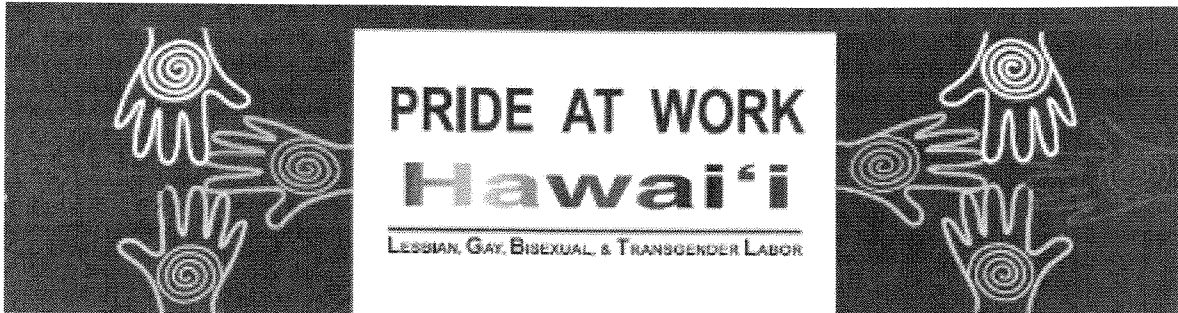


LATE



PO Box 22416 Honolulu, HI 96822  
(808) 543-6054  
*prideatworkhawaii@hawaiiantel.net*  
*www.hawaflcio.org/PAWHI*

February 17, 2009

Hawaii State House of Representatives  
Committee on Labor and Public Employment  
Chair, Rep. Karl Rhoads  
Vice Chair, Rep. Kyle Yamashita

Testimony in opposition to H.B. 1715 – RELATING TO RETIREMENT

Pride At Work Hawai'i, whose mission is to mobilize lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) workers and their supporters for full equality and to build mutual support between the labor movement and the LGBT community, strongly opposes H.B. 1715. As drafted, the bill would create a two-tier system of benefits for public workers, with new workers at a significant disadvantage in terms of their future retirement.

In these difficult economic times, public workers represent necessary lifelines for Hawai'i's citizens. We rely on them to serve our needs, and this reliance only increases during bad times. These public workers also need to earn enough to care for their families, and know they'll be able to retire in dignity. Passage of this bill would harm these hard-working women and men by raising their retirement age, forcing them to work more years to earn the same benefits as their co-workers.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify against this unfair legislation. On behalf of all LGBT workers in Hawai'i, we hope you will oppose this harmful bill.

Respectfully submitted,  
Steve Dinion  
President  
Pride At Work Hawai'i

LATE

Yara Lamadrid-Rose  
yardav@hawaii.rr.com

February 16, 2009

Rep. Karl Rhoads, Chair  
Rep. Kyle T. Yamashita, Vice Chair  
Committee on Labor and Public Employment  
Hearing February 17, 2009  
Conference Room 309

RE: Testimony in Opposition to **HB1723**, **HB1715**, **HB1726**, **HB1727**, and **HB1725**

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

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in opposition to **HB1723**, **HB1715**, **HB1726**, **HB1727**, and **HB1725**. Please vote “no” on these bills.

I have been in public service for almost 25 years. These bills would hurt me, and my family, in very personal ways. Specifically, **HB1727**, heard here today (and **HB 1725** heard February 13th) are the most onerous. **HB1727** (and **HB1725**) would prohibit the EUTF from providing prescription drug coverage (**HB1725**), and dental and vision coverage (**HB1727**) for 6 years! This is a regressive bill in a state that prides itself in providing health care for its people.

My husband lost his job in March 2008. I was the sole breadwinner for our family (2 young children) until he found employment a few months later, at a fraction of his previous salary, I might add. I also provide the medical, prescription drug, dental, and vision coverage for our family through the EUTF. **HB1727** and **HB1725** will impact our ability to adequately take care of our family, and ourselves, when we have the greatest need, when we are ill, as well as provide preventative care for our children. Our family has already tightened its belt, we have cut back and economize on everything to make ends meet and provide for our family. **HB1727** and **HB1725** would add an incredible financial burden on our family when we can least afford it.

**HB1723** also threatens state employees and amounts to a pay cut by decreasing the employer contributions to the EUTF and making it a non-negotiable item under collective bargaining. **HB1726** would also amount to another pay cut by prohibiting the EUTF from providing the current life insurance. **HB1715** would change the minimum retirement age and years of service for new employees, creating a 2-tiered employee system, which has proven ineffective and eventually unworkable in the past.

We have always been told to look at pay and benefits as a “package.” Our pay is less than comparable employment in the private sector, but the benefits in medical and retirement balance the pay difference. These bills would change the ground rules of our employment in a negative way.

Please vote “no” on **HB1723**, **HB1715**, **HB1726**, **HB1727**, and **HB1725** that would take away benefits from public employees.

c: Rep. Jessica Wooley

**yamashita2 - Kristen**

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**From:** Cindy Sakoda [ccsakoda@yahoo.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, February 16, 2009 9:48 PM  
**To:** LABtestimony  
**Subject:** House Bills

HB 1725 - If they should pass this bill, can you imagine how many of us can't afford to purchase medicine at today's rate? I feel this will hurt all of us and some may have to choose between purchasing food or medication. Please consider killing this bill.

HB 1723 - I already pay approximately \$360.00 for our portion (medical, dental, drug, and vision). Even that amount is pretty stiff today. I know that each year medical keeps on going up and I feel that HMSA, HMA, etc. should have an incentive program so people won't abuse using it. They should give back rebates to people who hardly use it (like car insurance agencies does). They should also charge more for bigger families that use the insurance more than a family of 3. Right now, we're paying the same amount whether we have a family of 3 or 8. Somethings really wrong here. Please consider killing this bill.

HB 1715 - Already at age 55, employees have health problems where some of us die before retiring. Can you imagine the government having 65 year old employees still working and how efficient they would be at that age? I don't think so. Also, if they have to work longer, can you imagine how much ERS must pay out? Most of them who get out of college and start with the government would have 40 plus years or so. With the hybrid of 2% X 40 years of service = 80% of their high 3. It would be a disaster. Please consider killing this bill, also.

HB 1726 and HB 1927 - I thought this would be a benefit for government workers. As we get older, this was something we purchased to protect us for our future. Now they want to strip us of everything we have. Please consider killing this bill, also.

We sacrificed many years ago that we would take a lower pay and work for the government because of the benefits we would have when we retire. The private firms offered more money at that time, free medical at that time, while we were paying a portion of our medical for the government. That is so sad.

I feel raising the sales tax, whether it's 1/2 % or 1 % would be fair for everyone. This way, everyone won't feel it as bad. It will help increase the spending in the economy. Also, tourist who would visit the islands would pay the tax, also.

LATE

yamashita2 - Kristen

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**From:** Laurie Sodetani [lsodetani@msn.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, February 16, 2009 9:46 PM  
**To:** LABtestimony  
**Subject:** FW: House Bills

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**From:** lsodetani@msn.com  
**To:** labtestimony@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** House Bills  
**Date:** Mon, 16 Feb 2009 21:43:33 -1000

I am a speech/language pathologist on the island of Hawaii. I have worked for the State of Hawaii Department of Education since 1985. During that time, I have traveled over most of the island providing speech and language services to children from age 3 to 20. These children have autism, hearing loss, mental retardation, emotional illness, specific learning disabilities, and speech and language deficits, among other learning difficulties. I and my colleagues have worked very hard for the State of Hawaii for many years. Several of us are in our 50's, and we worry about future speech/language services to our islands. Speech pathologists are already in high demand throughout the nation. We have been unable to recruit and/or retain trained speech/language pathologists here in Hawaii in part because the State pays a lower wage than most facilities and school districts do. If the legislature should decide to take away benefits as well, I can foresee the shortage becoming critical, with Hawaii's children being the unfortunate victims. These bills, specifically, HB 1725, 1723, 1715, 1726, and 1727, are short-sighted and will, if passed, cause unquestionable damage to thousands of Hawaii's children. In addition, without retirement benefits, won't a good portion of public retirees become a huge financial drain on the state? Please do not break the promises made to Hawaii's public workers by passing this legislation. You might save a few bucks in the short run, but the long-term consequences will be disastrous.

Sincerely,  
Laurie Sodetani  
MA CCC-Sp

LATE

**yamashita2 - Kristen**

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**From:** julie t [ajmt14@yahoo.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, February 16, 2009 9:31 PM  
**To:** Rep. Roy Takumi  
**Cc:** LABtestimony  
**Subject:** HB1725, 1723, 1715, 1726, and 1727.

To: Representative Roy Takumi  
Re: HB1725 – Halt prescription drug coverage under EUTF;  
HB1723 – Limit employer contribution to 55% and make it non-negotiable.  
HB1715 - Increase, for new employees, the age and service time requirement  
to retire;  
HB1726 – Curtail EUTF payment for life insurance benefits;  
HB1727 – Prohibits provision of dental and vision coverage.

Hello, my name is Julie Tamura. I live in your district and voted for you. I work for the DOE and am a member of HGEA. I am employed at a wonderful public elementary school and have 17.5 years with the DOE.

I am also a taxpayer. There are several members' in my family that also work for the State of Hawaii. And I also have a multitude of friends' and acquaintances that work for the City & County. House Bills 1725, 1723, 1715, 1727 will affect those of us who have given many years of our lives to service the public. HB 1726 will eventually affect specifically, two of my nieces', who are currently at the University of Hawaii and want to become future educators.

In addition to this, my sister and I, are caregivers' for our parents'. We share a lot of the responsibilities within the household. If my income and/or health benefits were decreased, it will have an adverse effect in my household. If my income, medical coverage, including dental and vision are affected, not only will my income be severely affected, but my wellness will be threatened as well. I already have some medical conditions that require several maintenance prescription drugs.

I had decided a long time ago, to make a career in public service, opting to take a substantial pay cut from my private sector job. But I have never regretted the change in careers, as I have never been happier, working with children and colleagues' who share the same essential goal in educating young minds.

I cannot imagine what my livelihood would be like without the retirement and benefits. I am sincerely making a plea for you to consider NOT taking away these hard-earned benefits from myself, as well as, the many thousands of public service employees.

I don't know how it'll be possible to suffer losses in the benefits that I've worked so hard for. I may not be able to retire anytime soon, but have always hoped to be able to retire comfortably. The health benefits have been another factor in staying with public service.

I truly don't believe that it is fair for the House to be looking at ways to balance the budget on the backs of public employees. We all work hard at our jobs and the economic crisis is taking a toll on all of us.

Please find another way to balance the budget. Perhaps, raising the excise tax would be a fairer and equal way to address the state's current revenue problem. With everyone paying a bit more, we can share the burden during these difficult times.

I thank you for your kind attention and consideration to my plea. A reply would be appreciated.

Respectfully submitted,  
Julie Tamura

**From:** Caroline CALDWELL [ccaldwell002@yahoo.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, February 16, 2009 8:59 PM  
**To:** All Reps; sen@capitol.hawaii.gov; LABtestimony  
**Cc:** Caroline Caldwell  
**Subject:** Testimony

Thank you for allowing me to share my concerns regarding the bills before your committee that could potentially impact not only me but also many of my fellow co-workers.

I believe the following bills will negatively impact both me and many of my co-workers: HB1106, HB1718, HB1719, HB1725, HB1723, HB1715, HB1726, HB1727.

As a grounds worker with DAGS who services the Windward side of Oahu and also as chief steward with UPW, I have had the opportunity to see and to talk to some state blue and white collar co-workers.

Just this past week I've heard from a few of my co-workers how the proposed cutbacks will negatively impact them if these bills become law. One of DAGS grounds division newest workers shared with me his concern regarding lay-offs. After being laid off and on unemployment, he now hopes furloughing will save his job; he has four young children. A young woman who is a clerk with the Health Department and is a single mother with two young children is very concerned about the financial impact that even a one day a month furlough will have on her. A nurse whose husband has been laid off and who relies on the State medical plan for the whole family is concerned that their family will eventually be required to absorb higher medical bills. My supervisor is now seriously considering retiring three years earlier than he had planned so that he can be grandfathered into the present medical plan for retirees.

As legislators I trust that you will carefully consider the potential for "unintended consequences" not only for state government workers but also how these bills may negatively impact our state economy as a whole. As of this writing I also plan to retire before the July 1, 2009, deadline to be grandfathered into the state retiree medical plan. Obviously, if these bills impacting me are killed, I will be able to change my mind on retiring early.

Thank you for your time and serious concern for the workers in the state.

Sincerely,

~/Lee Caldwell

hm 235-8956

cell 722-5271

**yamashita2 - Kristen**

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**From:** Keoki Miyamoto [keoki104@yahoo.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, February 16, 2009 8:25 PM  
**To:** LABtestimony  
**Cc:** keoki104@yahoo.com  
**Subject:** Testimony for HB 1725, 1723, 1715, 1726 and 1727

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

I am providing testimony in opposition to HB 1725, 1723, 1715, 1726, and 1727. I am Jackie Ferguson-Miyamoto, long time active HGEA leader and elected Trustee of the Employees Retirement System Board. I have about 33 years of state service.

Friday you heard very compelling testimony from the rank and file. For each one that you heard there are a thousand more, across these islands, just like it. These bills are hitting the very core of employees who have committed many hard working years to public service. Not only did we come to public service for the benefits, but we stayed for the benefits and expect to retire with medical benefits like our sisters and brothers before us, and deservedly so.

Stopping any of these benefits is a dangerous proposition that may lead to many not getting the proper health care that costs so much and continues to escalate every year. Children will go without proper dental and vision care simply because families will not be able to afford them. If the employee is forced to pay more for health benefits it will diminish their purchasing power for other things, which will certainly have an impact on the greater community.

In short, these bills are so regressive if they should pass what will they accomplish?

Speaker Say said he introduced these bills to start discussion on this subject. Well this is not the venue.

LATE

Sharon Wong  
1054 Kaupaku Place  
Honolulu, HI 96825  
February 16, 2009

Representative Karl Rhoads  
Chair, House Committee on Labor and Public Employment  
28th Representative District  
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 326  
415 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, HI 96813

Representative John Mizuno  
Vice-Chair, House Committee on Labor and Public Employment  
12th Representative District  
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 422  
415 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, HI 96813

**RE: IN OPPOSITION TO:**

- 1) **HB1725 – Halt prescription drug coverage under EUTF;**
- 2) **HB1723 – Limit employer contribution to 55% and make it non-negotiable (health care);**
- 3) **HB1715 – Increase, for new employees, the age and service time requirement to retire;**
- 4) **HB1726 – Curtail EUTF payment for life insurance benefits;**
- 5) **HB1727 – Prohibits provision of dental and vision coverage.**

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT  
ON TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2009, 8:30 A.M., CONFERENCE  
ROOM 309**

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

Thank you for providing the opportunity for me to testify. My name is Sharon Wong and I have been a public employee for twenty years. I chose to remain a public servant because of my commitment to work for the citizens of Hawaii and for the benefits of public employment. While I understand the State's bleak financial situation, I do not support HB1725, HB1723, HB 1715, HB 1726, and HB1727, which all aim to reduce public employee benefits as the solutions to balance the State budget.

All of these bills reduce the benefits of public employment. When I joined State government twenty years ago, I took a 30% pay cut, coming from a private employer. It was difficult to live on 30% less pay, but I thought that the other benefits made up for most of that difference. So far, I dedicated twenty years of my working career to government service because I value the entire benefits package. My current salary is low, compared to industry standards. If these bills become law, then I and other public



Page 2

House Committee on Labor and Public Employment

RE: HB1725, HB1723, HB 1715, HB 1726, and HB1727

February 16, 2009

employees will be in a difficult financial situation, as we will need to pay for our own health coverage and life insurance benefits. Even worse, if these unanticipated costs are more than what we can pay for, we may be in a position to forego this coverage and benefits, putting our health at risk.

Please vote "no" on HB1725, HB1723, HB 1715, HB 1726, and HB1727. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Sharon Wong  
(via email)

**yamashita2 - Kristen**

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**From:** Hiapo Perreira [hiapo@leoki.uhh.hawaii.edu]  
**Sent:** Monday, February 16, 2009 8:12 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 HB 1715!!!

Distinguished Representatives of the House Committee on Labor and Public Employment:

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 HB 1715 relating to Employees Retirement System; Service Retirement Credit. I urge you to vote likewise.

VOTE TO OPPOSE!

Respectfully submitted,

Hiapo K. Perreira  
PO Box 6225  
Hilo, HI 96720

## Calvin Say's proposed bills

Lisa Ferreira [lialisafa@yahoo.com]

**Sent:** Monday, February 16, 2009 3:50 PM

**To:** LABtestimony

LATE

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Chair Rhodes, Vice Chair Yamashita and members of the committee,

Thank you for letting me voice my opinion. My name is Lisa Aquino and I have been a public employee for a year now. I am proud to be a public employee and with this job, came the security of a solid retirement, good health benefits and peace of mind. All of this seems that it is about to change.

The bills that have been introduced by speaker, Calvin Say are deeply troubling to say the least. I strongly oppose the bills of HB1106, HB1719, HB1715 and HB1726. There has to be a better way to balance the state budget crisis than taking away from public employees health benefits, retirement and furloughing employees. It seems the state is taking the easy way out to balance their financial shortfalls on all on public employees instead of finding other alternatives to balance the budget. This is not fair to all who have worked hard to earn their benefits as public employees and are approaching retirement age as well as those who have just begun their journey as public employees.

I urge you to vote "NO" on all these bills that take away benefits to public employees.

**anti-labor bills**

pw [goldd@hawaiianisp.com]

**LATE****Sent:** Monday, February 16, 2009 4:35 PM**To:** LABtestimony

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Dear Committee Members,

I am opposed to the below mentioned bills:

\*

HB1106, \*HB1725 – Halt prescription drug coverage under EUTF;  
HB1723 – Limit employer contribution to 55% and make it non-negotiable;  
HB1715 – Increase, for new employees, the age and service time requirement to retire;  
HB1726 – Curtail EUTF payment for life insurance benefits;  
HB1727 – Prohibits provision of dental and vision coverage.

It seems that the governor and apparently some legislators feel that the only way to cut the deficit is to do so on the backs of state workers which would dramatically affect the livelihood me and many others. My budget is based on my currently salary. I pay my bills based on what take home in my check. So it is with great concern when you are considering bills that will cut my pay anywhere from 5% to 30%. This kind of cut will jeopardized my economic solvency. Imagine you as legislators taking similar cuts and not making a financial impact on your life.

I urge you to reject the above mentioned bills.

Sincerely P.Watanabe

P.S. Below is a email message to my Calvin Say(the instigator of this anti-labor legislation)

"Mr. Say,

I am astonished that you are trying balance the state budget on state employees. What is more astonishing is that you support pay raises for your own PART TIME JOBS. I would love to make the amount of money the legislators make for 3 months of work. If you feel that your jobs are full time jobs, change the law and make it officially a full time position. \_And if you are asking everyone to sacrifice, shouldn't you as House speaker be a example for everyone and give up your pay raise, take a additional pay cut and give up your state benefits.\_

Mr Say if you continue to support anti state employee legislation I will NOT vote for you. Also, I will convince my mother to NOT vote for you too.

If you fail to heed this advice, I will consider voting for a republican candidate against you.

As a state employee I went through similar cutbacks, but the process was to cut all temporary employees first, cut all emergency employees, cut all exempt positions, reduce programs, cut tax credits to businesses and

then consider RIFFs.

The process WASN'T to cut state employees benefits.

I suggest you consider a excise tax increase.

Sincerely a concerned constituent and state worker

Paul Watanabe "

LATE

LATE

**PLEASE Vote no....**

E Foster Heckman [efoste@gmail.com]

**Sent:** Monday, February 16, 2009 5:52 PM

**To:** LABtestimony

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

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning. My name is Elizabeth Foster Heckman and I have been working for the Department of Health for 2 years. I am quite upset about the following bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say:

- HB1725 Halt prescription drug coverage under EUTF;
- HB1723 Limit employer contribution to 55% and make it non-negotiable;
- HB1715 Increase, for new employees, the age and service time requirement to retire;
- HB1726 Curtail EUTF payment for life insurance benefits;
- HB1727 Prohibits provision of dental and vision coverage.

I had the option of working at a private agency for much more money than I currently make with the state. However, I choose to join a team of hard workers at AMHD to work at reduced pay for the benefits afforded State of Hawaii workers. Please do not vote in favor of these bills, as they would negatively impact our work force. If cuts had to be made, I would choose a furlough rather than the long-term repercussions of reduced benefits.

Thank you for your time and attention to these concerns,

Elizabeth Foster Heckman, M.Ed.  
2507A Rainbow Dr  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96822

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Let the beauty of what you love be what you do ~Jalal ad-Din Rumi

Be the change you want to see in the world. ~Mahatma Gandhi

May all beings be safe and free from anger, fear, greed, dilution and all ill being.  
~Buddhist Peace Delegation

<http://www.bpf.org/html/home.html>

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**Re-sent with my address...**

LATE

Bran-D Foster Heckman [brand808@gmail.com]

**Sent:** Monday, February 16, 2009 5:54 PM

**To:** LABtestimony

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

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning. My name is Bran-D Foster Heckman and I have been working for the Department of Health for 4 years. I am very upset about the following bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say:

HB1725 Halt prescription drug coverage under EUTF;  
HB1723 Limit employer contribution to 55% and make it non-negotiable;  
HB1715 Increase, for new employees, the age and service time requirement to retire;  
HB1726 Curtail EUTF payment for life insurance benefits;  
HB1727 Prohibits provision of dental and vision coverage.

I am a hard worker and proud to be a State Worker. I could make much more money and spend less time doing extra paperwork or in meetings in the private sector. However, I work at reduced pay for the benefits afforded State of Hawaii workers. Please do not vote in favor of these bills, as they would negatively impact our work force.

Thank you for your time,

Bran-D Foster Heckman  
2507A Rainbow Dr  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96822

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 I am that many of my co-workers and myself have great  
opposition to:

House Bill No. 1723- Related to Public Employees  
House Bill No. 1715- Related to Retirement  
House Bill No. 1726- Related to the Health Fund  
House Bill No. 1727- Related to the Hawaii Employer-Union Health  
Benefits Trust Fund

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 our County  
of Maui, 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.

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. Vacancies will be among the experienced individuals who have dedicated their employment careers to government service. Filling these 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  
Haiku, Hawaii 96708

Testimony re: Take away Bills

LATE

HB1715

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

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

The proposed take away bills are counterproductive to the philosophy that the government should be doing everything in it's power to stimulate the economy, and not to drag it down.  
The numerous attacks that these bills have on government employees pay and benefits are short-sighted and foolhardy.

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

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

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

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

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

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

LATE

yamashita2 - Kristen

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**From:** Marbeth Aquino [akau\_aquino96795@yahoo.com]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 17, 2009 4:28 AM  
**To:** LABtestimony  
**Cc:** akau\_aquino96795@yahoo.com; Paul Akau; Kamakana Aquino  
**Subject:** \*\*\*\*\*SPAM\*\*\*\*\* BILLS #1106, #1719,#1725, #1723, #1726, #1727, #1715

ALOHA,

AGAIN, I AM AGAINST THE TAKING AWAY FROM YOUR EMPLOYEES BECAUSE, WE SHOULD NOT BE HELD LIABLE FOR YOUR MISTAKES IN YOUR SPENDING. I CALL ON ALL OF YOU AS LEGISLATURES. TO MAKE THINGS RIGHT AND PONO. PLEASE HEAR THE PEOPLE OF HAWAII. REMEMBER WE ARE TAX PAYORS, TOO!

MAHALO

LATE

yamashita2 - Kristen

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**From:** milton m [m\_mukai@hotmail.com]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 17, 2009 6:43 AM  
**To:** LABtestimony  
**Subject:** \*\*\*\*\*SPAM\*\*\*\*\*

Hi, my name is Milton Mukai and I work for the University of Hawaii at Manoa and am a member of the HGEA.

I'm also a taxpayer and spend my money at local businesses regularly to buy food, clothing and other needs such as medication; my copayment amounting to approximately 9% of my net income per month and have received recent notification of an increase in my rent of about 8% effective March 2009.

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 in the department I work with and demands for services have increased.

Less income means less spending that will only contribute to the erosion of the fading economy and I fail to see the rationale behind some of the bills recently introduced in the State of Hawaii Legislature by Representative Calvin Say which I feel is mean spirited and targets Hawaii government workers and their families:

HB1725 – Halt prescription drug coverage under EUTF;  
HB1723 – Limit employer contribution to 55% and make it non-negotiable;  
HB1715 – Increase, for new employees, the age and service time requirement to retire;  
HB1726 – Curtail EUTF payment for life insurance benefits;  
HB1727 – Prohibits provision of dental and vision coverage.

He should be ashamed of himself for viewing public workers in this light who work hard to serve the public; not become scapegoats.

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.

Thank you,

Milton Mukai

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LATE

February 17, 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 No. 1723, Related to Public Employees  
House Bill No. 1715, Relating to Retirement  
House Bill No. 1726, Relating to Health Fund  
House Bill No. 1727, Relating to Hawaii Employer-Union Health Benefits  
Trust Fund**

The purpose House Bill No. 1723 makes employer contributions to the employer-union health benefits trust fund non-negotiable under collective bargaining and establishes employer contributions for active public employees at 55 percent of monthly cost of the health benefits plan.

The purpose of House Bill No. 1715, Relating to Retirement increases, for new public employees, the minimum age and length of service for an unreduced service retirement allowance.

The purpose of House Bill No. 1726, Relating to Health Fund, prohibits the Hawaii employer-union health benefits trust fund from providing group life insurance benefits if any of the premiums are paid by the State or a county. Allows the trust fund to contract with a group life insurer to make available group life insurance benefits to employee-beneficiaries provided that none of the premiums are paid by the State or any county and the insurer pays a fee to the board of trustees.

The purpose of House Bill No. 1727, Relating to Hawaii Employer-Union Health Benefits Trust Fund, prohibits the health benefits plan of the employer-union health benefits trust fund from providing dental and vision coverage from 07/01/2009 until 06/30/2015. Allows the board of trustees to make dental and vision benefits available to employee-beneficiaries at no cost to the employers.

These bills are attempt to solve the economic downturn and financial crisis facing the State of Hawaii and its respective Counties will hurt the very people who will be instrumental in turning this crisis around. Public employees have always been the most dedicated people in Hawaii; most have given up larger salaries because they truly believe in civil service. The State and Counties made a promise to these employees on the date of their hire, insuring a good retirement system, which included health coverage. This promise kept many intelligent leaders of which the State and Counties have benefited from over these vast years, from seeking higher compensating jobs with the private sector.

Many in our department will need to work much past their maximum years of service for retirement date in order to retain medical coverage and with no benefit to their retirement, as their pension compensation percentage would be locked with their years of service.

Police officers don't contribute to Social Security; therefore, officers who retire with 32 years of service often work part time to secure some social security benefits. This legislation, if passed will cause numerous retirements before July, 2009 and will create an immediate impact on all State and County services. Department Heads, Police and Fire Chiefs, upper management from all sectors of State and County who have the time to retire will retire to preserve their benefits.

To make the employer contributions to the employer-union health benefits trust fund non-negotiable under collective bargaining and to establish employer contributions for active public employees at 55 percent of monthly cost of the health benefits plan is very costly. Further, to prohibit the Hawaii employer-union health benefits trust fund from providing group life insurance benefits if any of the premiums are paid by the State or a county and to prohibit the health benefits plan of the employer-union health benefits trust fund from providing dental and vision coverage from 07/01/2009 until 06/30/2015 is cruel. It appears as though the State is renegeing on their promises to their employees and punishing them at the same time.

Lastly, the extended retirement age of 65 years old or 30 years of service will be physically and mentally challenging for Police Personnel. Sixty-five years old is rather old to be chasing down criminals. Most Law Enforcement Agencies retire their officers at 20 years of service. Injuries to our personnel and public will likely increase and it will be costly.

Should these Bills pass legislation, you will lose the trust of the people you employ. I certainly do not support these House Bills.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Sgt. T. Nishida  
Maui Police Department  
Lahaina District

LATE

Dear Committee Members,

This letter is in opposition to House Bills 1715, 1723, 1726 and 1727.

My name is Pat Tompkins. I would first like to thank you for the courage you exhibited last Friday when you Held or Killed House Bills 1106, 1718, 1719 and 1725. These bills were bad, unfair and would have resulted in numerous unintended consequences had they been passed out of committee.

The bills you are hearing today are also bad. I hope you will see that they are dealt the same fate as those heard last Friday.

Please consider the following points:

HB 1715 proposes to increase the minimum age and length of service requirements for retirement for new employees. While this seems like something a current employee like myself might not consider important, let me share why I think it is. It is unfair to have two people working side by side doing the same work who do not share in benefits equally. We saw this happen during the Cayetano administration when we were forced to accept fewer sick and vacation days for new hires if we wanted to get our arbitrated pay raise. We found that it was an unfair employment practice then and sought to have it rectified during our next arbitration hearing, which it was. I feel this bill is similar and will result in reducing the pool of qualified applicants even further than we currently experience when recruiting for open positions.

HB 1723 proposes to make the Employer's contribution to the EUTF non-negotiable and caps it at 55% of the total insurance premium. This is patently unfair on two levels. First, this is our right through collective bargaining and it should not be taken away. Second, employees cannot negotiate coverage and therefore have no say in controlling costs. With the employer's contribution capped at 55%, there would be even less incentive to control costs.

HB 1726 proposes to prohibit the EUTF from providing group life insurance if any of the premiums are paid by the Employer. For many, this group life insurance is their only life insurance. Many would be ineligible to purchase insurance on the open market due to pre-existing conditions. Group life insurance is relatively inexpensive when purchased in the quantity it currently is. Please guarantee this benefit for the future for all employees.

HB 1727 proposes to prohibit the EUTF from providing dental and vision coverage from 07/01/09 through 06/30/15. These two types of insurance are very important in the role of preventing more serious illnesses. Infections, if left untreated can progress to painful illnesses and even fatalities. Regular eye and vision exams often tip off more serious problems such as heart disease and glaucoma.

I hope you will consider the testimony you received for the bills you heard last Friday as well as the additional testimony for the bills to be heard today and do the right thing – Kill the Bills that hurt public workers.

Once again, in closing, public workers know economic times are tough. We're working harder and smarter and we will continue to do our share to help strengthen our home state. But we are not willing to be made the scapegoats for all that ails Hawaii. No one person or entity created this situation. Likewise, no one person or entity will be able to get us out of it. We stand ready to support our elected officials but only if they support us.

Thank you for your consideration.

Pat Tompkins  
Waianae, Hawaii



LATE

yamashita2 - Kristen

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**From:** jnfaus@hawaii.rr.com  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 17, 2009 12:47 AM  
**To:** LABtestimony  
**Subject:** HB1715, 1723, 1725, 1726 & 1727

Relating to the above bills that will affect government employees' health and retirement benefits Labor Committee Tuesday, February 17, 2009 8:30 a.m.

Chairperson Rhoads and members of the committee:

My name is Judy Faustino and I work for the Department of Agriculture and am an HGEA member. I strongly oppose H.B. Nos. 1723, 1725, 1726, 1727 and any other proposals that would take away the benefits that I have worked so hard for. I also oppose HB1715 which proposes to increase the age and service time requirement for new employees

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'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. When I left the private sector, I took a cut in pay knowing that the benefits the State offered would make up for it.

>

> I think it's absolutely wrong for legislators to take these benefits away from me.

>

> Please look for other ways to balance the budget. Although an unpopular choice, 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.

Regarding HB1715, it should not apply to those already employed by the State. In my personal situation, I am eligible to retire at age 55 with 30 years of service. I honestly think 55 years old is a bit young to retire; however, 30 years of service should not be changed as I believe that is a long time to invest in one's retirement.

>

> Thank you for allowing me to comment on these very important issues.

>

> Judy Faustino

LATE

**yamashita2 - Kristen**

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**From:** Jennifer Carrell [jcarrell1981@yahoo.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, February 16, 2009 11:34 PM  
**To:** LABtestimony  
**Subject:** HB1715,18,19,26,25,26,27,37

To Whom it May Concern (and that should be everybody),

What ever happened to TRUST? Contracted Deals? TRUST? Respect? We elected you so that you could stab us in the back and take away all that was promised to us when we started Yesterday? 10 years ago? 20 years ago? If I had only known when I first started, I would've gone to work for GEICO, and earned so much more money than I am know But after working out side, I came here to City and County Gov't Employee because I didn't want to end up like my Mom who retired from the Feds and got nothing in medical, dental, drugs or vision, but at least she go medicare B.

This just came out of left field. How about you subject this policy to people hired after 7/1/09. See how many people want to be hired after that. Isn't this more of a contract negotiation w/Union people and making a law is just wrong.

I think you are being very unfair and disloyal to the thousands of people who have stayed w/City, County, and State gov't jobs even though the mainland calls to us w/more money, better benefits, but terrible retirement plans.

Some of us actually think we can survive after retirement. Please don't make it more difficult for us to stay. We're just people who need to make a living in these hard times just as you do.

One last question. Who pays for you medical? as a part time employee. And How are you going to be taken care of when you retire? I hear that Senators, and Representatives don't have to give money to Social Security because they pretty much are taken care by themselves. Is this so? There is noone out there to take care of me when I retire.

Please consider what you are doing before you do something really bad.

Mahalo  
Jennifer Carrell