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DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS**

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March 16, 2009

To: The Honorable Karl Rhoads, Chair
and Members of the House Committee on Labor and Public Employment

Date: March 17, 2009
Time: 8:30 a.m.
Place: Conference Room 309, State Capitol

From: Darwin L.D. Ching, Director
Department of Labor and Industrial Relations

**Testimony in Strong Support
of
S.B. 1568 S.D. 2 - Relating to Unemployment Insurance**

I. OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED LEGISLATION

S.B. 1568 S.D. 2 proposes to amend Chapter 383, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) to add new sections to extend unemployment benefits to individuals seeking part-time work and to workers separated from employment for a compelling family reason.

II. CURRENT LAW

Currently, there is no comparable section on part-time benefits or separation for compelling family reasons. Under section 12-5-47, Administrative Rules, Chapter 5, Title 12, good cause is provided if for leaving employment where there is a change in the individual's marital or domestic status.

III. SENATE BILL

The Department strongly supports this measure that intends to allow benefits to individuals who seek part-time work only and to those who separate due to compelling family reasons. By policy and practice, the Department has applied the law consistent

S.B. 1568 S.D. 2

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with the provisions in this measure. However, this measure will serve to codify and affirm our current practice in conformity with provisions of The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

The Twenty-Fifth Legislature
Regular Session of 2009

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

State Capitol, Conference Room 309
Tuesday, March 17, 2009; 8:30 a.m.

**STATEMENT OF THE ILWU LOCAL 142 ON S.B. 1568, SD2
RELATING TO UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE**

The ILWU Local 142 supports S.B. 1568, SD2, which extends unemployment benefits to individuals seeking part-time work and to workers separated from employment for a compelling family reason. Our comments are focused on the first part of the bill that would extend unemployment benefits to those seeking part-time work.

Currently, UI rules specify that those receiving benefits must seek full-time work. Although part-time employment may be accepted, the worker must still fulfill his or her obligation to seek full-time employment.

S.B. 1568, SD1 will allow those who worked part-time for the majority of their base period to seek part-time employment. We think this is fair. Since the weekly unemployment benefit is calculated based on the worker's earnings during the base period, the benefit will reflect part-time earnings.

In these difficult economic times when jobs are scarce, we should encourage workers to take whatever employment they are offered and will suit their needs, even if it is part-time. In addition, a part-time job may lead to a full-time job. Allowing the unemployment insurance system to be more flexible will also benefit the Department by reducing the number of denials and appeals.

The ILWU urges passage of S.B. 1568, SD2. Thank you for considering our testimony on this matter.



HAWAII GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION

AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO

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**House of Representatives
The Twenty-Fifth Legislature
Committee on Labor & Public Employment**

**Testimony by HGEA/AFSCME, Local 152, AFL-CIO
March 17, 2009**

S.B. 1568, S.D. 2 – RELATING TO UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

The Hawaii Government Employees Association, AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO supports the purpose and intent of S.B. 1568, S.D. 2 which extends unemployment benefits to individuals seeking part-time work and to workers separated from employment for a compelling family reason.

The intent of the measure to provide unemployment benefits to an unemployed part-time worker seeking part-time work is fair. Further, extending coverage to workers that separate from employment for difficult family situations such as domestic violence, serious family illness or disability, and a spouse's job relocation is pro-worker and pro-family. The bill will benefit our community as a whole. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of S.B. 1568, S.D. 2.

Respectfully submitted,

Nora A. Nomura
Deputy Executive Director



Before the House Committee on Labor & Public Employment

DATE: March 17, 2009

TIME: 8:30 a.m.

PLACE: Conference Room 309

Re: SB 1568 SD2 Relating to Unemployment Insurance Testimony of Melissa Pavlicek for NFIB Hawaii

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. On behalf of the business owners who make up the membership of the National Federation of Independent Businesses in Hawaii, we ask that you reject SB1568 SD2. NFIB opposes this measure in its current form.

The National Federation of Independent Business is the largest advocacy organization representing small and independent businesses in Washington, D.C., and all 50 state capitals. In Hawaii, NFIB represents more than 1,000 members. NFIB's purpose is to impact public policy at the state and federal level and be a key business resource for small and independent business in America. NFIB also provides timely information designed to help small businesses succeed.

We are concerned about the possible unintended consequences of mandating the extension of unemployment benefits to individuals seeking part-time work and to workers separated from employment for a compelling family reason. We believe that such legislation will add costs to business which ultimately hurts employees and the economy as a whole.