1106 (Relating to Public Employment), HB1718 (Relating to Employer-Union Health Benefits), HB1719 (Relating to Public Employees), and HB1725 (Relating to the Hawaii Employer-Union Health Benefit Trust Fund). I understand that Committee on Labor & Public Employment will be holding a hearing tomorrow to consider these bills. I realize that these bills are being proposed in an effort to help meet the current financial challenges facing the State of Hawaii. However, I believe that this is an incorrect way to approach the problem. Governor Linda Lingle in her State of the State speech noted the need for the people of Hawaii to equally share the burden of the projected budget deficits. These bills are antithetical to Governor Lingle's idea because they unfairly target just one segment of the State's population, a segment which has often had to make concessions in the past and always forced to do more with less. It does not make sense to me that they are again being targeted to carry a heavier burden to help resolve a problem, which actually is the responsibility of the entire State. Rather, I believe a more fair way to address the budget shortfall is to enact legislation that calls for equal sacrifice from everyone in the State.

Bryan S. K. Kim, Ph.D.
A Voting Resident of Hilo

yamashita1- Kathy

From: Thom Hudson [thomhudson@gmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 2:03 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: HB1106, HB1718, HB1719, HB1725

LATE

From: Thomas Hudson
Professor, University of Hawaii at Manoa

To: Committee on Labor and Public Employment

Hearing set for February 13, 2009
Measures: HB1106, HB1718, HB1719, HB1725

Honorable Representatives,

I am sending this to express my concern about the proposed measures listed above. Together, they represent a sentiment which debases the value and contributions of state of Hawaii employees. They send a message that state workers do not contribute their fair value to the state. I have worked for the state of Hawaii for almost 20 years. Throughout that time, I have not gone to other institutions, but have made decisions to remain and work in this state that I love very much. I have always assumed that the state would not go back on promises about what conditions and terms would exist when I retire regarding the benefits I would receive. However, the resolutions that are being proposed will make changes to my eventual retirement conditions, changes which had not been indicated during the past twenty years of my employment. Basically, the measures are designed to harm state employees and their families. They will create a situation in which many current employees will find it necessary to retire earlier than they had planned in order to retain retirement benefits that have been promised over time. The issues that are being addressed should not be brought up to the legislature with little notice to the public. They will have substantial impact on those who work of the state. Such issues should be discussed among the appropriate labor unions and the state in order to come to a fair and reasoned solution. It is not fair for the state to make these proposed changes after having made promises regarding retirement benefits over the past many years. It may be that such changes could be discussed for new employees of the state, but such a development should be discussed with all people involved.

Thank you.
Thomas Hudson

--
Thom Hudson, PhD
Professor, Second Language Studies
Chair of Graduate Programs: MA, PhD & Graduate Certificate
Co-editor, Reading in a Foreign Language
Department of Second Language Studies
University of Hawai'i
Honolulu, Hawai'i, 96822, U.S.

LATE

FROM: Lance Uyeda
Instructor
Windward Community College

TO: Committee on Labor and Public Employment

DATE: Friday, February 13, 2009

TIME: 8:30 A.M.

SUBJECT: Testimony against HB1106, HB1718, HB1719, HB1725

COPIES: 1 copy submitted via email

Honorable Representatives:

Please consider this testimony against House Bills 1106, 1718, 1719, and 1725.

These proposals shift cost to current employees and those nearing retirement by removing benefits currently provided in EUTF health insurance plans and/or provided to employees upon retirement. They fail to recognize the significant impact state and county employees have on our state's economy.

HB1106 Relating to Public Employment—this measure seeks to protect the rights of public employees to health, retirement, leave, and other benefits if furloughed. But it implies that furloughs are a certainty without negotiating impact with unions. There is an assumption that furloughs will be imposed.

HB1718 Relating to Employer-Union Health Benefits—this measure appears to be a negative incentive to move retirement eligible employees out of the workforce. If employees eligible to retire and eligible for Medicare do not retire by December 31, 2009, they will not receive reimbursement for Medicare part B premiums. These premiums for part B, which covers doctor's services, range from \$96.40 to \$238.40 per month per employee. This creates a two tiered system of benefits. Future retirees will be penalized.

HB 1719 Relating to Public Employees—this measure undermines employees who have made career decisions based on access to health care upon retirement. If an employee retires after July 1, 2009 and is not eligible for Medicare, the state and county employee will not receive employer provided health care. This will force employees into immediate retirement while creating a two tiered system of benefits for future retirees.

HB1725 Relating to the Hawaii Employer-Union Health Benefit Trust Fund—this measure prohibits EUTF from providing prescription drug coverage. This prohibition will increase premiums, since access to prescription drugs often prevents other costly services like surgery.

Although these measures may result in short-term savings for the state, forcing employees to bear the increased costs of health care will likely decrease the state's long-term revenues. More worryingly, these measures are by all appearances punitive in nature, and they will make it hard to maintain a quality public workforce.

Please vote down measures HB1106, HB1718, HB1719, and HB1725.

From: Cindy Terao [dumas.808@gmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 5:00 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: testimony

LATE

HB1719 - Stop employer contribution for health benefits for those retiring after 7/1/09
HB1725 - Halt prescription drug coverage under EUTF
HB 1723 - Limit employer contribution to 55% and make it non-negotiable;
HB1715 - Increase, for new employees, the age and service time requirement to retire;
HB 1726 - Curtail EUTF payment for life insurance benefits;
HB 1727 - Prohibits provision of dental and vision coverage.

Hi, my name is Cindy. I work for the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations and am a member of HGEA. I'm also a taxpayer. I don't believe it's fair for the House to be looking at ways to balance the budget on the backs of public employees. I work hard at my job and things are even harder now since vacancies have been frozen and demands for services have increased. The stigma about state workers that we don't work hard is only a reflection of a few who make us look bad. We work hard, and do what we can with what we have to work with. I understand that we have to make changes, but if these bills are imposed, you will lose a lot of seasoned employees that can retire but have not due to the already struggling economy. The welfare of the people who rely upon the government agencies will be in jeopardy if we lose so many of these valuable employees all at the same time. The incentive to be a government employee will be lost. I have worked for the State for almost 18 years now and I appreciate the benefits that I have. If our out of pocket expenses for our dental, prescriptions and medical cost increase, and our pay remains the same it would be difficult to frequent the local stores for clothes, food and other items. Aren't we supposed to be trying to stimulate the economy?

I've made a career in public service knowing that my pay may not be as good as in the private sector but I could rely on retirement and health benefits for myself and my family. . I think it's wrong for representatives to take these benefits away from me. Please look for other ways to balance the budget. Raising the excise tax would be a fairer way to address the state's revenue problem. Ensuring that pay raises are frozen across the board for ALL government personnel. Change the way of how departments are issued their budgets, "if you don't use it you lose it" When divisions are able to spend below their budgets, don't take away money from them the following year. Reward them by giving them at least the same amount to add to their balance. That would ensure that monies are not wasted on things not needed because they are afraid if they don't use it you lose it!

Things just have to be done differently, it's no longer business as usual, simple changes can make a big difference, we just have to be willing to open our eyes and try. No more "post-it" brand name items go for the generic. Everyone paying a little more will mean sharing the burden during these tough times.

Thank you,
Cindy

yamashita2 - Kristen

From: Rob Edmondson [robe771@gmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 5:06 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Testimony on HB 1106 - 1718 - 1719 - 1725

LATE

-- FROM --

Rob Edmondson
Asst. Prof. of Anthropology
University of Hawaii -
Honolulu Community College
Address: 874 Dillingham Blvd. Honolulu, HI - 96817
Phone: 845-9260

-- TO --

COMMITTEE ON LABOR & PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT
Rep. Karl Rhoads, Chair
Rep. Kyle T. Yamashita, Vice Chair

Dear Sirs,

I am testifying in opposition to HB 1106, HB 1718, HB 1719, and HB 1725.

Each of these bills proposes to take away the rights of faculty and other public employees of the State of Hawaii that have been earned through years of hard work and collective bargaining. A particularly heavy burden is placed by these bills on State employees who are near their retirement age.

HB 1106 - This bill presupposes furloughs which is a matter that must be negotiated with the respective unions including UHPA.

HB 1718 - Specifies a retirement age for Medicare benefit reimbursement, which takes away benefits promised the State workers by their contract.

HB 1719 - Discriminates against those few State workers who must retire before their medicare retirement age.

HB 1725 - Takes away rights to drug coverage specified in past contracts.

If any of these bills are passed on there will be a large negative vote on those House members who vote for it.

--
Rob Edmondson

yamashita2 - Kristen

From: jean yamanaka [jeansachi@yahoo.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 5:07 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Requesting Your Help!

LATE

Testifier name, position/title/organization: Jean Yamanaka, Office Assistant IV, DOH
The Committee the comments are directed to: Labor and Public Employment
The date and time of hearing: February 13, 2009, Friday, 8:30am.

Measure numbers HB 1718, HB 1719, HB 1725

I have been working for the State Government for 40 years and have been working for my health and retirement benefits. I am pretty close to retirement and wouldn't want to lose what ever I have been working for. Please do not pass these bills as it will affect my family and many many others.

Please find some other ways to balance the budget.

Thank you.
Jean Yamanaka

yamashita2 - Kristen

From: Shari_Okada/POMAIKAI/HIDOE@notes.k12.hi.us
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 5:13 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Re: HB 1719, HB 1718 and HB 1725

LATE

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

My name is Shari Okada and I am a teacher at Pomaika'i School and I **strongly oppose** the following bills:

HB 1719 which suspends state and county contributions to the EUTF for all state and county employees-beneficiaries who retire after July 1, 2009, regardless of date of hire and years of service if the employee retires before the employee's medicare retirement age.

HB 1718 which relates to the Employer-Union health benefits.

HB 1725 which relates to the Hawaii Employer-Union Benefits Trust Fund.

If these bills should pass, it would encourage state and county employees to retire on June 30, 2009.

I have been working for the state for over 20 years and feel that it is unfair to change my health benefits. It would seriously make me think about retiring early, in order that I will not lose my health benefits. The medical and drug coverage is one of the main reasons why I chose to work for the state. I hope that you will **not pass** any of these bills.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

yamashita1- Kathy

From: Leighton Miyake [leightonmiyake@yahoo.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 2:00 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: opposition to bills

LATE

I just want to say that we civil service employees work so hard for so little. So why take what little we have and make it even less? Making ends meet in our family seems to be getting harder and harder to do. It creates a lot anxiety thinking that health benefits for me and my family will be downsized and premiums will increase. Stopping prescription coverage as well as dental and vision will just make our burden heavier. Bills I oppose are HB:1106, 1718,1719,1725,1723,1715 & 1727.

From: Sarah Hodell [shodell@hawaii.edu]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 5:12 PM
To: LABtestimony
Cc: kris@uhpa.org
Subject: testing

LATE

Aloha,

I have been working in the UH system as a faculty member for more than 20 years. I have just had my 60th birthday. I've dedicated my life to being the best counselor I can be to students in the University of Hawaii system, to training teachers many for Hawaii's schools for years, and to helping hundreds of individuals find their paths as a career counselor.

The cost of living in Hawaii is very high, as we all know. I have managed to own a modest condo in Waikiki for 20 years. I have stayed with the UH system because of the promises made to me regarding retirement and health insurance benefits regardless of my modest salary, and because I love my work. The same is true for almost all the faculty I work with within the University of Hawaii system.

If you entertain passing the legislation to be discussed in your 8:30 meeting related to HB 1106, HB 1718, HB1719, and HB 1725, you will be penalizing myself and the many faculty I have worked with over the years. Secondly, you will do more than save money for the state; you will have drained the intellectual lifeblood out of our University System and our state as well. Where will our future law makers, teachers, social works, counselors, nurses and doctors come from if we deplete the faculty?

I strongly urge you to vote no on all of these house bills.

Mahalo Dr. Sarah Hodell

Sarah Hodell, Ed. D. Counselor & Career Specialist
Windward Community College, University of Hawaii
45-720 Keaahala Rd.
Hale Akoakoa 212B
Kaneohe, HI 96744

Phone: (808) 235-7485
Fax: (808) 235-7414
shodell@hawaii.edu

yamashita1- Kathy

From: Gwen.M.Valparaiso@hawaii.gov
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 1:57 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: My Testimony

LATE

TO: Chair Rhoads
Vice-Chair Yamashita
and
Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this afternoon. My name is Gwen Valparaiso (Cancer Survivor). As a public employee for TEN years, I am deeply, deeply upset by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say.

Specifically HBs: 1106 - 1719 - 1725

All of the above HBS, I strongly disagree as follows:

- Governor Lingle does not have the authority to unilaterally furlough state employees;
- What happens to protecting the rights of public employees? Per Speaker Say....Least amount of disruption to public service? He forgets "who" voted him in office...; For the people....
- A civil servant, I chose to work for less pay to be able to contribute to the community. Per Speaker Say - he disregards my years of service and reduces medical benefits until the Medicare retirement age - uhhmm not being responsible?;
- Speaker Say is letting me know and other state employees we don't mean much and promises to us can be broken mid-stream?
- Public employees will have to bear THE ENTIRE burden of prescription drug coverage - State is playing with its employees' life like a "russian roulette"? My God...six years is a long time - does Speaker Say know what type of chronic diseases state employees will encounter - how about Cancer, diabetes and heart attacks etc.? Will he be giving a "helping" hand to these affected state employees? Or who cares one less state employee?

As a state employee, we work very "hard" to get our job done for our communities.

I thank you for your time reading my testimony...Please vote "NO" on all of these bills that take away benefits from me and my fellow workers.

God Bless you all!

Gwen M. Valparaiso
Legal Assistant
Dept. of Attorney General
Civil Recoveries Unit
425 Queen Street, Rm. 212-DOT
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
Tel. No. 586-1100-Fax No. 586-1111

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yamashita1- Kathy

From: LYamamoto@dhs.hawaii.gov
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 1:56 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Opposition to HB Bills
Importance: High

LATE

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita and Committee Members:

I have been a public employee with the Department of Human Services for 28+ years. I appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony as I am very upset with the bills being introduced specifically, HB 1719, 1723, 1725, 1727 and 1737.

As a civil servant, I had been counting on a safe and sound retirement. With the bills that are being introduced, all my years of service along with my medical benefits for myself and my spouse are gravely jeopardized. My plans for myself and family are now up in the air as I am being forced to retire earlier than I had anticipated to.

I believe the State, as a whole, will lose many experienced and knowledgeable employees who have willingly devoted their lives to civil service and we should not be punished or targeted for our sincere dedication and commitment.

Please vote "no" on all the bills that will take away benefits from public employees.

Thank you.

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yamashita1- Kathy

From: Sandy_Amaral/KAUH/HIDOE@notes.k12.hi.us
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 1:48 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: OPPOSITION TO HB 1719, 1723, 1725, 1727

LATE

Short and sour -

We oppose HB 1719, 1723, 1725, 1727!!!!

From: Dlnaba@dhs.hawaii.gov
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 1:54 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Written Testimony

LATE

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning. My name is Derek Inaba. As a public employee for 10 years, I am deeply upset by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say. Specifically: **HB 1106, 1719, 1725**

HB 1106 is supposed to 'protect the rights of public employees' in the event of a furlough. Speaker Say has said that a furlough would cause the "least amount of disruption to public service."

I pose this question to the Speaker: What about the disruption to us as residents of this state? A reduction in our salaries is hugely disruptive at a time when we find ourselves more and more the sole breadwinners for our entire families. How can we afford a reduction to our salaries when we are some of the last remaining wage earners in this unstable economy?

I also strongly disagree with Section 4 of HB 1106. The Governor does not have the authority to unilaterally furlough state employees.

HB 1719 is also of concern to me. As a civil servant, I chose to work for less pay to be able to contribute to the community. On balance, I believed that I would be able to count on a safe retirement. Speaker Say's bill, which disregards my years of service and reduces medical benefits until the Medicare retirement age, is irresponsible. Instead of supporting public service, Speaker Say is telling us that public employees don't mean much and promises to us can be broken mid-stream.

This bill is a thinly veiled attempt to force people into early retirement. Plans I and others may have made to ensure our family's well-being before retirement are suddenly up in the air. I now have to make the choice - get out now so that I can afford to stay healthy during my retirement, or stay even longer to provide for my family during these tough economic times and risk losing my current level of care during my retirement.

Speaker Say is backing us into a corner, and it's not irresponsible for him to suggest that this economic crisis should be resolved by sacrificing the health and well being of me and my family. Also, by forcing people into retirement before July 1, 2009, we are gambling with the future of state programs. The loss to institutional knowledge and expertise that we could experience is putting our families in Hawai'i at risk. State programs that protect Hawai'i's children, elderly and public will lose a wealth of knowledge that is not easy to recover when state hiring freezes are overburdening our already overburdened workforce. I strongly encourage this committee to vote "no" on HB 1719 and to send a strong message to Speaker Say, that he cannot punish civil servants for their dedication and commitment to the state of Hawai'i.

HB 1725 says that from July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2015, public employees will have to bear THE ENTIRE burden of prescription drug coverage. This is literally a bill that is playing with the life and death of public workers. Although the bill is only temporary, we are gambling with six years of prescription medication. With rising chronic diseases that require medication, this bill, coupled with talk of salary cuts and rises in our premiums is like a death sentence for our elderly, sick, or recovering public workers and retirees. It will deter some employees and retirees from accessing medicine that is essential to long

and healthy lives. This is a regressive bill when the rest of the nation is talking about improvements to our health care coverage.

Please vote "no" on all of these bills that take away benefits from public employees.

Derek Inaba, M.Ed., C.R.C.
Vocational Rehabilitation & Services for the Blind
PO Box 459
Captain Cook, HI 96704

Ph: (808) 323-0025
Fax: (808) 323-0028
Email: dinaba@dhs.hawaii.gov

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yamashita1- Kathy

From: Dzung Thai [dtthai@ymail.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 1:48 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: HB 1106, HB1108, HB1715, HB1718, HB1719, HB1720, HB1721, HB1722, HB1723, HB1725, and HB1727

Dear Representatives:

I am writing to express my outrage and disappointment in regards to the following House bills that would affect state worker salaries, benefits and retirement: HB 1106, HB1108, HB1715, HB1718, HB1719, HB1720, HB1721, HB1722, HB1723, HB1725, and HB1727.

These bills would place an unfair burden on the backs of state workers. There are many of us state workers, and we provide invaluable experience and service to the public. For all the important work that we do, we depend on the state's benefits because we are not compensated at the rate of those working in the private sector. By decreasing our already low salaries through furloughs, limiting employer contributions to health care benefits, and expecting us to pay for our own prescription drug coverage, dental and vision plan, many of us will not be able to make ends meet and to support our families.

Many of my coworkers close to retirement are planning on retiring early after hearing about these proposed changes to their benefits. This will place more of a burden on the staff who are left behind, who are already stretched to the limit due to the current hiring freeze. I work at the Health Department - Tuberculosis Branch. Contrary to popular opinion, in general my co-workers are dedicated, hardworking and do care about the clients we serve. Our branch provides an important public health service to the community, preventing and controlling the spread of tuberculosis. There could be disastrous consequences to the health of the public if we are expected to do more with even less staff and resources.

I am extremely disappointed in the state legislators who proposed and support these bills; I thought that they were supposed to keep the health and welfare of their constituents in mind. They need to remember that the people of Hawaii gave them this important job, and they will serve them well by listening to them.

Thank you for your time and consideration.
Dzung Thai

yamashita1- Kathy

From: Steve_Stephenson/KAUH/HIDOE@notes.k12.hi.us
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 1:48 PM
To: LABtestimony
Cc: Rep. Robert Herkes
Subject: No on HB1723, HB1719, HB1725 and HB1727

LATE

Please register my opposition to House Bills 1723, 1719, 1725 and 1727, all of which are pending discussion or action by the House Labor & Public Employment Committee.

As a nearly 30-year employee of the State of Hawaii, I have honored every aspect of my various contracts with the Department of Education. To unilaterally withdraw State support for our medical insurance costs at this point will send a very negative message to all current and prospective employees and greatly inhibit our ability to recruit and retain effective employees in our classrooms at a time when we have a major teacher shortage in nearly all subject areas.

In my opinion, if you feel the need to cut labor costs, the appropriate action is to terminate the employment of our Superintendent of Education and all of her assistants and deputies down to and including the unending supply of Complex Area staff, and require that all remaining employees of the Department of Education teach at least one class section for a semester duration every school year and to demonstrate that they can meet or exceed every standard that we expect students to attain. I expect that major cost savings may be had by introducing similar measures in every State agency to eliminate those staff who have retired in place and those who do not demonstrate the skill sets that we demand in our lowest paid employees.

I sincerely trust that you will also send a positive message to all State employees by rejecting your own salary increases for the duration of the current financial crisis.

yamashita2 - Kristen

From: michelle.manes@gmail.com on behalf of Michelle Manes [mmanes@cal.berkeley.edu]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 1:43 PM
To: LABtestimony
Cc: kris@uhpa.org
Subject: Testimony regarding hearing on Friday, 2/13

Dear House Committee on Labor & Public Employment,

I am writing, as a new Assistant Professor at the University of Hawaii, to urge you to vote against House Bills 1536, 1106, 1718, 1719, and 1725.

I do understand that the State is in dire economic straits, and that cost-cutting measures are necessary. However, drastically reducing benefits, and shifting costs onto State employees, is simply not the answer.

The overall impact of these bills will be a drastic reduction in my salary, the salary of my husband (also a UH employee), and the salaries of my colleagues. I am especially concerned about proposed changes to the health insurance (including dental and vision) benefits. These amount to a pay cut, and one that we will likely never recoup. I do not know of a single example where cuts like these are made in tough economic times, and then reversed when times are better. Further, these cuts are proposed for six years, and we have no idea what the economy will be like in that time.

I was excited to come and work at UH. My husband and I relocated 5,000 miles for this job. He left a lucrative position in industry and took one here. I turned down job offers at Harvard and other private institutions in order to come here. The job at UH was attractive for many reasons, but high among them is my deep belief in public education. I was educated in the University of California system, and my brother was educated in the California State University system. We were not a family that could afford private institutions for four kids. But he and I both received world-class educations and have gone far with what those state schools provided us.

I'm horrified to think that I may have made a terrible mistake in coming here, to think that quality faculty and world-class education for students in Hawaii does not mean as much to you as it does to me.

Working for the State is a public service job. It usually entails lower pay than one could make in the private sector. Historically, generous benefits packages have helped to compensate for this dramatic pay difference, at least in part. If these bills pass, you will be sending a message that you do not value the work done by State employees, including those of us working in higher education.

When these bills were proposed, my husband immediately started looking at jobs outside of the UH system, and outside of the state and local government. I may have to do the same. We both love our work here at UH and do not want to leave so soon after arriving, after moving our entire lives here and starting over. But the fact is that we can't afford the dramatic cuts to both of our salaries that these bills would entail. Please keep in mind that State employees spend their money locally. So money you take out of our pockets, in the form of furloughs and higher health insurance premiums, is money that will not go to the local economy. It will only hurt the State more in the long run.

I hope you consider your decision carefully, including the ramifications of these bills for State employees, their families, and local businesses. And don't forget the difficulty we will have in recruiting high-caliber faculty in the future. I will not, in good conscience,

be able to persuade colleagues to choose UH over private institutions if bills like these are enacted.

Best Regards,
-michelle

--
Michelle Manes
Assistant Professor of Mathematics
University of Hawaii at Manoa

yamashita2 - Kristen

From: Barry Curtis [barryc76@hotmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 1:42 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: I oppose HB 1728, 1719 and HB 1725

Dear Sirs:

HB 1728, 1719 and HB 1725 would cause a severe hardship on State retirees at a time of great economic uncertainty.

As someone who would be directly affected by these bills, and on behalf of my colleagues in similar circumstances, I wish to express my opposition to this legislation.

Thanks for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Barry Curtis, Ph.D.
Professor of Philosophy
University of Hawaii at Hilo

See how Windows connects the people, information, and fun that are part of your life. [See Now](#)

Dear Committee:

LATE

I am not in support of the following bills.

* HB1106 Relating to Public Employment

Seeks to protect the rights of public employees to health, retirement, leave and other benefits if furloughed. Implies that furloughs are a certainty without negotiating impact with unions. There is an assumption that furloughs will be imposed.

Also doesn't preclude other legislation from taking current benefits away.

* HB1718 Relating to Employer-Union Health Benefits

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.

* HB 1719 Relating to Public Employees

If an employee retires after July 1, 2009 and is not eligible for Medicare the state and county employee will not receive employer provided health care. Retirees will be allowed to retain coverage by paying the premiums to EUTF. Coverage through the employer resumes after Medicare age is reached. This undermines the employees who have made career decisions based on access to health care upon retirement. It is an attempt to force employees into immediate retirement while creating a two tiered system of benefits for future retirees.

* HB1725 Relating to the Hawaii Employer-Union Health Benefit Trust Fund

Prohibits EUTF from providing prescription drug coverage. Allows EUTF to have a prescription benefits paid by the employee. The impact of this could be to increase premiums since access to prescription drugs often prevents other costly services like surgery. Finding an insurance carrier may be difficult because there needs to be assurances that a large number of employees will participate.

These bills are an attempt to diminish employee's voices in influencing their conditions of employment.

They are punitive in nature doing substantial harm to families and will make it hard to maintain a quality higher education workforce. Faculty will not see UH as a viable career option nor will faculty invest in staying.

The proposals shift cost to current employees and those nearing retirement by removing benefits currently provided in EUTF health insurance plans and/or provided to employees upon retirement. These proposals are being advanced to obtain major concessions from employee unions without the state meeting its obligation to bargain.

These proposals fail to recognize the significant impact state and county employees have on our state's economy. The more pressure that is placed on employees to bear all the increased costs of health care, the more likely the state revenue stream will lessen. It is also clear that some employees will be unable to continue to provide health care for their families. Some of the benefit cuts are for six years making it unlikely that benefit coverage provided today can ever be regained.

Sincerely,

Rosanne C. Harrigan

LATE

Rosanne C. Ahrrigan
1465 Kalanikai Pl
Honolulu, HI 96821

Testimony

DATE:

Friday, February 13, 2009

TIME:

8:30 A.M.

PLACE:

Conference Room 309

State Capitol

415 South Beretania Street

A G E N D A

HB 1536

Status

RELATING TO SALARIES.

Freezes the salaries of the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, justices and judges of all state courts, Administrative Director of the State, departmental directors and deputy directors, and members of the Legislature.

LAB, FIN

HB 1106

Status

RELATING TO PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT.

Protects the rights of public employees by preserving health, retirement, leave, and other benefits if furloughs are implemented in fiscal years 2009 to 2013.

LAB, FIN

HB 1718

Status

RELATING TO EMPLOYER-UNION HEALTH BENEFITS.

Specifies that the requirement that the State and the counties reimburse retired employees for medicare part B premiums through the employer-union trust fund applies only to the employees who retire prior to 12/31/09.

LAB, FIN

HB 1719

Status

RELATING TO PUBLIC EMPLOYEES.

Suspends state and county contributions to the EUTF for all state and county employee-beneficiaries who retire after 7/1/09, regardless of date of hire and years of service, if the employee retires before the employee's medicare retirement age. Resumes coverage after medicare retirement age. Allows employee to retain health coverage through the EUTF by paying the respective state or county share of premiums until medicare retirement age.

LAB, FIN

HB 1725

Status

RELATING TO THE HAWAII EMPLOYER-UNION HEALTH BENEFITS TRUST FUND.

From 07/01/2009 to 06/30/2015: (1) prohibits health benefits plan of the employer-union health benefits trust fund from providing prescription drug coverage; and (2) allows board of trustees to make prescription drug benefits available through drug coverage plans that are paid for entirely by employee-beneficiaries.

HGEA Local 152-Concerned Citizens
Same Written Testimony in Opposition to: HB1106, 1718, 1719, 1725
(See Attached for Letter)

LATE

	First Name	Last Name	Years of Service as Public Employee
1	Dawn	Reppuhn	14-18
2	Diane	Matsushima	27
3	C.	Young	
4		Fujimoto	19
5	Weylin	Agpaoa	3
6	Benita	Manog	20
7	Darrick	Tokuda	22
8	James	Greubel	3
9	Bradford	Holt	1
10	Alejandra	Ralleca	3
11	Chad	Crosier	
12	Marivic	Cadelina	5
13	Bert	Horiyasu	22
14	Arlene	Tokuda	18.5
15	Cary	Belluomini	
16	Mildred	Welch	17
17	Neil	Matsuwa	24
18	Lori	Enos	3
19	Dana	Sugimoto	15
20	Leila	Akiona	
21	Shirlyn	Young	5
22	Lori	Kobayshi	21
23	Karen	Yamasaki	19
24	Jacqueline	Gauthier	6
25	Aileen	Ching	32
26	Don	Wna	Less than 1
27	Mencie	Tan	5
28	Gloria	Elaban	15
29	Gordon	Iakahali	12
30	Lupe	Puahi	3
31	Daphne	Griffin	10
32	Diane	Tengan	18
33	Gladys	Asuncion	1
34	Barbara	Yuen	
35	Rosa	Mormad	12
36	Ross	Murasaki	3.5
37	Betty	Tashibana	23
38	Lynn	Bell	33
39	Rissa	Miyasato	24
40	Nenita	Moralis	9
41	Joy Lynn	Uyeno	9
42	Shanna	Sakagawa	2
43	Shelley	Kohashikawa	3

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning. My name is Dawn Reppuhn
As a public employee for 14-8 years, I am deeply upset by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say.
Specifically **HB: 1106, 1718, 1719, 1725, 1723, 1715, 1726, and 1727.**

HB 1106 is supposed to 'protect the rights of public employees' in the event of a furlough. Speaker Say has said that a furlough would cause the "least amount of disruption to public service." I pose this question to the Speaker: What about the disruption to us as residents of this state? A reduction in our salaries is hugely disruptive at a time when we find ourselves more and more the sole breadwinners for our entire families. How can we afford a reduction to our salaries when we are some of the last remaining wage earners in this unstable economy?

We also strongly disagree with *Section 4* of **HB 1106**. The Governor does not have the authority to unilaterally furlough state employees.

HB 1719 is also of concern to me. As a civil servant, I chose to work for less pay to be able to contribute to the community. On balance, I believed that I would be able to count on a safe retirement. Speaker Say's bill, which disregards my years of service and reduces medical benefits until the Medicare retirement age, is irresponsible. Instead of supporting public service, Speaker Say is telling us that public employees don't mean much and promises to us can be broken mid-stream. This bill is a thinly veiled attempt to force people into early retirement. Plans I may have made to ensure a comfortable retirement suddenly up in the air. I now have to make the choice - get out now so that I can afford to stay healthy during my retirement or stay even longer to provide for my family during these tough economic times and risk losing my current level of care during my retirement.

Speaker Say is backing us into a corner, and it's irresponsible for him to suggest that this economic crisis should be resolved by sacrificing the health and well being of me and my family. Also, by forcing people into retirement before July 1, 2009, we are gambling with the future of state programs. The loss to institutional knowledge and expertise that we could experience is putting our families in Hawai'i at risk. State programs that protect Hawai'i's children, elderly and public will lose a wealth of knowledge that is not easy to recover when state hiring freezes are overburdening our already overburdened workforce.

HB 1725 says that from July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2015, public employees will have to bear **THE ENTIRE** burden of prescription drug coverage. This is literally a bill that is playing with the life and death of public workers. Although the bill is only temporary, we are gambling with six years of prescription medication. With rising chronic diseases that require medication, this bill, coupled with talk of salary cuts and rises in our premiums is like a death sentence for our elderly, sick, or recovering public workers and retirees. It will deter some employees and retirees from accessing medicine that is essential to long and healthy lives. This is a regressive bill when the rest of the nation is talking about improvements to our health care coverage.

I strongly encourage this committee to **Vote "No"** on these bills and to send a strong message to Speaker Say, that he cannot punish civil servants for their dedication and commitment to the state of Hawai'i. Please do not take away these hard earned benefits from public employees!

Yours Truly,

 2/12/09

yamashita1- Kathy

From: Rowena Estores [reestores@yahoo.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 11:16 AM
To: LABtestimony; EDNtestimony@hawaii.capitol.gov
Subject: HB 1718, 1719, 1723, 1725, 1727 - RELATING TO PUBLIC EMPLOYEES

LATE

My name is Rowena Estores and I am a speech/language pathologist in Leeward District and I strongly oppose HB 1719 which suspends state and county contributions to the EUTF for all state and county employees-beneficiaries who retire after July 1, 2009, regardless of date of hire and years of service, if the employee retires before the employee's Medicare retirement age. It resumes coverage after Medicare retirement age. Allows employee to retain health coverage through the EUTF by paying the respective state or county share of premiums until Medicare retirement age. I also oppose HB 1718, 1723, 1725, & 1727 which would further cut benefits to state and county employees.

If these bills should pass, it would encourage state and county employees to retire on June 30, 2009.

The State of Hawaii Department of Education has already had several lawsuits regarding the provision of special education and related services. The bills in the legislature would discourage possible hires from seeking employment as a state employee. This would further increase the shortage of speech/language pathologists which would affect the state's ability to provide federally mandated special education services to Hawaii's students.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Rowena Estores
Speech/Language Pathologist
State of Hawaii
Department of Education
Leeward District

yamashita1- Kathy

From: Gloria_Ishibashi/HAWAIIIDO/HIDOE@notes.k12.hi.us
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 11:13 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Testimony

LATE

To: Labor and Public Employment Committee
RELATING TO THE HAWAII EMPLOYER-UNION HEALTH BENEFITS TRUST FUND

I am a resident on the Big Island and take pride in the job that I do working for the State of Hawaii. I urge you to vote “**NO**” to the following bills HB1723, HB1715, HB1726, HB1727 HB1718, HB1719, HB1725, HB1106 which will be very devastating to many hard working families who already are struggling to make ends meet. The State needs to find other alternatives for funds and not take it out on public employees. The sector that represents me is HGEA Unit 13 and they have done a tremendous job in helping the community throughout the State. Again, please vote “**NO**” to the above bills.

Mahalo for taking the time to read this letter,

Sincerely,

Gloria Ishibashi
SBBH-Keaau High school

yamashita2 - Kristen

From: June Nii [junenii@yahoo.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 5:27 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: HB1719 and 1725

LATE

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:

My name is June Nii. As a public employee for 31 years, I am deeply upset by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say. I am writing about HB1719 and 1725 at this time.

HB 1719 is a major concern to me. I believed and heavily counted on a safe retirement. Speaker Say's bill, which disregards my years of service and reduces medical benefits until the Medicare retirement age, is irresponsible. Instead of supporting public service, Speaker Say is telling us that public employees don't mean much and promises to us can be broken mid-stream.

This bill is a thinly veiled attempt to force people into early retirement when they are not ready to retire which is my situation. I now have to make the choice - get out now so that I can afford to stay healthy during my retirement, or stay even longer to provide for my family during these tough economic times and risk losing my current level of care during my retirement.

Speaker Say is backing us into a corner, and it is irresponsible for him to suggest that this economic crisis should be resolved by sacrificing the health and well being of my family and myself. Also, by forcing people into retirement before July 1, 2009, we are gambling with the future of state programs. The loss to institutional knowledge and expertise that we could experience is putting our families in Hawai'i at risk. State programs that protect Hawai'i's children, elderly and public will lose a wealth of knowledge that is not easy to recover when state hiring freezes are overburdening our already overburdened workforce. I strongly encourage this committee to vote "no" on HB 1719 and to send a strong message to Speaker Say, that he cannot punish civil servants for their dedication and commitment to the state of Hawai'i.

HB 1725 says that from July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2015, public employees will have to bear THE ENTIRE burden of prescription drug coverage.. This is literally a bill that is playing with the life and death of public workers. Although the bill is only temporary, we are gambling with six years of prescription medication. With rising chronic diseases that require medication, this bill, coupled with talk of salary cuts and rises in our premiums is like a death sentence for our elderly, sick, or recovering public workers and retirees. It will deter some employees and retirees from accessing medicine that is essential to long and healthy lives. This is a regressive bill when the rest of the nation is talking about improvements to our health care coverage.

A furlough would definitely create hardships for public workers and their families. I am not for it, however, given a choice, I would accept the furlough as long as all the other House Bills that take away benefits from public workers do NOT pass.

Please vote "NO" on all of those bills that take away benefits from public employees. Mahalo!

yamashita2 - Kristen

From: Charles Gill [charlesgill1050@gmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 5:35 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: HB 1718, HB1725 and 1727

LATE

Dear Members fo teh Labor and Public Employment Committee,

I oppose HB 1718, HB 1725 and HB 1727.

Mahalo,

Charles Gill

LATE

RE: HB 1723, 1715, 1726, 1727 1719 and 1725

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning. My name is Beth Malvestiti. As a public employee, I am deeply upset by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say and strongly oppose HB 1723, 1715, 1726, 1727, 1719 and 1725.

I am a taxpayer and spend money at local businesses every day to buy food, clothing and other needs to support myself. I don't believe it's fair for the House to be looking at ways to balance the budget on the backs of public employees. I work hard at my job and things are even harder now since vacancies have been frozen and demands for services have increased. As a civil servant, I chose to work for less pay to be able to contribute to the community. On balance, I believed that I would be able to count on a safe retirement with health benefits.

The bills introduced are not only reducing medical benefits but will force many people into early retirement, which will gamble with the future state programs. We will lose institutional knowledge and expertise and could jeopardize many state programs. This wealth of knowledge is not easy to recover when the state has a hiring freeze and will overburden the current workforce.

I'd like to send a strong message to Speaker Say, that he cannot punish civil servants for their dedication and commitment to the State of Hawaii. Please vote NO on all these bills that take away benefits from public employees.

Please look at other ways to balance the budget. Raising the excise tax would be a fairer way to address the state's revenue problem or implementing a lottery system and set the funds aside in a special fund for education, affordable housing or "DLNR Renaissance"!

Thank you

From: Angie Hashimoto [ahash94@gmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 5:36 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: RE: Oppose HB 1719 and HB 1725

LATE

TESTIMONY in opposition of HB 1719 and HB 1725

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning. My name is Angie Hashimoto and I have been a public employee for the past 7 years. I am sincerely upset by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say. Specifically: HB 1719 and HB 1725. I would strongly urge you to oppose these house bills that "take-away" from public employees.

I work as an Educational Assistant III at King Intermediate School in the Windward District. I am a single-parent of a high school student, and have a take home pay of about \$20,000.00. We are lucky that we are able to live with my parents, but strive to someday own a place of our own. My parents are both retired, and in the very near future, I will have the responsibility of their care weighing on me financially. For my family to survive at this point, I would need to acquire a second job to provide more income for the added bills.

Each day of the year, we (educational assistants statewide) strive to make a difference in the education of students across the state. Each year, we are faced with budget cuts and empty promises. Our jobs are not glamorous and we are not highly paid. We continue to show up at work and make the students the stars of tomorrow. We are dedicated to the success of our students, and take pride in knowing that President Obama feels education is the driving force that guides the leaders for the future!

HB 1719 changes the game plan for all public workers. All of a sudden we are burdened with additional costs. I am forced by a power that will take away my benefits to make me consider what my dollars, can pay for and when I am allowed to retire. With rising medical co-payment costs, there is little or no dollars left for simple pleasures you take as a necessity. Things like the internet, cell phones, and other everyday pleasures you may take for granted are financial challenges with our pay scale. In the world today, we count on dedication and commitment. As an employee of the State, I counted on my Retirement and Benefits knowing that my counterparts in the private sector had higher wages. Our small rewards was seeing John and Mary graduate from high school and college and venture into the community to become successful citizens. Our jobs will always reward us in our hearts, just as we nurtured our student's hearts. Our benefit was to make sure our hearts would endure a robust and healthy life; please oppose HB 1719 and HB 1725.

HB 1725 would give the burden of prescription medicine to public workers who are already underpaid, and working two or three jobs to suffice. For me, this would again mean choosing between survival needs like food and shelter. Will it come to deciding that my prescription drugs are just a comfort item versus a survival detail? I have to ask, would the legislature make us choose and suffer so they may pass this bill? Prescription Drug coverage is something I rely on. As representatives, you highly rely on your office staff. What measures would you go to if they were suddenly cut from your budget/office? Keep in mind also, that working in the school environment each day, we are at a higher exposure to the many illnesses like the common cold, and flu. With the rising cost of everything but our wages, our lives have become a challenge from day to day. We implore that you vote "NO" on HB 1725.

These bills introduced by Speaker Say and being heard today by the House committee on Labor and Public Employment will hurt me here today in the present, and AGAIN in my future. Please vote "NO" on HB 1719 and HB 1725.

Sincerely,

Angie K. Hashimoto
Educational Assistant III, King Intermediate School
- member of Hawaii Government Employees Association, Unit 03

LATE

RE: HB 1723, 1715, 1726, 1727 1719 and 1725

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning. My name is Beth Malvestiti. As a public employee, I am deeply upset by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say and strongly oppose HB 1723, 1715, 1726, 1727, 1719 and 1725.

I am a taxpayer and spend money at local businesses every day to buy food, clothing and other needs to support myself. I don't believe it's fair for the House to be looking at ways to balance the budget on the backs of public employees. I work hard at my job and things are even harder now since vacancies have been frozen and demands for services have increased. As a civil servant, I chose to work for less pay to be able to contribute to the community. On balance, I believed that I would be able to count on a safe retirement with health benefits.

The bills introduced are not only reducing medical benefits but will force many people into early retirement, which will gamble with the future state programs. We will lose institutional knowledge and expertise and could jeopardize many state programs. This wealth of knowledge is not easy to recover when the state has a hiring freeze and will overburden the current workforce.

I'd like to send a strong message to Speaker Say, that he cannot punish civil servants for their dedication and commitment to the State of Hawaii. Please vote NO on all these bills that take away benefits from public employees.

Please look at other ways to balance the budget. Raising the excise tax would be a fairer way to address the state's revenue problem or implementing a lottery system and set the funds aside in a special fund for education, affordable housing or "DLNR Renaissance"!

Thank you

yamashita1- Kathy

From: Beth.E.Malvestiti@hawaii.gov
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 11:14 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: HB 1723,1726,1727,1719,1725
Attachments: Benefit Testimony ltr.docx

LATE

Aloha,
Please see attached letter as testimony regarding above House Bills. Thank you

Beth E. Malvestiti
Project Coordinator
Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation
677 Queen Street, Suite 300
Honolulu, HI 96813

808.587.0546

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning. My name is Johnelle Kaimikaua. As a public employee for over 10 years, I am deeply upset by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say. Specifically: HBs 1106, 1719, and 1725.

HB 1106 is supposed to 'protect the rights of public employees' in the event of a furlough. Speaker Say has said that a furlough would cause the "least amount of disruption to public service." Are public employees not also considered the 'public?' A reduction in our salaries is hugely disruptive. How can we afford a reduction to our salaries when we are some of the last remaining wage earners in this unstable economy? We also strongly disagree with Section 4 of HB 1106. The Governor does not have the authority to unilaterally furlough state employees.

HB 1719 is also of concern to me. As a civil servant, I chose to work for less pay to be able to contribute to the community. In return, I believed that I would be able to count on a safe retirement. Speaker Say's bill, which disregards my years of service and reduces medical benefits until the Medicare retirement age, is irresponsible. Instead of supporting public service, Speaker Say is telling us that public employees don't mean much and promises to us can be broken mid-stream. Speaker Say is backing us into a corner, and it's irresponsible for him to suggest that this economic crisis should be resolved by sacrificing the health and well being of state employees and their families. Also, by forcing people into retirement before July 1, 2009, we are gambling with the future of state programs. The loss to institutional knowledge and expertise that we could experience is putting our families in Hawai'i at risk. State programs that protect Hawai'i's children, elderly and public will lose a wealth of knowledge that is not easy to recover when state hiring freezes are overburdening our already overburdened workforce. I strongly encourage this committee to vote "no" on HB 1719 and to send a strong message to Speaker Say, that he cannot punish civil servants for their dedication and commitment to the state of Hawai'i.

HB 1725 says that from July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2015, public employees will have to bear THE ENTIRE burden of prescription drug coverage. This is literally a bill that is playing with the life and death of public workers. Although the bill is only temporary, we are gambling with six years of prescription medication. With rising chronic diseases that require medication, this bill, coupled with talk of salary cuts and rises in our premiums is like a death sentence for our elderly, sick, or recovering public workers and retirees. It will deter some employees and retirees from accessing medicine that is essential to long and healthy lives. This is a regressive bill when the rest of the nation is talking about improvements to our health care coverage.

Please vote "no" on all of these bills that take away benefits from public employees. To force all these changes in benefits unjustly puts a large amount of the state's economic burden on public employees. The State needs to find other ways of dealing with the budget than to always take the easy way out by taking away benefits from its employees.

From: Donna Alalem [dalalem@hawaii.rr.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 5:47 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: REQUESTING YOU TO OPPOSE HB 1106, 1718, 1719, 1725, 1723, 1715, 1726, 1727

LATE

You Must Oppose:

HB 1106 - Furloughing employees
HB1718 - Halt reimbursement for Medicare part B premiums for employees retiring after 12/31/09
HB1719 - Stop employer contribution for health benefits for those retiring after 7/1/09
HB1725 - Halt prescription drug coverage under EUTF

HB 1723 - Limit employer contribution to 55% and make it non-negotiable;
HB1715 - Increase, for new employees, the age and service time requirement to retire;
HB 1726 - Curtail EUTF payment for life insurance benefits;
HB 1727 - Prohibits provision of dental and vision coverage

Re: HB1715, 1716, 1719, 1720 Etc.

Representative Calvin Say's proposals are a hard, insulting b**ch slap to government workers.

The threat of taking away our medical benefits and moving our acceptable retirement date to 65 will force us to retire before 6/30/09

I am a state employee with the Dept of Ed, and an HGEA Excluded Associate Member for a short 15 years. Others have dedicated 30-40 years or more.

I have worked happily underpaid and happily overworked, because I love my job and most certainly for the relatively good benefits I was promised.

My paycheck doesn't cover even minimum living expenses; retirement and social security will be minimum. I took a 30% cut coming from the private sector to the DOE primarily for the alleged security and benefits, certainly not for the salary.

I foresee Rep. Say's bills forcing out seasoned, knowledgeable employees from every part of the State Government, setting the stage systemic chaos.

It is curious that 35% pay increases for upper echelon state officials sail through unquestioned, while clerical and blue collar grunts like me--the backbone of the functioning system--are slapped with threats Calvin Say has presented.

It is curious that there are no proposals to cull the judges' and elected officials' retirement base of 3.5% compared to our 1.25%, PLUS their annuity, PLUS they may retire in only 10 years at any age.

Your proposals are an insult to government workers and political to any elected official who votes for those bills.

Thank you for your time and bandwidth,

Donna Alalem

P O Box 1151

Kapaa, HI 96746

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning. My name is William Lau. As a public employee for 3 years, I am deeply upset by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say. Specifically: HB 1106, HB 1719, and HB 1725.

HR 1106 is supposed to protect the rights of public employees in the event of a furlough. Speaker Say has said that a furlough would cause the "least amount of disruption to public service."

I pose this question to the Speaker: What about the disruption to us as residents of this state? A reduction in our salaries are hugely disruptive at a time when we find ourselves more and more the sole breadwinners for our entire families. How can we afford a reduction to our salaries when we are some of the last remaining wage earners in this unstable economy?

We also strongly disagree with Section 4 of HB 1106. The Governor does not have the authority to unilaterally furlough state employees.

HB 1719 is also of concern to me. As a civil service I chose to work for less pay to be able to contribute to the community. On balance, I believed that I would be able to count on a safe retirement. Speaker Say's bill, which disregards my years of service and reduces medical benefits until the Medicare retirement age, is irresponsible. Instead of supporting public service, Speaker Say is telling us that public employees don't mean much and promises to us can be broken mid-stream.

This bill is a thinly veiled attempt to force people into early retirement. Plans I may have made to ensure that my children graduated from college before I retire are suddenly up in the air. I now have to make the choice - get out now so that I can afford to stay healthy during my retirement, or stay even longer to provide for my family during these tough economic times and risk losing my current level of care during my retirement.

Speaker Say is backing us into a corner, and it's not responsible for him to suggest that this economic crisis should be resolved by sacrificing the health and well being of me and my family. Also, by forcing people into retirement before July 1, 2009, we are gambling with the future of state programs. The loss to institutional knowledge and expertise that we could experience is putting our families in Hawaii at risk. State programs that protect Hawaii's children, elderly and public will lose a wealth of knowledge that is not easy to recover when state hiring freezes are overburdening our already overburdened workforce. I strongly encourage this committee to vote 'no' on HB 1719 and to send a strong message to Speaker Say, that he cannot punish civil servants for their dedication and commitment to the state of Hawaii.

HB 1725 says that from July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2015, public employees will have to bear THE ENTIRE burden of prescription drug coverage. This is literally a bill that is playing with the life and death of public workers. Although the bill is only temporary, we are gambling with six years of prescription medication. With rising chronic diseases that require medication, this bill, coupled with talk of salary cuts and rises in our premiums is like a death sentence for our elderly, sick, or recovering public workers and retirees. It will deter some employees and retirees from accessing medicine that is essential to long and healthy lives. This is a regressive bill when the rest of the nation is talking about improvements to our health care coverage.

Please Vote "NO" on all of these bills that take away benefits from public employees. Thank you.

yamashita2 - Kristen

From: Francis_Farrington/LEIHOKU/HIDOE@notes.k12.hi.us
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 5:49 PM
To: LABtestimony

LATE

To whom it may concern,

I write this email as a concerned state employee. I feel privileged to be able to serve the state of Hawaii and specifically the community of Wai'anae. But however I am deeply saddened as well as disturbed to hear of HB 1719 and the proposal to suspend contribution of funds to those who will retire as of July 1, 2009. I understand that our current economic crisis is causing a tremendous strain on all facets of our society, but we need to preserve the bond between state and employees and their community. Cutting out hard earned benefits will only weaken the relationship between state employees and their superiors. The community will in turn suffer when those who here to serve them and better their lives, are betrayed and left disheartened by the possibility of abandonment of benefits to them. I felt it necessary to make it known that I strongly denounce any proposal or support of HBs 1723, 1719, 1725 & 1727. I hope that this can contribute in anyway, to preserve the commitments made to state employees years ago.

Francis Farrington
Special Education teacher
Leihoku Elementary School
Wai'anae, HI, 96707

From: Donna Ho [dho221@gmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 5:56 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: HB1106, HB1715, HB1718, HB1719, HB1723, HB1725, HB1726, HB1727

LATE

Aloha! House Labor & Public Employee Committee,

I appreciate this opportunity to provide comments on the subject House Bills. I have been a public employee for over 12 years. I enjoy my job, and the benefits seem to keep us dedicated and motivated to continue to serve the public.

I find it very disappointing that the representative I had voted for had introduced these bills. Nevertheless, the subject bills appear to have negative impacts on public employees and our families.

Even a possible decrease in income and benefits to a large number of persons will further negatively impact businesses and the overall economy in the islands. Businesses will suffer since employees will choose to spend less especially if their future is unknown. Nonprofit organizations will have fewer volunteers and may result in offering fewer services.

HB1715 would impact our future hiring of colleagues. This will affect those qualified and skilled individuals on their decision to decide not to enter as public employees. Less pay and less benefits is not attractive.

We cannot forget to mention how the subject bills would impact our retirees and those close to retirement.

Your consideration in voting against the subject House Bills is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,
Donna Ho
c 221-1400

From: Valerie Wayne [vwayne@hawaii.edu]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 5:55 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: testing

LATE

Dear Legislators:

As a faculty member at UH Manoa for thirty years, I want to voice my objections to House Bills 1106, 1718, 1719, 1725. These bills seriously diminish support for the health care that I have worked my entire career to achieve and have been told I could rely upon. I am aware that we are in a serious economic crisis and need to reduce the state budget, but withdrawing these kinds of resources from your hard-working and dedicated state employees is not the answer. At a time when the federal government is aware of the need to improve health care for all of its citizens, is Hawai'i, previously a progressive state in this regard, going to back-peddle on its commitments to its own workers? There are many other ways that the problems of the cost of health care can be addressed and are being addressed, including some through the stimulus package that is on its way to approval in Congress. That package will bring some much-needed relief to this state, and there are other ways in which you can reduce the state budget without cutting our health care at precisely the point in our lives that we may need to draw on it. Over the thirty years I have been a professor at UHM, I have paid far more for health care per year than I have ever received in medical benefits. Please don't withdraw that resource from me now.

Respectfully yours,

Valerie Wayne
Professor of English
University of Hawai'i. Manoa

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:

LATE

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning. My name is Laurie Kimura and I am a member of HGEA, Bargaining Unit 03. I live in Kahului, Maui.

As a public employee, I am deeply upset by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say. Specifically: HB 1106. HB 1106 is supposed to 'protect the rights of public employees' in the event of a furlough. Speaker Say has said that a furlough would cause the "least amount of disruption to public service." I pose this question to the Speaker: What about the disruption to us as residents of this state? A reduction in our salaries is hugely disruptive at a time when we find ourselves more and more the sole breadwinners for our entire families. How can we afford a reduction to our salaries when we are some of the last remaining wage earners in this unstable economy? I also strongly disagree with Section 4 of HB 1106. The Governor does not have the authority to unilaterally furlough state employees.

HB 1719 is also of concern to me. As a civil servant, I chose to work for less pay to be able to contribute to the community. On balance, I believed that I would be able to count on a safe retirement. Speaker Say's bill, which disregards my years of service and reduces medical benefits until the Medicare retirement age, is irresponsible. Instead of supporting public service, Speaker Say is telling us that public employees don't mean much and promises to us can be broken mid-stream. This bill is a thinly veiled attempt to force people into early retirement. I now have to make the choice - get out now so that I can afford to stay healthy during my retirement, or stay even longer to provide for myself during these tough economic times and risk losing my current level of care during my retirement.

Speaker Say is backing us into a corner, and it is irresponsible for him to suggest that this economic crisis should be resolved by sacrificing the health and well being of me and my family. Also, by forcing people into retirement before July 1, 2009, we are gambling with the future of state programs. The loss to institutional knowledge and expertise that we could experience is putting our families in Hawai'i at risk. State programs that protect Hawai'i's children, elderly and public will loose a wealth of knowledge that is not easy to recover when state hiring freezes are overburdening our already overburdened workforce. I strongly encourage this committee to vote "no" on HB 1719 and to send a strong message to Speaker Say, that he cannot punish civil servants for their dedication and commitment to the state of Hawai'i.

HB 1725 says that from July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2015, public employees will have to bear THE ENTIRE burden of prescription drug coverage. This is literally a bill that is playing with the life and death of public workers. Although the bill is only temporary, we are gambling with six years of prescription medication. With

rising chronic diseases that require medication, this bill, coupled with talk of salary cuts and rises in our premiums is like a death sentence for our elderly, sick, or recovering public workers and retirees. It will deter some employees and retirees from accessing medicine that is essential to long and healthy lives. This is a regressive bill when the rest of the nation is talking about improvements to our health care coverage.

Please vote "no" on all of these bills that take away benefits from public employees.

Mahalo

yamashita2 - Kristen

From: WMa27@aol.com
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 6:05 PM
To: LABtestimony
Cc: WMa27@aol.com
Subject: Testimony

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony for your February 13, 2009 meeting.

My name is Wallace Ma. I have been a public employee for almost 15 years with the State of Hawaii.

I am a taxpayer like yourselves. I spend money at local businesses every day to buy food, clothing, gasoline and other necessities.

I don't believe it is fair for the House of Representatives, through their Speaker, Calvin Say, to be looking at cutting health and retirement benefits for public employees as a way to balance the budget. I work hard at my job and things are even harder now since vacancies have been frozen. I've made a career in public service knowing that my pay may not be as good as in the private sector but I could rely on retirement and health benefits for myself and my family.

I think it is wrong for the House of Representatives to take these benefits away from me.

I respectfully ask this committee to please vote "NO" on the following house bills that seek to take away benefits from public employees:

HB 1106; HB 1718; HB 1719; HB 1725

The year's hottest artists on the red carpet at the Grammy Awards. [AOL Music takes you there.](#)

From: siu ying or [siuyingor@gmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 6:07 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Requesting Your Help

LATE

Hi, my name is Siu Ying Or. I work for State Judiciary and am a member of HGEA.

I am also a taxpayer. I spend money at local businesses every day to buy food, clothing and other needs.

I don't believe it's fair for the House to be looking at ways to balance the budget on the backs of public employees. I work hard at my job and things are even harder now since vacancies have been frozen and demands for services have increased. I've made a career in public service knowing that my pay may not be as good as in the private sector but I could rely on retirement and health benefits for myself and my family.

I think it's wrong for representatives to take these benefits away from me.

Please look for other ways to balance the budget. Raising the excise tax would be a fairer way to address the state's revenue problem. Everyone paying a little more will mean sharing the burden during these tough times.

I strongly oppose to the bills #1106,1718,1719,1725,1723,1727

yamashita2 - Kristen

From: Kevin Yokoyama [kyokoyama@hawaiiintel.net]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 6:16 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Testimony on HB 1719 and HB 1725

LATE

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony. My name is Kevin Yokoyama. As a public employee for 19 years, I am extremely upset by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say. Specifically: HB 1719 and HB 1725.

I sacrificed pay to work in government to contribute to the community and for the long-term benefits. These bills are like changing the rules after a game has started. They are totally unfair, misguided, and put the financial burden of the entire state on one group. Government employees did not cause the economic crisis that we are all facing and there must be a more equitable way to deal with this situation.

Sacrificing long-term public employee benefits is short-sighted and will create tremendous problems down the road. When the economy improves the most capable public employees will find employment elsewhere because there will be no incentive to work for government. It will also be difficult to attract capable new employees into government and everyone will end up suffering.

Please vote "no" on these and other bills that take away benefits from government employees.

LATE

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning. My name is Audrey Horimoto. As a public employee for 14 years, I am deeply upset by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say. Specifically: HB 1106, HB 1719, and HB 1725.

HR 1106 is supposed to protect the rights of public employees in the event of a furlough. Speaker Say has said that a furlough would cause the “least amount of disruption to public service.”

I pose this question to the Speaker: What about the disruption to us as residents of this state? A reduction in our salaries are hugely disruptive at a time when we find ourselves more and more the sole breadwinners for our entire families. How can we afford a reduction to our salaries when we are some of the last remaining wage earners in this unstable economy?

We also strongly disagree with Section 4 of HB 1106. The Governor does not have the authority to unilaterally furlough state employees.

HB 1719 is also of concern to me. As a civil service I chose to work for less pay to be able to contribute to the community. On balance, I believed that I would be able to count on a safe retirement. Speaker Say’s bill, which disregards my years of service and reduces medical benefits until the Medicare retirement age, is irresponsible. Instead of supporting public service, Speaker Say is telling us that public employees don’t mean much and promises to us can be broken mid-stream.

This bill is a thinly veiled attempt to force people into early retirement. Plans I may have made to ensure that my children graduated from college before I retire are suddenly up in the air. I now have to make the choice - get out now so that I can afford to stay healthy during my retirement, or stay even longer to provide for my family during these tough economic times and risk losing my current level of care during my retirement.

Speaker Say is backing us into a corner, and it’s not responsible for him to suggest that this economic crisis should be resolved by sacrificing the health and well being of me and my family. Also, by forcing people into retirement before July 1, 2009, we are gambling with the future of state programs. The loss to institutional knowledge and expertise that we could experience is putting our families in Hawaii at risk. State programs that protect Hawaii’s children, elderly and public will lose a wealth of knowledge that is not easy to recover when state hiring freezes are overburdening our already overburdened workforce. I strongly encourage this committee to vote ‘no’ on HB 1719 and to send a strong message to Speaker Say, that he cannot punish civil servants for their dedication and commitment to the state of Hawaii.

HB 1725 says that from July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2015, public employees will have to bear THE ENTIRE burden of prescription drug coverage. This is literally a bill that is playing with the life and death of public workers. Although the bill is only temporary, we are gambling with six years of prescription medication. With rising chronic diseases that require medication, this bill, coupled with talk of salary cuts and rises in our premiums is like a death sentence for our elderly, sick, or recovering public workers and retirees. It will deter some employees and retirees from accessing medicine that is essential to long and healthy lives. This is a regressive bill when the rest of the nation is talking about improvements to our health care coverage.

Please Vote “NO” on all of these bills that take away benefits from public employees. Thank you.

LATE

RE: HB 1723, 1715, 1726, 1727 1719 and 1725

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning. My name is Beth Malvestiti. As a public employee, I am deeply upset by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say and strongly oppose HB 1723, 1715, 1726, 1727, 1719 and 1725.

I am a taxpayer and spend money at local businesses every day to buy food, clothing and other needs to support myself. I don't believe it's fair for the House to be looking at ways to balance the budget on the backs of public employees. I work hard at my job and things are even harder now since vacancies have been frozen and demands for services have increased. As a civil servant, I chose to work for less pay to be able to contribute to the community. On balance, I believed that I would be able to count on a safe retirement with health benefits.

The bills introduced are not only reducing medical benefits but will force many people into early retirement, which will gamble with the future state programs. We will lose institutional knowledge and expertise and could jeopardize many state programs. This wealth of knowledge is not easy to recover when the state has a hiring freeze and will overburden the current workforce.

I'd like to send a strong message to Speaker Say, that he cannot punish civil servants for their dedication and commitment to the State of Hawaii. Please vote NO on all these bills that take away benefits from public employees.

Please look at other ways to balance the budget. Raising the excise tax would be a fairer way to address the state's revenue problem or implementing a lottery system and set the funds aside in a special fund for education, affordable housing or "DLNR Renaissance"!

Thank you

yamashita1- Kathy

From: Loreene Fujioka [lrfujioka@yahoo.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 11:04 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Testimony regarding State Employees

LATE

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning. My name is Loreene Fujioka. As a public employee for over 35 years, I am deeply upset by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say.

I truly believe it is a punitive and a travesty that your proposed solution is narrowly focusing on eliminating and/or reducing the health benefits for state workers. We have all worked long and hard and earned these benefits and to have them wiped away merely to balance the state budget is reprehensible.

Please look at other ways, than just penalizing the state employees by reducing and/or eliminating their dental, vision and drug benefits.

I truly believe that an increase of the excise/sales tax would generate millions of dollars and more than offset this anticipated deficit. This solution is "shared" by everyone in the state of Hawaii, including the tourists, not just the state employees. Food items should be exempt from the increase and be eliminated. This would lessen the pain of an increase in the tax. Hawaii has one of the lowest tax rates in the nation in comparison to other states.

if you look long and hard, there are other revenue generating options available including user fees, registration fees, excise tax increase on tobacco, alcohol and also increase in penalties for violation, etc. Additionally, programs that have outlived its usefulness should be evaluated and perhaps terminated.

Taking this simplistic approach of taking away benefits from state employees is unjust, dishonorable and shameful.

Speaker Say is being irresponsible for him to suggest that this economic crisis should be resolved by sacrificing the health and well being of me and my family. The state employee are not the bad guys here. We should not be taking the blame for all the short-falls of the economy.

Therefore, I urge you to vote NO on the following bills:

Friday, February 13, 2009

HB 1718 - Halt reimbursement for Medicare part B premiums for employees retiring after 12/31/09.

HB 1719 - Stop employer contribution for health benefits for those retiring after 7/1/09.

HB 1725 - Halt prescription drug coverage under EUTF.

Tuesday, February 17, 2009

HB 1723 - Limit employer contribution to 55% and make it non-negotiable;

HB 1726 - Curtail EUTF payment for life insurance benefits;

HB 1727 - Prohibit provision of dental and vision coverage.

Loreene T. Fujioka

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning. My name is David Kahue.

As a public employee for 8+ years, I am deeply upset by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say.

HB 1106 is supposed to 'protect the rights of public employees' in the event of a furlough. Speaker Say has said that a furlough would cause the "least amount of disruption to public service." I pose this question to the Speaker: What about the disruption to us as residents of this state? A reduction in our salaries is hugely disruptive at a time when we find ourselves more and more the sole breadwinners for our entire families. How can we afford a reduction to our salaries when we are some of the last remaining wage earners in this unstable economy?

We also strongly disagree with Section 4 of HB 1106. The Governor does not have the authority to unilaterally furlough state employees.

HB 1719 is also of concern to me. As a civil servant, I chose to work for less pay to be able to contribute to the community. On balance, I believed that I would be able to count on a safe retirement. Speaker Say's bill, which disregards my years of service and reduces medical benefits until the Medicare retirement age, is irresponsible. Instead of supporting public service, Speaker Say is telling us that public employees don't mean much and promises to us can be broken mid-stream.

This bill is a thinly veiled attempt to force people into early retirement. Plans I may have made to ensure that my children graduated from college before I retire are suddenly up in the air. I now have to make the choice - get out now so that I can afford to stay healthy during my retirement, or stay even longer to provide for my family during these tough economic times and risk losing my current level of care during my retirement.

Speaker Say is backing us into a corner, and it's irresponsible for him to suggest that this economic crisis should be resolved by sacrificing the health and well being of me and my family. Also, by forcing people into retirement before July 1, 2009, we are gambling with the future of state programs. The loss of institutional knowledge and expertise that we could experience is putting our families in Hawai'i at risk. State programs that protect Hawai'i's children, elderly and public will lose a wealth of knowledge that is not easy to recover when state hiring freezes are overburdening our already overburdened workforce. I strongly encourage this committee to vote "no" on HB 1719 and to send a strong message to Speaker Say, that he cannot punish civil servants for their dedication and commitment to the state of Hawai'i.

HB 1725 says that from July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2015, public employees will have to bear THE ENTIRE burden of prescription drug coverage. This is literally a bill that is playing with the life and death of public workers. Although the bill is only temporary, we are gambling with six years of prescription medication. With rising chronic diseases that require medication, this bill, coupled with talk of salary cuts and rises in our premiums is like a death sentence for our elderly, sick, or recovering public workers and retirees. It will deter some employees and retirees from accessing medicine that is essential to long

and healthy lives. This is a regressive bill when the rest of the nation is talking about improvements to our health care coverage.

It was just recently that the state had a surplus and now that we have a downturn in the economy, some people panic and make bad decisions (i.e. the aforementioned bills) and want to drastically affect the lives of thousands of people. I don't think these proposals were well thought out and would probably prolong the recession (if passed) that we are facing. These proposals are just a poor and lazy attempt to try and balance the budget.

There are numerous ways to save money and/or generate more money to balance the budget. Currently, many positions aren't being filled and won't be filled, thus saving millions of dollars. Every department is cutting their budget and probably will continue to do so, saving millions more. Creative ways to generate money include implementing small user fees for parks and other "free" services that would help cover maintenance costs and keep facilities open. Gambling may be a touchy subject to some, but I haven't heard the other 48 states complain or cite that gambling has increased their crime or poverty levels. Having a form of legalized gambling would generate millions of dollars for the state and stimulate the economy by keeping money in the state. The positives of legalized gambling outweigh the negatives. Another way to generate more revenue may be to raise the excise tax to 5%. This way, everyone will have the responsibility in helping out the state.

Economists/analysts know that the economy goes in cycles and that the country should rebound, so I don't understand the knee jerk reaction by Calvin Say.

Please vote "no" on all of these bills that take away benefits from public employees.

LATE

Chair Roads, Vice Chair Yamashita and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to voice my concerns on the various issues facing the State employees. As a newly hired employee, I am upset by the bills that have been introduced by Speaker Calvin Say. In particular, HB 1719, HB 1725, HB 1726 and HB 1727 which will directly affect health issues for myself and my family.

I recently left a higher paying job in private industry to work for less pay in order to make my small contribution to the community. With a smaller income, I will not be able to afford paying more for health insurance. HB 1725 states that for the period of July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2015, public employees will have to bear THE ENTIRE burden of prescription drug coverage. This is in essence a bill that is manipulating with the life and death of public workers. For myself, I am in need of prescription drug coverage to help with chronic pain management. Without medication, my quality of life will be seriously affected.

Please vote **“no”** on all of these bills that take away benefits from public employees to ensure that we can all enjoy a healthy lifestyle and leads to more productivity in the workplace.

720 Mahi'ai Street, Apt. E
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96826
February 12, 2009

LATE

Representative Karl Rhoads, Chair
Committee on Labor & Public Employment
Hawai'i State House of Representatives
State Capitol
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Representative Rhoads,

I understand that the following bills will be heard by the Committee on Labor and Public Employment tomorrow, February 13, 2009. I am writing to urge you and the members of your committee to vote **AGAINST** these bills:

HB 1106 Relating to Public Employment

HB 1718 Relating to Employer-Union Health Benefits

HB 1719 Relating to Public Employees

HB 1725 Relating to the Hawaii Employer-Union Health Benefit Trust Fund

I feel that these bills are very unfair to public workers, especially those who are near retirement. They should be allowed to keep their health benefits. After working hard all their lives, they should have the assurance that they will have adequate health care.

HB 1718 practically forces people to retire this year, even if they didn't plan to. Many people are suffering losses because of the economic recession which has gripped the country. They really cannot afford to retire now. But if they don't, they will lose much-needed health coverage.

HB 1719 would require many retired workers who are not eligible for Medicare to pay their health premiums -- but how can they afford it?

This is like picking the pockets of the elderly. This is no way to treat our kupuna. This is no way to treat people who worked hard all their lives. They are the vulnerable ones in our society.

If the kupuna cannot afford their premiums or are forced to retire even if they cannot afford to, this will hurt their children financially, because they will be forced to pay the health care bills.

Please protect the health care benefits of public workers by voting **NO** to these bills.

Mahalo,

Eileen Cain

yamashita2 - Kristen

From: Kerry Holokai [kholokai@hawaii.edu]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 6:33 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Testimony

LATE

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony. My name is Kerry Holokai and a member of HGEA, Bargaining Unit 03. I live in Ha'iku, Maui.

As a public employee for 16 years, I am truly disturbed by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say. Specifically:

HB 1106 - Furloughing employees

HB1718 - Halt reimbursement for Medicare part B premiums for employees retiring after 12/31/09

HB1719 - Stop employer contribution for health benefits for those retiring after 7/1/09

HB1725 - Halt prescription drug coverage under EUTF

HB 1723 - Limit employer contribution to 55% and make it non-negotiable;

HB1715 - Increase, for new employees, the age and service time requirement to retire;

HB 1726 - Curtail EUTF payment for life insurance benefits;

HB 1727 - Prohibits provision of dental and vision coverage.

HB 1106. I cannot afford a reduction in my salary during this time of economic strife. I am already living paycheck to paycheck, and just barely making ends meet. I also strongly disagree with Section 4 of HB 1106. The Governor does not have the authority to unilaterally furlough state employees.

HB 1719 is also disappointing. I chose to work for less pay to be able to contribute to the community. Speaker Say's bill, which disregards my years of service and reduces medical benefits until the Medicare retirement age, is irresponsible. Sacrificing the health and well-being of people in the hopes that the economic crisis will be resolved is quite simply, ludicrous.

HB 1725 says that from July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2015, public employees will have to bear THE ENTIRE burden of prescription drug coverage. How odd to introduce such a bill when the rest of the nation is talking about improvements to our health care coverage.

It seems that public employees are usually the target and often the ones to blame for our State's problems. Public employees are not the problem.

Please vote "no" on all of these bills that take away benefits from public employees.

Mahalo

yamashita1- Kathy

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 11:06 AM
To: LABtestimony
Cc: terrypulham@msn.com
Subject: Testimony for HB1723 on 2/17/2009 8:30:00 AM

LATE

Testimony for LAB 2/17/2009 8:30:00 AM HB1723

Conference room: 309
Testifier position: oppose
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Terry J Pulham
Organization: Individual
Address: 820A Kaipii St. Kailua HI 96734
Phone: 808-779-6310
E-mail: terrypulham@msn.com
Submitted on: 2/12/2009

Comments:

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning. My name is Terry J Pulham. As a public employee for 8 years, I am deeply upset by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say. Specifically: HB 1106, HB 1718, HB 1719, HB 1725, HB 1723, HB 1715, HB 1726, HB 1727

HB 1106 is supposed to 'protect the rights of public employees' in the event of a furlough. Speaker Say has said that a furlough would cause the "least amount of disruption to public service."

I pose this question to the Speaker: What about the disruption to us as residents of this state?

A reduction in our salaries is hugely disruptive at a time when we find ourselves more and more the sole breadwinners for our entire families. How can we afford a reduction to our salaries when we are some of the last remaining wage earners in this unstable economy? We also strongly disagree with Section 4 of HB 1106. The Governor does not have the authority to unilaterally furlough state employees.

HB 1719 is also of concern to me. As a civil servant, I chose to work for less pay to be able

to contribute to the community. On balance, I believed that I would be able to count on a safe retirement. Speaker Say's bill, which disregards my years of service and reduces medical benefits until the Medicare retirement age, is irresponsible. Instead of supporting public service, Speaker Say is telling us that public employees don't mean much and promises to us can be broken mid-stream. This bill is a thinly veiled attempt to force people into early retirement. Plans I may have made to ensure that my children graduate from college before I retire are suddenly up in the air. I now have to make the choice - get out now so that I can afford to stay health during my retirement, or stay even longer to provide for my family during these tough economic times and risk losing my current level of care during my retirement. Speaker Say is backing us into a corner, and it's not irresponsible for him to suggest that this economic crisis should be resolved by sacrificing the health and well being of me and my family. Also, by forcing people into retirement before July 1, 2009, we are gambling with the future of state programs. The loss to institutional knowledge and expertise that we could experience is putting our families in Hawai'i at risk. State programs that protect Hawai'i's children, elderly and public will loose

a wealth of knowledge that is not easy to recover when state hiring freezes are overburdening our already overburdened workforce. I strongly encourage this committee to vote "NO" on HB 1719 and to send a strong message to Speaker Say, that he cannot punish civil servants for their dedication and commitment to the state of Hawai'i.

HB 1725 says that from July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2015, public employees will have to bear THE ENTIRE burden of prescription drug coverage. This is literally a bill that is playing with the life and death of public workers. Although the bill is only temporary, we are gambling with six years of prescription medication. With rising chronic diseases that require medication, this bill, coupled with talk of salary cuts and rises in our premiums is like a death sentence for our elderly, sick, or recovering public workers and retirees. It will deter some employees and retirees from accessing medicine that is essential to long and healthy lives. This is a regressive bill when the rest of the nation is talking about improvements to our health care coverage.

Please vote "NO" on all of these bills that take away benefits from public employees.

NO to HB 1106

NO to HB 1718

NO to HB 1719

NO to HB 1725

NO to HB 1723

NO to HB 1715

NO to HB 1726

NO to HB 1727

yamashita2 - Kristen

From: Kathryn Klingebiel [kathrynklingebiel@yahoo.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 6:33 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: health care and retirement benefits for UHM faculty

LATE

To the **House Committee and Labor and Public Employment:**

I do not support the following measures:

- *HB1106 Relating to Public Employment*
- *HB1718 Relating to Employer-Union Health Benefits*
- *HB 1719 Relating to Public Employees*
- *HB1725 Relating to the Hawaii Employer-Union Health Benefit Trust Fund*

I do not support forcing UHM faculty into immediate retirement = retirement before 1 July 2009.

I wish EUTF to continue providing prescription drug coverage.

Sincerely,

Dr. Kathryn Klingebiel (UHM faculty since 1991)

yamashita1- Kathy

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 11:06 AM
To: LABtestimony
Cc: terrypulham@msn.com
Subject: Testimony for HB1106 on 2/13/2009 8:30:00 AM

LATE

Testimony for LAB 2/13/2009 8:30:00 AM HB1106

Conference room: 309
Testifier position: oppose
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Terry J Pulham
Organization: Individual
Address: 820A Kaipii St. Kailua HI 96734
Phone: 808-779-6310
E-mail: terrypulham@msn.com
Submitted on: 2/12/2009

Comments:

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning. My name is Terry J Pulham.

As a public employee for 8 years, I am deeply upset by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say. Specifically: HB 1106, HB 1718, HB 1719, HB 1725, HB 1723, HB 1715, HB 1726, HB 1727

HB 1106 is supposed to 'protect the rights of public employees' in the event of a furlough. Speaker Say has said that a furlough would cause the "least amount of disruption to public service."

I pose this question to the Speaker: What about the disruption to us as residents of this state?

A reduction in our salaries is hugely disruptive at a time when we find ourselves more and more the sole breadwinners for our entire families. How can we afford a reduction to our salaries when we are some of the last remaining wage earners in this unstable economy?

We also strongly disagree with Section 4 of HB 1106. The Governor does not have the authority to unilaterally furlough state employees.

HB 1719 is also of concern to me. As a civil servant, I chose to work for less pay to be able

to contribute to the community. On balance, I believed that I would be able to count on a safe retirement. Speaker Say's bill, which disregards my years of service and reduces medical benefits until the Medicare retirement age, is irresponsible. Instead of supporting public service, Speaker Say is telling us that public employees don't mean much and promises to us can be broken mid-stream. This bill is a thinly veiled attempt to force people into early retirement. Plans I may have made to ensure that my children graduate from college before I retire are suddenly up in the air. I now have to make the choice - get out now so that I can afford to stay health during my retirement, or stay even longer to provide for my family during these tough economic times and risk losing my current level of care during my retirement. Speaker Say is backing us into a corner, and it's not irresponsible for him to suggest that this economic crisis should be resolved by sacrificing the health and well being of me and my family. Also, by forcing people into retirement before July 1, 2009, we are gambling with the future of state programs. The loss to institutional knowledge and expertise that we could experience is putting our families in Hawai'i at risk. State programs that protect Hawai'i's children, elderly and public will loose

a wealth of knowledge that is not easy to recover when state hiring freezes are overburdening our already overburdened workforce. I strongly encourage this committee to vote "NO" on HB 1719 and to send a strong message to Speaker Say, that he cannot punish civil servants for their dedication and commitment to the state of Hawai'i.

HB 1725 says that from July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2015, public employees will have to bear THE ENTIRE burden of prescription drug coverage. This is literally a bill that is playing with the life and death of public workers. Although the bill is only temporary, we are gambling with six years of prescription medication. With rising chronic diseases that require medication, this bill, coupled with talk of salary cuts and rises in our premiums is like a death sentence for our elderly, sick, or recovering public workers and retirees. It will deter some employees and retirees from accessing medicine that is essential to long and healthy lives. This is a regressive bill when the rest of the nation is talking about improvements to our health care coverage.

Please vote "NO" on all of these bills that take away benefits from public employees.

NO to HB 1106

NO to HB 1718

NO to HB 1719

NO to HB 1725

NO to HB 1723

NO to HB 1715

NO to HB 1726

NO to HB 1727

yamashita2 - Kristen

From: Greg Jenkins [Greg.Jenkins@co.maui.hi.us]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 6:40 PM
To: LABtestimony; repctrl@Capitol.hawaii.gov; Rep. Karl Rhoads; Sen. J. Kalani English
Subject: Committee on Labor & Public Employment, House of Representatives-February 13 Hearing

LATE

February 11, 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,

Gregory E. Jenkins

I, Jacob Kawa'a Heffernan, **oppose the following bills** heard on Friday, February 13 and Tuesday, February 17 at 8:30 a.m. State Capitol, Room 309:

LATE

HB 1106 - Furloughing employees

HB1718 - Halt reimbursement for Medicare part B premiums for employees retiring after 12/31/09

HB1719 - Stop employer contribution for health benefits for those retiring after 7/1/09

HB1725 - Halt prescription drug coverage under EUTF

HB 1723 - Limit employer contribution to 55% and make it non-negotiable;

HB1715 - Increase, for new employees, the age and service time requirement to retire;

HB 1726 - Curtail EUTF payment for life insurance benefits;

HB 1727 - Prohibits provision of dental and vision coverage.

Reasons:

"Our committed staff strives, day-in and day-out, to provide timely, efficient and effective programs, services and benefits, for the purpose of achieving the outcomes of empowering those who are the most vulnerable in our State to expand their capacity for self-sufficiency, self determination, independence, healthy choices, quality of life and personal dignity"(Department of Human Services Vision).

As a new Department of Human Service (DHS) employee and State worker, I believe in being part of a bigger Ohana where something "good" and honorable can continue to be done on a grander scale. Instead of being a private service provider who used to work with a dozen or so families, I can now be part of a service that impacts hundreds to thousands of families statewide. This decision to move into public service was a no-brainer, especially since it used to be common knowledge that the security and benefits were stable. The wages are not competitive, but nevertheless, it was a great decision to join DHS and make it my career to do what I love the most, which is to help others to improve their quality of lives across many challenging areas. I have never worked for an agency or department with a vision which closely matches my own. My fear is that if the aforementioned bills are passed, it will dim DHS' mission in my heart as it will in others tasked with an already difficult, yet rewarding, job to do. When considering likely repercussions in the near future, it is not farfetched to assume public service will be mediocre at best and we will be faced with bigger problems than our current economic crises. Despair and hopelessness will be far more common in our community and among our public/state employees. My hope is that state officials can nurture public and state employees to keep the flame of passion burning brightly in our efforts in positively impacting the community. Opposing the aforementioned bills is a first step in the right direction towards this nurturance that not only the community, but public and state employees need too. Thank you for your time.

With the Utmost Aloha,

Jacob K. Heffernan
DHS employee

yamashita1- Kathy

From: Shirley M Oyama [soyama@hawaii.edu]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 11:01 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: NEED YOUR HELP!!!

LATE

Dear Labor & Public Employment Committee,

It is very disturbing that the legislators would want to hurt the state workers by taking away the benefits that we have looked forward to when we retire and adding additional burden to us in the future as state workers. We in the State of Hawaii are all suffering with this economy and if you pass these bills we will suffer more. These bills are not the way to go, please find another avenue to address.

HB 1106 - Furloughing employees

HB1718 - Halt reimbursement for Medicare part B premiums for employees retiring after 12/31/09

HB1719 - Stop employer contribution for health benefits for those retiring after 7/1/09

HB1725 - Halt prescription drug coverage under EUTF

HB 1723 - Limit employer contribution to 55% and make it non-negotiable;

HB1715 - Increase, for new employees, the age and service time requirement to retire;

HB 1726 - Curtail EUTF payment for life insurance benefits;

HB 1727 - Prohibits provision of dental and vision coverage.

I have worked from a young age so long ago in the state as a loyal worker waiting for my retirement and now I find that I am with a situation that I don't now what to do with my future. Please find it you your hearts not to pass this bill it will cause those who work for the state in dire need.

Thank you for taking the time to read this email.

Yours truly,

Shirley Oyama

LATE

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:

My name is William G.T. Lee. As a public employee for 3 years, I am deeply upset by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say. Specifically: HB 1106, 1719, 1725

It has been made clear by President Obama that mind sets must be changed and the economy must be stimulated. The following are my comments for your review and consideration.

- Many government employees' have small salaries and have a vital part in supporting the general public. Cutting salaries and benefits will not resolve the issues at hand and in many ways will only make matters worst.
- It is clear that President Obama is trying to stimulate the economy and is looking at mind sets to be changed. How do you stimulate the economy by cutting pay and benefits as this is the short sited and easy approach to this most serious situation? President Obama is also for health care and education. Why are our government leaders going against what our new President is trying to improve and accomplish?
- Our government leaders need to look at new ideas of how to stimulate spending and the economy. This is done by creative tax incentives and making plans for the general public to start spending some of their earnings to stimulate the economy. As an example in the past there were tax credits for businesses that patronized restaurants etc. This would be an immediate stimulus for the restaurant and entertainment business as it will generate jobs and tax income as well as stability of jobs. In the future when our government leaders retire they will reap better benefits than us and will be in a better position in life than a normal government employee as why are we not entitled to some of the basic benefits you will have?
- What our government leaders are doing is looking for a short term fix which will have no positive affect for the future. This will only punish the small people and have little affected on our leaders as they are in a higher income bracket and placement in life.
- We need creative positive measures or we will for sure all fail and lose. If a simple person like me can see the ill effects how can you not see what is at hand as panic never solves and negativity never resolves any issues or concerns. If you are truly trying to do the best for the general public you will have to do so with new and creative ideas. You hold the lively hoods of many in your hands as your current approach to our problems is not the answer.

Please vote "no" on all of these bills that take away benefits from public employees.

Mahalo

From: Travis Santos [travis.santos@gmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 6:47 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: My testimony

LATE

Hi, my name is Travis Santos; I work for the Department of Education, and am a member of HGEA I'm also a taxpayer. I spend money at local businesses every day to buy food, clothing and other needs.

I don't believe it's fair for the House to be looking at ways to balance the budget on the backs of public employees. I work hard at my job and things are even harder now since vacancies have been frozen and demands for services have increased. I've made a career in public service knowing that my pay may not be as good as in the private sector but I could rely on retirement and health benefits for myself and my family.

I think it's wrong for representatives to take these benefits away from me. Please look for other ways to balance the budget. Raising the excise tax would be a fairer way to address the state's revenue problem. Everyone paying a little more will mean sharing the burden during these tough times.

Please vote NO on:

- HB1536 - Freezing salaries of Governor, Lt Governor
- HB 1106 - Furloughing employees
- HB1718 - Halt reimbursement for Medicare part B premiums for employees retiring after 12/31/09
- HB1719 - Stop employer contribution for health benefits for those retiring after 7/1/09
- HB1725 - Halt prescription drug coverage under EUTF
- HB 1723 - Limit employer contribution to 55% and make it non-negotiable;
- HB1715 - Increase, for new employees, the age and service time requirement to retire;
- HB 1726 - Curtail EUTF payment for life insurance benefits;
- HB 1727 - Prohibits provision of dental and vision coverage.

Thank you,
Travis Santos
HGEA -BU13

From: Terry Pulham [terrypulham@msn.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 11:00 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: HB 1106, HB 1718, HB 1719, HB 1725, HB 1723, HB 1715,

LATE

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning. My name is Terry J Pulham.

As a public employee for 8 years, I am deeply upset by the bills introduced by Speaker

Calvin Say. Specifically: HB 1106, HB 1718, HB 1719, HB 1725, HB 1723, HB 1715,

HB 1726, HB 1727

HB 1106 is supposed to ‘protect the rights of public employees’ in the event of a furlough.

Speaker Say has said that a furlough would cause the “least amount of disruption to public

service.”

I pose this question to the Speaker: What about the disruption to us as residents of this

state?

A reduction in our salaries is hugely disruptive at a time when we find ourselves more and

more the sole breadwinners for our entire families. How can we afford a reduction to our

salaries when we are some of the last remaining wage earners in this unstable economy?

We also strongly disagree with Section 4 of HB 1106. The Governor does not have the

authority to unilaterally furlough state employees.

HB 1719 is also of concern to me. As a civil servant, I chose to work for less pay to be able

to contribute to the community. On balance, I believed that I would be able to count on a

safe retirement. Speaker Say's bill, which disregards my years of service and reduces

medical benefits until the Medicare retirement age, is irresponsible. Instead of supporting

public service, Speaker Say is telling us that public employees don't mean much and

promises to us can be broken mid-stream. This bill is a thinly veiled attempt to force

people into early retirement. Plans I may have made to ensure that my children

graduate from college before I retire are suddenly up in the air. I now have to make the

choice - get out now so that I can afford to stay health during my retirement, or stay even

longer to provide for my family during these tough economic times and risk losing my current

level of care during my retirement. Speaker Say is backing us into a corner, and it's not

irresponsible for him to suggest that this economic crisis should be resolved by sacrificing

the health and well being of me and my family. Also, by forcing people into retirement

before July 1, 2009, we are gambling with the future of state programs. The loss to

institutional knowledge and expertise that we could experience is putting our families in

Hawai'i at risk. State programs that protect Hawai'i's children, elderly and public will lose

a wealth of knowledge that is not easy to recover when state hiring freezes are

overburdening our already overburdened workforce. I strongly encourage this committee to

vote "NO" on HB 1719 and to send a strong message to Speaker Say, that he cannot punish

civil servants for their dedication and commitment to the state of Hawai'i.

HB 1725 says that from July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2015, public employees will have to

bear THE ENTIRE burden of prescription drug coverage. This is literally a bill that is

playing with the life and death of public workers. Although the bill is only temporary, we

are gambling with six years of prescription medication. With rising chronic diseases that

require medication, this bill, coupled with talk of salary cuts and rises in our premiums

is like a death sentence for our elderly, sick, or recovering public workers and retirees. It

will deter some employees and retirees from accessing medicine that is essential to long

and healthy lives. This is a regressive bill when the rest of the nation is talking about

improvements to our health care coverage.

Please vote “NO” on all of these bills that take away benefits from public employees.

NO to HB 1106

NO to HB 1718

NO to HB 1719

NO to HB 1725

NO to HB 1723

NO to HB 1715

HB 1726=NO HB 1727=NO

yamashita2 - Kristen

From: Travis Santos [travis.santos@gmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 6:47 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: My testimony

LATE

Hi, my name is Travis Santos; I work for the Department of Education, and am a member of HGEA I'm also a taxpayer. I spend money at local businesses every day to buy food, clothing and other needs.

I don't believe it's fair for the House to be looking at ways to balance the budget on the backs of public employees. I work hard at my job and things are even harder now since vacancies have been frozen and demands for services have increased. I've made a career in public service knowing that my pay may not be as good as in the private sector but I could rely on retirement and health benefits for myself and my family.

I think it's wrong for representatives to take these benefits away from me. Please look for other ways to balance the budget. Raising the excise tax would be a fairer way to address the state's revenue problem. Everyone paying a little more will mean sharing the burden during these tough times.

Please vote NO on:

HB1536 - Freezing salaries of Governor, Lt Governor
HB 1106 - Furloughing employees
HB1718 - Halt reimbursement for Medicare part B premiums for employees retiring after 12/31/09
HB1719 - Stop employer contribution for health benefits for those retiring after 7/1/09
HB1725 - Halt prescription drug coverage under EUTF
HB 1723 - Limit employer contribution to 55% and make it non-negotiable;
HB1715 - Increase, for new employees, the age and service time requirement to retire;
HB 1726 - Curtail EUTF payment for life insurance benefits;
HB 1727 - Prohibits provision of dental and vision coverage.

Thank you,
Travis Santos
HGEA -BU13

yamashita2 - Kristen

From: Melvin Honda [hondam005@hawaii.rr.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 6:49 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Public Employees Health and Retirement Benefits

LATE

As a recent retiree from the state after 33 years, I do not think it is fair that the following bills be passed by the State Legislature:

HB1725: Halt prescription drug coverage under EUTF

HB 1726: Curtail EUTF payment for life insurance benefits

HB 1727: Prohibit prescription drug coverage under EUTF

I'm sure there are other areas that can be cut or reduced but it should not involve public employees who have serviced the state of Hawaii for many years.

Thank you for your consideration.

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LATE

February 12, 2009

Committee on Labor & Public Employment
Hawaii State Capital
Honolulu, Hawaii

Chairman Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita and Members of the Labor & Public Employment Committee:

RE: HB 1106, 1718, 1719, and HB 1725 hearing held before your committee on Friday, February 13, 2009 @ 8:30am

Thank you for the opportunity to submit my written testimony for the following bills. My name is Gayle Puou. As a public employee for more than 20 years, I am deeply upset by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say. Specifically HB 1106, 1178, 1719, and HD 1725.

HB 1106 - Furloughing employees—I **strongly oppose this bill**. State employees should not be the answer to a short fix. This suppose to protect the rights of public employees.

HB1718 - Halt reimbursement for Medicare part B premiums for employees retiring after 12/31/09—I **strongly oppose this bill**. Any future retirees that are forced to retire because of personal reasons such as health or family care, should not suffer. They along with many have services the public for many years.

HB1719 - Stop employer contribution for health benefits for those retiring after 7/1/09---I **strongly oppose this bill**. As stated in HB1718, public service employees should not be the answer to a quick fix. Public employees that have put many years in for little, will have to work for the rest of their lives and die making ends meet to continue supporting their families.

HB1725 - Halt prescription drug coverage under EUTF –I **strongly oppose**. I am currently spending more than \$400 each month on medication with insurance and will not be able to afford the cost of these medicines without insurance coverage. Please don't pave the path on how unimportant my life is just so government can save a buck.

I am disappointed that it comes down to us having to carry the burden of all past government and political mistakes. A combination of gambling, lottery, raising of

taxes and other fees will have to be the answer to avoid many layoffs, an increase of homelessness, and god forbid death for now until the right answers are found. Don't add to the problem, be part of the solution.

Mahalo,

Gayle Puou

yamashita2 - Kristen

From: jillfitz@hawaii.rr.com
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 6:55 PM
To: LABtestimony
Cc: jillfitz@hawaii.rr.com
Subject: Legislative Bills 1106,1718,1719,1725,1723,1726,1727

LATE

Dear Members of the House of Representatives of the State of Hawaii,

My name is Jill Fitzpatrick. I have put my heart and soul into my work at the University of Hawaii, Maui Community College, have received the UHCC Excellence in Service award, and I am a member of HGEA. HGEA members are the people who perform a lot of volunteer work for many of non-profit agencies in the state of Hawaii, in addition to the work they perform at their jobs.

I do not believe that it is fair for the House to be looking at ways to balance the budget by taking away benefits that I have worked for during the past 20 years. I do believe that a salary freeze or a short furlough or raising the GET tax by one percent would be a better way to solve the Hawaii's projected budget crisis. Please look for other ways to balance the budget than by taking away our hard earned benefits.

Thank you for your time
Jill Fitzpatrick
Media Specialist
Maui Community College

yamashita2 - Kristen

From: Mynahs@aol.com
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 6:57 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Please Do Not Take Away Health Benefits for State Workers

LATE

I am deeply concerned about some of the bills that you will soon be voting on. HB1106, regarding furloughing employees, is not well thought out. Part-time workers cannot afford to have any hours taken away from them and it would affect their ability to be eligible for health insurance and unemployment insurance if they do not work 20 hours a week. We need to make a living too, and balancing the budget on us would not save much money anyway. Bill HB1725, which would take away our drug coverage, bill HB1727, which would take away our dental and vision insurance, and bill HB1723, which could make health care unaffordable, all need to be taken off the table. At a time when President Obama is trying to make sure everyone has health coverage, Hawaii does not need to be an example where everyone is uninsured. State workers work hard and many of us, especially at the DOE, put in overtime for free. I don't think that kind of dedication deserves to be rewarded with taking away our basic health insurance plans. Hawaii is know as one of the top healthy states, and this is not the direction we need to be going in. There are many other ways to cut the budget without punishing people just because they happen to work for the state. Balancing the budget by cutting health plans should not be an option, and I especially can't understand how a democrat like Calvin Say can propose these things when democrats are the ones who worked so hard for us to have health plans. Those who get the largest salaries, our leaders and legislators, should be the ones to make the biggest sacrifices and remind us why we elected them in the first place. Thank you for your attention.

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yamashita1- Kathy

From: zombies@hawaiiantel.net
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 11:00 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Testimony: HB 1715, 1718, 1719, 1723, 1725, 1726, 1727

LATE

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit my testimony. My name is Jim Hayden. As a public employee for 16 years, I am deeply upset by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say. Specifically: HB 1715, 1718, 1719, 1723, 1725, 1726, 1727

HB 1719, HB1718, and HB 1723 are of greatest concern to me. As a civil servant, I choose to work for roughly one third less pay than my counterparts in the private sector. Every negotiation cycle the value of our retirement package has been touted by administrations past and present.

I personally don't consider these to be "take away" bills simply because we've made sacrifices and have earned these benefits. They weren't handed out to us like party favors and to suggest otherwise is deeply insulting.

For years the legislator has raided the ERS funds; and they haven't had a second thought. Yet the minute things head south, they expect us to take one for the team. It is a public disgrace, you people may have the ability to write something on a piece of paper and call it a law; but I call it stealing, and I don't think very highly of it.

These bills are blatant attempts to force people into early retirement. The plans I have made to ensure that my daughter graduates from college before I retire are suddenly up in the air. I now have to ask myself if it is worth keeping this job knowing that a single ailment could completely negate my family's future. I take great comfort knowing that even if I were to drop dead tomorrow there is a safety net for the widow I would leave behind and for our nine year old daughter. She could be the biggest loser under the honorable speaker's purposed reforms. If I choose to get out now so that I know my wife and I won't become a burden to her during our retirement, we're going to be looking at a few lean years. I'm probably not going to be able to send her to a private school, and may have to spend some time out of state to chase after work. I'm certainly not going to be pumping a lot of bucks into the economy if I have to worry about what I'm going to do for a living.

But it's not like it's the first time I've seen huge pay cuts. I took a job as an SR-9 to get my foot in the door of the civil service, and I spent the better part of a decade getting my pay back up to the level it was prior to that; I've paid my dues, worked hard, and made a number of sacrifices to secure a future for my myself and my family. I strongly encourage this committee to vote "no" on these bills and to send a strong message to Speaker Say, that when you decide to take something away from somebody, you had better make damn sure that it was yours to begin with; and not something that someone else had labored many years of their life to acquire.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Jim Hayden

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<http://link.myhosting.com/myhosting>

yamashita2 - Kristen

From: Kristine Yahiku [kyahiku@hawaiiantel.net]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 7:15 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: oppose bills 1723, 1719, 1725, 1727

LATE

I strongly oppose bills 1723, 1719, 1725, and 1727. How can you cut the benefits of retired teachers? Did they get paid enough when they were working in order to have saved enough for these unexpected costs? With everyone struggling as it is, using a chunk of our paychecks to have to pay for these extra costs (vision, dental, and drug) is going to be impossible. Please do not pass these bills.

Thank you!
Kristine Yahiku

From: peggy moore [puailikea@gmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 7:17 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Testimony for HB 1718, HB1719, HB1725,HB1723, HB 1727

LATE

I have worked for the State DOE for over 20 years. I will be retiring when I reach 62 which is 12 more years so then I will have more that 30 years of service. I feel that we have a union that is there for negotiating the fairest ways to keep us motivated to do more than our job calls for with our employer. By putting caps on benefits and taking away benefits that we have earned already is wrong. The public needs us and we want to continue serving them. We don't have a choice of whether or not to join the union -- we pay for it. Let the union do its job for us as intended. When we don't have anything to negotiate then the union won't be needed. I've always felt safe working for the State of Hawaii and now uncertainty is becoming a daily worry for myself and many workers. Let's vote no on these bills, and look for other ways to help our State economically.

LATE

Testimony against Bills before the House Committee on Labor and Public
Employment.

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

Respectfully;

I am John Bruce, writing to you to voice my concerns about the following
House Bills that myself and a majority of my co-workers have opposition to:

House Bill No. 1536- Relating to Salaries
House Bill No. 1106- Relating to Public Employment
House Bill No. 1718- Relating to Employer-Union Health Benefits
House Bill No. 1719- Relating to Public employees
House Bill No. 1725- Relating to the Hawaii Employer-Union Health
Benefits Trust Fund

In all honesty, the first Bill HB 1536 has its merits. Freeze the salaries of
the highest paid State and County Employees. **DON'T FORGET THE
UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT.** We must share
in this suffering together.

Regarding the second on this list, HB 1106, furloughs may be the least
painful method of dealing with this financial problem by everyone taking 2
days off a month without pay until some benchmark is met, not necessarily
fiscal year 2013. Our benefits must be preserved with this common
sacrifice. This should be required of ALL state and county employees.

HB 1718 will create a mass retirement of upper level management in many
agencies. Anyone remaining will have to have other retirement medical
arrangements.

HB 1719 will also create a mass exodus. Maybe some think this would be a great idea, I think not.

HB 1725 goes along with a bill on Tuesday's agenda. It PROHIBITS funding of prescription drug coverage for employees. The bill on Tuesday, HB 1727 will do the same for dental and vision coverage. My wife is disabled with a muscle disease; please drop by and suggest alternatives for medication to her.

Benefits are frequently what attracts and keeps employees to become and continue as civil service employees. The majority of these individuals have been loyal to government employment and the missions of their respective agencies for many years.

Eliminating benefits will cause morale problems and will affect not only our County of Maui but the other counties and the State as a whole. Removal of benefits and changing the agreements will be detrimental to all employees, their families and the community at large.

In addition, eliminating benefits from employees will stimulate a large number of mid-level and higher management personnel to seek retirement immediately. Those who remain for the present may indeed seek other employment when the economy improves. With these forced changes there will cease to be any incentive for employees to remain with the State or County divisions and agencies.

By creating such a situation the quality of public safety and services will become a major concern. The vacancies will be among the experienced individuals who have dedicated their employment careers to government service. Filling the positions will be difficult and will undoubtedly create problems of its own. The timetable presented doesn't create an orderly transfer or training scenario for personnel replacement.

For this reason, I am voicing my opposition to the proposed house bills. The overall effect would bring larger problems that would cause a disruption to State and County services on all islands.

There are forces in our community who will applaud these changes if implemented. Their interests are at odds with the logic of government operations. Private contractors will never be the answer to the government's

financial shortfalls and inevitably leads to corruption and influence of special interests. Jobs still must be done and your loyal government employees are there to serve the public in this capacity. Support them by not passing these bills on.

Sincerely;

John G. Bruce
1299 Kauhikoa Road.
Haiku, Hawaii 96708
808-344-2793

From: Corinne [chongn006@hawaii.rr.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 7:53 PM
To: LABtestimony
Cc: repaquino@capital.hawaii.gov; repawana@capital.hawaii.gov;
rephanohano@capital.hawaii.gov; repkeithagaran@capital.hawaii.gov;
replee@capital.hawaii.gov; repnakashima@capital.hawaii.gov; reppine@capital.hawaii.gov;
reprhoads@capital.hawaii.gov; repsaiki@capital.hawaii.gov; repsouki@capital.hawaii.gov;
reptakumi@capital.hawaii.gov; repyamashita@capital.hawaii.gov
Subject: testimony on Take Away Bills: HB1723, HB1715, HB1726, HB1727, HB1536, HB1106,
HB1718, HB1719, HB1725

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony today. My name is Corinne Chong and I work at the Kona Community Hospital. I have worked as a public employee for 20 years, and I am deeply upset by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say.

As a civil servant, I chose to work for less pay to be able to contribute to the community. I believed that I would be able to count on a safe retirement. Speaker Say's bill, which disregards my years of service and reduces medical benefits until the Medicare retirement age is irresponsible. Instead of supporting the public service community, Speaker Say is telling us that public employees don't mean much and that promises can be broken mid-stream. It is not fair that the economic crisis should be resolved by sacrificing the health and well being of me and the rest of the public workers who have dedicated themselves to their jobs.

HB1725 relating to public employees bearing the entire burden of prescription drug coverage is not acceptable. With the rising cost of healthcare and the increase in chronic diseases that require medication, this bill along with talks of salary cuts and increases in our premiums is detrimental to each public worker and their families. This will have ill affects past the six years and will definitely have an effect on the quality of life for each of the public employees and their families.

I don't feel it is fair that we the public employees take the burden of resolving the State's economic situation. We have sacrificed over the many years and those of us that have long years of service have been dedicated to our employers. Penalizing the public employees and taking away benefits is simply not fair to us.

I humbly ask that you vote "NO" on all the bills that take away benefits from public employees like me.

Sincerely,
Corinne Chong

From: Terry Proctor [docproc@usa.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 7:56 PM
To: LABtestimony

Committee on labor and Public Employment

Friday Feb 13th

8:30am

HB 1718, 1719,1725, 1727

February 12, 2009

Honorable Karl Rhoads;

My name is Terry Proctor I am the Principal of Wilcox elementary School on Kauai. I have been with the Department of Education for over 20 years now and I feel the need to urge you to vote against HB's 1718,1719,1725, and 1727. It is unfair to balance the State's budget on the back of the state employees. If these bills are passed we are likely to see a very large number of educators retire before Dec 31, 2009. We already are having a hard time filling our positions with qualified workers and a mass exodus would truly put our education system in a perilous situation. Recent predictions show that a large percentage of teachers and administrators are going to retire in the next five years and the DOE will certainly not be able to cope with that scenario. If these bills pass then the retirement timeline will be accelerated and compressed into 6 months. I firmly believe that our struggling school system will collapse under such a burden.

It is also unfair to make a promise that we will have funded healthcare and retirement benefits after serving for 30, or 40 or more years and then take it away. Many of us

have worked diligently (for not a lot of money) for our entire careers with the goal of reaching retirement and to have our benefits removed is a terrible way to treat our valuable human resources.

On behalf of all of our hard working state employees especially educators please vote no on HB's 1718,1719,1725, and 1727.

As an educator I obviously have a personal stake in this but I am making this plea for our children, because I truly believe this type of legislation will cripple an already struggling educational system.

Terry E. Proctor

Principal

Wilcox Elementary School

--

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yamashita2 - Kristen

From: Jon D. [jdonios@hawaii.rr.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 8:01 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: HB regarding state employees

Aloha,

My name is Barbara Donios. I work for the University of Hawaii and am a member of HGEA. I'm also a taxpayer. I spend money at local businesses every day to buy food, clothing and other needs. I don't believe it's fair for the House to be looking at ways to balance the budget on the backs of public employees. I work hard at my job and things are even harder now since vacancies have been frozen and demands for services have increased. I've made a career in public service knowing that my pay may not be as good as in the private sector but I could rely on retirement and health benefits for myself and my family. I think it's wrong for representatives to take these benefits away from me. Please look for other ways to balance the budget. Raising the excise tax would be a fairer way to address the state's revenue problem. Everyone paying a little more will mean sharing the burden during these tough times.

I urge you not to support the following bills: HB 1106, HB1718, HB1719, HB1725, HB 1723, HB1715, HB 1726, HB 1727.

Should you need to contact me, you can call me at 671-0454, email me at jdonios@hawaii.rr.com or 94-690 Kehela St. Waipahu, HI 96797.

Thank you,

Barbara Donios

yamashita1- Kathy

From: JMina@dhs.hawaii.gov
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 10:55 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Fw: HB 1106, 1719, 1725

LATE

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning. My name is Jerome Mina. As a public employee for 35 years, I am deeply upset by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say. Specifically: HB 1106, 1719, 1725

HB 1106 is supposed to 'protect the rights of public employees' in the event of a furlough. Speaker Say has said that a furlough would cause the "least amount of disruption to public service."

I pose this question to the Speaker: What about the disruption to us as residents of this state? A reduction in our salaries is hugely disruptive at a time when we find ourselves more and more the sole breadwinners for our entire families. How can we afford a reduction to our salaries when we are some of the last remaining wage earners in this unstable economy? We also strongly disagree with Section 4 of HB 1106. The Governor does not have the authority to unilaterally furlough state employees.

HB 1719 is also of concern to me. As a civil servant, I chose to work for less pay to be able to contribute to the community. On balance, I believed that I would be able to count on a safe retirement. Speaker Say's bill, which disregards my years of service and reduces medical benefits until the Medicare retirement age, is irresponsible. Instead of supporting public service, Speaker Say is telling us that public employees don't mean much and promises to us can be broken mid-stream.

This bill is a thinly veiled attempt to force people into early retirement. Plans I may have made to ensure that my children graduated from college before I retire are suddenly up in the air. I now have to make the choice - get out now so that I can afford to stay healthy during my retirement, or stay even longer to provide for my family during these tough economic times and risk losing my current level of care during my retirement.

Speaker Say is backing us into a corner, and it's not irresponsible for him to suggest that this economic crisis should be resolved by sacrificing the health and well being of me and my family. Also, by forcing people into retirement before July 1, 2009, we are gambling with the future of state programs. The loss to institutional knowledge and expertise that we could experience is putting our families in Hawai'i at risk. State programs that protect Hawai'i's children, elderly and public will lose a wealth of knowledge that is not easy to recover when state hiring freezes are overburdening our already overburdened workforce. I strongly encourage this committee to vote "no" on HB 1719 and to send a strong message to Speaker Say, that he cannot punish civil servants for their dedication and commitment to the state of Hawai'i.

HB 1725 says that from July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2015, public employees will have to bear THE ENTIRE burden of prescription drug coverage. This is literally a bill that is playing with the life and death of public workers. Although the bill is only temporary, we are gambling with six years of prescription medication. With rising chronic diseases that require medication, this bill, coupled with talk of salary cuts and rises in our premiums is like a death sentence for our elderly, sick, or recovering public workers, retirees and people with a disability.

It will deter some employees and retirees from accessing medicine that is essential to long and healthy lives. This is a regressive bill when the rest of the nation is talking about improvements to our health care coverage.

Please vote "no" on all of these bills that take away benefits from public employees.

mahalo

Jerome Mina

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From: Kathy [hanlond001@hawaii.rr.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 8:02 PM
To: LABtestimony
Cc: kris@uhpa.org
Subject: HB 1160, HB, 1718, HB 1719, HB 1725

TO: House Committee on Labor and Public Employment
25th Legislative Session
Friday, February 13, 2009
8:30 A.M.
Conference Room #309
State Capitol

FROM: David Hanlon
Professor of History
University of Hawai'i at Manoa

RE: HB 1160, HB 1718, HB 1719, and HB 1725

I respectfully ask that members of the House Committee on Labor and Public Employment reject HBs 1160, 1718, 1719, and 1725. They are ill-advised, badly written, poorly thought through, and exclude state employees and their representatives from having any voice or say in matters relating to health care benefits. These measures show disregard for the dedication, service, and important work state employees do. Moreover, they place extreme hardship on those employees nearing retirement and those who have made career decisions based on the benefits available to them through their current contracts. In the case of the University of Hawai'i and other state agencies, it will become increasingly difficult to recruit quality workers given the penalties and burden of costs these bills impose on current employees.

Thank you for your time and attention to my testimony.

From: JMina@dhs.hawaii.gov
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 10:55 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Fw: HB 1106, 1719, 1725

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning. My name is Jerome Mina. As a public employee for 35 years, I am deeply upset by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say. Specifically: HB 1106, 1719, 1725

HB 1106 is supposed to 'protect the rights of public employees' in the event of a furlough. Speaker Say has said that a furlough would cause the "least amount of disruption to public service."

I pose this question to the Speaker: What about the disruption to us as residents of this state? A reduction in our salaries is hugely disruptive at a time when we find ourselves more and more the sole breadwinners for our entire families. How can we afford a reduction to our salaries when we are some of the last remaining wage earners in this unstable economy? We also strongly disagree with Section 4 of HB 1106. The Governor does not have the authority to unilaterally furlough state employees.

HB 1719 is also of concern to me. As a civil servant, I chose to work for less pay to be able to contribute to the community. On balance, I believed that I would be able to count on a safe retirement. Speaker Say's bill, which disregards my years of service and reduces medical benefits until the Medicare retirement age, is irresponsible. Instead of supporting public service, Speaker Say is telling us that public employees don't mean much and promises to us can be broken mid-stream.

This bill is a thinly veiled attempt to force people into early retirement. Plans I may have made to ensure that my children graduated from college before I retire are suddenly up in the air. I now have to make the choice - get out now so that I can afford to stay healthy during my retirement, or stay even longer to provide for my family during these tough economic times and risk losing my current level of care during my retirement.

Speaker Say is backing us into a corner, and it's not irresponsible for him to suggest that this economic crisis should be resolved by sacrificing the health and well being of me and my family. Also, by forcing people into retirement before July 1, 2009, we are gambling with the future of state programs. The loss to institutional knowledge and expertise that we could experience is putting our families in Hawai'i at risk. State programs that protect Hawai'i's children, elderly and public will lose a wealth of knowledge that is not easy to recover when state hiring freezes are overburdening our already overburdened workforce. I strongly encourage this committee to vote "no" on HB 1719 and to send a strong message to Speaker Say, that he cannot punish civil servants for their dedication and commitment to the state of Hawai'i.

HB 1725 says that from July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2015, public employees will have to bear THE ENTIRE burden of prescription drug coverage. This is literally a bill that is playing with the life and death of public workers. Although the bill is only temporary, we are gambling with six years of prescription medication. With rising chronic diseases that require medication, this bill, coupled with talk of salary cuts and rises in our premiums is like a death sentence for our elderly, sick, or recovering public workers, retirees and people with a disability. It will deter some employees and retirees from accessing medicine that is essential to long and healthy lives. This is a regressive bill when the rest of the nation is talking about

improvements to our health care coverage.

Please vote "no" on all of these bills that take away benefits from public employees.

mahalo

Jerome Mina

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NOTICE: This information and attachments are intended only for the use of the individual or entity to which it is addressed, and may contain information that is privileged and/or confidential. If the reader of this message is not the intended recipient, any dissemination, distribution or copying of this communication is strictly prohibited and may be punishable under state and federal law. If you have received this communication and/or attachments in error, please notify the sender via email immediately and destroy all electronic and paper copies.

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From: Jack_Little/KEONEPOKO/HIDOE@notes.k12.hi.us
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 10:47 AM
To: Rep. Faye Hanohano; Rep. Mark Nakashima
Cc: LABtestimony
Subject: please vote NO on HB1723, HB1715, HB1726, HB1727, HB1718, HB1719, HB1725, and HB110

Aloha, my name is Jack Little and I live in your district and voted for you.

I work for Keonepoko Elementary School and am a member of HSTA. I have worked as a teacher on the Big Island for the last 18 years.

I'm also a taxpayer. I spend money at local businesses every day to buy food, clothing and other needs.

I don't believe it's fair for the House to be looking at ways to balance the budget on the backs of public employees. I work hard at my job and things are even harder now since vacancies have been frozen and demands for services have increased. I've made a career in public service knowing that my pay may not be as good as in the private sector but I could rely on retirement and health benefits for myself and my family.

I think it's wrong for representatives to take these benefits away from me.

I am urging you to vote "NO" on HB1723, HB1715, HB1726, HB1727, HB1718, HB1719, HB1725, and HB1106.

Please look for other ways to balance the budget. Raising the excise tax would be a fairer way to address the state's revenue problem. Everyone paying a little more will mean sharing the burden during these tough times.

Thank you,
Jack Little

LATE

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning.

My name is Myra Elliott.

As a public employee for 10 years, I am deeply upset by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say. Specifically: HB1719, HB1715, HB1725, HB1726, HB1727, HB1723, HB1718, and HB1106. I am a sole bread winner in my family and I would like to protect the benefits that I have now. I cannot afford to pay more for benefits or have them lost. This would cripple myself and others I work with, as most are in the same circumstance.

I have been employed by Kauai Veteran's Memorial Hospital as a registered nurse. Hawaii and the rest of the country are faced with a critical nurse shortage. We have already been faced with the fact that we are not able to attract nurses to the state hospital system due to lower wages (as much as 15 to 20 dollars lower an hour) and now Mr. Say would like to enact laws that greatly reduce the benefits that the state provides to attract employees, especially nurses. This is very concerning to myself and my fellow nurses. We have to work many times short staffed with the population now sicker than before. We have an older nurse population. Many people in Hawaii do not have medical benefits and come to the hospital many times too late. We are exposed to many diseases, infections and all sorts of nasty conditions, so our chances of contracting an illness are greater. We may not be able to enjoy a healthful retirement, and will therefore definitely need medical, prescription and dental coverage. We sacrifice everyday, as well as our families. These bills are not fair to us hard working nurses or other employees in the state systems.

HB 1106 is supposed to 'protect the rights of public employees' in the event of a furlough. Speaker Say has said that a furlough would cause the "least amount of disruption to public service."

I pose this question to the Speaker: What about the disruption to us as residents of this state?

A reduction in our salaries is hugely disruptive at a time when we find ourselves more and more the sole breadwinners for our entire families. How can we afford a reduction to our salaries when we are some of the last remaining wage earners in this unstable economy?

We also strongly disagree with Section 4 of HB 1106. The Governor does not have the authority to unilaterally furlough state employees.

HB 1719 is also of concern to me. As a civil servant, a registered nurse, I chose to work for less pay to be able to contribute to the community. On balance, I believed that I would be able to count on a safe retirement. Speaker Say's bill, which disregards my years of service and reduces medical benefits until the Medicare retirement age, is irresponsible. Instead of supporting public service, Speaker Say is telling us that public employees don't mean much and promises to us can be broken mid-stream.

This bill is a thinly veiled attempt to force people into early retirement. Plans I may have made to ensure that my children graduated from college before I retire are suddenly up in the air. I now have to make the choice - get out now so that I can afford to stay healthy during my retirement, or stay even longer to provide for my family during these tough economic times and risk losing my current level of care during my retirement.

Speaker Say is backing us into a corner, and it's not irresponsible for him to suggest that this economic crisis should be resolved by sacrificing the health and well being of me and my family. Also, by forcing people into retirement before July 1, 2009, we are gambling with the future of state programs. The loss to institutional knowledge and expertise that we could experience is putting our families in Hawai'i at risk. State programs that protect Hawai'i's children, elderly and public will lose a wealth of knowledge that is not easy to recover when state hiring freezes are overburdening our already overburdened workforce. I strongly encourage this committee to vote "no" on HB 1719 and to send a strong message

to Speaker Say, that he cannot punish civil servants for their dedication and commitment to the state of Hawai'i.

HB 1725 says that from July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2015, public employees will have to bear THE ENTIRE burden of prescription drug coverage. This is literally a bill that is playing with the life and death of public workers. Although the bill is only temporary, we are gambling with six years of prescription medication. With rising chronic diseases that require medication, this bill, coupled with talk of salary cuts and rises in our premiums is like a death sentence for our elderly, sick, or recovering public workers and retirees. It will deter some employees and retirees from accessing medicine that is essential to long and healthy lives. This is a regressive bill when the rest of the nation is talking about improvements to our health care coverage.

Please vote "no" on all of these bills that take away benefits from public employees.

Thank you , Myra Elliott (Unit 09 Kauai)

yamashita1- Kathy

From: 50 INOUYE [50inouye@gmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 10:48 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: public employee bills

Dear Labor Committee,

There are many government employees making 20 years or more of service who have been loyal to the government and who have been hit hard by the poor economy. Spouses have been laid off or have died and they have young dependents relying on them and their benefits. It's a travesty to take away these benefits from those who have served the government faithfully all these years and who have planned on these benefits when they retire. Please kokua and vote NO on all the bills that take away benefits from public employees. Bills include HB 1106,HB1718,HB1719,HB1725,HB1723,HB1726,HB1727.

Mahalo

yamashita1- Kathy

From: Beverly Lashley [blashley@hawaii.edu]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 10:45 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: HB1718, HG1719, HB1725, HB1106, HB1723, HB1727

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:

My name is Beverly Lashley and I have been a public servant for the State of Hawaii for over 30 years. I humbly ask that you vote no on House Bills 1718, 1719, 1723, 1725, 1727 and 1106.

I am appalled that the bill introduced by Speaker Calvin Say shows very little regard for the people who are the nuts and bolts of our government.

In regards to HB 1106, as a parent of a college student, I cannot afford to be furloughed. Can Speaker Say personally guarantee that my daughter's college expenses will be paid? A reduction in my salary even for a day would bring hardship to my family. As it is, we live paycheck to paycheck. My husband is working in an unstable position and can have his hours cut or be laid off at any time. In these tough times, many state employees are some of the last remaining wage earners in their families. I strongly disagree with Section 4 of HB 1106. The Governor does not have the authority to unilaterally furlough state employees.

HB 1719 is also of concern to me. As a civil servant, I chose to work for less pay to be able to contribute to the community. On balance, I believed that I would be able to count on a safe retirement. Speaker Say's bill, which disregards my years of service and reduces medical benefits until the Medicare retirement age, is irresponsible. Instead of supporting public service, Speaker Say is telling us that public employees don't mean much and promises to us can be broken mid-stream.

This bill is a thinly veiled attempt to force people into early retirement. Plans I have made to ensure that my children graduated from college before I retire are suddenly up in the air. I now have to make the choice - get out now so that I can afford to stay healthy during my retirement, or stay even longer to provide for my family during these tough economic times and risk losing my current level of care during my retirement.

Speaker Say is backing us into a corner, and it's not irresponsible for him to suggest that this economic crisis should be resolved by sacrificing the health and well being of me and my family. Also, by forcing people into retirement before July 1, 2009, we are gambling with the future of state programs. The loss to institutional knowledge and expertise that we could experience is putting our families in Hawai'i at risk. State programs that protect Hawai'i's children, elderly and public will lose a wealth of knowledge that is not easy to recover when state hiring freezes are overburdening our already overburdened workforce. I strongly encourage this committee to vote "no" on HB 1719 and to send a strong message to Speaker Say, that he cannot punish civil servants for their dedication and commitment to the state of Hawai'i.

HB 1725 says that from July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2015, public employees will have to bear THE ENTIRE burden of prescription drug coverage. This is literally a bill that is playing with the life and death of public workers. Although the bill is only temporary, we are gambling with six years of prescription medication. With rising chronic diseases that require medication, this bill, coupled with talk of salary cuts and rises in our premiums is like a death sentence for our elderly, sick, or recovering public workers and retirees. It will deter some employees and retirees from accessing medicine that is essential to long and healthy lives. This is a regressive bill when the rest of the nation is talking about improvements to our health care coverage.

Please vote "no" on all of these bills that take away benefits from public employees

yamashita2 - Kristen

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 8:29 PM
To: LABtestimony
Cc: scott.martin@co.maui.hi.us
Subject: Testimony for HB1725 on 2/13/2009 8:30:00 AM

LATE

Testimony for LAB 2/13/2009 8:30:00 AM HB1725

Conference room: 309
Testifier position: oppose
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Scott Martin
Organization: maui county fire department
Address: 200 Dairy Rd Kahului, HI 96732
Phone: 808-270-7911
E-mail: scott.martin@co.maui.hi.us
Submitted on: 2/12/2009

Comments:
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.

The buzz around the Fire Department and the moral overall is at an all time low due to some of the topics that are coming up in the legislation. This is just the tip of the iceberg, but the bill by Linda Lingle and Calvin Sai seem to make everyone even more frustrated. We

as firefighters sacrifice a lot for those of you who come up with these obscene ideas on how to fix the economy. Taking away benefits that we have fought so hard for just isn't right. The fact remains that many of our health benefits are very poor already, having to pay 45 - 55% of our own insurance and for not even a respectable coverage is crazy with in itself, but now to make it worse, these bills are trying to cheat us out of a respectable living.

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, Scott Martin County of Maui Firefighter Kahului Engine

yamashita2 - Kristen

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 8:29 PM
To: LABtestimony
Cc: scott.martin@co.maui.hi.us
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: Scott Martin
Organization: maui county fire department
Address: 200 Dairy Rd Kahului, HI 96732
Phone: 808-270-7911
E-mail: scott.martin@co.maui.hi.us
Submitted on: 2/12/2009

Comments:
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.

The buzz around the Fire Department and the moral overall is at an all time low due to some of the topics that are coming up in the legislation. This is just the tip of the iceberg, but the bill by Linda Lingle and Calvin Sai seem to make everyone even more frustrated. We

as firefighters sacrifice a lot for those of you who come up with these obscene ideas on how to fix the economy. Taking away benefits that we have fought so hard for just isn't right. The fact remains that many of our health benefits are very poor already, having to pay 45 - 55% of our own insurance and for not even a respectable coverage is crazy with in itself, but now to make it worse, these bills are trying to cheat us out of a respectable living.

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, Scott Martin County of Maui Firefighter Kahului Engine

From: Baltao, Fe B. [Fe.Baltao@doh.hawaii.gov]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 10:39 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Testimony

LATE

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning. My name is Fe Baltao . As a public employee for over 15 years, I am very upset by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say. Specifically: HB 1106, HB 1719, HB 1725.

HB 1106 is supposed to ‘protect the rights of public employees’ in the event of a furlough. Speaker Say has said that a furlough would cause the “least amount of disruption to public service.” I pose this question to the Speaker: What about the disruption to us as residents of this state? A reduction in our salaries is hugely disruptive at a time when we find ourselves more and more the sole breadwinners for our entire families. How can we afford a reduction to our salaries when we are some of the last remaining wage earners in this unstable economy? As a nurse, my wage is lower than those in the private sector. I was made promises that are now in jeopardy of being taken away. Many of us agreed to lower salaries due to the benefits that were promised us and now these benefits are in jeopardy. I also strongly disagree with Section 4 of HB 1106. The Governor does not have the authority to unilaterally furlough state employees.

HB 1719 is also of concern to me. As a civil servant, I chose to work for less pay to be able to contribute to the community. Let’s talk about my contribution to the community. I work at the State Hospital where as many know house some of the most dangerous murderers and criminals in the State of Hawaii. We work to take care of these patients that no one wants or sometimes cannot take care of. Do we want to layoff individuals that keep our community safe? Do we want to risk having dangerous patients escape from the hospital because there are not enough staff to monitor them? What about the lifeguards that save the lives of our loved ones? On balance, I believed that I would be able to count on a safe retirement. Speaker Say’s bill, which disregards my years of service and reduces medical benefits until the Medicare retirement age, is irresponsible. It is the medical benefits that many of us stayed employed at the hospital and took lower wages in return. Instead of supporting public service, Speaker Say is telling us that public employees don’t mean much and promises to us can be broken mid-stream. It would be interesting to see how he would feel if he were in our shoes. I am sure he has no worries about paying his mortgage or putting food on the table, but the rest of us do.

This bill is a thinly veiled attempt to force people into early retirement. I now have to make the choice - get out now so that I can afford to stay healthy during my retirement, or stay even longer to provide for my family during these tough economic times and risk losing my current level of care during my retirement. I chose the latter. Both my two college graduate kids lost their jobs late last year,

Speaker Say is backing us into a corner, and it’s very irresponsible for him to suggest that this economic crisis should be resolved by sacrificing the health and well being of my family and mine. Also, by forcing people into retirement before July 1, 2009, we are gambling with the future of state programs. The loss to institutional knowledge and expertise that we could experience is putting our families in Hawai’i at risk. State programs that protect Hawai’i’s children, elderly and public will loose a wealth of knowledge that is not easy to recover when state hiring freezes are overburdening our already overburdened workforce.

I strongly encourage this committee to vote “no” on HB 1719 and to send a strong message to Speaker Say, that he cannot punish civil servants for their dedication and commitment to the state of Hawai’i.

Fe Baltao, BSN, RN Nurse Educator
Hawaii State Hospital
Staff Development and Training
Tel.# 236-8738
fe.baltao@doh.hawaii.gov



From: Lee, Robert [rlee3@honolulu.gov]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 10:37 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Opposition Testimony; y FRI, 02/13/2009 & TUES, 2/17/2009

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita and members of the committee:

My name is Robert Lee and I am providing testimony in strong opposition to HB 1719, HB 1725, HB 1723, HB1726, & HB 1727, all relating to employee benefits. Hearings related to those issues are taking place on Friday, February 13, 2009 at 08: 30 a.m. and Tuesday, February 17, 2009 at 08:30 a.m.

I have worked in city government for many years after foregoing opportunities in the private sector for more money. I enjoy my job and am very good at what I do and have been recognized as an exceptional employee.

One of the attractions of working in the public sector for me are health benefits. Should those benefits had not existed I would have likely not become a public sector employee.

Those health benefits are the result of the collective bargaining process and any changes to those benefits should take place through that same process and not through legislation. Presently HGEA and state and city governments are engaged in negotiations related to coming to terms for a new contract. Should not that be a more appropriate approach to changing benefits? And why would legislators assume the risk of disappointing a large number of their own constituents needlessly when state and city governments are already engaged with public employees?

As a union member I can accept changes which occur through a collective bargaining process, however, I cannot accept legislative driven changes. Should those changes occur during this legislative session, I will be deeply disappointed and respond by registering my disappointment through my vote in the next election. I will encourage others to share in my disappointment and vote accordingly as well.

Bob

Robert K. W. Lee, Jr.
HGEA Unit 13 member

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning. My name is Liane Koga and a member of HGEA, Bargaining Unit 03. I live in Kahului, Maui.

As a public employee for 26 years, I am deeply upset by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say. Specifically: HB 1106, HB 1719, HB 1718, and HB 1725.

HB 1106 is supposed to 'protect the rights of public employees' in the event of a furlough. Speaker Say has said that a furlough would cause the "least amount of disruption to public service." I pose this question to the Speaker: What about the disruption to us as residents of this state? A reduction in our salaries is hugely disruptive at a time when we find ourselves more and more the sole breadwinners for our entire families. How can we afford a reduction to our salaries when we are some of the last remaining wage earners in this unstable economy? I also strongly disagree with Section 4 of HB 1106. The Governor does not have the authority to unilaterally furlough state employees.

HB 1719 is also of concern to me. As a civil servant, I chose to work for less pay to be able to contribute to the community. On balance, I believed that I would be able to count on a safe retirement. Speaker Say's bill, which disregards my years of service and reduces medical benefits until the Medicare retirement age, is irresponsible. Instead of supporting public service, Speaker Say is telling us that public employees don't mean much and promises to us can be broken mid-stream. This bill is a thinly veiled attempt to force people into early retirement. I now have to make the choice - get out now so that I can afford to stay healthy during my retirement, or stay even longer to provide for myself during these tough economic times and risk losing my current level of care during my retirement.

Speaker Say is backing us into a corner, and it's irresponsible for him to suggest that this economic crisis should be resolved by sacrificing the health and well being of me and my family. Also, by forcing people into retirement before July 1, 2009, we are gambling with the future of state programs. The loss to institutional knowledge and expertise that we could experience is putting our families in Hawai'i at risk. State programs that protect Hawai'i's children, elderly and public will lose a wealth of knowledge that is not easy to recover when state hiring freezes are overburdening our already overburdened workforce. I strongly encourage this committee to vote "no" on HB 1719 and to send a strong message to Speaker Say, that he cannot punish civil servants for their dedication and commitment to the state of Hawai'i.

HB 1725 says that from July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2015, public employees will have to bear THE ENTIRE burden of prescription drug coverage. This is literally a bill that is playing with the life and death of public workers. Although the bill is only temporary, we are gambling with six years of prescription medication. With

rising chronic diseases that require medication, this bill, coupled with talk of salary cuts and rises in our premiums is like a death sentence for our elderly, sick, or recovering public workers and retirees. It will deter some employees and retirees from accessing medicine that is essential to long and healthy lives. This is a regressive bill when the rest of the nation is talking about improvements to our health care coverage.

Please vote "no" on all of these bills that take away benefits from public employees.

Mahalo

yamashita2 - Kristen

From: Baker, Kathleen K. [kathleen.baker@doh.hawaii.gov]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 8:34 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Do Not Support These Bills
Attachments: image001.gif; image002.gif; image003.gif; image004.gif

LATE

HB 1719 - Stop employer contribution for health benefits for those retiring after 7/1/09
HB 1725 - Halt prescription drug coverage under EUTF
HB 1723 - Limit employer contribution to 55% and make it non-negotiable;
HB 1726 - Curtail EUTF payment for life insurance benefits;
HB 1727 - Prohibits provision of dental and vision coverage.

I strongly urge you NOT to support the above bills. While it is known the salaries for a state position are not comparable to the mainland, the benefits are good. I have stayed in a state position because of the benefits and not the salary. A comparable position on the mainland would have doubled my salary. By supporting any of the above bills you are punishing people where many have worked years to accumulate benefits for their retirement.

Thank you,

Kathleen K. Baker

Kathleen Kromer Baker, Ph.D.

Research Statistician

OHSM, Statistics and Surveys

Hawai'i Department of Health

808 586 8050

kathleen.baker@doh.hawaii.edu

From: Marcia Ota [marciaota@yahoo.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 10:32 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Testimony

LATE

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony. My name is Marcia Ota and I have been a public employee for 34 years. I am very upset by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say, specifically HB 1106, 1719 and 1725.

HB 1106 talks about furloughs. I am against furloughs of public employees and a furlough would be a hardship on my and my family. A furlough would also force us to curtail spending, which would contribute more to downturn in the economy.

HB 1719 is also a concern to me. I have put 34 years into state government and this bill would reduce the medical benefits I counted on when I retired. It is irresponsible of Speaker Say to resolve the economic crisis by sacrificing my health and welfare.

Please vote "no" on HB 1719 so Speaker Say cannot balance the budget on the backs of the public employee and punish us for being good civil servants.

HB 1725 cuts our prescription drug coverage. This bill would literally cause financial burden to me as I depend on a lot of prescription drugs. I oppose this bill as it would greatly increase the cost of health care for me, at this stage in my life.

Please vote "no" on all of these bills that take away benefits from public employees.

Thank you.

From: CAROL KRAMER [kramercr@msn.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 8:37 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: HB1536 - Freezing salaries of Governor, Lt Governor

LATE

HB1536 - Freezing salaries of Governor, Lt Governor
HB 1106 - Furloughing employees
HB1718 - Halt reimbursement for Medicare part B premiums for employees retiring after 12/31/09
HB1719 - Stop employer contribution for health benefits for those retiring after 7/1/09
HB1725 - Halt prescription drug coverage under EUTF

As a married couple and both with HGEA, we are opposed to the above bills. I have been working in the system for 28 years and my husband for 12 years. Our monthly pay could be more in the private sector but we chose to stay in the system because of the health benefits after retirement. If any future changes need to be reviewed, it should be for the new employees, not the ones who have put in 10 years plus.

Carol J. Kramer
& Rorick J. Kramer
844 Leinaala Way
Makawao, Hawaii 96768
Ph. No. 572-6196

From: Karen Nakamura [khnakamura@msn.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 10:29 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Testimony for HB 1719, 1106, and 1725

LATE

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning. My name is Karen Nakamura. I was a dedicated and a proud public servant for 37years, I am deeply upset by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say. Specifically: HB 1719.

As a civil servant, I chose to work for less pay to be able to contribute to the community. I did so believing that I could count on a safe retirement. According to Speaker Say's bill, my fellow workers may not be able to do so. It disregards their years of service and reduces their medical benefits until the Medicare retirement age. This is irresponsible and **brings me shame. It makes me feel as though our years of service is being taken lightly.** Instead of supporting public service, Speaker Say is telling us that public employees don't mean much and promises to us can be broken mid-stream.

This bill is a thinly veiled attempt to force people into early retirement. Plans that may have been made to ensure that children graduate from college before retirement are suddenly up in the air. Now choices must be made - get out now so that civil servants can afford to stay healthy during their retirement, or stay even longer to provide their family during these tough economic times and risk losing their current level of care during their retirement.

HB 1106 is supposed to 'protect the rights of public employees' in the event of a furlough. Speaker Say has said that a furlough would cause the "least amount of disruption to public service." I pose this question to the Speaker: What about the disruption to us as residents of this state? A reduction in salaries is hugely disruptive at a time when some find themselves more and more the sole breadwinners for their entire family. How can they afford a reduction to their salaries when some of them may be the last remaining wage earners in this unstable economy?

We also strongly disagree with Section 4 of HB 1106. The Governor does not have the authority to unilaterally furlough state employees. Speaker Say is backing us into a corner, and it's irresponsible for him to suggest that this economic crisis should be resolved by sacrificing the health and well being of civil servants and their family. Also, by forcing people into retirement before July 1, 2009, we are gambling with the future of state programs. The loss to institutional knowledge and expertise that we could experience is putting our families in Hawai'i at risk. State programs that protect Hawai'i's children, elderly and public will loose a wealth of knowledge that is not easy to recover when state hiring freezes are overburdening our already overburdened workforce. I strongly encourage this committee to vote "no" on HB 1719 and to send a strong message to Speaker Say, that he cannot punish civil servants for their dedication and commitment to the state of Hawai'i.

HB 1725 says that from July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2015, public employees will have to bear THE ENTIRE burden of prescription drug coverage. This is literally a bill that is playing with the life and death of public workers. Although the bill is only temporary, we are gambling with six years of prescription medication. With rising chronic diseases that require medication, this bill, coupled with talk of salary cuts and rises in our premiums is like a death sentence for our elderly, sick, or recovering public workers and retirees. It will deter some employees and retirees from accessing medicine that is essential to long and healthy lives. This is a regressive bill when the rest of the nation is talking about improvements to our health care coverage.

Please vote "no" on all of these bills that take away benefits from public employees.

LATE

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning. My name is Arlanda Fields, registered nurse. As a public employee for 13 years, I am deeply upset by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say. Specifically: 1106, 1719 and 1725

HB 1106 is supposed to 'protect the rights of public employees' in the event of a furlough. Speaker Say has said that a furlough would cause the "least amount of disruption to public service."

I pose this question to the Speaker: What about the disruption to us as residents of this state? A reduction in our salaries is hugely disruptive at a time when we find ourselves more and more the sole breadwinners for our entire families. How can we afford a reduction to our salaries when we are some of the last remaining wage earners in this unstable economy? Living in Hawaii is very expensive and most of us are barely above water as it is and the Speaker desires to shove us further down. I have always tried to make wise choices to help support my family which was why I chose to work for the State.

We also strongly disagree with Section 4 of HB 1106. The Governor does not have the authority to unilaterally furlough state employees.

HB 1719 is also of concern to me. As a civil servant, I chose to work for less pay to be able to contribute to the community. On balance, I believed that I would be able to count on a safe retirement. Speaker Say's bill, which disregards my years of service and reduces medical benefits until the Medicare retirement age, is irresponsible. Instead of supporting public service, Speaker Say is telling us that public employees don't mean much and promises to us can be broken mid-stream.

This bill is a thinly veiled attempt to force people into early retirement. Plans I may have made to ensure that my children graduated from college before I retire are suddenly up in the air. I now have to make the choice - get out now so that I can afford to stay healthy during my retirement, or stay even longer to provide for my family during these tough economic times and risk losing my current level of care during my retirement.

Speaker Say is backing us into a corner, and it is irresponsible for him to suggest that this economic crisis should be resolved by sacrificing the health and well being of me and my family. Also, by forcing people into retirement before July 1, 2009, we are gambling with the future of state programs. The loss to institutional knowledge and expertise that we could experience is putting our families in Hawai'i at risk. State programs that protect Hawai'i's children, elderly and public will loose a wealth of knowledge that is not easy to recover when state hiring freezes are overburdening our already overburdened workforce. I strongly encourage this committee to vote "no" on HB 1719 and to send a strong message to Speaker Say, that he cannot punish civil servants for their dedication and commitment to the state of Hawai'i.

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Please vote "no" on all of these bills that take away benefits from public employees.

yamashita2 - Kristen

From: faye kawaoka [kawaokaf001@hawaii.rr.com]
Sent: Friday, February 13, 2009 6:46 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Bills which directly impat State of Hawaii workers

LATE

RE: Bills HB1723, HB1715, HB1726, HB1727, HB1727, **HB1718, HB1719, HB1725**

I am totally opposed to the above bills. I am a 58 year old with 27 years of service with the Dept. of Human Services. I have dedicated my life as a public servant knowing that the only rewards to look forward to were the State retirement benefits which included medical benefits.

You are trying to take away everything that I have worked diligently for. The burden of the State should not be carried only by the employees of the State.

If you implement these bills, you will soon find that you will have no one willing to work for the State of Hawaii. The pay is already not up to par with the private sector and the only drawing power were the medical and retirement benefits.

While you want to give all the poor people access to medical benefits, you now want to take that away from the working class?

LATE

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning. My name is Arlanda Fields, registered nurse. As a public employee for 13 years, I am deeply upset by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say. Specifically: 1106, 1719 and 1725

HB 1106 is supposed to 'protect the rights of public employees' in the event of a furlough. Speaker Say has said that a furlough would cause the "least amount of disruption to public service."

I pose this question to the Speaker: What about the disruption to us as residents of this state? A reduction in our salaries is hugely disruptive at a time when we find ourselves more and more the sole breadwinners for our entire families. How can we afford a reduction to our salaries when we are some of the last remaining wage earners in this unstable economy? Living in Hawaii is very expensive and most of us are barely above water as it is and the Speaker desires to shove us further down. I have always tried to make wise choices to help support my family which was why I chose to work for the State.

We also strongly disagree with Section 4 of HB 1106. The Governor does not have the authority to unilaterally furlough state employees.

HB 1719 is also of concern to me. As a civil servant, I chose to work for less pay to be able to contribute to the community. On balance, I believed that I would be able to count on a safe retirement. Speaker Say's bill, which disregards my years of service and reduces medical benefits until the Medicare retirement age, is irresponsible. Instead of supporting public service, Speaker Say is telling us that public employees don't mean much and promises to us can be broken mid-stream.

This bill is a thinly veiled attempt to force people into early retirement. Plans I may have made to ensure that my children graduated from college before I retire are suddenly up in the air. I now have to make the choice - get out now so that I can afford to stay healthy during my retirement, or stay even longer to provide for my family during these tough economic times and risk losing my current level of care during my retirement.

Speaker Say is backing us into a corner, and it is irresponsible for him to suggest that this economic crisis should be resolved by sacrificing the health and well being of me and my family. Also, by forcing people into retirement before July 1, 2009, we are gambling with the future of state programs. The loss to institutional knowledge and expertise that we could experience is putting our families in Hawai'i at risk. State programs that protect Hawai'i's children, elderly and public will lose a wealth of knowledge that is not easy to recover when state hiring freezes are overburdening our already overburdened workforce. I strongly encourage this committee to vote "no" on HB 1719 and to send a strong message to Speaker Say, that he cannot punish civil servants for their dedication and commitment to the state of Hawai'i.

HB 1725 says that from July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2015, public employees will have to bear THE ENTIRE burden of prescription drug coverage. This is literally a bill that is playing with the life and death of public workers. Although the bill is only temporary, we are gambling with six years of prescription medication. With rising chronic diseases that require medication, this bill, coupled with talk of salary cuts and rises in our premiums is like a death sentence for our elderly, sick, or recovering public workers and retirees. It will deter some employees and retirees from accessing medicine that is essential to long and healthy lives. This is a regressive bill when the rest of the nation is talking about improvements to our health care coverage.

Please vote "no" on all of these bills that take away benefits from public employees.

yamashita1- Kathy

From: Kim Murphy [ollo1188@hotmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 10:25 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Proposed Bills Affecting State Employees

LATE

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony. I have been a public employee for the State of Hawaii for 7 years and am upset about some of the bills being considered that target public employees. I understand the state is in a fiscal crisis and needs to take action. I believe all residents should share in shouldering the burden not just state employees.

It is my sincere hope that the following Bills Do Not pass:

HB 1718
HB 1719
HB 1720
HB 1721
HB 1722
HB 1723
HB 1725
HB 1727

I understand HB 1715 proposes to increase the minimum age and length of service requirement for retirement for new public employees. I understand HB 1719 proposes to suspend EUTF payments for retirees who retire prior to Medicare retirement age. One issue to consider with these bills would be the incentive provided to state employees to work longer, at a time when their salaries are highest, rather than encouraging them to leave state service. I can't help but wonder, and hope someone can assess, whether continuing to pay these high salaries would cost the state more than the retirement benefits.

I do not object to HB 1106 relating to furloughs. When I worked for the State of Massachusetts, in the early 90's, they had a fiscal crisis and state employees were furloughed, for a period of time. Furloughs seem like a better solution to what might be a temporary fiscal crisis. It can be implemented as long as necessary and changed as conditions change.

Making long term changes to the state employee benefit package, in response to what might be a temporary fiscal crisis, could result in losing valuable state employees. Finding qualified candidates, to work on the neighbor islands, which have problems with their health care and education systems, is very difficult. If it is necessary to remove some benefits then I suggest decreasing sick leave, which should assist in increasing productivity. Another idea that I have not heard being considered is moving to the 4 day work week, like many other states have done. This could result in significant savings.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my thoughts on these matters.

Kim Murphy

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From: atiida@netscape.net
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 8:42 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Disappointed Loyal State Employee

LATE

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning. My name is Elsie Iida from Hilo.

As a dedicated public employee for 33 years, I am deeply upset by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say.

Specifically: HBs 1106, 1719 and 1725

HB 1106 is supposed to 'protect the rights of public employees' in the event of a furlough. Speaker Say has said that a furlough would cause the "least amount of disruption to public service."

I pose this question to the Speaker: What about the disruption to us as residents of this state? A reduction in our salaries is hugely disruptive at a time when we find ourselves more and more the sole breadwinners for our entire families. How can we afford a reduction to our salaries when we are some of the last remaining wage earners in this unstable economy?

We also strongly disagree with Section 4 of HB 1106. The Governor does not have the authority to unilaterally furlough state employees.

HB 1719 is also of concern to me. As a civil servant, I chose to work for less pay to be able to contribute to the community. On balance, I believed that I would be able to count on a safe retirement. Speaker Say's bill, which disregards my years of service and reduces medical benefits until the Medicare retirement age, is irresponsible. Instead of supporting public service, Speaker Say is telling us that public employees don't mean much and promises to us can be broken mid-stream.

This bill is a thinly veiled attempt to force people into early retirement. Plans I may have made to ensure that my children graduated from college before I retire are suddenly up in the air. I now have to make the choice - get out now so that I can afford to stay healthy during my retirement, or stay even longer to provide for my family during these tough economic times and risk losing my current level of care during my retirement.

Say is backing us into a corner and it's not irresponsible for him to suggest that this economic crisis should be resolved by sacrificing the health and well being of me and my

family. Also, by forcing people into retirement before July 1, 2009, we are gambling with the future of state programs. The loss to institutional knowledge and expertise that we could experience is putting our=2 0families in Hawai'i at risk. State programs that protect Hawai'i's children, elderly and public will loose a wealth of knowledge that is not easy to recover when state hiring freezes are overburdening our already overburdened workforce. I

strongly encourage this committee to vote "no" on HB 1719 and to send a strong message to Speaker Say, that he cannot punish civil servants for their dedication and commitment to the state of Hawai'i.

HB 1725 says that from July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2015, public employees will have to bear **THE ENTIRE** burden of prescription drug coverage. This is=2 0literally a bill that is playing with the life and death of public workers. Although the bill is only temporary, we are gambling with six years of prescription medication. With rising chronic diseases that require medication, this bill, coupled with talk of salary cuts and rises in our premiums is like a death sentence for our elderly, sick, or recovering public workers and retirees. It will deter some employees and retirees from accessing medicine that is essential to long and healthy lives. This is a regressive bill when the rest of the nation is talking about improvements to our health care coverage.

Please vote "no" on all of these bills that take away benefits from public employees.

A Good Credit Score is 700 or Above. See yours in just 2 easy steps!

yamashita1- Kathy

From: Monica_DeCosta/AINAHAINA/HIDOE@notes.k12hi.us
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 10:10 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: testimony

LATE

Here is my testimony regarding the following bill:

#HB1536 - I think freezing salaries for Governor, Lt. Governor is not fair as far as the amount of work that it takes to run the State of Hawaii. I realize that it is a time consuming job and also never ending. Over worked and under paid.

#HB1106 - Furloughing employees - is out of the question - you could implement it for all new employees that start after a certain date. The ones that have been in the system for along time (let's say 1993 till 2000) should not be touch.

#HB1718 - I would need more clarification on this one.

#HB1719 - This bill should be dissolved

#HB1725 - We all need drug coverage as we get older money will be tighter let along when we all retire if they want to take everything away from us - we will have more sick people who can't afford to go to the doctor let along get medicine to help out. What is this State coming to?

#HB1723 - It need to be voted on. I bet Clayton Say will get everything that he is trying to stop he will benefit from it.

#HB1715 - That will never happen as long as the union will help out. It should be greatly consider.

#HB1726 - Is it the FREE one?

#HB1727 - We need to keep this coverage. If we can't see or our teeth go bad what will happen? We can't eat or we will be blind. Doctor visit are expensive.

The way it looks they are trying to take everything away from those of us who are hard working people. Take benefits away from those who come to work late and leave early. It happens at alot of our schools.

Or like in our SPED classes - There is 1 teacher and EA's and skill trainers in classrooms. Cut down the EA position. We need to see how many SPED children we at the school level and then make cuts from there. SPED children need all the help they can get but let's also think about the regular ED students. Someone needs to check all of the school see how many SPED children there are. Please investigate so that we don't have to cut benefits from the workers. After all we are over worked and under paid. People think that State/C & C worker are lazy (SOME ARE) not all.

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yamashita2 - Kristen

From: Linda [miyahiraa006@hawaii.rr.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 9:01 PM
To: LABtestimony
Cc: repchang@capital.hawaii.gov; Rep. Mark Nakashima
Subject: FW: HB 1723, 1715, 1726, 1727, 1719, 1725

LATE

From: Linda [mailto:miyahiraa006@hawaii.rr.com]
Sent: Wednesday, February 11, 2009 8:43 PM
To: 'Linda_Miyahira@notes.k12.hi.us'
Subject: FW: HB 1723, 1715, 1726, 1727, 1719, 1725

From: Linda [mailto:miyahiraa006@hawaii.rr.com]
Sent: Wednesday, February 11, 2009 8:42 PM
To: 'LABtestimony@Capitol.hawaii.gov'
Cc: 'repnakashima@capitol.hawaii.gov'; 'repchang@capital.hawaii.gov'
Subject: HB 1723, 1715, 1726, 1727, 1719, 1725

Aloha Representative Nakashima and Representative Chang,

We are Linda and Alan Miyahira, both state employees, who live in your district and voted for you. Linda has been an educational assistant for the past 10+ years and works at Kaumana Elementary School. Because of budget cuts, she has been informed that her position has been cut for the coming school year. Alan has worked as a carpenter/maintenance worker for 25 years. We are members of HGEA and UPW. As taxpayers, we spend money at local businesses every day to buy food, clothing and other needs. It is unacceptable for the House to look to public employees to balance the budget. We are at the mercy of lawmakers who look to the easiest source to take from – public servants. We work hard at our jobs, pay our taxes and want to be able to have a comfortable life. It's near to impossible to survive in Hawaii. Every time we receive a nominal raise, it's taken away by the ever-increasing cost of medical benefits. We chose to work for the state because of the benefits offered – not the salary. We are both close to retirement and don't need to have the benefits changed on us. We implore you to be fair by looking to all citizens of Hawaii to balance the budget, and not just the public sector. Please vote no on the above bills.

Mahalo,
Linda & Alan Miyahira

From: Kailana Flores [kailanaf@yahoo.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 9:57 AM
To: LABtestimony

I am a member of the HGEA, working as a registered nurse on Maui. I have 3 young children and a husband insured through me. It is so, extremely unjust for you to take from our benefits to recuperate money lost by your mismanagement of government funds. It is as if you are punishing us for the wrongdoing of others. I firmly object to bills HB1719,1725,1723,1715,1726,1727. We will all be paying attention to who voted for what in the coming elections.

Sincerely,
Kailana Flores
Unit 9

From: Laura Gonzalez [lauranng@yahoo.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 9:00 PM
To: LABtestimony
Cc: lauranng@yahoo.com
Subject: Take-away bills

LATE

- HB 1106 - Furloughing employees
- HB1718 - Halt reimbursement for Medicare part B premiums for employees retiring after 12/31/09
- HB1719 - Stop employer contribution for health benefits for those retiring after 7/1/09
- HB1725 - Halt prescription drug coverage under EUTF
- HB 1723 - Limit employer contribution to 55% and make it non-negotiable;
- HB1715 - Increase, for new employees, the age and service time requirement to retire;
- HB 1726 - Curtail EUTF payment for life insurance benefits;
- HB 1727 - Prohibits provision of dental and vision coverage.

I have been a state employee for 12 years. The bills listed above directly relate to the main reasons most of us became state workers, the benefits. The pay is not good and the workload is ridiculous. People have traditionally become state workers for the benefits including and especially, the retirement and medical. To remove these benefits would cause many to leave the state workforce (as many have already begun contemplating since these bills were introduced) leaving those left behind with an even bigger shortage and impossible workload, not to mention an inability to fill positions. This is already very difficult. The office that I work in is short one social worker, and one social service assistant and has been for quite some time. Without the benefits that we are threatened with losing, where is the draw for people to work for the state? I sincerely believe that taking away these benefits will only bring the state down and further handicap our ability to serve the public.

From: Kathleen Kim [gkim51@yahoo.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 10:11 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Testimony regarding State Employees

LATE

Dear Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify this morning. I and most of my colleagues have been employed by the State of Hawaii for about 30+ years. It is punitive and a travesty that your proposed solution is narrowly focusing on eliminating and/or reducing the health benefits for state workers. We all have worked long and hard and earned these benefits and to have them wiped away merely to balance the state budget is reprehensible. If there is another shortfall in the future, What would be next? Instead of penalizing the state employees by reducing and/or eliminating their dental, vision and drug coverage/benefits, you could and should be looking at ways to generate additional revenue(s) into the state economy. Although, at this critical juncture, it may not be a pleasant remedy, an increase of the excise/sales tax would generate millions of dollars and more than offset this anticipated deficit. This solution is 'shared' by everyone in the state of Hawaii including the tourists, not just state employees. Food items should be exempt from the increase which would lessen the pain of an increase in the tax. Hawaii has one of the lowest tax rates in the nation in comparison to other states. If you look long and hard, there are other revenue generating options available including user fees, registration fees, excise tax increases on alcohol, tobacco and also an increase in penalties for violations, etc. Additionally, programs that have outlived its usefulness should be evaluated and perhaps terminated. Taking this simplistic approach of taking away benefits from state employees is unjust, dishonorable and shameful.

Therefore, I urge you to vote NO on the following bills:

Friday, February 13, 2009

HB1718 - Halt reimbursement for Medicare part B premiums for employees retiring after 12/31/09

HB1719 - Stop employer contribution for health benefits for those retiring after 7/1/09

HB1725 - Halt prescription drug coverage under EUTF

Tuesday, February 17, 2009

HB 1723 - Limit employer contribution to 55% and make it non-negotiable;

HB 1726 - Curtail EUTF payment for life insurance benefits;

HB 1727 - Prohibits provision of dental and vision coverage.

Kathleen Kim

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning.

My name is Janine Leong Lau. As a public employee, I am deeply upset by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say.

HB 1106 is supposed to 'protect the rights of public employees' in the event of a furlough. Speaker Say has said that a furlough would cause the "least amount of disruption to public service."

I pose this question to the Speaker: What about the disruption to us as residents of this state? A reduction in our salaries is hugely disruptive at a time when we find ourselves more and more the sole breadwinners for our entire families. How can we afford a reduction to our salaries when we are some of the last remaining wage earners in this unstable economy?

We also strongly disagree with Section 4 of HB 1106. The Governor does not have the authority to unilaterally furlough state employees.

HB 1719 is also of concern to me. As a civil servant, I chose to work for less pay to be able to contribute to the community. On balance, I believed that I would be able to count on a safe retirement. Speaker Say's bill, which disregards my years of service and reduces medical benefits until the Medicare retirement age, is irresponsible. Instead of supporting public service, Speaker Say is telling us that public employees don't mean much and promises to us can be broken mid-stream.

This bill is a thinly veiled attempt to force people into early retirement. Plans I may have made to ensure that my children graduated from college before I retire are suddenly up in the air. I now have to make the choice - get out now so that I can afford to stay healthy during my retirement, or stay even longer to provide for my family during these tough economic times and risk losing my current level of care during my retirement.

Speaker Say is backing us into a corner, and it's not irresponsible for him to suggest that this economic crisis should be resolved by sacrificing the health and well being of me and my family. Also, by forcing people into retirement before July 1, 2009, we are gambling with the future of state programs. The loss to institutional knowledge and expertise that we could experience is putting our families in Hawai'i at risk. State programs that protect Hawai'i's children, elderly and public will lose a wealth of knowledge that is not easy to recover when state hiring freezes are overburdening our already overburdened workforce.

I strongly encourage this committee to vote “no” on HB 1719 and to send a strong message to Speaker Say, that he cannot punish civil servants for their dedication and commitment to the state of Hawai‘i.

HB 1725 says that from July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2015, public employees will have to bear THE ENTIRE burden of prescription drug coverage. This is literally a bill that is playing with the life and death of public workers. Although the bill is only temporary, we are gambling with six years of prescription medication. With rising chronic diseases that require medication, this bill, coupled with talk of salary cuts and rises in our premiums is like a death sentence for our elderly, sick, or recovering public workers and retirees. It will deter some employees and retirees from accessing medicine that is essential to long and healthy lives. This is a regressive bill when the rest of the nation is talking about improvements to our health care coverage.

Please vote “**NO**” on all of these bills that take away benefits from public employees.

From: Nora Cuban [cubannora@yahoo.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 9:43 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: *****SPAM*****

LATE

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning. My name is Leonora Cuban. As a public employee for 37 years and 6 months, I am deeply upset by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say. Specifically: HB 1106, HB 1718, HB 1719, HB 1725

HB 1106 is supposed to 'protect the rights of public employees' in the event of a furlough.

Speaker Say has said that a furlough would cause the "least amount of disruption to public service." I pose this question to the Speaker: What about the disruption to us as residents of this state?

A reduction in our salaries is hugely disruptive at a time when we are the sole breadwinners. How can we afford a reduction to our salaries when we are some of the last remaining wage earners in this unstable economy? We also strongly disagree with Section 4 of HB 1106. The Governor does not have the authority to unilaterally furlough state employees.

HB 1719 is also of concern to me. As a civil servant, I chose to work for less pay to be able to contribute to the community. On balance, I believed that I would be able to count on a safe retirement. Speaker Say's bill, which disregards my years of service and reduces medical benefits until the Medicare retirement age, is irresponsible. Instead of supporting public service, Speaker Say is telling us that public employees don't mean much and promises to us can be broken mid-stream. This bill is a thinly veiled attempt to force people into early retirement. My plans to remain in service until my only child graduated from college are dissolved. The only choice I have is to be forced into retiring. Speaker Say is backing us into a corner, and it's not irresponsible for him to suggest that this economic crisis should be resolved by sacrificing the health and well being of me and

my family. Also, by forcing people into retirement before July 1, 2009, we are gambling with the future of state programs. The loss to institutional knowledge and expertise that we could experience is putting our families in Hawai'i at risk. State programs that protect Hawai'i's children, elderly and public will lose a wealth of knowledge that is not easy to recover when state hiring freezes are overburdening our already overburdened workforce. I strongly encourage this committee to vote "no" on HB 1719 and to send a strong message to Speaker Say, that he cannot punish civil servants for their dedication and commitment to the state of Hawai'i.

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Please vote "no" on all of these bills that take away benefits from public employees. .

yamashita1- Kathy

From: Roxanne Sanehira [roxasane@gmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 10:07 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Please vote NO

LATE

Chair Rhoades, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:

My name is Roxanne Sanehira. As a public employee for 21 years, I am deeply upset by bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say. HB 1106, HB 1719, HB 1725

HB1106 "protects the rights of public employees" in the event of a furlough. Speaker Say has been quoted to say that a furlough will cause the "least amount of disruption to public service". Public employees are also residents of the state of Hawaii. A reduction in our salary and combination of other bills (i.e.HB1725) is disruptive at a time when many of us are beginning to find ourselves the sole breadwinner in our family. It looks like I may soon end up as the sole breadwinner in my family with one child in college and another along the way. How can we afford a reduction in salary (and possible increase in cost of "benefits") when we are the last remaining wage earners in this unstable economy?

I strongly disagree with Section 4 of HB 1106. The Governor should not have the authority to unilaterally furlough state employees.

HB 1719 is of great concern to me. As a civil servant I believed that I would be able to count on a safe retirement. HB 1719 disregards my years of service and reduces medical benefits until the Medicare retirement age. This is irresponsible and a clear message to public employees that we don't matter because promises/contracts can be broken at any time.

This bill forces many of our public employees including many of my friends into early retirement. If this bill passes, I won't have a choice but to work until age 65 to provide for my family during tough economic times or risk losing my current level of care during my retirement years. Those of us left to continue working will be faced with the loss of people who have the knowledge and expertise to carry on public service putting our families in Hawaii at risk especially with the hiring freezes that have already overburdened the workforce. Plans we have all made to ensure that our children graduate from college are suddenly up in the air.

I strongly encourage this committee to **vote "NO" on HB 1719** and send a strong message to **Speaker Calvin Say that he should not place the burden of balancing the state budget on the backs of public employees and punish them for their commitment to the state of Hawaii.**

HB 1725 states that July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2015 public employees will have to bear the entire burden of prescription drug coverage. Although the bill is temporary, we are gambling with six years of prescription medication. This bill coupled with the talk of salary cuts and rises in our premiums is a death sentence for our elderly, sick and recovering public works and retirees. It will deter employees and retirees from accessing medication necessary for long and healthy lives. The state of Hawaii will not be in line with the rest of the nation who is talking about improvements to health care. Again the message is... public employees and retirees are not important.

Please vote "NO" on all of these bills that take away benefits from public employees.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit my testimony.

Roxanne Sanehira
705 Kilaha Place
Hilo, HI 96720
808-959-1178

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning. My name is Doris Wada. As a public employee for 39 years, I am deeply upset by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say. Specifically: HBs 1106, 1718, 1719, 1725.

HB 1106 is supposed to 'protect the rights of public employees' in the event of a furlough. Speaker Say has said that a furlough would cause the "least amount of disruption to public service."

I pose this question to the Speaker: What about the disruption to us as residents of this state? A reduction in our salaries is hugely disruptive at a time when we find ourselves more and more the sole breadwinners for our entire families. How can we afford a reduction to our salaries when we are some of the last remaining wage earners in this unstable economy?

We also strongly disagree with Section 4 of HB 1106. The Governor does not have the authority to unilaterally furlough state employees.

HB 1719 is also of concern to me. As a civil servant, I chose to work for less pay to be able to contribute to the community. On balance, I believed that I would be able to count on a safe retirement. Speaker Say's bill, which disregards my years of service and reduces medical benefits until the Medicare retirement age, is irresponsible. Instead of supporting public service, Speaker Say is telling us that public employees don't mean much and promises to us can be broken mid-stream.

This bill is a thinly veiled attempt to force people into early retirement. Plans I may have made to ensure that my children graduated from college before I retire are suddenly up in the air. I now have to make the choice - get out now so that I can afford to stay healthy during my retirement, or stay even longer to provide for my family during these tough economic times and risk losing my current level of care during my retirement.

Speaker Say is backing us into a corner, and it's not irresponsible for him to suggest that this economic crisis should be resolved by sacrificing the health and well being of me and my family. Also, by forcing people into retirement before July 1, 2009, we are gambling with the future of state programs. The loss to institutional knowledge and expertise that we could experience is putting our families in Hawai'i at risk. State programs that protect Hawai'i's children, elderly and public will lose a wealth of knowledge that is not easy to recover when state hiring freezes are overburdening our already overburdened workforce. I strongly encourage this committee to vote "no" on HB 1719 and to send a strong message to Speaker Say, that he cannot punish civil servants for their dedication and commitment to the state of Hawai'i.

HB 1725 says that from July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2015, public employees will have to bear THE ENTIRE burden of prescription drug coverage. This is literally a bill that is playing with the life and death of public workers. Although the bill is only temporary, we

are gambling with six years of prescription medication. With rising chronic diseases that require medication, this bill, coupled with talk of salary cuts and rises in our premiums is like a death sentence for our elderly, sick, or recovering public workers and retirees. It will deter some employees and retirees from accessing medicine that is essential to long and healthy lives. This is a regressive bill when the rest of the nation is talking about improvements to our health care coverage.

Please vote “no” on all of these bills that take away benefits from public employees.

Thank you.

Doris Wada
Hawaii State Hospital
Kaneohe, HI 96744

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning. My name is Mrs. Reyna Tasi. As a public employee for 5 years, I am deeply upset by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say.

HB 1106 is supposed to 'protect the rights of public employees' in the event of a furlough. Speaker Say has said that a furlough would cause the "least amount of disruption to public service." I pose this question to the Speaker: What about the disruption to us as residents of this state? A reduction in our salaries is hugely disruptive at a time when we find ourselves more and more the sole breadwinners for our entire families. How can we afford a reduction to our salaries when we are some of the last remaining wage earners in this unstable economy?

We also strongly disagree with Section 4 of HB 1106. The Governor does not have the authority to unilaterally furlough state employees. HB 1719 is also of concern to me. As a civil servant, I chose to work for less pay to be able to contribute to the community. On balance, I believed that I would be able to count on a safe retirement. Speaker Say's bill, which disregards my years of service and reduces medical benefits until the Medicare retirement age, is irresponsible. Instead of supporting public service, Speaker Say is telling us that public employees don't mean much and promises to us can be broken mid-stream.

This bill is a thinly veiled attempt to force people into early retirement. Plans I may have made to ensure that my children graduated from college before I retire are suddenly up in the air. I now have to make the choice - get out now so that I can afford to stay healthy during my retirement, or stay even longer to provide for my family during these tough economic times and risk losing my current level of care during my retirement.

Speaker Say is backing us into a corner, and it's not irresponsible for him to suggest that this economic crisis should be resolved by sacrificing the health and well being of me and my family. Also, by forcing people into retirement before July 1, 2009, we are gambling with the future of state programs. The loss to institutional knowledge and expertise that we could experience is putting our families in Hawai'i at risk. State programs that protect Hawai'i's children, elderly and public will lose a wealth of knowledge that is not easy to recover when state hiring freezes are overburdening our already overburdened workforce. I strongly encourage this committee to vote "no" on HB 1719 and to send a strong message to Speaker Say, that he cannot punish civil servants for their dedication and commitment to the state of Hawai'i.

HB 1725 says that from July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2015, public employees will have to bear THE ENTIRE burden of prescription drug coverage. This is literally a bill that is playing with the life and death of public workers. Although the bill is only temporary, we are gambling with six years of prescription medication. With rising chronic diseases that require medication, this bill, coupled with talk of salary cuts and rises in our premiums is like a death sentence for our elderly, sick, or recovering public workers and retirees. It will deter some employees and retirees from accessing medicine that is essential to long and healthy lives. This is a regressive bill when the rest of the nation is talking about improvements to our health care coverage.

Please vote “no” on all of these bills that take away benefits from public employees.

yamashita1- Kathy

From: James_Peacock/KAHUKUHI/HIDOE@notes.k12.hi.us
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 9:56 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Opposition to HB1719 and HB1723

LATE

Representative Rhoades:

Never before have I called a politician or sent an e-mail about proposed legislation. Yet, upon reading about HB 1719 and HB1723, I'm very concerned that this is either a bad idea, or a political stunt.

I'm sure you will receive similar e-mail messages, so I'll attempt to keep my comments brief and to the point. I gave up a nice teaching job at a prestigious ILH high school almost 20 years ago to take a job in the DOE to be a school counselor. At that time, the DOE seemed to be begging for certified counselors. Not only could I fulfill a real need at Kahuku High School, but the retirement program was fairly attractive. As I saw it, I could give up real monthly wages, with the promise of getting the missing wages back thru the retirement system. Did I error in judgement? In many ways, this seems similar to our last president and his effort to tear apart our Social Security System. People who worked hard, were going to get the shaft! Fortunately, the president lost out on this idea. Hopefully, the politicians from Hawaii who are really promoting these bills will also change their minds.

Can you imagine all of the different labor unions for both the state and city and county, who will most likely take the state to court on these issues? How much money will the tax payers shell out to cover these court costs? I wonder if the state of Hawaii will win all of these suits in both state and federal courts, especially at the appellate level? I can only imagine that lawyers would find a number of issues that would be taken up in our courts.

Yet, as compelling as these arguments against these bills may seem, my largest concern, as it should be for all of Hawaii's citizens, is the effect your bill will have on those too old to work. Without a retirement or medical package, many seniors will eventually be forced out of their homes and will be without medical assistance. Can you imagine how our current ugly homeless situation will continue to manifest itself, and how our emergency rooms at every hospital will be filled with senior citizens who can not afford medical assistance at a doctor's office because of these proposed bills? The state of Hawaii can not avoid being a steward of our citizens. Additional homelessness will continue to drive perspective tourist away, further shrinking the state's tax base income. This would be similar to a dog chasing it's tail.

Can I also assume that these bills would also cut out the retirement plans and medical benefits for state judges, and politicians, such as yourself? Or is this only an attempt to upset state and C&C employees and all of their affected family members?

James C. Peacock, Kahuku High School Counselor

**James
Peacock/KAHUKUHI/HIDOE**

To LABTesying@capitol.Hawaii.gov

02/12/2009 08:49 AM

cc

Subject: seeing if the e-mail address is accurate

yamashita1- Kathy

From: Akeo, April L. [April.Akeo@doh.hawaii.gov]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 9:57 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Re: Bills introduced by Calvin Say

LATE

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning. My name is April Lacsina Akeo. As a public employee for over 10 years, I am very upset by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say. Specifically: HB 1106, HB 1719, HB 1725.

HB 1106 is supposed to ‘protect the rights of public employees’ in the event of a furlough. Speaker Say has said that a furlough would cause the “least amount of disruption to public service.” I pose this question to the Speaker: What about the disruption to us as residents of this state? A reduction in our salaries is hugely disruptive at a time when we find ourselves more and more the sole breadwinners for our entire families. How can we afford a reduction to our salaries when we are some of the last remaining wage earners in this unstable economy? As a nurse, my wage is lower than those in the private sector. I was made promises that are now in jeopardy of being taken away. Many of us agreed to lower salaries due to the benefits that were promised us and now these benefits are in jeopardy. I also strongly disagree with Section 4 of HB 1106. The Governor does not have the authority to unilaterally furlough state employees.

HB 1719 is also of concern to me. As a civil servant, I chose to work for less pay to be able to contribute to the community. Let’s talk about my contribution to the community. I work at the State Hospital where as many know house some of the most dangerous murderers and criminals in the State of Hawaii. We work to take care of these patients that no one wants or sometimes cannot take care of. Do we want to layoff individuals that keep our community safe? Do we want to risk having dangerous patients escape from the hospital because there are not enough staff to monitor them? What about the lifeguards that save the lives of our loved ones? On balance, I believed that I would be able to count on a safe retirement. Speaker Say’s bill, which disregards my years of service and reduces medical benefits until the Medicare retirement age, is irresponsible. It is the medical benefits that many of us stayed employed at the hospital and took lower wages in return. Instead of supporting public service, Speaker Say is telling us that public employees don’t mean much and promises to us can be broken mid-stream. It would be interesting to see how he would feel if he were in our shoes. I am sure he has no worries about paying his mortgage or putting food on the table, but the rest of us do.

This bill is a thinly veiled attempt to force people into early retirement. Plans I may have made to ensure that my children graduated from college before I retire are suddenly up in the air. I now have to make the choice - get out now so that I can afford to stay healthy during my retirement, or stay even longer to provide for my family during these tough economic times and risk losing my current level of care during my retirement.

Speaker Say is backing us into a corner, and it’s not irresponsible for him to suggest that this economic crisis should be resolved by sacrificing the health and well being of me and my family. Also, by forcing people into retirement before July 1, 2009, we are gambling with the future of state programs. The loss to institutional knowledge and expertise that we could experience is putting our families in Hawai’i at risk. State programs that protect Hawai’i’s children, elderly and public will loose a wealth of knowledge that is not easy to recover when state hiring freezes are overburdening our already overburdened workforce.

I strongly encourage this committee to vote “no” on HB 1719 and to send a strong message to Speaker Say, that he cannot punish civil servants for their dedication and commitment to the state of Hawai’i.

April Lacsina Akeo MSN, MBA, BSN, RN
Risk Management/Quality Improvement

From: RAbordo@dhs.hawaii.gov
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 9:55 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Take Away Bills

LATE

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning. My name is Mrs. Reyna Tasi. As a public employee for 5 years, I am deeply upset by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say.

HB 1106 is supposed to 'protect the rights of public employees' in the event of a furlough. Speaker Say has said that a furlough would cause the "least amount of disruption to public service." I pose this question to the Speaker: What about the disruption to us as residents of this state? A reduction in our salaries is hugely disruptive at a time when we find ourselves more and more the sole breadwinners for our entire families. How can we afford a reduction to our salaries when we are some of the last remaining wage earners in this unstable economy?

We also strongly disagree with Section 4 of HB 1106. The Governor does not have the authority to unilaterally furlough state employees. HB 1719 is also of concern to me. As a civil servant, I chose to work for less pay to be able to contribute to the community. On balance, I believed that I would be able to count on a safe retirement. Speaker Say's bill, which disregards my years of service and reduces medical benefits until the Medicare retirement age, is irresponsible. Instead of supporting public service, Speaker Say is telling us that public employees don't mean much and promises to us can be broken mid-stream.

This bill is a thinly veiled attempt to force people into early retirement. Plans I may have made to ensure that my children graduated from college before I retire are suddenly up in the air. I now have to make the choice - get out now so that I can afford to stay healthy during my retirement, or stay even longer to provide for my family during these tough economic times and risk losing my current level of care during my retirement.

Speaker Say is backing us into a corner, and it's not irresponsible for him to suggest that this economic crisis should be resolved by sacrificing the health and well being of me and my family. Also, by forcing people into retirement before July 1, 2009, we are gambling with the future of state programs. The loss to institutional knowledge and expertise that we could experience is putting our families in Hawai'i at risk. State programs that protect Hawai'i's children, elderly and public will lose a wealth of knowledge that is not easy to recover when state hiring freezes are overburdening our already overburdened workforce. I strongly encourage this committee to vote "no" on HB 1719 and to send a strong message to Speaker Say, that he cannot punish civil servants for their dedication and commitment to the state of Hawai'i.

HB 1725 says that from July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2015, public employees will have to bear THE ENTIRE burden of prescription drug coverage. This is literally a bill that is playing with the life and death of public workers. Although the bill is only temporary, we are gambling with six years of prescription medication. With rising chronic diseases that require medication,

this bill, coupled with talk of salary cuts and rises in our premiums is like a death sentence for our elderly, sick, or recovering public workers and retirees. It will deter some employees and retirees from accessing medicine that is essential to long and healthy lives. This is a regressive bill when the rest of the nation is talking about improvements to our health care coverage.

Please vote “no” on all of these bills that take away benefits from public employees.

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yamashita1- Kathy

From: Wilma [wgo@hawaii.edu]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 9:50 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Testimony from a Public Employee

LATE

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning. My name is Wilma Go. As a public employee for over 30 years, I am deeply upset by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say. Specifically: HB 1106, 1719, and 1725.

HB 1106 is supposed to ‘protect the rights of public employees’ in the event of a furlough. Speaker Say has said that a furlough would cause the “least amount of disruption to public service.”

I pose this question to the Speaker: What about the disruption to us as residents of this state? A reduction in our salaries is hugely disruptive at a time when we find ourselves more and more the sole breadwinners for our entire families. How can we afford a reduction to our salaries when we are some of the last remaining wage earners in this unstable economy?

We also strongly disagree with Section 4 of HB 1106. The Governor does not have the authority to unilaterally furlough state employees.

HB 1719 is also of concern to me. As a civil servant, I chose to work for less pay to be able to contribute to the community. On balance, I believed that I would be able to count on a safe retirement. Speaker Say’s bill, which disregards my years of service and reduces medical benefits until the Medicare retirement age, is irresponsible. Instead of supporting public service, Speaker Say is telling us that public employees don’t mean much and promises to us can be broken mid-stream.

This bill is thinly veiled attempt to force people into early retirement. I now have to make the choice get out now so that I can afford to stay healthy during my retirement, or stay even longer for my family during these tough economic times and risk losing my current level of care during my retirement.

Speaker Say is backing us into a corner, and it’s not irresponsible for him to suggest that this economic crisis should be resolved by sacrificing the health, and well being of me and my family. Also by forcing people into retirement before July 1, 2009, we are gambling with the future of state programs. The loss to institutional knowledge and expertise that we could experience is putting our families in Hawai’i at risk. State programs that protect Hawai’i’s children, elderly and public will lose a wealth of knowledge that is not easy to recover when state hiring freezes are overburdening our already overburdened workforce. I strongly encourage this committee to vote “no” on HB 1719 and to send a strong message to Speaker Say, that he cannot punish civil servants for their dedication and commitment to the State of Hawai’i

HB 1725 says that from July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2015, public employees will have to bear THE ENTIRE burden of prescription drug coverage. This is literally a bill that is playing with the life and death of public workers. Although the bill is only temporary, we are gambling with six years of prescription medication. With rising chronic diseases that require medication, this will, coupled with talk of salary cuts and increases in our premiums Is like a death senence for our elderly, sick, or recovering public employiyees and retirees. It will deter some employees and retirees from accessing medicine that is essential to long and healthy lives. This is a regressive bill when the rest of the nation is talking about improvements to our health care coverage.

Please vote "no" on all of these bills that take away benefits from public employees!

Also, please vote "no" to **HB 1715, 1718, 1723, 1726, and 1727!**

Thank you in advance for your assistance to this matter.

Wilma Go
Secretary
University of Hawaii
William S. Richardson School of Law
Office of the Chief Operating Officer/
Senior Advisor
2515 Dole St., Room 223
Honolulu, HI 96822

Phone: (808) 956-8395
FAX: (808) 956-6402
E-mail: wgo@hawaii.edu

yamashita1- Kathy

From: Carol Llego [carol_llego@yahoo.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 9:20 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Please vote "no" on all of these bills that take away benefits from public employees

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning. My name is Carol D. Llego. As a public employee for 7 years, I am deeply upset by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say. Specifically:

- HB 1106 - Furloughing employees
- HB1718 - Halt reimbursement for Medicare part B premiums for employees retiring after 12/31/09
- HB1719 - Stop employer contribution for health benefits for those retiring after 7/1/09
- HB1725 - Halt prescription drug coverage under EUTF
- HB 1723 - Limit employer contribution to 55% and make it non-negotiable
- HB1715 - Increase, for new employees, the age and service time requirement to retire
- HB 1726 - Curtail EUTF payment for life insurance benefits
- HB 1727 - Prohibits provision of dental and vision coverage

HB 1106 is supposed to 'protect the rights of public employees' in the event of a furlough. Speaker Say has said that a furlough would cause the "least amount of disruption to public service."

I pose this question to the Speaker: What about the disruption to us as residents of this state? A reduction in our salaries is hugely disruptive at a time when we find ourselves more and more the sole breadwinners for our entire families. How can we afford a reduction to our salaries when we are some of the last remaining wage earners in this unstable economy?

We also strongly disagree with Section 4 of HB 1106. The Governor does not have the authority to unilaterally furlough state employees.

HB 1719 is also of concern to me. As a civil servant, I chose to work for less pay to be able to contribute to the community. On balance, I believed that I would be able to count on a safe retirement. Speaker Say's bill, which disregards my years of service and reduces medical benefits until the Medicare retirement age, is irresponsible. Instead of supporting public service, Speaker Say is telling us that public employees don't mean much and promises to us can be broken mid-stream.

This bill is a thinly veiled attempt to force people into early retirement. Plans I may have made to ensure that my children graduated from college before I retire are suddenly up in the air. I now have to make the choice - get out now so that I can afford to stay healthy during my retirement, or stay even longer to provide for my family during these tough economic times and risk losing my current level of care during my retirement.

Speaker Say is backing us into a corner, and it's not irresponsible for him to suggest that this economic crisis should be resolved by sacrificing the health and well being of me and my family. Also, by forcing people into retirement before July 1, 2009, we are gambling with the future of state programs. The loss to institutional knowledge and expertise that we could experience is putting our families in Hawai'i at risk. State programs that protect Hawai'i's children, elderly and public will lose a wealth of knowledge that is not easy to recover when state hiring freezes are overburdening our already overburdened workforce. I strongly encourage this committee

to vote “no” on HB 1719 and to send a strong message to Speaker Say, that he cannot punish civil servants for their dedication and commitment to the state of Hawai’i.

HB 1725 says that from July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2015, public employees will have to bear THE ENTIRE burden of prescription drug coverage. This is literally a bill that is playing with the life and death of public workers. Although the bill is only temporary, we are gambling with six years of prescription medication. With rising chronic diseases that require medication, this bill, coupled with talk of salary cuts and rises in our premiums is like a death sentence for our elderly, sick, or recovering public workers and retirees. It will deter some employees and retirees from accessing medicine that is essential to long and healthy lives. This is a regressive bill when the rest of the nation is talking about improvements to our health care coverage.

Please vote “no” on all of these bills that take away benefits from public employees.

Aloha,
Carol D. Llega

-- Many Ways to Say I Love You --

From the very beginning of our lives, we've had a natural need to receive. Without it, we couldn't have grown. We wouldn't have wanted nourishment; we wouldn't have wanted care. And what we must realize is that we do not outgrow this need to receive. Receiving times are for everybody, and so are giving times.

-- Fred Rogers --

yamashita1- Kathy

From: rlkoa@aol.com
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 9:40 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Please Vote "NO"

LATE

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the work that you do for our community and for our State. At times it may feel like a thankless job but I'm glad that you take on the challenges of making hard decisions for us especially during this harsh economic time.

As a State employee, I'm voicing my opposition to the proposed bills that are on the table concerning cuts to State employee benefits. As you know our stability come from our benefits package. Cutting any portion of it will negatively impact us and our families. We are already in service to the community and we rely on that stability to see through tough economic times such now. Please remain protective of our benefits and vote **"NO"** to the following bills:

- HB1536 - Freezing salaries of Governor, Lt Governor
- HB 1106 - Furloughing employees
- HB1718 - Halt reimbursement for Medicare part B premiums for employees retiring after 12/31/09
- HB1719 - Stop employer contribution for health benefits for those retiring after 7/1/09
- HB1725 - Halt prescription drug coverage under EUTF
- HB 1723 - Limit employer contribution to 55% and make it non-negotiable;
- HB1715 - Increase, for new employees, the age and service time requirement to retire;
- HB 1726 - Curtail EUTF payment for life insurance benefits;
- HB 1727 - Prohibits provision of dental and vision coverage

Once again mahalo for the work that you do and I hope that I am heard.

Aloha,

Roland Lee
Concerned Citizen and State Employee

A Good Credit Score is 700 or Above. See yours in just 2 easy steps!

LATE

TO: EDNtestimony@hawaii.capitol.gov
FROM: George-ann Kealoha
BCC: mmorita@hsta.org
SUBJECT: HB 1719 - RELATING TO PUBLIC EMPLOYEES
HB 1725

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

My name is George-ann Kealoha and I am a teacher at Pomaikai School and I strongly oppose HB 1719 and 1725 which suspends state and county contributions to the EUTF for all state and county employees-beneficiaries who retire after July 1, 2009, regardless of date of hire and years of service, if the employee retires before the employee's Medicare retirement age. It resumes coverage after Medicare retirement age. We have not had an appropriate length of time to become informed of new laws which impact teachers.

If this bill should pass, it would encourage state and county employees to retire on June 30, 2009.

If this law is passed I would retire effective June 2009 to preserve the benefits which my family and I feel I have earned and have relied on since I became vested. It is unfair to present state employees who were promised these benefits.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

George-ann Kealoha

yamashita1- Kathy

From: Keola Akana [keolabear@hotmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 9:41 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: FW: HB 1106, HB 1718, HB 1719 & HB 1725

LATE

Testimony for Hearing. Please provide my testimony for the hearing tomorrow and make the appropriate copies. Mahalo for your kokua.

House Committee on Labor and Public Employment
2/13/09, 8:30 am hearing
Room 309

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita and members of the House Committee on Labor and Public Employment. My name is Wayne Akana and I have been a State government employee with the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations for over 10 years. I am in opposition to HB 1106, HB 1718, HB 1719 and HB 1725. Government workers at the DLIR are hard working and attempt to provide the best service to the community that we are able given the increased volume of cases that are filed in our offices even though many vacant positions have not been filled and are frozen. As you know government pay is not as high as working in the private sector. However, government work serving the community is a reward. Another reward are the benefits that are offered to government workers and their families. To cut these benefits in order to improve the State's economy will demoralize government workers and make it such that we will reserve our incomes even further from spending in the State's economy. Also why are government workers targeted as the ones to suffer financially to bring additional funds for the State?

Government workers did not cause the negative State economy, why should it be the government workers and their families to be the ones who are economically penalized? All of Hawai`i's citizens should equally share in the remedy to ensure that the State's financial health improve, not just one group such as government employees. Please vote against HB 1106, HB 1718, HB 1719 and HB 1725. Mahalo.

Wayne K. Akana
449 Kawaihae Street
Honolulu, Hawai`i 96825

Windows Live™: Keep your life in sync. [Check it out.](#)

Windows Live™: Keep your life in sync. [Check it out.](#)

From: Shawn Fonseca [coachfonz@hotmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 9:39 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Against HB's 1106, 1718, 1719, 1725, 1723, 1726, 1727

LATE

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita and members of the commtee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning. My name is Shawn G. Fonseca. As a public employee for 28 years, I am deeply sadden and upset by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say. Specifically: HB 1106, 1718, 1719, 1725, 1726, 1723 and 1727.

My reasons for working as a public servant 28 years ago was to give back to the community and State that me and my generations of family have been apart of all our lives. I have forgone working in the private sector and making more salary because of the promise of benefits that could help me and my family in our later years of life. Now these promises are about to be broken and my commitment to public service could be a financial burden and disruptive to my family's future.

The HB Bills I mentioned above is an attempt to break promises made to public workers who have made sacrifices in their lives to serve their communities. To try to balance the budget on the backs of State workers will do more harm to the communities who depend on quality workers to continue the various services that are more needed in this time of an unstable economy.

Please protect the rights of public employees who have given their lives to the betterment of the State of Hawaii.

Please vote "NO" on all of these bills that take away benefits from public employees.

Mahalo, Shawn Fonseca

February 12, 2009

LATE

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning. My name is Janelle Garcia. As a public employee for 15 years, I am deeply upset by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say. Specifically: **HB 1718, HB 1723, HB 1725, HB 1726 & HB 1727**

Relating to HB 1718:

I am against halting reimbursement for Medicare Part B premiums for employees retiring after 12/31/09 because I look forward to receiving what I'm entitled to after the years of service as a public employee. By removing a benefit such as this, would greatly affect me as a future retiree. I don't know what the future will bring but by taking away benefits I work hard for does not make me feel good as a public employee.

Relating to HB 1723:

I am against limiting employer contribution to 55% and making it non-negotiable because times are definitely harder and by adding 5% to my contribution would affect me and my family in many ways such as buying food, putting gas to get to work, etc.

Relating to HB 1725:

I am against halting prescription drug coverage under EUTF for the following reasons:

- The cost of drugs are not affordable, oftentimes I have difficulty paying my co-pay.
- I am a one-income family since my husband's lay-off last October.
- I am afraid that I will not be able to pay for the necessary prescriptions for my family should this bill go through because I can't afford it.
- I chose to work for the County of Hawaii because of the benefits (medical, dental, drug, and vision) and by taking away even one of these benefits; it would hurt me as a public employee.

Relating to HB 1726:

I am against curtailing EUTF payment for life benefits because it's a benefit we should be entitled to. I can't afford my own life insurance so what little I have through being a public employee definitely benefits me.

Relating to HB 1727:

I am against prohibiting provision of dental and vision coverage for the following reasons:

- The cost of dental and vision is very expensive, even the co-pay is not affordable.
- I am a one-income family since my husband's lay-off last October.
- I am afraid I will not be able to pay for the dental work that may be needed later or vision problems that may come later for my family because I won't be able to afford it.
- I chose to work for the County of Hawaii because of the benefits (medical, dental, drug & vision) and by changing or removing even one of these benefits, would drastically affect my and my family's life.

Please vote **"NO"** on all of these bills that take away benefits from public employees.

yamashita1- Kathy

From: FWong2@dhs.hawaii.gov
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 9:28 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: I am opposed to these bills

LATE

I am opposed to the bills being proposed:

- HB 1106 - Furloughing employees
- HB1718 - Halt reimbursement for Medicare part B premiums for employees retiring after 12/31/09
- HB1719 - Stop employer contribution for health benefits for those retiring after 7/1/09
- HB1725 - Halt prescription drug coverage under EUTF
- HB 1723 - Limit employer contribution to 55% and make it non-negotiable;
- HB1715 - Increase, for new employees, the age and service time requirement to retire;
- HB 1726 - Curtail EUTF payment for life insurance benefits;
- HB 1727 - Prohibits provision of dental and vision coverage.

I feel that these bills are prejudice and are a prelude to discrimination. These bills target only state and public employees who pay the same taxes and are subject to the same bills as the rest of the public. By limiting benefits the costs to pay for medical needs would become unbearable for many and lead to more individuals being placed on the strained welfare system.

Instead I believe that the State of Hawaii needs to look into innovative ways to generate revenues in order to improve our states economy. By taxing already strained households the problem will only get worse.

Due to Hawaii's centralized location, Hawaii should be the hub of incoming and outgoing technologies and trends. We should welcome business from foreign countries and maintain the money making events that help to boost Hawaii's economy and provide jobs for residence such as the Pro Bowl and Professional Surfing.

Another way to improve our economy in the long term would be to invest in our students that are in school now. Instead of eliminating programs, as has been the case, schools should be in the process of being repaired and improved and study materials updated to reflect current events and global conditions.

I do not think that it would have been possible for Brian Clay or Clay Stanley to win Olympic Gold Medals if, at the time that they attended school, sports activities were a program that was cut from their curriculum.

In summary it is my point of view that by implementing these bills that the state worker will be singled out and subject to unfair penalties that other employees (Tax payers) will not be subject to. Also the State Government needs to look into other means of generating income for the State. Lastly programs such as education should not be penalized for governments lack of foresight and inability to plan for the future.

Thank you,

Frederick M. Wong
Eligibility Worker
Kuakini Unit / 174
BESSD / DHS
(808)832-3809

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February 12, 2009

LATE

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

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 and 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.

I, therefore, do not support the bills listed above.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Sue Yamada

yamashita1- Kathy

From: rhoads3-Christine on behalf of Rep. Karl Rhoads
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 9:27 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: FW: Please vote NO

LATE

From: Hager [mailto:wlhager@hawaiiintel.net]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 5:14 AM
To: Rep. Karl Rhoads
Subject: Please vote NO

Subject: Please vote NO on bills
HB1717,HB1718,HB1719,HB1720,HB1721,HB1722,HB1723,HB1724,HB1725,
and HB1106.

Aloha,

My Name is Walter Hager I work for the County of Maui and am a member of HGEA. I'm also a taxpayer. I spend money at local businesses every day to buy food clothing and other needs.

I don't agree or believe that it is fair for the House to be looking at ways to balance the budget on the backs of public employees. I work hard at my job and things are even harder now since vacancies have been frozen and demands for services have increased. I have made a career in public service knowing that my pay may not be as high as in the private sector, but that I could rely on retirement and health benefits for myself and my family being there when it came time for me to retire.

I think that it is shameful for the House to even consider taking these benefits away from me and my family that I have been working a lifetime to earn.

Please look at other ways to balance the budget. Raising the excise tax would be a fairer way to address the State's revenue short fall. Everyone paying a little more will mean sharing the burden equally during these difficult times.

Thank you and Aloha,

Walter L Hager.

yamashita1- Kathy

From: rhoads3-Christine on behalf of Rep. Karl Rhoads
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 9:25 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: FW: HB 1718, 1719 & 1725 -- Vote No!

LATE

From: Livit Callentine [mailto:livit@earthlink.net]
Sent: Wednesday, February 11, 2009 10:52 PM
To: Rep. Karl Rhoads
Cc: Rep. Henry J.C. Aquino; Rep. Karen Awana; Rep. Faye Hanohano; Rep. Gilbert Keith-Agaran; Rep. Marilyn Lee; Rep. Mark Nakashima; Rep. Scott Saiki; Rep. Joseph Souki; Rep. Roy Takumi; Rep. Kymberly Pine
Subject: HB 1718, 1719 & 1725 -- Vote No!

February 11, 2009

The Honorable Karl Rhoads, Chair
And Members
Committee on Labor&Public Employment
House of Representatives
State Capitol
Honolulu,Hawaii96813

Dear Chair Rhoads and Members:

SUBJECT:House Bill 1106 Relating to Public Employment
House Bill 1718 Relating to Employer-Union Health Benefits
House Bill 1719 Relating to Public Employees
House Bill 1725 Relating to theHawaiiEmployer-Union Health Benefit Trust Fund

Aloha, my name isLivit Callentineand I live in Wailuku and vote Democrat in every election.I also work in Wailuku, for theCountyofMaui, and I'm a member of HGEA.

I understand that some of you may believe these bills if passed will rectify the economic downturn and financial crises the State ofHawaiiand respective Counties are facing.But I think this view is naïve.The money you save by destroying our benefits packages will not be spent by public employees.I am also a taxpayer.I spend money at local businesses every day to keep food on my table, clothes on my back, gas in my car, and other necessities.If I am put on an involuntary furlough, I will have less money to buy anything not absolutely essential.

I don't believe it's fair for the House to be looking at ways to balance the budget on the backs of public employees. I work very hard at my job and things are even harder now since vacancies have been frozen and demands for services have increased. I've made a career in public service knowing that my pay may not be a good as in the private sector, but that I could rely on retirement and health benefits.

Because of the meager compensation paid to the public workers ofHawaii, I don't have any extra money to put in IRAs or 401ks.My retirement plan is based on the expectations and terms that were offered to me as part of the total compensation package.

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

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

To turn around now and renege on promises made at hire is simply not how it's done in Hawaii. I urge you to vote "no" on Bills 1106, 1718, 1719, and 1725.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

LivitU.Callentine
Staff Planner
CountyofMaui

yamashita1- Kathy

From: rhoads3-Christine on behalf of Rep. Karl Rhoads
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 9:24 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: FW: *****SPAM***** HB 1106, HB 1718, HB 1719 & HB 1725

LATE

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

From: Keola Akana [mailto:keolabear@hotmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, February 11, 2009 10:34 PM
Subject: *****SPAM***** HB 1106, HB 1718, HB 1719 & HB 1725

House Committee on Labor and Public Employment
2/13/09, 8:30 am hearing
Room 309

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita and members of the House Committee on Labor and Public Employment. My name is Wayne Akana and I have been a State government employee with the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations for over 10 years. I am in opposition to HB 1106, HB 1718, HB 1719 and HB 1725. Government workers at the DLIR are hard working and attempt to provide the best service to the community that we are able given the increased volume of cases that are filed in our offices even though many vacant positions have not been filled and are frozen. As you know government pay is not as high as working in the private sector. However, government work serving the community is a reward. Another reward are the benefits that are offered to government workers and their families. To cut these benefits in order to improve the State's economy will demoralize government workers and make it such that we will reserve our incomes even further from spending in the State's economy. Also why are government workers targeted as the ones to suffer financially to bring additional funds for the State? Government workers did not cause the negative State economy, why should it be the government workers and their families to be the ones who are economically penalized? All of Hawai'i's citizens should equally share in the remedy to ensure that the State's financial health improve, not just one group such as government employees. Please vote against HB 1106, HB 1718, HB 1719 and HB 1725. Mahalo.

Wayne K. Akana
449 Kawaihae Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96825

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yamashita1- Kathy

From: rhoads3-Christine on behalf of Rep. Karl Rhoads
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 9:12 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: FW: Labor & Public Employment Committee Hearing February 13, 2009 and February 17, 2009

LATE

From: Cheryl Rapoza [mailto:mango808@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, February 11, 2009 8:16 PM
To: Rep. Karl Rhoads
Cc: Rep. Karen Awana; Rep. Faye Hanohano; Rep. Marilyn Lee; Rep. Roy Takumi
Subject: Labor & Public Employment Committee Hearing February 13, 2009 and February 17, 2009

From: Cheryl Rapoza, Sr. Clerk Typist
Telecommunications Systems Section
Honolulu Police Department

Date: February 11, 2009

Subject: Labor & Public Employment Committee
Hearing, Friday Feb. 13, 2009, 8:30 a.m.
HB 1106 Relating to Public Employment
HB 1718 Relating to Employer-Union Health Benefits
HB 1719 Relating to Public Employees
HB 1725 Relating to Hawaii Employees-Union Health Benefits Trust Fund
Hearing, Tuesday Feb. 17, 2009, 8:30 a.m.
HB 1723 Relating to Hawaii Employer-Union Health Benefits Trust
HB 1725 Relating to Retirement
HB 1726 Relating to Hawaii Employees-Union Health Benefits Trust
HB 1727 Relating to the Hawaii Employer-Union Health Benefits Trust Fund

I urge the Labor & Public Employment Committee members to oppose the above bills. It is a reality that the economy is in a poor state, both nationwide and worldwide. In Hawaii, we have one of the highest cost of living. When I started with the City almost 4 years ago, I accepted employment knowing the pay was much lower than what I was getting in the private sector, but knew the long term benefits as a government worker would outweigh the lower wages.

Because there is no control over the private sector where it comes to cutting staff members and benefits to save on costs, the burden falls on the public employees and the local government system. To have public employees bear the burden due to finances of the State of Hawaii is an unfair practice.

Personally, my husband, retired, and I will no longer be able to afford our home; we'll have to forego medications and make more cuts here and there. We may even have to drop the medical insurance altogether. We would have to choose between our home, our health, and our food. We have enough financial problems trying to stay afloat in Hawaii's ever increasing fees and costs and now we have bill proposals to "add to the fuel". It's frightening to think that your decision determines our livelihoods and the quality of our lives.

It will be chaos if the bills are not opposed. If the bills pass, it would affect thousands of lives. We would all have to make choices of whether to pay for our homes, for medical insurance, and other living necessities. It will lead to more

people losing their homes, more people living on the beach, less police, firefighters, and paramedics to act as first responders which would then trickle its effect down to Hawaii's community as a whole.

An alternative to the above bills would be to possibly raise taxes so that all Hawaii consumers would bear the burden.

February 10, 2009

LATE

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,

Simeon K. Alo L-14-Wailea fire station
County of Maui

From: JessakaMitz [jessakamitz@gmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 8:54 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Testimony Opposing Bills, By Jessica Mitsui

LATE

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit my testimony this morning. My name is Jessica Mitsui and I work for the Judiciary in the State of Hawaii. As a public employee for 1.5 years, I am outraged by the types of bills that are being presented tomorrow and next Tuesday that include furloughing state employees (HB 1106), stop medicare for retirees (HB1718), stop employer contribution for health benefits (HB1719), stop prescription drug coverage under EUTF (HB1725), the increase of age and service time for retiring (HB1715), stop payments for life insurance (HB 1726), and stopping our dental and vision coverage (HB 1727).

I do not see how cutting our benefits would benefit the state as a whole. I think what you are doing will force more of us off of this beautiful island we call "home." I do not make much money as it is, and it is downright wrong to make everyone suffer through this, especially those who are at the bottom of the totem pole as it is. I am only a Clerk IV, and cannot afford to be making any less money than I am making today.

The cost of living in Hawaii is extremely high. How am I supposed to be expected to live with around \$150-200 less a month in my pocket if you impose a furlough on me? If a furlough NEEDS TO HAPPEN, then I do not think it should be for more than one day a month and I think it should be for EVERYONE, not just some of us. There are people who really need the money, but as Calvin Say says, we all need to suffer some of this pain, right? By the way...while we're on that subject, who is he to say we all have to suffer? He thinks he's going to suffer? The people with more money than us do not care if they have to take a pay cut because it will not impact them as much as it will impact us. He has no right to say that we're all going to share in the pain and suffering, including him. He isn't one of us.

I have a problem with the bill that would cut medicare because how am I supposed to pay my medical bills when I get older? First, you want to cut my regular pay, now you want to take away a benefit that I should be getting when I am older. That is very unfair, and especially unfair to those who are close to retirement now. I have many co-workers/friends who will probably be forced into early retirement just to keep the benefits they have now since you want to take them away after a certain date. And, how will you fill those positions if they do decide to retire, when there's a freeze in place? You can't.

My health and my family's health is very important to me. I do not see how stopping employer contribution to our health benefits helps the state. The state doesn't pay enough as it is. Sometimes I feel like I am paying to WORK. It makes me outraged. I get all this money taken out of my paycheck, and for what? For them to want to change it so I'll have to pay even more? What about my mom? She is also a state worker and with her deteriorating health, she will need these benefits more than ever. The state won't help a person who has given almost half their life in service to the state? That's just wrong and feels like a slap in the face. What about me? I started working for the state because my mom always told me I needed health benefits, but if you take that away from me, what will I be working here for? I should just go back to my old job where I had no health coverage, because it does pay more anyway.

I am only 24 years old, and to impose a higher age and service time before retirement seems cruel. I do not want to have to work until I am 65, or whatever ridiculous number of years you want us to work to. My grandmother died at age 68, so most likely that's around how long I will live. That means I will only have about 3 years to do

whatever it is I need to do before I die. Three years is not enough for me. I will be old and wrinkly and have no time to spend my life how I truly want to. That's very unfair of the state if they treat their hard working employees this way.

The curtailing of payment for life insurance is a horrible thing. What if I died and I had no life insurance? The state is supposed to provide for the people, not be tight with their money so that we can't even die in peace and have to burden our families by making them foot the bill after death.

The last thing that really gets me is the state wanting to get rid of our dental and vision coverage. I think the state just wants us to go blind and have rotten teeth, then we'll give better customer service, right? No. How in the world are we supposed to work if we can't see? More than half of the jobs here deal with reading and speaking, so without those, what are we supposed to do? And, if you take away our prescription coverage as well, then how will we pay for our dental and vision out of our pocket? Especially when you'll be giving us less money!

As you can see, my views on these bills are very strong and I just cannot comprehend why you want us, the little people, to suffer. I can't survive with all of these benefits taken away from me, and I know a lot of others won't be able to survive like this either. Please do not pass these bills.

There are so many other ways the state could save money or make more money. Some of the things that I am in support of is drug testing welfare recipients, because they shouldn't be getting my tax money if they are taking advantage of the system. I also think the boot is a great idea to nab those people who have multiple traffic tickets. Some things that were not introduced, but I think would be great for us as a state is a mandatory shutdown of power for the whole island like when our power went out a few months ago. As long as we are forewarned about it, we can make accommodations for it. It gives families more time to be together without things that require power, and it would save a lot of money on power for the state as a whole. I also think a lot of money is wasted every time road widening or pothole filling is not done properly. Take Ewa Beach for example, they widened our road once, it fixed NOTHING, took FOREVER, and it is still NOT FIXED. The idea was not thought out well because whoever planned it doesn't live in Ewa Beach so didn't understand what the true problem was! About the potholes, every time they are filled with a material that obviously doesn't hold, why are we wasting money every time we fill up a hold and not just fix it with something that actually works?

I hope I was able to clearly express myself in this testimony, and I hope you folks really do what is right for the state as a whole and not take it out on state workers. All I can do is write my little letter and hope someone actually cares enough to even read it. If the island goes down the drain, I will have to relocate, because if the price to live here is too high and we do not get any type of break, it's just not worth it anymore.

Thank you for your time,

-Jessica Mitsui

February 10, 2009

LATE

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,

Bram Denhaan L-14-Wailea fire station
County of Maui

yamashita1- Kathy

From: Ingrid Kunimura [kuni2006@yahoo.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 8:20 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Testimony

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning. My name is Ingrid Kunimura. As a public employee for over 32 years, I am deeply upset by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say.

Years ago there was an incentive for public employees to retire early. I have witnessed people retiring who normally would have stayed 5 or more years. I said then, it's a big mistake. Big amounts of monies were spent ahead of schedule. But let's look at the most unfair and unethical bills I have seen in my many years of government service introduced by Speaker Say.

HB 1106

As people have a hard time making ends meet, does he really think that it would enhance the welfare of the families in Hawaii? In my case, I am single, I have no other breadwinner who could make up for shortcomings. Does he really think it's fair that the public employees should be used to fix the economy? Is it our fault? It's not like we account for 90% of our population, we are just a drop in the bucket. Especially the State employees seem to be targeted every time. While C&C workers still get paid twice a month on the day one should get paid, we get paid 5 days late. This served only to be good one time...to show less expense for the year because we got paid January 5th instead of December 31st. Please stop playing with numbers, we are "real" people.

HB1718

Don't you think it's unfair to change midstream? Don't you think it's unethical to promise something (in my case for over 32 years) and then say tough luck? This is only going to thrive people to retire early. Have you thought about all the monies you better have ready that retirees are eligible to get paid for their accumulated vacation days? It's almost forcing people to retire early if we don't want to worry about getting sick when we are older and to receive what we were promised when we started to work for the State Government. While on the mainland the effort is made to give people more and better health coverage, you take it away?

HB1719

As a civil servant, I chose to work for less pay to be able to contribute to the community. In return, I believed that I would be able to count on a safe and sound retirement. If I had worked in the private sector, I would be enjoying a much higher salary today. Speaker Say's bill is irresponsible. It totally ignores my years of dedicated service and reduces medical benefits until the Medicare retirement age. This bill forces people into early retirement, with a very short notice I might add. I think it was a mistake last time and obviously, Speaker Say doesn't realize what might be part of the financial problem today. Are we fixing the economic crisis by sacrificing the health and well being of State employees and their families? Does this really make any sense? Are we not gambling with the future of State programs by loosing knowledgeable employees to early retirement? I strongly encourage this committee to vote "no" on HB 1719 and to send a strong message to Speaker Say, that he shouldn't punish civil servants for their dedication and commitment to the State of Hawaii.

HB1725

We are supposed to bear the “entire” cost of prescription drug coverage for six years? This bill literally plays with the life and death of public employees. Although the bill is only temporary, (but maybe not) we are gambling with at least six years of prescription medication. With rising chronic diseases that require medication, this bill, coupled with talk of salary cuts and increases in our premiums is like a death sentence for our elderly, sick or recovering public employees and retirees. It will deter some employees and retirees from accessing medicine that is essential to long and healthy lives.

This is a regressive bill when the rest of the nation is talking about improvements to our health care coverage.

Please. I urge you to not think of balancing the budget solely on our backs. Instead, find ways to save money. Why are people only looking where to cut expenses, why isn't the focus how to spend the money more wisely, therefore spend a lot less.

Just a few very basic examples:

1. Why are we freezing in the offices and spending huge amounts of money on air conditioning, when we could save money by having it less cold? In fact, I see people getting sick more often because of it.
2. Use of electronic technology to save postage, envelopes, wrapping material, etc.
3. Have conference calls in-house instead of traveling to neighbor islands for meetings.
4. Purchase items on sale, look for bargains. Change purchasing regulations to enable us to take advantage of sales instead of requiring to shop with certain vendors.

Please vote “no” on all of the bills that take away benefits from public employees. It is just not fair to take away benefits we were promised and worked hard for.

Lastly, but not least, thank you for reading my testimony. I hope you see it my way and support the public employees.

Mahalo,
Ingrid Kunimura

From: Tina Tauasosi-Posiulai [tposisiulai@gmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 8:43 AM
To: LABtestimony
Cc: tposisiulai@gmail.com
Subject: RE: HB1719, HB1725, HB1727

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

I TOTALLY DISAGREE WITH THE ABOVE-MENTIONED BILL INTENDED TO BE DISCUSSED THIS WEEK. THESE BILLS WILL NO DOUBT HAVE GREAT NEGATIVE IMPACT ON MANY FAMILIES AND PARTICULARLY WIDOWED AND SINGLE MOMS LIKE ME. IT WILL NOT HELP THE STATE OF HAWAII AT ALL BUT WILL FORCE SINGLE MOMS LIKE ME TO QUIT WORKING AND THEREFORE OPT FOR WELFARE BENEFITS WHICH I BELIEVE WILL GO BACK TO THE STATE AND THEREFORE HAVE A GREATER IMPACT OF ITS CURRENT DISASTROUS CONDITION.

MEDICAL BENEFITS ARE ESSENTIAL FOR THE HEALTH OF CHILDREN AND EVERYONE ELSE AND PASSING SUCH BILLS WILL PUT MORE BURDEN ON SINGLE MOMS WHO ARE WORKING EXTRA HARDER TO CARE FOR OUR CHILDREN AND STAY OUT OF THE WELFARE.

PLEASE DO NOT PASS THESE DISASTROUS BILLS..PERHAPS CUT DOWN THE SALARY OF ALL SENATORS AND AUTHORITIES INVOLVED BUT DO NOT MAKE LIFE MORE DISASTROUS FOR THE PUBLIC SERVANTS WHO ARE DOING GREAT SERVICE FOR OUT HAWAII STATE.

TINA TAUASOSI

--

Tina Tauasosi
94-011 Waipahu Street, D212
Waipahu, HAWAII 96797
Phone: (808) 676-6830

February 10, 2009

LATE

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,

David Williams L-14-Wailea fire station
County of Maui

February 10, 2009

LATE

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And members
Committee on Labor & Public Employment
House of Representatives
State Capitol
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

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Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Lee R. Mainaga
County of Maui

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning. My name is Anthony Fraiola III. As a public employee for 11 years, I am deeply upset by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say. My grandparents were both civil service employees and were able to purchase a home and send my father to private school. Collective bargaining over the years has not kept up with inflation in the Islands. Already, I take less salary when compared to the private sector. There are thousands of us and these proposed cuts will have a "reverse stimulus" effect on the local economy.

HB 1106 is supposed to 'protect the rights of public employees' in the event of a furlough. Speaker Say has said that a furlough would cause the "least amount of disruption to public service."

I pose this question to the Speaker: What about the disruption to us as residents of this state? A reduction in our salaries is hugely disruptive at a time when we find ourselves more and more the sole breadwinners for our entire families. How can we afford a reduction to our salaries when we are some of the last remaining wage earners in this unstable economy?

We also strongly disagree with Section 4 of HB 1106. The Governor does not have the authority to unilaterally furlough state employees.

HB 1719 is also of concern to me. As a civil servant, I chose to work for less pay to be able to contribute to the community. On balance, I believed that I would be able to count on a safe retirement. Speaker Say's bill, which disregards my years of service and reduces medical benefits until the Medicare retirement age, is irresponsible. Instead of supporting public service, Speaker Say is telling us that public employees don't mean much and promises to us can be broken mid-stream.

Speaker Say is backing us into a corner, and it's not irresponsible for him to suggest that this economic crisis should be resolved by sacrificing the health and well being of me and my family. Also, by forcing people into retirement before July 1, 2009, we are gambling with the future of state programs. The loss to institutional knowledge and expertise that we could experience is putting our families in Hawai'i at risk. State programs that protect Hawai'i's children, elderly and public will lose a wealth of knowledge that is not easy to recover when state hiring freezes are overburdening our already overburdened workforce. I strongly encourage this committee to vote "no" on HB 1719 and to send a strong message to Speaker Say, that he cannot punish civil servants for their dedication and commitment to the state of Hawai'i.

HB 1725 says that from July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2015, public employees will have to bear THE ENTIRE burden of prescription drug coverage. This is literally a bill that is playing with the life and death of public workers. Although the bill is only temporary, we are gambling with six years of prescription medication. With rising chronic diseases that require medication, this bill, coupled with talk of salary cuts and rises in our premiums

is like a death sentence for our elderly, sick, or recovering public workers and retirees. It will deter some employees and retirees from accessing medicine that is essential to long and healthy lives. This is a regressive bill when the rest of the nation is talking about improvements to our health care coverage.

Please vote “no” on all of these bills that take away benefits from public employees.

February 10, 2009

LATE

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

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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,

Kellen K. Yap L-14-Wailea fire station
County of Maui

From: Trevina Wiest [wiesttrevina@hotmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 9:08 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: HB 1718,HB1719,HB1725, HB1725,HB1723,HB1727

LATE

Follow these simple steps to submit your testimony:

1) Write a short message to express why you are opposed to the bill(s) – be sure to indicate the bill number(s). Feel free to cut and paste, or copy parts of the sample below.

2) Send it to the Labor & Public Employment Committee

Simply e-mail the committee directly at LABtestimony@capitol.hawaii.gov.

- or -

Upload your document at www.capitol.hawaii.gov/emailtestimony (State Legislature website)

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning. My name is Trevina Wiest

As a public employee for 3 years, I am deeply upset by the bills introduced by Speaker

Calvin Say. Specifically: HB 1718,HB 1719,HB 1725,HB 1723,HB 1727 _____

HB 1106 is supposed to ‘protect the rights of public employees’ in the event of a furlough.

Speaker Say has said that a furlough would cause the “least amount of disruption to public service.”

I pose this question to the Speaker: What about the disruption to us as residents of this state?

A reduction in our salaries is hugely disruptive at a time when we find ourselves more and

more the sole breadwinners for our entire families. How can we afford a reduction to our

salaries when we are some of the last remaining wage earners in this unstable economy?

We also strongly disagree with Section 4 of HB 1106. The Governor does not have the

authority to unilaterally furlough state employees.

HB 1719 is also of concern to me. As a civil servant, I chose to work for less pay to be able to contribute to the community. On balance, I believed that I would be able to count on a safe

retirement. Speaker Say’s bill, which disregards my years of service and reduces medical

benefits until the Medicare retirement age, is irresponsible. Instead of supporting public

service, Speaker Say is telling us that public employees don’t mean much and promises to us

can be broken mid-stream.

This bill is a thinly veiled attempt to force people into early retirement. Plans I may have made to ensure that my children graduated from college before I retire are suddenly up in the

air. I now have to make the choice - get out now so that I can afford to stay healthy during

my retirement, or stay even longer to provide for my family during these tough economic

times and risk losing my current level of care during my retirement.

Speaker Say is backing us into a corner, and it’s not irresponsible for him to suggest that this economic crisis should be resolved by sacrificing the health and well being of me and

my family. Also, by forcing people into retirement before July 1, 2009, we are gambling

with the future of state programs. The loss to institutional knowledge and expertise that

we could experience is putting our families in Hawai’i at risk. State programs that protect

Hawai’i’s children, elderly and public will loose a wealth of knowledge that is not easy to

recover when state hiring freezes are overburdening our already overburdened workforce. I

strongly encourage this committee to vote “no” on HB 1719 and to send a strong message

to Speaker Say, that he cannot punish civil servants for their dedication and commitment to

the state of Hawai’i.

HB 1725 says that from July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2015, public employees will have to

bear THE ENTIRE burden of prescription drug coverage. This is literally a bill that is

playing with the life and death of public workers. Although the bill is only temporary, we

are gambling with six years of prescription medication. With rising chronic diseases that

require medication, this bill, coupled with talk of salary cuts and rises in our premiums

is like a death sentence for our elderly, sick, or recovering public workers and retirees. It

will deter some employees and retirees from accessing medicine that is essential to long

and healthy lives. This is a regressive bill when the rest of the nation is talking about

improvements to our health care coverage.

Please vote “no” on all of these bills that take away benefits from public employees.

yamashita1- Kathy

From: rhoads3-Christine on behalf of Rep. Karl Rhoads
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 9:12 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: FW: Public Testimony

LATE

-----Original Message-----

From: James Kino [mailto:James.Kino@co.maui.hi.us]
Sent: Wednesday, February 11, 2009 8:20 PM
To: Rep. Karl Rhoads
Subject: Public Testimony

February 10, 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,

James L. Kino
Fire Department, County of Maui

County of Maui.
IT Security measures will reject attachments larger than 12 MB, and will block or quarantine high-risk file types in attachments.

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning. My name is Rebecca Tumamao. As a public employee for 9 years, I am deeply upset by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say. Specifically: HB 1719.

HB 1106 is supposed to 'protect the rights of public employees' in the event of a furlough. Speaker Say has said that a furlough would cause the "least amount of disruption to public service."

I pose this question to the Speaker: What about the disruption to us as residents of this state? A reduction in our salaries is hugely disruptive at a time when we find ourselves more and more the sole breadwinners for our entire families. How can we afford a reduction to our salaries when we are some of the last remaining wage earners in this unstable economy?

We also strongly disagree with Section 4 of HB 1106. The Governor does not have the authority to unilaterally furlough state employees.

HB 1719 is also of concern to me. As a civil servant, I chose to work for less pay to be able to contribute to the community. On balance, I believed that I would be able to count on a safe retirement. Speaker Say's bill, which disregards my years of service and reduces medical benefits until the Medicare retirement age, is irresponsible. Instead of supporting public service, Speaker Say is telling us that public employees don't mean much and promises to us can be broken mid-stream.

This bill is a thinly veiled attempt to force people into early retirement. Plans I may have made to ensure that my children graduated from college before I retire are suddenly up in the air. I now have to make the choice - get out now so that I can afford to stay healthy during my retirement, or stay even longer to provide for my family during these tough economic times and risk losing my current level of care during my retirement.

Speaker Say is backing us into a corner, and it's not irresponsible for him to suggest that this economic crisis should be resolved by sacrificing the health and well being of me and my family. Also, by forcing people into retirement before July 1, 2009, we are gambling with the future of state programs. The loss to institutional knowledge and expertise that we could experience is putting our families in Hawai'i at risk. State programs that protect Hawai'i's children, elderly and public will lose a wealth of knowledge that is not easy to recover when state hiring freezes are overburdening our already overburdened workforce. I strongly encourage this committee to vote "no" on HB 1719 and to send a strong message to Speaker Say, that he cannot punish civil servants for their dedication and commitment to the state of Hawai'i.

HB 1725 says that from July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2015, public employees will have to bear THE ENTIRE burden of prescription drug coverage. This is literally a bill that is

playing with the life and death of public workers. Although the bill is only temporary, we are gambling with six years of prescription medication. With rising chronic diseases that require medication, this bill, coupled with talk of salary cuts and rises in our premiums is like a death sentence for our elderly, sick, or recovering public workers and retirees. It will deter some employees and retirees from accessing medicine that is essential to long and healthy lives. This is a regressive bill when the rest of the nation is talking about improvements to our health care coverage.

Please vote “no” on all of these bills that take away benefits from public employees.

LATE**TESTIMONY in opposition of HB 1719 and HB 1725****Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:**

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning. My name is Angie Hashimoto and I have been a public employee for the past 7 years. I am sincerely upset by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say. Specifically: HB 1719 and HB 1725. I would strongly urge you to oppose these house bills that "take-away" from public employees.

I work as an Educational Assistant III at King Intermediate School in the Windward District. I am a single-parent of a high school student, and have a take home pay of about \$20,000.00. We are lucky that we are able to live with my parents, but strive to someday own a place of our own. My parents are both retired, and in the very near future, I will have the responsibility of their care weighing on me financially. For my family to survive at this point, I would need to acquire a second job to provide more income for the added bills.

Each day of the year, we (educational assistants statewide) strive to make a difference in the education of students across the state. Each year, we are faced with budget cuts and empty promises. Our jobs are not glamorous and we are not highly paid. We continue to show up at work and make the students the stars of tomorrow. We are dedicated to the success of our students, and take pride in knowing that President Obama feels education is the driving force that guides the leaders for the future!

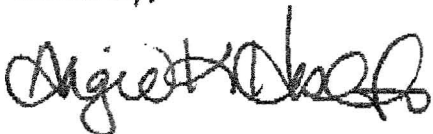
HB 1719 changes the game plan for all public workers. All of a sudden we are burdened with additional costs. I am forced by a power that will take away my benefits to make me consider what my dollars, can pay for and when I am allowed to retire. With rising medical co-payment costs, there is little or no dollars left for simple pleasures you take as a necessity. Things like the internet, cell phones, and other everyday pleasures you may take for granted are financial challenges with our pay scale. In the world today, we count on dedication and commitment. As an employee of the State, I counted on my Retirement and Benefits knowing that my counterparts in the private sector had higher wages. Our small rewards was seeing John and Mary graduate from high school and college and venture into the community to become successful citizens.

Our jobs will always reward us in our hearts, just as we nurtured our students' hearts. Our benefit was to make sure our hearts would endure a robust and healthy life; please oppose HB 1719 and HB 1725.

HB 1725 would give the burden of prescription medicine to public workers who are already underpaid, and working two or three jobs to suffice. For me, this would again mean choosing between survival needs like food and shelter. Will it come to deciding that my prescription drugs are just a comfort item versus a survival detail? I have to ask, would the legislature make us choose and suffer so they may pass this bill? Prescription Drug coverage is something I rely on. As representatives, you highly rely on your office staff. What measures would you go to if they were suddenly cut from your budget/office? Keep in mind also, that working in the school environment each day, we are at a higher exposure to the many illnesses like the common cold, and flu. With the rising cost of everything but our wages, our lives have become a challenge from day to day. We implore that you vote "NO" on HB 1725.

These bills introduced by Speaker Say and being heard today by the House committee on Labor and Public Employment will hurt me here today in the present, and AGAIN in my future. Please vote "NO" on HB 1719 and HB 1725.

Sincerely,



Angie K. Hashimoto

Educational Assistant III, King Intermediate School

- member of Hawaii Government Employees Association, Unit 03

LATE

February 12, 2009

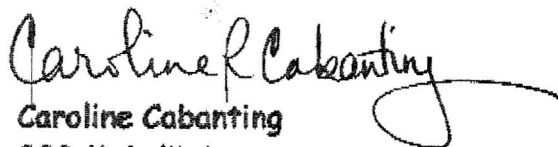
Representative Gilbert Keith-Agaran
Representative Joseph Souki
Representative Kyle Yamashita

RE: HB 1723, HB 1715, HB 1726, HB 1727
HB 1718, HB 1719, HB 1725, HB 1106

I am a 49 year resident of Kahului, Maui. I have worked for the state as a registered nurse for 29 years. I am very angry about the proposed house bills that will negatively affect the health and welfare of hundreds of state workers.

It unfair to withhold health coverage for those of us who have been loyal to state service. As a nurse, I have spent my life caring for the public. The State has always tried to promote Hawaii as the "Health State" and now they are proposing to cut employees' health benefits?

This is so wrong. I urge you, ^{DO} NOT support the above bills.



Caroline Cabanting
820 Makalii St.
Kahului, HI 96732
808-871-5145

yamashita1- Kathy

From: rhoads3-Christine on behalf of Rep. Karl Rhoads
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 9:05 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: FW:

LATE

-----Original Message-----

From: Geoffrey Bogar [mailto:Geoffrey.Bogar@co.mauhi.us]
Sent: Wednesday, February 11, 2009 5:42 PM
To: Rep. Karl Rhoads
Subject:

February 10, 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
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Trust Fund

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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,
Geoff Bogar

Firefighter III

County of Maui

County of Maui.

IT Security measures will reject attachments larger than 12 MB, and will block or quarantine high-risk file types in attachments.

yamashita1- Kathy

From: rhoads3-Christine on behalf of Rep. Karl Rhoads
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 9:05 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: FW:

LATE

-----Original Message-----

From: Thomas Devereux [mailto:Thomas.Devereux@co.maui.hi.us]
Sent: Wednesday, February 11, 2009 5:36 PM
To: Rep. Karl Rhoads
Subject:

February 10, 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:

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Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Thomas Devereux
Firefighter 1
County of Maui

County of Maui.
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yamashita1- Kathy

From: rhoads3-Christine on behalf of Rep. Karl Rhoads
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 9:04 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: FW:

LATE

-----Original Message-----

From: Peter Gand [mailto:Peter.Gand@co.maui.hi.us]
Sent: Wednesday, February 11, 2009 5:32 PM
To: Rep. Karl Rhoads
Subject:

February 10, 2009

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

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Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Peter Gand
Firefighter I

County of Maui

County of Maui.
IT Security measures will reject attachments larger than 12 MB, and will block or quarantine high-risk file types in attachments.

yamashita1- Kathy

From: rhoads3-Christine on behalf of Rep. Karl Rhoads
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 9:03 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: FW:

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Completed

LATE

-----Original Message-----

From: Steven O'Donnell [mailto:Steven.O'Donnell@co.maui.hi.us]
Sent: Wednesday, February 11, 2009 5:29 PM
To: Rep. Karl Rhoads
Subject:

February 10, 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:

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Sincerely,
Steve O'Donnell
Firefighter I

County of Maui

County of Maui.
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larger than 12 MB, and will block or quarantine
high-risk file types in attachments.

February 10, 2009

LATE

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

Nathan Nishiki
County of Maui

February 10, 2009

LATE

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,

Alan D. Cordeiro
County of Maui

LATE

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning. My name is Colleen Shibano. As a public employee, I am deeply upset by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say. Specifically: HB 1718, 1719, 1725, 1723, 1715, 1726 and 1727.

HB 1719 is especially of concern to me. As a civil servant, I chose to work for less pay to be able to contribute to the community. On balance, I believed that I would be able to count on a safe retirement. Speaker Say's bill, which disregards my years of service and reduces medical benefits until the Medicare retirement age, is irresponsible. Instead of supporting public service, Speaker Say is telling us that public employees don't mean much and promises to us can be broken mid-stream. This bill is a thinly veiled attempt to force people into early retirement. Plans I may have made to ensure a comfortable retirement suddenly are up in the air.

Speaker Say is backing us into a corner, and it's irresponsible for him to suggest that this economic crisis should be resolved by sacrificing the health and well being of me and my family. Also, by forcing people into retirement before July 1, 2009, we are gambling with the future of state programs. The loss to institutional knowledge and expertise that we could experience is putting our families in Hawai'i at risk. State programs that protect Hawai'i's children, elderly and public will lose a wealth of knowledge that is not easy to recover when state hiring freezes are overburdening our already overburdened workforce.

HB 1725 says that from July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2015, public employees will have to bear THE ENTIRE burden of prescription drug coverage. This is literally a bill that is playing with the life and death of public workers. Although the bill is only temporary, we are gambling with six years of prescription medication. With rising chronic diseases that require medication, this bill, coupled with talk of salary cuts and rises in our premiums is like a death sentence for our elderly, sick, or recovering public workers and retirees. It will deter some employees and retirees from accessing medicine that is essential to long and healthy lives. This is a regressive bill when the rest of the nation is talking about improvements to our health care coverage.

I strongly encourage this committee to vote "no" on these bills and to send a strong message to Speaker Say, that he cannot punish civil servants for their dedication and commitment to the state of Hawai'i. Please vote "no" on all of these bills that take away benefits from public employees.

Yours truly,

Colleen Shibano

LATE

Testimony

To: Representative Karl Rhoads
Chair

From: Marissa Mier
HGEA Member

Chairman Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to submit testimony regarding HB 1718, HB 1719 and HB1725.

I am a four year public employee, and I am deeply upset by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say.

As a civil servant I elected to work as a public servant and therefore chose to work for a little less pay then the public sector. In return I was lead to believe that in return for my years of public service, I would be able to count on a certain standard of living during retirement that included coverage for medical/drug coverage. HB1719 disregards my years of service and dedication to the public and instead calls for the reduction of my medical benefits until I reach 65 years of age. Without medical coverage until I reach medicare age is simply a way for Speaker Say to disguise a salary reduction on public employees. Public employees most affected are the one occupying positions at the bottom of the pay scale. A reduction in salaries is hugely disruptive at a time when we find ourselves more and more the sole breadwinners for our entire families. How can we afford a reduction to our salaries when we are some of the last remaining wage earners in this unstable economy. HB 1725 ends drug coverage from July 1, 2009 to June 30 2015 is totally, unacceptable and a break in the implied promise made to all state employees when we first got hired that we would receive medical and drug coverage when we retire.

Speaker Say is irresponsible for even contemplating this as a solution to resolving the current budget deficit. Sacrificing the health and well being of public employees and their families is unacceptable and criminal. Speaker Say by proposing these bill shows that he does not value the work public employees perform. Instead by proposing HB 1718, HB 1719 and HB1725, Speaker Say shows his contempt for all public employees, and that he considers himself above the law. Public employees fought long and hard for the benefits they currently receive, benefits which were gain through years of collective bargaining. Speaker Say by proposing these bills is instead telling us, that public employees don't mean much, and that promises made can be broken mid-stream.

I strongly encourage this committee to vote "NO" on HB 1718, HB 1719, and HB 1725 and on all bills that take away benefits from public employees. These are all regressive bills when the rest of the nation is talking about improvements to health care coverage.

Testimony

LATE

To: Representative Karl Rhoads
Chair

From: Grace Yoshimura
HGEA Member

Chairman Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to submit testimony regarding HB 1718, HB 1719 and HB1725.

I am a 20+ year public employee, and I am deeply upset by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say.

As a civil servant I dedicated my life to public service and therefore chose to work for less pay to be able to contribute to the community. In return I was lead to believe that in return for my years of public service, I would be able to count on a certain standard of living during retirement that included coverage for medical/drug coverage. HB 1718, HB1719 and HB 1725 disregards my years of service and dedication to the public and instead calls for the reduction of my medical benefits until I reach 65 years of age and drug coverage from July 1, 2009 to June 30 2015. This is totally, unacceptable and a break in the implied promise made to all state employees when we first got hired that we would receive medical and drug coverage when we retire.

Speaker Say is irresponsible for even contemplating this as a solution to resolving the current budget deficit. Sacrificing the health and well being of public employees and their families is unacceptable and criminal. Speaker Say by proposing these bill shows that he does not value the work public employees perform. Instead by proposing HB 1718, HB 1719 and HB1725, Speaker Say shows his contempt for all public employees, and that he considers himself above the law. Public employees fought long and hard for the benefits they currently receive, benefits which were gain through years of collective bargaining. Speaker Say by proposing these bills is instead telling us, that public employees don't mean much, and that promises made can be broken mid-stream.

I strongly encourage this committee to vote "NO" on HB 1718, HB 1719, and HB 1725 and on all bills that take away benefits from public employees. These are all regressive bills when the rest of the nation is talking about improvements to health care coverage.

February 10, 2009

LATE

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 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.

I, therefore, do not support the bills listed above.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,



Nina-Lehua Kawano
County of Maui
Planning Department

yamashita1- Kathy

From: cnicolas@gmail.com
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 9:17 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Testimony for Bills

LATE

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee,

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony this morning. My name is Cory Nicolas, as a public employee of 4 years, I am deeply upset about the bills that are targeting public employees.

HB 1106 - Furloughing employees
HB1718 - Halt reimbursement for Medicare part B premiums for employees retiring after 12/31/09
HB1719 - Stop employer contribution for health benefits for those retiring after 7/1/09
HB1725 - Halt prescription drug coverage under EUTF
HB 1723 - Limit employer contribution to 55% and make it non-negotiable;
HB1715 - Increase, for new employees, the age and service time requirement to retire;
HB 1726 - Curtail EUTF payment for life insurance benefits;
HB 1727 - Prohibits provision of dental and vision coverage

As a resident of our State (and a registered voter), I am upset at the legislature for attempting to solve our State Budget by punishing the people that execute the work for them. It is an insult that they are targeting our salaries and benefits after the legislature just received a 36% raise. \$48,708... that's more than I make a year and I work year round. \$10,200 expense account... I don't even have one of those. Our economy is in turmoil, yet the people who are suppose to protect our assets... Increase their own and attempt to balance it out by decreasing benefits and salaries from the people they are suppose to serve.

I have a family to support, we barely make it with my salaries and benefits. It's always a thought in our heads when we see the homeless that we, ourselves are always one paycheck away from being camped next to them.

The Legislature forgets that they are our Public Leaders and should LEAD by EXAMPLE. I would like to see them cut their salaries first, before they ask to cut ours.

Please serve the public the way you were meant to and vote no on these bills.

From: Jade M Lum [jadelum@hawaii.edu]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 9:12 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Committee on Labor & Public Employment

LATE

Testimony re: HB 1106, HB1718, HB 1719, HB 1725, HB 1723, HB 1715, HB 1726, HB 1727

Hi, my name is Jade Lum and I work for the State of Hawai'i Judiciary.

I am a tax payer who spends money at local businesses everyday to buy grocery, clothing and other needs.

It is not fair for the House to be looking at ways to balance the budget by taking away the retirement and health benefits from public employees. I work hard at my job and things are even harder now because vacancies have been frozen and there has been an increase in demands for services.

I have made a career in public service knowing that the pay may not be as good as in the private sector but I could rely on the retirement and health benefits for myself and my family.

It is wrong for representatives to take these benefits away from me.

Please look at alternative ways to balance the budget. For example, raising the excise tax would be a fairer method to address the state's revenue problem. Everyone paying a little more will mean sharing the burden during these tough economic times.

Thank you,

Jade Lum

yamashita1- Kathy

From: rhoads3-Christine on behalf of Rep. Karl Rhoads
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 9:08 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: FW: Requesting your help

LATE

From: Kimberley Haines [mailto:kimberleyhaines12@yahoo.com]
Sent: Wednesday, February 11, 2009 7:00 PM
To: Rep. Karl Rhoads
Subject: Requesting your help

Dear Mr. Rhoads,

My name is Kimberley Haines. I am a library technician at the University of Hawaii and am a member of HGEA. Though I do not live in your district, I am very concerned about a number of bills before your committee that seek to take away benefits from public workers like me. I love my job and the community I work with. My salary may not be as good as those in the private sector or equivalent to similar positions on the U.S mainland, but I can rely on important health and retirement benefits. I do not want these benefits to be taken away from me, therefore I urge you to vote "no" on the following bills:

HB 1106, HB 1715, HB 1718, HB 1719, HB 1723, HB 1725, HB 1726, HB 1727

Thank you,

Kimberley Haines

yamashita1- Kathy

From: g muranaka [gmura8@yahoo.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 8:37 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Say No to All HB !!!!!!!

LATE

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:

I'm against the passing of the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say!

HB 1106

HB 1718

HB 1719

HB 1725

HB 1723

HB 1715

HB 1726

HB 1727

I'm 63 yrs. old, 22 yrs of service with the City & County.

I had plans to retire Dec. 2010, but the passing of these bills.

I may have to continue to work longer.

The lost of these benefits I know will be a hardship to me in terms of the financial burden.

I had planned & depended on these benefits in planning my retirement.

SAY No to all the bills mention above.

George MURANAKA
City & County Employee
02-12-09

From: Kristin Uyemura [kristin.uyemura@gmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 8:56 AM
To: LABtestimony
Cc: kristin.uyemura@gmail.com
Subject: Testimony against proposed bills

LATE

Dear Chair Rhoads and members of the Committee:

I'm writing in regards to the proposed bills that will be discussed at tomorrow, 2/13 and next Tuesday's 2/17 hearings. When I was notified of the items that would be discussed at these hearings, I was appalled. As a University of Hawaii state employee for nearly two years, I have come to appreciate the benefits given to state employees.

Even though I am a recent employee with the state, I've learned that the benefits received are what attract many employees to stay. Several of my coworkers have been with the state for over 20, sometimes 30, years. We sacrifice lower wages for great health coverage and retirement benefits.

HB 1106 is supposed to "protect the rights of public employees" in the event of a furlough. Now I hear that HB 1725 would "halt prescription drug coverage under EUTF." This would essentially risk the lives of public workers. The cost of prescription drugs is not nearly affordable, especially for older employees, if not covered by insurance. How are we expected to maintain a healthy and safe lifestyle when we are unable to afford it? Why are all public workers being put at risk for a struggling economy begun at no fault of our own?

In addition, if HB 1719 "stops employer contribution for health benefits for those retiring after 7/01/09," then what incentive is there for currently employees to dedicate their years of service to the state? One of the reasons I entered the state system was because my parents taught me the benefits of being a state employee, including medical coverage after I retire (with a minimum number of service years). That benefit was essential to me as an employee. These long-term benefits are what I was looking for when I entered the work field.

I urge you to please vote "no" on all of these bills that would take away benefits from public employees. The future of state employees is in your hands.

Mahalo,
Kristin Uyemura
Institutional Support
University of Hawaii

yamashita1- Kathy

From: tonyearles@aol.com
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 8:48 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: My family's OPPOSITION to HB 1106, HB 1719 & HB1725

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning. My name is Anthony Earles. As a public employee for many years, I am deeply upset by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say. Specifically: HB 1106, HB 1719 & HB1725.

HB 1106 is supposed to 'protect the rights of public employees' in the event of a furlough. Speaker Say has said that a furlough would cause the "least amount of disruption to public service." I pose this question to the Speaker: What about the disruption to us as residents of this state?

A reduction in our salaries is hugely disruptive at a time when we find ourselves more and more the sole breadwinners for our entire families. How can we afford a reduction to our salaries when we are some of the last remaining wage earners in this unstable economy? We also strongly disagree with Section 4 of HB 1106. The Governor does not have the authority to unilaterally furlough state employees.

HB 1719 is also of concern to me. As a civil servant, I chose to work for less pay to be able to contribute to the community. On balance, I believed that I would be able to count on a safe retirement. Speaker Say's bill, which disregards my years of service and reduces medical benefits until the Medicare retirement age, is irresponsible. Instead of supporting public service, Speaker Say is telling us that public employees don't mean much and promises to us can be broken mid-stream. This bill is a thinly veiled attempt to force people into early retirement. Plans I may have made to ensure that my children graduated from college before I retire are suddenly up in the air. I now have to make the choice - get out now so that I can afford to stay healthy during my retirement, or stay even longer to provide for my family during these tough economic times and risk losing my current level of care during my retirement. Speaker Say is backing us into a corner, and it's not irresponsible for him to suggest that

this economic crisis should be resolved by sacrificing the health and well being of me and my family. Also, by forcing people into retirement before July 1, 2009, we are gambling with the future of state programs. The loss to institutional knowledge and expertise that we could experience is putting our families in Hawai'i at risk. State programs that protect Hawai'i's children, elderly and public will lose a wealth of knowledge that is not easy to recover when state hiring freezes are overburdening our already overburdened workforce. I strongly encourage this committee to vote "no" on HB 1719 and to send a strong message to Speaker Say, that he cannot punish civil servants for their dedication and commitment to the state of Hawai'i.

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HB 1725 says that from July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2015, public employees will have to bear THE ENTIRE burden of prescription drug coverage. This is literally a bill that is playing with the life and death of public workers. Although the bill is only temporary, we are gambling with six years of prescription medication. With rising chronic diseases that require medication, this bill, coupled with talk of salary cuts and rises in our premiums

is like a death sentence for our elderly, sick, or recovering public workers and retirees. It will deter some employees and retirees from accessing medicine that is essential to long and healthy lives. This is a regressive bill when the rest of the nation is talking about improvements to our health care coverage.

Please vote **"no"** on all of these bills that take away benefits from public employees.

yamashita1- Kathy

From: Mark Cutler [macsm16@yahoo.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 8:37 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: HB1106, 1719 & 1725 testimony

LATE

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony today. My name is Mark Cutler.

As a public employee for 18 years, I am deeply upset by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say. Specifically: HB 1106, 1719, & 1725.

Please vote "no" on all of these bills that take away benefits from rank and file public employees who support our State and Counties in many ways themselves.

Early retirement is a valid goal, but I suggest a more reasonable offer be made to Public employees, like removing the penalty for full retirement before age 62, after 20 to 30 years of faithful service. This will have many benefits, but will not be viable for many before age 62 when social security will help provide enough financial support.

I would like to propose that the Excluded Union members and appointees like Administrators, Directors and even some Supervisors be given a 10-15% pay cut for failing to encourage efficiency and economy in government. They are well overpaid. Just like the banking leaders have been digging deep while failing to perform, these leaders are just making it harder to do our jobs, and not supporting our good works because they seem to feel so far above their fellow civil-service workers. They need to come down a little in their levels of authority, and come back to the concept of their own civil service contribution, as well as those who serve them.

Lastly, if these bills are to be sacrifices for the government employees to save Government leaders who have failed to plan and manage our government well enough, I believe it is completely fair for all elected officials to accept the same or very similar limitations and sacrifices, including those members who would consider or approve of this legislation for others of lesser means.

Thank you

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning. My name is Penni LaBatte. As a public employee for 7 years, I am deeply upset by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say. Specifically: HB 1106, HB 1719, HB 1725

HB 1106 is supposed to 'protect the rights of public employees' in the event of a furlough. Speaker Say has said that a furlough would cause the "least amount of disruption to public service."

I pose this question to the Speaker: What about the disruption to us as residents of this state? A reduction in our salaries is hugely disruptive at a time when we find ourselves more and more the sole breadwinners for our entire families. How can we afford a reduction to our salaries when we are some of the last remaining wage earners in this unstable economy?

We also strongly disagree with Section 4 of HB 1106. The Governor does not have the authority to unilaterally furlough state employees.

HB 1719 is also of concern to me. As a civil servant, I chose to work for less pay to be able to contribute to the community. On balance, I believed that I would be able to count on a safe retirement. Speaker Say's bill, which disregards my years of service and reduces medical benefits until the Medicare retirement age, is irresponsible. Instead of supporting public service, Speaker Say is telling us that public employees don't mean much and promises to us can be broken mid-stream.

This bill is a thinly veiled attempt to force people into early retirement. Plans I may have made to ensure that my children graduated from college before I retire are suddenly up in the air. I now have to make the choice - get out now so that I can afford to stay healthy during my retirement, or stay even longer to provide for my family during these tough economic times and risk losing my current level of care during my retirement.

Speaker Say is backing us into a corner, and it's not irresponsible for him to suggest that this economic crisis should be resolved by sacrificing the health and well being of me and my family. Also, by forcing people into retirement before July 1, 2009, we are gambling with the future of state programs. The loss to institutional knowledge and expertise that we could experience is putting our families in Hawai'i at risk. State programs that protect Hawai'i's children, elderly and public will lose a wealth of knowledge that is not easy to recover when state hiring freezes are overburdening our already overburdened workforce. I strongly encourage this committee to vote "no" on HB 1719 and to send a strong message to Speaker Say, that he cannot punish civil servants for their dedication and commitment to the state of Hawai'i.

HB 1725 says that from July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2015, public employees will have to bear THE ENTIRE burden of prescription drug coverage. This is literally a bill that is

playing with the life and death of public workers. Although the bill is only temporary, we are gambling with six years of prescription medication. With rising chronic diseases that require medication, this bill, coupled with talk of salary cuts and rises in our premiums is like a death sentence for our elderly, sick, or recovering public workers and retirees. It will deter some employees and retirees from accessing medicine that is essential to long and healthy lives. This is a regressive bill when the rest of the nation is talking about improvements to our health care coverage.

Please vote "no" on all of these bills that take away benefits from public employees.

LATE

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning. My name is Lisa Daclison and as a public employee for 5 years, I am deeply upset by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say. Specifically: HB 1106, HB 1719, & HB 1725

Please vote "NO" on all of these bills that take away benefits from public employees.

HB 1106 is supposed to 'protect the rights of public employees' in the event of a furlough. Speaker Say has said that a furlough would cause the "least amount of disruption to public service." How can we afford a reduction to our salaries when we are some of the last remaining wage earners in this unstable economy?

We also strongly disagree with Section 4 of HB 1106. The Governor does not have the authority to unilaterally furlough state employees.

HB 1719 is also of concern to me. As a civil servant, I chose to work for less pay to be able to contribute to the community. I believed that I would be able to count on a safe retirement and a stable job. Speaker Say's bill, which disregards my years of service and reduces medical benefits until the Medicare retirement age, is irresponsible. Instead of supporting public service, Speaker Say is telling us that public employees don't mean much and promises to us can be broken mid-stream.

Speaker Say is backing us into a corner, and it's irresponsible for him to suggest that this economic crisis should be resolved by sacrificing the health and well being of me and my family. Also, by forcing people into retirement before July 1, 2009, we are gambling with the future of state programs. The loss to institutional knowledge and expertise that we could experience is putting our families in Hawai'i at risk. State programs that protect Hawai'i's children, elderly and public will lose a wealth of knowledge that is not easy to recover when state hiring freezes are overburdening our already overburdened workforce.

I strongly encourage this committee to vote "no" on HB 1719 and to send a strong message to Speaker Say, that he cannot punish civil servants for their dedication and commitment to the state of Hawai'i.

HB 1725 says that from July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2015, public employees will have to bear THE ENTIRE burden of prescription drug coverage. This is literally a bill that is playing with the life and death of public workers. Although the bill is only temporary, we are gambling with six years of prescription medication. With rising chronic diseases that require medication, this bill, coupled with talk of salary cuts and rises in our premiums is like a death sentence for our elderly, sick, or recovering public workers and retirees. It will deter some employees and retirees from accessing medicine that is essential to long and healthy lives. This is a regressive bill when the rest of the nation is talking about improvements to our health care coverage.

Please vote "NO" on all of these bills that take away benefits from public employees.

Thank you for your time to listen to my testimony.

