

yamashita3-Chelsea

From: Norman Fujioka [nmfujioka@yahoo.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 10:36 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Vote no on measures penalizing government employees and their families

To the Labor and Public Employment Committee:

As a retired state employee after 36 years of service, I am dismayed and shocked that Speaker Say is forgetting the services provided by former and current public employees. It is wrong and an insult for him or other legislators to seriously consider the bills before your committee. We have provided good-faith services to people in this state in good and bad economic times. To now forget about us when times are bad is to treat us commodities to be handled without regard to the real impact that such actions will entail. Almost everyone in this state knows or is related in some way to government employees. They may be parents, grandparents, siblings, and friends. Public employees also pay taxes and other fees to help our economy. The solution is not to penalize one group of people. The federal government is expected to provide some financial assistance to the state and the legislators should consider such aid which would reduce the financial impact to the state. We are all hurting financially. These bills unfairly target us as the "problem". Yet when elections roll around, politicians expect us to forget what is being considered. We will not forget. To be courageous is not to cruelly vote for these despicable bills but it is to vote a resounding "no" to these bills.

So I ask the committee members to kill these bills in committee and unanimously vote no to these 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.

Mahalo for your action in turning back these cruel bills.

Norman M. Fujioka

TO: Committee on Labor and Public Employment

February 13, 2009, 8:30 AM

Testimony Against HB 1718, HB 1719, HB 1725

Aloha,

I am extremely disheartened to learn that the Committee on Labor & Public Employment is considering the following bills tomorrow: HB 1718, HB 1719, HB 1725. Bills such as these, with little notice for public input, circumvents the collective bargaining process that state workers are entitled to.

While I understand the predicament that the state is currently in due to the financial crisis that has beset our nation, I do not see how reducing the medical premiums that the state pays will benefit the state. After all, if state employees must pay higher medical premiums, they will stop spending money in other ways and the state will ultimately lose revenue.

Measures such as these will make it hard to maintain a quality higher education force. If such bills were to pass, the state will experience a mass exodus of seasoned, tenured faculty members as they will choose to retire rather than lose medical benefits. Ultimately, the students will be severely affected with such a loss of expertise.

Perhaps this is what the state ultimately wants--for those at the top of the pay scale to retire so that lecturers can be hired at a much reduced price. But it is the state that will ultimately lose in such a reality as students will no longer have access to experts in their fields as their knowledge will no longer be passed down to the younger generations.

Sincerely,
Sarah Hadmack
Religion Instructor
Windward Community College and University of Hawaii at Manoa

yamashita3-Chelsea

From: estrella ua [leilani1239@gmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 10:01 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Your health and retirement benefits are at risk!!!!

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Completed

I Estrella L. Ua deeply oppose to all of the following bills #HB1718, #HB1719, HB1725, #HB1723, #HB1715, #HB1726 and #HB1727. My reasons are that I have been employed by D.O.E. for many years and have contributed to the state of Hawaii. I feel that I am entitled to all of the above for the sake of taking care of myself and my family.

Sincerely,
Estrella L. Ua

yamashita3-Chelsea

From: Julianne_Ostrosky/KEONEPOKO/HIDOE@notes.k12.hi.us
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 10:05 PM
To: Rep. Faye Hanohano; Rep. Mark Nakashima; Rep. Roy Takumi
Cc: LABtestimony
Subject: Please vote NO on HB1723, HB1715, HB1726, HB1727, HB1718, HB1719, HB1725, and HB110

Aloha Representative Hanohano, et.al.,

My name is Julianne Ostrosky and I live in your district and voted for you. I am currently employed as a 6th grade teacher at Keonepoko Elementary School in Hawaiian Beaches. Living and working in the district of Lower Puna on the Big Island since 1984, I have been employed as a teacher/instructor for the last 18 years and am a member of HSTA.

Being a taxpayer, I spend my hard-earned money every day, buying food, clothing and other needs for myself and my family at local businesses .

I don't believe it's fair for the House to be looking for ways to balance the budget on the backs of public employees. All the teachers I know work hard at their jobs, and things have become even harder now that 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 always depended on the fact that I could rely on fair retirement and health benefits for myself and my family.

I think it's **WRONG** for representatives to take these benefits away from me by supporting the following bills:

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,

Julianne Ostrosky

yamashita3-Chelsea

From: Wesley Matsunaga [wesm201@yahoo.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 9:45 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Concerning Bills HB 1106, 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 Wesley Matsunaga. As a public employee for 10.5 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 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.

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

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning. My name is Charles Miller. As a public employee for 22 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 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 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

Sharon Wong
1054 Kaupaku Place
Honolulu, HI 96825
February 21, 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) HB1718 (RELATING TO EMPLOYER-UNION HEALTH BENEFITS);**
- 2) HB1719 (RELATING TO PUBLIC EMPLOYEES), and;**
- 3) HB1725 (RELATING TO THE HAWAII EMPLOYER-UNION HEALTH BENEFITS TRUST FUND)**

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT
ON FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 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 HB1718, HB1719, and HB1725, which all aim to reduce public employee benefits as the solutions to balance the State budget.

Of particular concern is HB1719, which affects medical coverage for employees who retire after July 1, 2009. If this bill becomes law, there will be a mass exodus of retirement-eligible employees by June 30, 2008. This will cause a serious negative impact on government operations, as the most senior and knowledgeable employees will have retired. By the time this becomes law, there will be no time for transition planning, large gaps will occur in government operations due to the loss of seasoned public employees, which will negatively affect services to the Hawaii citizens.

Page 2
House Committee on Labor and Public Employment
RE: HB1718, HB 1719, and HB1725
February 13, 2009

HB1718 and HB1725 both reduce the benefits of public employment. I made a conscious decision to work in the public sector at a lower pay scale than the private sector, because I valued the entire benefits package that the State offered, especially the medical retirement benefit. To that end, I have invested twenty years of my working career with the State of Hawaii, and my future financial planning included the public employment benefits package.

Please vote "no" on HB1718, HB1719, and HB1725. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Sharon Wong
(via email)

From: MICHELLE LAYOSA [mmlgb@hotmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 11:01 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Testimony on bills

02/12/2009

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

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning. My name is Michelle Layosa-Bonilla and I am a public employee with 26 years of service. Bills HB1106, HB1719, HB1725, HB1723, HB1715, HB1726, and HB1727 introduced by Speaker Calvin Say moves me to speak out.

One of the fundamental things in life is meaningful work for proper compensation. Like others my job has afforded me to work at a job I enjoy and to live in a place I love. It has helped me to provide for my family including planning for a safe retirement. A retirement I thought I could depend on. I will be betrayed if any of these bills are passed.

As legislatures you have a duty to do your best job to uphold the law. These bills are a poor showing for the letter of the law and the spirit of law, but most of all it is just wrong. As representatives of the people, you are expected to perform with respect, dignity, and honor. Please do what is right and vote "NO" to these bills. Mahalo.

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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 Susan Hokama.

As a public employee for 2 years, I am deeply upset by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say. Specifically: HB1106.

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.

Susan Hokama

yamashita3-Chelsea

From: Yvonne Wilson [yvnnwilson@yahoo.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 11:10 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Fw: HB: 1718, 1719, 1720, 1721, 1722, 1723, 1725, 1727

--- On Wed, 2/11/09, Yvonne Wilson <yvnnwilson@yahoo.com> wrote:

From: Yvonne Wilson <yvnnwilson@yahoo.com>
 Subject: HB: 1718, 1719, 1720, 1721, 1722, 1723, 1725, 1727
 To: reprhoads@capitol.hawaii.gov, repyamashita@capitol.hawaii.gov, repaquino@capitol.hawaii.gov, repawana@capitol.hawaii.gov, rephanohano@capitol.hawaii.gov, repkeithagaran@capitol.hawaii.gov, replee@capitol.hawaii.gov, repnakashima@capitol.hawaii.gov, repsaiki@capitol.hawaii.gov, repsouki@capitol.hawaii.gov, reptakumi@capitol.hawaii.gov, reppine@capitol.hawaii.gov
 Date: Wednesday, February 11, 2009, 12:23 AM

Dear Labor Committee Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and members:

Please do not allow the above mentioned House Bills to pass. I am currently working at Hawaii State Hospital and nearing retirement age after working in many different state positions. I chose to remain a state worker after returning to state employment in 1996 due to a couple of reasons (needs of my family while caring for my elderly parents on Maui), and the state's retirement benefits. You need to know that as a registered occupational therapist who has consistently sought training in my profession (usually at my own cost) I am paid approximately \$20,000.00 less per annum compared to the private sector. This disparity in pay makes me depend on the differential pay that I receive and occasional over-time pay to help make ends meet.

What Calvin Say is proposing is disastrous for my retirement planning, especially since I just gave up a chance for advancement thinking that the rules of retirement when I signed on are/will be in place. After 38 years of experience (e.g., training occupational therapy students, providing consultation to other professionals, agencies, and consumers, being a case manager, and a supervisor in the private sector, etc.), I am still stuck in the system's entry level position. The state is receiving a lot of expertise without paying a fair wage. If the Speaker of the House has his way, my years of retirement will be a struggle, and am too old to make a meaningful change in plans as I am 60 1/2 years-old.

Most state employees are underpaid. The extra holidays and retirement plan help make up for the disparity in pay between the private and public sectors. Yes, there are some workers who do not have enough work to do and something should be done about eliminating their positions. As a registered occupational therapist (OTR), I have never had that experience, but just the opposite-putting in many more hours than I am being paid for. As someone from the private sector observed, I am not the "typical" state worker (whatever their perception is). The state will also suffer; there will be fewer applicants for positions if they know the rules of employment may be changed capriciously.

Please support the state employees by voting "No" to HB: 1718, 1719, 1720, 1721, 1722, 1723, 1725, and 1727. Mahalo,

Yvonne Wilson, OTR
 Occupational Therapy Dept.
 Hawaii State Hospital

yamashita3-Chelsea

From: Jan Correa [jsachi.correa@hawaiiantel.net]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 11:37 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: *****SPAM***** HB 1719, HB 1725, HB 1718, HB 1715, HB 1727

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

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning. My name is Jan Correa, Pharmacist for the Dept.of Health.

As a public employee for 5 years, I am deeply upset by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say. Specifically: HB 1719, HB 1725, HB 1718, HB 1715, HB 1727

HB 1719 is of concern to me. As a civil servant, I chose to work for less pay (taking more than half a cut in pay from retail pharmacy) 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.

The legislators approved pay raises for themselves even though many knew long ago that we would be in this budget deficit. The legislators get the same benefits, if not similar benefits as a full-time state employee even though they only work 4 months out of the year. Many of them are able to retire after this year's session, enabling them to retain all their retirement benefits & health benefits, that they are trying to take away from those of us who work 12 months out of the year, not just four, and from those of us who get paid way less than what the legislators get paid.

The Judiciary and Dept.of Education employees who are also STATE employees are not affected by these bills. We (civil servant employees) did not create this deficit alone, the STATE of HAWAII is in this deficit, so why target our group, ALL STATE employees should take cuts in pay and benefit, including legislators, Judiciary Branch, Executive Branch, D.O.E.

I strongly encourage this committee to vote "no" on HB 1719 and to send a strong message to Speaker Say, that he cannot punish only 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. We already pay a large premium for our Medical and 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. If this bill is passed, in 2015, someone (a legislator) will need to re-introduce the bill, which would be highly unlikely if they all voted for it in the first place, which would mean it would not resurface, and there would no longer ever be prescription drug coverage. 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.

HB 1727 would prohibit provision of dental and vision coverage. Like HB 1725, it is a regressive bill when the rest of the nation is talking about improvements to our health care coverage.

HB 1715 would increase the age and service time required to retire. Now that most of the legislators have served numerous terms, and have reached retirement age, it will not affect them. Many young civil servant employees have sacrificed low pay to work for the state, in public health, so that they can retire comfortably, and should have the same privileges of having the security of medical, dental, vision, and prescription drug coverage, without worrying about having to work 10 more years or until they're 70 years old!

Please vote "no" on all of these bills that take away benefits from public employees. Think about your children and your children's children, the young people who will be running this state, if there is still a civil servant population, how will they be able to afford taking care of their parents when their parents lose all of their health benefits because of these bills? Look at the BIG picture. Not just at the civil servant population. Explore other avenues to decrease cost.

yamashita3-Chelsea

From: Sandra Wagner-Wright [sandraww@hawaii.rr.com]
Sent: Friday, February 13, 2009 5:51 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: HB 1718 and HB 1719

February 13, 2009

TO: Karl Rhoads, Chair, House Committee on Labor & Employment
FR: Sandra Wagner-Wright, Hilo
RE: HB 1718; HB 1719

This testimony is in response to HB 1718 and HB 1719 which the committee is considering this morning. I object to both bills for the following reasons:

1. These proposed bills are an attempt to circumvent union negotiations regarding conditions of employment. Medical coverage is part of the agreement between employer and employee regarding retirement benefits.
2. These bills would seriously undermine the economic security of state and county employees without public discussion or contract negotiation.
3. Further, funds that might have become discretionary income during retirement and be put back into the economy will be redirected towards insurance premiums and associated medical costs.
4. Both bills also reflect an effort to push state and county employees into early retirement, to be replaced, presumably, by new employees, if the positions are not indefinitely frozen. The presumption that new employees would be more cost effective due to their lack of seniority and their reduced benefit coverage at retirement is false because a.) public employment will become a less attractive career which will affect recruitment for vital services; and b.) the retirement fund will have to make increased payouts at an earlier time than might otherwise be the case.

I urge you to vote against HB 1718 and HB 1719. They are bad for public employees and they are bad for the state.

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

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning. My name is Connie Balanay. As a public employee for 7 years and a single mother of two, 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,

Connie Balanay

yamashita3-Chelsea

From: rick & judy armsby [rjarmsby@hawaiiantel.net]
Sent: Friday, February 13, 2009 6:35 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Don't take away my health benefits

Dear Representatives of the House Labor and Employee Committee,

I have worked faithfully for the State for 40 years as a psychologist at the Windward Oahu Community Mental Health Center. I love my job and do not want to retire but I may quit if I have to in order to possibly preserve what I can salvage if you pass some of the bills Calvin Say has introduced. These bills will decimate the health coverage my wife and I have counted on receiving both now and after I do retire. I understand that HB1719 won't affect me since I'm already 67 but HB1725 would halt our prescription drug coverage under EUTF which would dramatically raise our health care costs since both my wife and I take expensive prescribed medications. HB 1727 would abolish our dental and vision coverage which we also need and HB 1718 would halt reimbursement for Medicare B premiums if I continue to work as I now plan past 12/31/09. Please don't force me to retire earlier than I want to. Please don't try to balance the State budget on the backs of the State employees. A fairer approach would be to raise the excise tax for every State citizen.

Mahalo, Rick Armsby Ph.D

47136 Kaimalolo Place
Kaneohe, HI 96744

From: Kim_Otani/WAILUKU/HIDOE@notes.k12.hi.us
Sent: Friday, February 13, 2009 7:10 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: HB 1718, 1719, 1725, 1723, 1715, 1726, 1727

I am writing to convey my disappointment and to reasons why the proposed House Bills regarding medical and health benefits should NOT be passed.

1 - Passage of these bills will increase the shortage of qualified workers, especially in the field of education.

A - Schools are already hard pressed to maintain staff. Staff who are eligible for retirement who would have continued

employment are now making plans to retire to retain the benefits of the current plan.

B - Schools currently rely heavily upon retired teachers to fill much needed positions.

C - If the bills are designed to cut costs to reduce the payroll, then please consider the difficulty that the education community is already dealing with to meet the mandates of NCLB and the Felix Consent Decree.

D - The cost of higher education has frequently made decision to major in education not economically feasible. The love of teaching and concern for the well-being of children is out weighed by the need for employment to support one's own family.

E - Educators are not only teachers, but include the support staff such as educational assistants, clerks, custodial and

cafeteria staff. The cost of the current health plans already takes a large chunk from our paychecks.

2 - There is insufficient notice and time for those affected by these bills to make alternative plans.

A - The passage of these bills may increase poor job performance. Those who would have considered retiring prior to 65 as their physical, emotional, and mental abilities decline, would feel bound to continue to work because they need the health benefits.

B - Is the State also prepared for a possible increase in workman's compensation claims?

C - Is the State making plans to increase alternative health care options such as QUEST?

a - It is already difficult for those on the neighbor islands to qualify for or receive services.

D - Those who have tried to plan for retirement have also been affected by the losses sustained by retirement programs.

3 - Trust in the State legislators and government has been breeched.

A - Schools have been criticized and penalized for holding onto monies for the "rainy" day.

Now that there is a shortfall, there appears to be no preparation for the situation and State employees feel victimized.

Please vote NO.

yamashita3-Chelsea

From: Aguilar, June [June.Aguilar@doh.hawaii.gov]
Sent: Friday, February 13, 2009 7:52 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: HB1718,HB1719, HB 1725, HB 1723, HB 1714, HB 1726, HB 1726, HB 1727

I am a Registered Nurse who has worked for the Department of Health for almost 8 years. I had many employment opportunities in the community. The reason that I took a job with the state was due to the benefits, especially the retirement benefits. I would have been able to receive a higher salary in a position in the community. I urge you not to cut the employee benefits further. They have been ravaged enough in current years.

June Aguilar

yamashita3-Chelsea

From: rhoads3-Christine on behalf of Rep. Karl Rhoads
Sent: Friday, February 13, 2009 8:37 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: FW:

From: Terry Proctor [mailto:docproc@usa.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 1:26 PM
To: Rep. Karl Rhoads
Subject:

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. 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.

Terry E. Proctor
Principal
Wilcox Elementary School

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yamashita3-Chelsea

From: Conchita_Mendoza/MAUNAWILI/HIDOE@notes.k12.hi.us
Sent: Friday, February 13, 2009 9:16 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Fw: Health care benefits and retirement
Attachments: ecblank.gif

----- Forwarded by Conchita Mendoza/MAUNAWILI/HIDOE on 02/13/2009 09:13 AM -----

**Conchita
Mendoza/MAUNAWILI/HIDOE** To LABtestimony@capitol.hawaii.gov
02/13/2009 09:01 AM cc
Subject Health care benefits and retirement

How can you take something away lilke that. I finally got a position working for the State and now your just going to take everything away that I was hoping to have when it is time for me to retire. It is not fair to punish the working people to fix your problems. We already took a big budget cut and I don't even have a high paying position to even afford your medical now. How are we as a people in this hard times supposed to deal with living on a small income and than get slammed that your taking more benefits away from us. You need to look somewhere else and not at us. These are for HB 1718,1719,1725,1723,1715,1726 and 1727

Mahalo for you time,
A struggling parent

LATE

yamashita3-Chelsea

From: melmurayama@hawaii.rr.com
Sent: Friday, February 13, 2009 11:19 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Vote "No" on HB 1106, HB 1719, HB 1725

February 13, 2009

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

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning. My name is Melina Murayama. As a public employee for almost 2 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 a thinly veiled attempt to force people into early retirement. Although I am not near retirement age, I do know many who are. To take away retirement benefits that people have loyally worked so hard for is unfathomable. I can see many people rushing to retire before July 1, 2009, because after working for over a quarter of a century, just to have their medical benefits cut until Medicare retirement age of 65 is not worth the wait. Without the current retirement benefits, why should people consider continuing to work as public employees?

Speaker Say is backing us into a corner, by suggesting that this economic crisis should be resolved by sacrificing the health and well being of my family and I. 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. I chose to work as a civil servant for the State of Hawaii, not because of the pay, but because of the wonderful health and prescription drug benefits. With a medical condition that requires me to be on medication to reduce the risk of stroke, HB 1725 will make my medication unaffordable, therefore increasing my risk of stroke once again. This bill will also cause more people to take sick leave as they will not be able to afford proper medication to keep them healthy and productive. 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.

Sincerely,
Melina Murayama
Education Assistant

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

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning. My name is Varouny M. Sybounmy. As a public employee for 10 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? Reductions 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.

Like many others, I am solely relying on the prescription drug coverage plan for treatment due to my medical condition. Without it, I will no longer be able to afford or be on this life-saving treatment. 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 help save many lives by Voting **"NO"** on all of these bills that take away benefits from public employees. Thank you very much for your help and support.

yamashita3-Chelsea

From: Akeo, Joshua [Joshua.Akeo@doh.hawaii.gov]
Sent: Friday, February 13, 2009 9:38 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Calvin Say bill

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:
Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning. My name is Joshua Akeo. As a public employee, 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? 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 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.

LATE

Jay L. Serle
PO Box 11063
Lahaina, HI 96761
808-385-1574
ksmui@yahoo.com

Dear

I am writing to oppose HB 1106, HB 1719, and HB 1725. I have worked for State, County, and local government for sixteen years of my life. I currently work as a School Based Behavioral Health Specialist, basically a mental health counselor. My current position pays substantially less than competing jobs in the private sector. By eliminating benefits in the bills above, I would imagine that many state employees would choose to leave for work in the private sector.

The reality is that a majority of state workers do so because they want to make an impact. We do this at what is already a reduced wage. Part of this reduced wage is made up for in benefits. I urge you to fight for me and other state workers as your constituents.

HB 1106 Furloughing employees in this difficult economy would result in less salaries thus less money to be spent to keep the economy healthy. Additionally, The Governor does not have the authority to furlough state employees.

HB 1719 takes away retirement prescription benefits until an employee reaches Medicare age. One of the reasons many state workers work for the state is the stability of medical retirement benefits. This bill takes this negotiated benefit. What about state employees with medical conditions that have paid their service debt? These employees would now be forced to pay the entire bill for their prescriptions. This could amount to fees that are simply unaffordable to the individual. Someone ill would certainly choose health over a house payment. This bill would place the state in a precarious position that could easily result in further economic loss due to reduced personal spending and even more drastic increased home foreclosures.

HB 1725 Places the entire expense prescription drugs on the state employee of from July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2015, public employees. Most importantly this bill places the health of hard working state employees at risk. As stated above, the costs could easily far outweigh any proposed benefits of this bill as the result of increased economic strain. It is fact that uninsured individuals cost the government far more money than those insured. Perhaps a better reason for not passing this bill is the fact it is unethical take away a state employees benefits that they have worked hard for and negotiated. By providing these benefits, the state has said we value you as an employee and want you to be healthy. The passage of this bill would negate that.

I strongly request that you vote "NO" on HB 1106, 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 Francis Wong. As a public employee for 1 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.

yamashita3-Chelsea

From: Harbold, Mary [mharbold@honolulu.gov]
Sent: Friday, February 13, 2009 8:17 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: retirement benefits

Importance: Low

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:
My name is Mary Harbold. As a public employee for over 20 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? What will happen to our local economy when there is another sudden reduction of activity due to the reduction of our income and subsequent spending?

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 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 and could create a significant loss of income for our State.

Thank you and Aloha,
Mary Harbold
6231 Keokea Pl
Honolulu, Hawaii 96825

From: Jamile, Clinton [cjamile@honolulu.gov]
Sent: Friday, February 13, 2009 7:47 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: HB 1106, HB 1719, HB 1725

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning. My name is Clinton Jamile. As a public employee for over 13 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 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 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 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, 20115, 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.

yamashita3-Chelsea

From: Frommer, Charlie [cfrommer@honolulu.gov]
Sent: Friday, February 13, 2009 7:20 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: House Bills

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

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Though I have only been a public employee for a little over four 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?

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 Hawaii at risk. 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.

Regards,

Charlie Frommer
Building Inspector
Department of Planning and Permitting
City and County of Honolulu

From: jnkubo@hawaiiantel.net
Sent: Friday, February 13, 2009 6:58 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 Julie Kubo, a pharmacist at Hilo Medical Center. As a public employee for 18 years, I am deeply upset by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say. Specifically: HB 1719.

HB 1106 is supposed to "protect the right 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 breadwinners for our entire families. How can we afford a reduction in 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 of particular 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 son graduated from college before I retire are suddenly up in the air. I now have to make a 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 would experience is putting our families in Hawaii at risk. State programs that protect Hawaii's children, elderly and public would 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 1819 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.

yamashita3-Chelsea

From: gene murayama [getmay@hotmail.com]
Sent: Friday, February 13, 2009 6:57 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: *****SPAM***** HB 1719 et al

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

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning. My name is Gene Murayama. As a public employee for 33 years, I am deeply concerned about the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say.

HB 1106 is supposed to "protect the rights of public employees" in the event of a furlough. The present language of the bill does not address the affects that furloughs would have on retirement benefits. I believe that any reduction in salary should not be factored into the calculation of one's retirement benefits (when calculating one's "high three" years of service). In addition, Section 4 of HB 1106 appears to be contrary to current collective bargaining laws.

HB 1719 concerns me because it appears to be 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 believe that by forcing employees into retirement by July 1, 2009, we will have consider less knowledgeable and experienced public employees in government service. One has to carefully consider the financial and public service ramifications that would result from this bill (e.g. decreased service to the public, increased retirement pension payouts, withdrawal of ERS contributions, etc.) 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 pertains to prescription drug coverage. Although this bill is only temporary (assuming that it is not extended after 2015), we are gambling with six years of prescription medication expenses. It will deter some employees and retirees from accessing medication 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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yamashita3-Chelsea

From:alconceip001 [alconceip001@hawaii.rr.com]
Sent: Friday, February 13, 2009 6:38 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: requesting your help

Hi, my name is Pearl Alconcel and I live in your district and voted for you, I work for CSD at Pearlridge Satellite City Hall and am a member of HGEA.

I'm also a taxpayer. I spend money at local businesses everyday 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 career in public service knowing that my pay may not be as good as in the private sector but I rely on retirement and health benefits for myself and my family.

I think it's wrong for the 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.

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

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning. .

As a public employee for 2 years, I am deeply upset by the bills introduced by Speaker

Calvin Say. Specifically:

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.

Thank you
Pearl Alconcel

yamashita3-Chelsea

From: jnfaus@hawaii.rr.com
Sent: Friday, February 13, 2009 4:12 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: HB1718/1719/1725

My name is Judy Faustino and I work for the Hawaii Dept of Agriculture, and am an HGEA member. I strongly oppose HB1718, HB1719, and HB1725 which propose to reduce retirement and health benefits for State and county 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 work hard at my job and so do everyone else in our office. Is this the thanks we get? 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.

Thank you.

Judy Faustino

LATE

yamashita3-Chelsea

From: Darren Wong [wongd014@hawaii.rr.com]
Sent: Friday, February 13, 2009 12:54 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Fairness for Public Employees

Dear honored representatives,

I appeal to your sense of fairness and ask that you reject HB 1106, HB 1719, and HB 1725. These three bills are nothing but take aways from hard-working folks who in all likelihood have similar values to you and your family. I have dedicated 17 years to serving our community as a wastewater engineer. I don't dream of getting rich. I just hope that I can afford to raise my family.

Please treat us fairly. Reject HB 1106, HB 1719, and HB 1725.

Thank you,
Darren Wong

yamashita3-Chelsea

From: Joy Magarifuji [joymaga@yahoo.com]
Sent: Friday, February 13, 2009 12:40 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 Joy Magarifuji. As a public employee for 18 years, 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 bill is a thinly veiled attempt to force people into early retirement. Some of us do not have enough years of service or age to retire.

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 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. Maybe he should propose to forfeit his pay and benefits. While he's at it, he can do the same for the governor who spent more time out of state campaigning for presidential candidates.

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,

Joy Magarifuji

yamashita3-Chelsea

From: PHYLLIS TOM [pk_tom@msn.com]
Sent: Friday, February 13, 2009 12:37 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 today. My name is Phyllis Tom and I have been a public employee for 25 years. I am deeply upset by the following bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say, HB 1725 and especially HB's 1106 and 1719.

Furloughing public employees with HB 1106 to balance a budget demonstrates poor planning. As a single parent, would the reduction in salary caused by the furlough then make me eligible for free health services, food stamps and any other state offered free service so that I can balance my own family budget?

HB 1719 tells me to withhold my plans for retirement in five years, because I need to continue working until I reach medicare age since I will have to pay for my own health benefits. I may be less productive as I reach an elder status, but that is acceptable to remain in the workplace just so that I can pay for medical benefits. My childrens' future college plans may be affected by this bill since I will have an unplanned expense to consider.

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 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 is literally a death sentence if one cannot incur the cost of needed prescriptions for six years. It just may be the only choice a public employee could make especially if they had a reduction in salary due to a furlough.

These bills are the same type of economic solutions that the rest of the country has taken which perpetuates more economic woes. Will the community feel that the State's economy is secure just because the legislators cast aside public employees and placed them in the same boat as employee's of failing businesses? Or, will this create a greater ripple effect that in hindsight future legislators will look for scapegoats for their colleagues past mistakes such as illegally tapping into employee retirement funds in the late '90's that now jeopardizes the future funding of benefits.

Please be more proactive and forthright by creating win-win solutions for all involved, especially the public employees who are one of the last remaining wage earners in this unstable economy. Demonstrate to our State that creative workable solutions are available. Please vote "no" on all of these bills that take away benefits from public employees.

Sincerely,

Phyllis Tom

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

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

As a public employee for 1-1/2 years, I am deeply upset and troubled 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 would like to pose this question to the Speaker: As a father of a newborn son and a 2 year old daughter a reduction in my salary will have a devastating affect on my family. Being the sole breadwinner for my entire family, with this reduction that you are proposing, how will I be able to pay my rent, put gas in my car and feed my family?

I am very upset and 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 am grateful for the job that I have and I chose to work for less pay to be able to contribute to the community that I deeply love. On balance, I believed that I would be able to count on a safe retirement. Speaker Say's bill, which disregards my years of future 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.

As a civil servant, Speaker Say is backing me and my family 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. I, myself, have benefitted and learned so much from my "elders" from different state branches to help better serve my community. 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. As a person who suffers from asthma and who is very grateful for my prescription benefits, the passing of HB 1725 would make my medication that keeps my asthma under control unaffordable.

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

Mahalo for taking the time to read my testimony.

Kevin Oshiro

LATE

yamashita3-Chelsea

From: Zita Castro [zita@hawaii.edu]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 11:09 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: February 13, 2008 Hearing at 8:30am, State Capitol, Rm 309

I oppose HB1719, HB1725 and HB1106. I believe that cutting down government employees' benefits is NOT the correct approach to solve the budget shortfall. We have survived from the previous economic crisis without cutting down government employees' benefits. Our Government has done an excellent job in dealing with our State's economic crisis in the past. Hope that our Government will find better ways to solve this problem.

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

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

As a public employee for 32 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 my salary is hugely disruptive as any decrease would affect my ability to pay my living expenses and meet my financial obligations.

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. After being a civil servant for over 30 years, I believed that I would be able to count on a safe retirement. Speaker Say's bill, which disregards my years of service and forces me to pay for 100% of my medical plan coverage 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. Unfortunately, I am not one of those who can retire before July 1, 2009 and still retain my current level of medical care. If this bill passes, I will be required to choose between retiring before the Medicare retirement age and paying for medical coverage out of pocket or postponing retirement until the Medicare retirement age.

Speaker Say is backing public employees into a corner, and it's irresponsible for him to suggest that this economic crisis should be resolved by sacrificing our and our families' health and well being. 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.

Audrey Wong

yamashita3-Chelsea

From: Brian Schatz [hawaiischatz@yahoo.com]
Sent: Friday, February 13, 2009 7:24 AM
To: LABtestimony; Rep. Gilbert Keith-Agaran; Rep. Karl Rhoads
Subject: LATE TESTIMONY

Aloha Chair Rhoads and members of the committee

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on HB 1718, HB 1719, and HB 1725.

I understand that the House and Senate are in uncharted waters, and that all options are on the table with respect to achieving a balanced budget.

However I believe that these measures are not the wisest way to balance the budget as they disproportionately place the burdens of our current economic crisis on public employees. The savings incurred would not be worth the human cost and lost productivity.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, I think we ought to wait until we confirm from the Obama administration and our Congressional Delegation how much money is coming to Hawaii from the stimulus bill before entertaining such draconian measures as those contained in these bills.

Respectfully,

Brian Schatz
Chair
Hawaii Democratic Party

From: honmab@gmail.com on behalf of Bonnie Honma [bhonma@hawaii.edu]
Sent: Friday, February 13, 2009 8:38 AM
To: LABtestimony; Sen. Gary Hooser; Rep. Roland Sagum; Rep. James Tokioka
Cc: kris@upha.org
Subject: HB 1718, HB 1719, HB 1725

Attention: Senator Hooser, Rep., Sagum, Rep. Togioka AND

COMMITTEE ON LABOR & PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT

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

| | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Rep. Henry J.C. Aquino | Rep. Mark M. Nakashima |
| Rep. Karen Leinani Awana | Rep. Scott K. Saiki |
| Rep. Faye P. Hanohano | Rep. Joseph M. Souki |
| Rep. Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran | Rep. Roy M. Takumi |
| Rep. Marilyn B. Lee | Rep. Kymberly Marcos Pine |

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The recent bills relating to reduction in benefits for Government employees is very disturbing. Many professionals took position within State and County governments based on promised benefits at the time or retirement. I am a Professor at the University of Hawaii, Kauai Community College and have 27 years of service, having made 55 yesterday. With a child in college, I have no immediate plan to retire but projected it for age 59 based on 30 years of service and the benefit plan promised.

While I have been offered several lucrative positions in the public sector, the decision to refuse those positions was largely based on the benefit package currently received and promised at retirement. I feel it is unjust and irresponsible for the State not to fulfill their commitment to their public servants who have earned their benefits and continue to serve the State of Hawaii in good faith.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my concern.

Sincerely,

Bonnie Honma, Counselor/Professor
Kauai Community College, University of Hawaii

House of Representatives
The Twenty-Fifth Legislature
Regular Session of 2009
Committee on Labor & Public Employment

Testimony by Elienne Yoshida
Pearl City, Hawaii
February 13, 2009

HB 1106 RELATING TO PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT
HB 1718 RELATING TO EMPLOYER-UNION HEALTH BENEFITS
HB 1719 RELATING TO PUBLIC EMPLOYEES
HB 1715 RELATING TO THE HAWAII EMPLOYER-UNION HEALTH
BENEFITS TRUST FUND

My name is Elienne Yoshida. My husband and I work for the State of Hawaii. He started working for the State in 1972 and I in 1975. I strongly oppose HB 1106 which protects the rights of public employees by preserving health, retirement, leave, and other benefits if furloughs are implemented in fiscal years 2009 to 2013; HB 1718 which 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; 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; and HB 1715 which states that from 07/01/2009 to 06/30/2015: (1) prohibits health fund 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.

I oppose these bills because my husband and I were promised by the State that upon retirement we would acquire free medical and medicare part B premiums would be reimbursed. When hired, we made an agreement to work full time, which consists of 40 hours per week, the government would pay us a salary and include drug coverage. How ever should HB 1719 pass, the government will not be true to their side of the bargain and my husband will need to retire to preserve what was rightfully promised to us. We have worked hard to service the public for over thirty years and made sacrifices with wages that did not keep up with inflation. Our income will be greatly reduced should my husband retire and it will be a hardship to support our family. My sixteen year old is thinking of looking for a full time job while attending school to help with the family finances as prices rise.

If my husband and I are furloughed through HB 1106, our income will be decreased by 5% each, since we work for the State. I oppose HB 1715 because we fairly paid premiums for our health insurance for over thirty years. For the first 20 years, we hardly used the medical benefit, which paid for others in need but now when we need it, our drug coverage will be unjustly taken away. In order to keep our drug coverage we must understandably pay for it, but we will not obtain any pay raises to aid in the payment of this extra cost. The cost of living percent change for 2006 through 2008 was 5.8, 4.9 and 4.2 respectively. In 2009, the Department of Business and Economic Development projects 2.9 percent increase. It is a struggle to pay bills.

In the past, when there were changes to the health fund, workers who were hired before the date of the law were grandfathered in, this is what should rightfully happen if this bill is to pass.

I believe this bill is immoral by disregarding agreements, puts Hawaii's government in a negative light of half promises, creates hardship in the lives of countless families and should not be passed.

In summary, instead of serving as an incentive for state and county workers to continue working until age 65, it will cause many experienced workers to retire before July 1, 2009. With the hiring freeze in place, many programs will be jeopardized by the sudden and large departure of these valued employees. All those left behind will suffer greater workloads and not be able to retire until age 65, unless they are able to pay for their own medical. I urge you to stop these bills and to ethically keep your promises.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in opposition of HB1106, HB1718, HB1719, and HB1725.

yamashita3-Chelsea

From: Linda Currivan [lcurrivan@hawaii.rr.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 10:54 PM
To: LABtestimony
Cc: Kristeen Hanselman
Subject: House Bills Due for Hearing on 2/13/09

Members of the Committee on Labor and Public Employment:

In reading over the descriptions of these proposed bills (1106,1718,1719 and 1725), I am struck by the thought that folks who have spent their adult working lives in public service have been terribly misled. We thought that long-term loyalty to the State would at least be recognized and perhaps respected: instead, when the House addresses the "current and ongoing economic crisis in the State," apparently the first consideration is to demonstrate gratitude by

1. Thoughtfully seeking to protect our rights under furloughs (HB 1106) which have not even been proposed to our unions, nor been subject of negotiation. How exactly one might suggest furloughing UH faculty and yet maintain there is "no cost to the public" is subject of much conjecture on our parts: students register and pay for a specified number of contact hours and are only offered 2/3 of the class time? 4/5?
2. "Compensating for dire economic crisis" by allowing the State to reimburse employees for Medicare Part B premiums (HB 1718) only if they retire within the next year? You must anticipate great savings in early retirements without understanding the unanticipated consequence of losing some of the most talented and knowledgeable faculty members who stay on because they feel they are letting down junior faculty if they leave before those coming in are capable of assuming forward motion without risking a loss of standards. Force them out, and see what you are left with. If you make this bed, you will lie down in it.
3. Then the State's inability to conduct "business as usual" mandates that it demonstrates its appreciation to long-term employees by suspending contributions to the health fund if they retire before medicare retirement age? So HB 1718 encourages them to leave if they want premiums Medicare Part B premiums reimbursed, but then HB 1719 forces them to pay the State's share of EUTF contributions until they reach medicare retirement age? The idea is to get State employees both coming and going, right?
4. And the meanest cut of all--HB 1725--for those of us who gravitated to State service because of what we perceived as decent health benefits, as we near the retirement years, just "temporarily" withdraw one of the most important of benefits--prescription drugs-- for only 6 years. How considerate.

I am embarrassed to say that I didn't see this coming when then- Governor Ben Cayetano offered to withdraw our health coverage over the summer break. It is truly unconscionable that when the circumstances turn "dire," the first line of attack is to defend what you propose doing in these measures. Thank you, Calvin K.Y. Say.

Linda Currivan
Professor, Language Arts
UH-Leeward Community College
808 455-0334

yamashita3-Chelsea

From: Kurt Muraoka [kimuraoka@hotmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 10:56 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Requesting Your Support

As an employee of the State of Hawaii, I am asking for your support to oppose the following bills that will greatly reduce our wages, and health and retirement benefits:

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 Benefits Trust Fund

HB 1723 - Relating to Public Employees
HB 1715 - Relating to Retirement
HB 1726 - Relating to Health Fund
HB 1727 - Relating to the Hawaii Employer-Union Health Benefits Trust Fund

I understand the financial crisis that we are in. Our budgets have been cut and our staffing has been reduced, and we are working harder than ever to keep up with our responsibilities with the limited resources we have. Due to the low salaries and reduced benefits that are currently available to State employees, we have lost several employees to the private sector, where they were able to get higher salaries and free health benefits. The low salaries and reduced benefits have also made it difficult to attract the best qualified applicants to fill our vacancies.

Further reductions to our wages, and health and retirement benefits will cause many of our most experienced workers to retire earlier than they would want to. Thus, creating a greater knowledge and experience loss than we already have, making operations even more difficult.

I do not believe that we should be singled out to help reduce the budget. I sacrificed my private career to be a public servant knowing that I would no longer make as much as my private sector counterparts, but that I would be able to count on the health and retirement benefits that I was offered when I started with the State. In addition to the budget cuts that have already been proposed, the fairest way to balance the budget and address the State's revenue problem would be to raise the various taxes (income tax, excise tax, etc.) and increase user fees. This way everyone would be sharing the burden, not just the State and County employees.

Thank you,
Kurt Muraoka

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yamashita3-Chelsea

From: Yara Lamadrid-Rose [yardav@hawaii.rr.com]
Sent: Friday, February 13, 2009 12:45 AM
To: LABtestimony
Cc: Rep. Jessica Wooley
Subject: Testimony for LAB Friday, February 13, 2009

Yara Lamadrid-Rose
yardav@hawaii.rr.com

February 12, 2009

Rep. Karl Rhoads, Chair
Rep. Kyle T. Yamashita, Vice Chair
Committee on Labor and Public Employment
Hearing February 13, 2009
Conference Room 309

RE: Testimony in Opposition to HB1106, HB1718, HB1719, and HB1725

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

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in opposition to HB1106, HB1718, HB1719, 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, HB1725, heard here today (and HB 1727 to be heard Tuesday, February 17th) is the most onerous. HB1725 (and HB1727) 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. HB1725 (and HB1727) 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. HB1725 would add an incredible financial burden on our family when we can least afford it.

I strongly disagree with Section 4 of HB1106. It would allow the Governor to unilaterally furlough state employees.

HB1718 and HB1719 also threaten state employees and their health in retirement, by eliminating reimbursement for Medicare part B (HB1718), and taking away the "gap" coverage until Medicare retirement age (HB1719) for those do not retire by certain dates. 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 HB1106, HB1718, HB1719, and HB1725. These bills would place unnecessary burdens on hard working public employees during these difficult times.

c: Rep. Jessica Wooley

yamashita3-Chelsea

From: Miriam Kikukawa [wailani2906@yahoo.com]
Sent: Friday, February 13, 2009 1:34 AM
To: Sen. Shan Tsutsui; Sen. Roz Baker; Sen. J. Kalani English; Rep. Joseph Souki; Rep. Gilbert Keith-Agaran; Rep. Angus McKelvey; repbetram@capitol.hawaii.gov; Rep. Kyle Yamashita; Rep. Mele Carroll; LABtestimony
Subject: Testimony re: HB1106, HB1715, HB1718, HB1719, HB1723, HB1725, HB1726, HB1727, HB1737

Dear Maui County State Legislators, & Members of the House Labor & Public Employee Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony. My name is Miriam Kikukawa. As a public employee for 17 years, I am deeply disturbed by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say. Specifically: HB1106, HB1715, HB1718, HB1719, HB1723, HB1725, HB1726, HB1727, & HB1737

HB1106 is supposed to 'protect the rights of public employees' in the event of a furlough.

I am a single parent with 3 children. I don't have much but the promise-contract I made along with thousands of others as a public servant. When I first applied for this public service job I had the opportunity to work elsewhere but I chose not to because of the medical benefits that I would have after I retire. You all know the wages of the state government employees are not desirable but all of us who are in these positions sacrificed for future benefits. This is our hope and dreams. Please don't take it away or make any changes.

I trust the state government, my employer to be true to your word, our contract. I still have faith in you, and believe that you will all make the right decision and vote "no" on all these bills that take away benefits from public employees who worked hard, made sacrifices and endured to reap it.

Thank you and may God bless you all.

yamashita3-Chelsea

From: Glenn Park [purple66line@hawaiiantel.net]
Sent: Friday, February 13, 2009 1:52 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Testimony HB 1719, HB 1737

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

My name is Glenn F. Park and I live in House District 23, Senate District 12. My employer is the State of Hawaii. I am a Social Worker, my position is located in the

Department of Human Services. I am a taxpayer, a homeowner, and a consumer of good and services.

I've made a career in public service knowing the pay is not as gainful as in private sector, but which affords decent retirement and health benefits.

Now those benefits are being chipped away.

As recent as the past week, I learned of bills which will have an adverse affect on the employee's and her/his family's health.

In a rush to make-up the projected budgetary shortfalls, if the HB 1719 passes, it will have an adverse effect her/his health and well-being. The employee,

although vested, will no longer have health insurance premium paid for the Employer (State of Hawaii). If, I and others like me, choose to retire prior to 06/30/2009, on

fixed income we will be faced with making-up the health premium out-of -pocket in order to continue health coverage 'til we are Medicare eligible.

In the rush to make-up the projected budgetary shortfall, if HB 1737 passes, it will adversely effect her/his ability to afford the health premium, by revising

method of determining the monthly retirement compensation resulting in fixed income of a lower amount.

I am not in support of HB 1719 which proposes to suspend EUTF payments for retirees who retire prior to Medicare retirement age, and HB 1737 which proposes to revise

the method for calculating retirement compensation.

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

Sincerely, Glenn F. Park
HGEA/BU13

2222 Aloha Drive
Apt. 901
Honolulu, Hawaii 96815-2807

yamashita3-Chelsea

From: Mary Beth [kunihirog001@hawaii.rr.com]
Sent: Friday, February 13, 2009 5:31 AM
To: LABtestimony
Cc: kunihirog001@hawaii.rr.com

Mary Beth W. Kunihiro
98-1424 Onikiniki Way
Aiea, Hawai'i 96701

February 13, 2008

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

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning. My name is Mary Beth W. Kunihiro. As a public employee and a taxpayer of the State of Hawai'i for 29 years and 9 months, I am upset by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say. Specifically: HB: 1106, HB 1718, HB1719, HB1725, HB 1723, HB1715, HB1726, HB 1727 and any other HB directed towards taking away or decreasing any of the benefits of State employees.

This would be a violation of many contracts negotiated over the past 30 years – changing our work conditions basically “breaching” our hard negotiated contracts.

The state hiring freezes are overburdening our already overburdened workforce.

I strongly urge the 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 any benefits from public employees.

yamashita3-Chelsea

From: Wayne Tsukazaki [wjt@hawaii.rr.com]
Sent: Friday, February 13, 2009 6:42 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: re: opposition to proposed bills by calvin say

My name is Wayne Tsukazaki and I am a state employee at the University of Hawaii at Manoa Records Office. As much as I'd like to be attending this meeting, I am unable to do so, so here is my statement: I am nowhere near retirement, however I'd like to voice my opinion that I am strongly opposed to bills # HB 1106, HB 1718, HB 1719, HB 1725, HB 1723, HB 1715, HB 1726, and HB 1727. I realize this email may not pack as much punch as a physical presence, but let it be known that I do care very much about the impact of this issue.

Sincerely,

Wayne Tsukazaki, Office Asst III

yamashita3-Chelsea

From: Calkins, Donna M. [Donna.Calkins@doh.hawaii.gov]
Sent: Friday, February 13, 2009 8:16 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: testimony regarding bills pertaining to public employees

I would like to testify regarding the following bills, which I am opposed to:

HB1106
HB1718
HB1719
HB1725
HB1723
HB1727

I have been a state employee for nearly eight years. What is being proposed would cause extreme hardship for me as a 61 year old single female who trying to make ends meet and plan for my eventual retirement.

If temporarily furloughing employees is what is necessary to get us through these difficult times, then I would be willing to do my part and could manage one day per month, but the rest of what is being purposed for current employees would cause me to return employment in the public sector.

Please consider that there are many of us in similar situations and this would undoubtedly cause a mass exodus of public employees.

I could agree to the purposed changes for new employees such as HB 1715. In fact all the bills being purposed could be re-written to apply to new employees and I would support that.

I truly could not survive as a public employee if the above bills are passed.

Thank you for weighing the concerns of those who have served the public these many years. I ask only that our service be valued as we all face these difficult times.

Sincerely,
Donna Calkins

yamashita3-Chelsea

From: Diane Galich [dgalich@hotmail.com]
Sent: Friday, February 13, 2009 8:29 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: I oppose!

I am writing in opposition of the following proposed bills: HB 1106, HB 1718, HB 1719, HB 1725, HB 1723, HB 1715, HB 1726, HB 1727.

As a state employee, I am in opposition of the proposed bills that will significantly decrease employee salaries and leave many employees without medication, vision and dental coverage. I am appalled that the legislation would also propose that employees retiring after 12/31/09 would lose their hard-earned health benefits after retirement.

I have been employed with the state for 6 years. I have dedicated myself to serving the state mostly due to the benefits that comes with being a state employee. I believe that state employees work hard and deserve our existing financial, health, vacation and retirement benefits. If the above legislative bills are passed, we would be left with significantly less money to pay for our expensive full-priced prescription drugs; we would not be motivated to extend our employment, because there would be no rewards or medical benefits in our retirement years; we would not have the peace of mind that our work is valued, as more changes could come to shake us from our already unstable foundations.

As an employee with the Department of Health, I find it hypocritical that the state would cause the health of its own employees to drastically deteriorate because of all these changes. How many employees will have to go without medical care or medications when these bills are passed? The resulting health of the state employees and retirees could be drastic: sickness, depression, and even death.

How can the lawmakers expect us, state employees, to serve the people of Hawaii if we can't even help ourselves? DO NOT pass these bills! The state will lose valuable and hard-working employees; what's the point of having a state job when there are no benefits?

Diane Galich
State of Hawaii
Department of Health

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From: Sydney S. [sydnature@hotmail.com]
Sent: Friday, February 13, 2009 8:43 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: I Opposed!

To the Labor and Public Employment Committee:

I am emailing my opposition to the following bills:

- *HB1106 – 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
- *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 an exempt state worker at the Adult Mental Health Dept. As a state worker, I do not agree with the proposed bills. Think of the people who has been working for the state for so long and given their life long service just to find out it will not assist them when they are old and grey. It is like a stab in the back. Of course people want to be compensated and not left in the dark. If you pass these bills, imagine what image you are putting the state into. Before I thought, “Wow! I’m sure it is great to work for the state because they take care of their workers. They have good benefits and you know you are helping many people.” Now, with these proposed bills, what will the state workers look forward to in the future? Nothing. It is like workers would be working to pay off their own medical bills? Working for the state sounds like they are working for the worst “employer” ever and it is looking like a slave driver. What happened to providing quality care and benefits? You are just eliminating it because you think it is not worth it to provide them the workers share after all the hard work they did for the state? Don’t treat the workers like pawns. The state should reconsider about proposing these bills that could end the connection between the workers and the state in servicing the community.

I am definitely against the bills mentioned above. Why is it that the state is targeting the people supporting the state? How about the people that earn so much are not getting punished? Why are we getting these punishment? Yes, it is a punishment! Why work hard now when in the end there is nothing for the state workers? Do you see what I mean? This is over the top so unfair for the people who work for the state. You would think the state will take care of you...you would think! Then the state just pulls the rug right off of you leaving you helpless.

How about the lawmakers that is supposed to be helping us? Some want to bail out our economy by getting rid of the hard earned benefits from the public employees. What is wrong with this picture? They think by doing that that it will solve all the economic crisis? A portion? I do not think so. They are quick to thinking that taking away benefits from the little people that they are just going to take it? They got us all wrong. Why don’t we start with their salaries? Just because these lawmakers who approved these idiotic of an idea does not mean they will solve the Hawaii economic problem. Have they thought of the consequences that this could bring to the public workers? No. You know why? Because it shows that these bill makers who come up with these stupid ideas does not bother them nor even care. It is simple...it is NOT happening to them! It is easy for them to do this because they are not going to experience this devastating benefit crisis. They are living the life!

To the Labor and Public Employment Committee, I hope that you can assist us in stopping these heinous disregard for the state workers. We are here to work, to help, and if all is loss esp. the state who I work for, The Dept. of Health, AMHD, cannot even save my co-workers and co-public workers from receiving health insurance then why do we even bother having Dept. of Health? Isn’t it not ironic that I work for the Dept. of

Health but my own health benefit cannot be re-assured or be taken cared of? I am totally appalled by these bills. Shame on them, tsk, tsk, tsk! I hope they realize that what goes around...comes around!

Sincerely,
Sydney Solano
DOH, AMHD
UM Specialist

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yamashita3-Chelsea

From: rhoads3-Christine on behalf of Rep. Karl Rhoads
Sent: Friday, February 13, 2009 8:54 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: FW: Bills affecting state workers

From: Dzung Thai [mailto:dtthai@ymail.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 1:27 PM
To: Rep. Karl Rhoads
Subject: Bills affecting state workers

Dear Representative Rhoads:

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 -- to serve them well by keeping them in mind when making important decisions such as this.

Thank you for your time and consideration.
Dzung Thai

yamashita3-Chelsea

From: Clara Iwata [clara@hcc.hawaii.edu]
Sent: Friday, February 13, 2009 10:31 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: HB Bills

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

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning. My name is Clara Iwata. As a public employee for about 38 years, I am deeply upset by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say. Specifically: HB 1106, 1718, 1719, 1725, 1723, 1715, 1726 and 1727.

HB106 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 of 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 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, the 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. STATE WORKERS WILL BE ABSENT FROM WORK MORE OFTEN BECAUSE THIS BILL WILL MAKE THEM GIVE UP TAKING THE FULL STRENGTH OF THE MEDICATION PRESCRIBED BY THEIR DOCTOR BECAUSE OF COST.

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 Mercy Nakabayashi. As a public employee for 3 ½ years, I am deeply upset by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say. Specifically: HB 1106, HB 1718, HB1719, HB 1725, HB1723, HB 1715, HB1726, and 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?

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 benefit 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.

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 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 Hawaii.

HB 1725 says that from July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2015, public employee 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 disease 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. My husband currently has kidney failure and has other medical problems. With this he has to

take 13 medications and has to go to dialysis 3x's a week. This will deter me, 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 beg of you to vote "no" on all of these bills that take away benefits from public employees.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Mercy Nakabayashi

yamashita3-Chelsea

From: Patrick Patterson [patrickmpatterson96825@gmail.com]
Sent: Friday, February 13, 2009 9:15 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: testing

To whom it may concern,

My name is Patrick M. Patterson, I am an Assistant Professor at Honolulu Community College, and have worked for the State of Hawaii for nearly ten years.

My family is heavily invested in the Hawaii economy. The state receives significant income tax, sales tax, and fee income from our living here, along with incidental income from our purchase of needed lifestyle, educational and work-related items. In my own work, I spend a significant amount of my personal salary to essentially subsidize the State by buying educational supplies that I use exclusively in the classroom for the benefit of my students and that the State of Hawaii and the University of Hawaii do not and will not provide. This contributes both to education in Hawaii, and to the creation of productive, high-salary workers who will be a part of state revenue generation in the future.

I oppose the following bills, in discussion today, Friday, Feb. 12, 2009:

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 oppose these bills for the following reasons: My health coverage as an employee of Honolulu Community College is the only health benefit that we have to take care of two children and two adults. Although we are currently healthy, without prescription drug benefits, the high cost of a private plan, if one can be found, will have a significant impact on our ability to pay our mortgage, bills, and food expenses. Ultimately, we'll have to cut back on those, thus generating even less revenue for the State. Considering this fact alone, and the fact that the cost of prescription drugs may have the same effect on many other state employees, the plans you are proposing to save costs will end up eating up all savings through loss of State revenue from reduced expenditures.

In addition, if cost of living here becomes too high for us, though we hope to call Hawaii home for the rest of our lives, we may be forced to retrench, move out of the state to a lower cost place with more family support, thus depriving the state of our tax revenue, the educational benefit that comes from my ability to teach students and provide a conduit for them into the workforce, and future citizens in the form of our children.

To remove retirement medical benefits will have similar effects. These plans seem shortsighted, and likely to cost the State more in the future than their passage would save in the short run. Add to that the likelihood of labor unrest in the form of strikes and work slowdowns, which will also cost the State, and which are a real possibility if you assume the likelihood of work fuloughs in this law without bargaining with the Unions, and if you continue to try to reduce benefits and workforce. In all, this will cause the State of Hawaii more problems over the long term, both financially and in terms of getting and keeping an effective educational workforce, and thus the provision of an educated and sophisticated and flexible workforce.

These bills are a clear way, perhaps unintentionally, to sabotage our State economy for the long term in the interest of assuaging a public panic now. Rather than panic, the legislature and the governor should concentrate

on long-term planning. Rather than react always to the crisis of the moment, the legislature and the governor should create long-term priority lists and find ways to make them work without depriving the citizens of Hawaii or the workforce that serves them from basic rights like effective healthcare and the opportunity to imagine a healthy, productive, and educated future.

I want to stay here. But I cannot justify sacrificing the health, safety, and financial security of my family for the sake of a legislative panic. Please think more carefully. It is also true that this issue will have a significant impact upon my voting choices over the period defined - at least through 2015.

Sincerely,
Patrick M. Patterson

yamashita3-Chelsea

From: Christel Kutzen [ckutzen@ymail.com]
Sent: Friday, February 13, 2009 8:31 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: I Object! In Favor Of Keeping State Worker Benefits

Good morning Labor and Public Employment Committee,

I oppose the following house bills: 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 07/01/09, HB 1725 Halt prescription drug coverage under EUTF, HB 1723 Limit employer contribution to 55% and make it non-negotiable, HB 1715 Increase, for new employees, the age and service time requirement to retire, HB 1726 Curtail EUTF payment for life insurance benefits, and HB 1727 Prohibits provision of dental and vision coverage for reasons that any rational employee would have. I know that most of these benefits are a privilege provided by the employer, but as a civil service state worker, benefits are part of the reasoning as to taking a lower pay rate opposed to working in the private sector. Loyal employees deserve the right to have these benefits, and they should not suffer due to a budget crunch that the US is experiencing. What is happening with all of the money that the new president's stimulus package is providing? This is the real question...I understand that the crunch needs to come from somewhere but without these benefits workers would not be able to provide support to their families, and health issues will become a factor. Also, taking away hours worked and decreasing the amount of income that state workers have is not a good idea with the current situation we are already just scraping by now, and this action will only affect the economy further. In regards to retirement, everyone should have the right to a legitimate retirement as they have worked for over 30 years or so to earn some relaxation in their life. Please don't touch the retirement, seniors will not have much to live on and taking away retirement will hurt them even more. Stop all of these house bills or the state might lose loyal, honest, hardworking employees!!

Sincerely,
Christel Kutzen

State of Hawaii, Department of Health

yamashita3-Chelsea

From: Troy Ludwick [tludwick@gmail.com]
Sent: Friday, February 13, 2009 8:34 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Opposition to: HB 1106, HB 1718, HB 1719, and HB 1725

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

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony. My name is Troy Ludwick. As a public employee for eight years, I am deeply troubled by some of the bills introduced this session to address the budget shortfalls associated with the current economic downturn. In particular, I am against HB 1106, HB 1718, HB 1719, and HB 1725.

HB 1106 is purportedly intended to 'protect the rights of public employees' in the event of a furlough. However my reading of HB 1106 leads me to conclude that it is instead designed to facilitate furloughs. This wolf in sheep's clothing approach is disingenuous and unbecoming. I would argue that any savings achieved by such furloughs would be more than offset by the detriments brought upon state employees as well as loss of productivity to the state. I ask that you please vote against this misguided attempt to grant authority to the Governor to cause further harm to state workers in these very difficult economic conditions.

HB 1718 and HB 1719 are also of concern. State retirees should not be asked to unduly bear the burden of balancing the state budget. In general they have dedicated much of their lives to public service believing they had a covenant with the state regarding retirement benefits. It would be unconscionable for the state to break this pact and not live up to its responsibilities only after these employees have upheld all of theirs. If the state wishes to implement a system of early retirement to cut costs, it should follow the lead of the private sector and do so by offering the carrot of incentives rather than the stick of punishment. For these reasons I ask that you vote against bills HB 1718 and HB 1719.

HB 1725 seeks to increase state employees' cost of prescription drug costs through June 30, 2015. However one would have take an extremely pessimistic view to believe that the current economic downturn will not have reversed course by 2015. Of course no one welcomes increases in health care costs. However if such an increase were to be enacted, it should at most be done temporarily -- on a yearly basis -- and rescinded once the economy improves. I ask also that you please vote against this measure.

In summation, I ask that you please consider the following. I chose public service over the private sector because I believe it is nobler to work towards the betterment of all rather than for the profit of a few. I've done so with the understanding that I would earn less than had I chosen the private sector. A primary factor in this decision was that I thought I could count on a fair package of, among other things, retirement and health care benefits. I work diligently, and my duties (being related to information technology) require that there is scarcely a day when I do not perform some amount of public service -- including weekends and holidays. I find the work to be fulfilling and believe that the vast majority of my colleagues have similar motivations and dedication. We ask that in seeking ways to address the state's budget problems that you not unduly burden those of us who have chosen this higher cause. To do so would devalue those of us who choose public service, and it would likely have the result of driving a significant portion of the state's best talent to the private sector.

I thus ask again that you please vote "no" on all of these bills that take away benefits from public employees, and I again thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

yamashita3-Chelsea

From: Mary Santa Maria [mary.santa_maria@doh.hawaii.gov]
Sent: Friday, February 13, 2009 8:27 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: HB1719,1725,1106,1718

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

Please accept this letter as my testimony and thank you. As a public employee for 15 years, I am deeply upset by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say.

Specifically: 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? I have several co-workers whose spouses have lost their employment.

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, **and public health professional I chose to work for less pay to be able**

to contribute to Hawaii. 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 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, my family, and my coworkers. 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. **The passage of these bills will make our state motto "The Health State" a joke. Please vote "no" on all of these bills that take away benefits from public employees.**

Sincerely,

Mary Santa Maria

Wailuku Maui

yamashita3-Chelsea

From: Donna M Fukuda [donnaf@hawaii.edu]
Sent: Friday, February 13, 2009 7:47 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Re: electronic testimony

----- Original Message -----

From: Donna M Fukuda <donnaf@hawaii.edu>
Date: Friday, February 13, 2009 7:40 am
Subject: electronic testimony
To: LABtestimony@Capitol.hawaii.gov

> Dear Representative Karl Rhoads,
> and Members of the:
>

> COMMITTEE ON LABOR & PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT

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

>

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| > Rep. Henry J.C. Aquino | Rep. Mark M. Nakashima |
| > Rep. Karen Leinani Awana | Rep. Scott K. Saiki |
| > Rep. Faye P. Hanohano | Rep. Joseph M. Souki |
| > Rep. Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran | Rep. Roy M. Takumi |
| > Rep. Marilyn B. Lee | Rep. Kymberly Marcos Pine |

> My name is Donna Fukuda, and I am a (25+ years) faculty member at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. I wish to express deep concern over the content and intent of the following House Bills which are scheduled to be heard today:

> NOTICE OF HEARING

- > HB1106 Relating to Public Employment
- > HB1718 Relating to Employer-Union Health Benefits
- > HB1719 Relating to Public Employees
- > HB1725 Relating to the Hawaii Employer-Union Health Benefit Trust Fund
- >

> Friday, February 13, 2009
DATE:
> TIME: 8:30 A.M.
> PLACE: Conference Room 309

State Capitol

415 South Beretania Street

>

> I realize that in efforts to find revenue savings is critical in the current economic times. However, as a health care professional, it is my hope that well-being of our economy will not be at the expense of our people's health and wellness.

>

> Over the years, my health care insurance coverage has been primarily through my husband's plan. Whenever supplemental plans were available, I enrolled, and truly appreciated the benefit. I am fortunate to have an alternative, and believe that the State has already saved on a state employee like me (in terms of health care premiums cost). For those of my colleagues who do not have such alternative, the proposed measures are devastating. There must be other creative alternatives than jeopardizing one's physical and mental health and wellness.

>

> **I do not support the measures proposed in:**

> HB1106 Relating to Public Employment

> HB1718 Relating to Employer-Union Health Benefits

> HB1719 Relating to Public Employees

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

>

>

> Thank you.

>

> Donna M. Fukuda, R.D.H., M.P.H.

yamashita3-Chelsea

From: Adrienne Valdez [avaldez@hawaii.rr.com]
Sent: Friday, February 13, 2009 7:34 AM
To: LABtestimony
Cc: Kristeen Hanselman
Subject: HB 1106, HB 1718, HB 1719 and HB 1725

To: Committee on Labor and Public Employment
From: Adrienne Valdez, faculty member at University of Hawaii – West Oahu,
Re: Hearing on February 13, 2009 at 8:30 a.m.

I respectfully request that you vote no to passing HB 1106, HB 1718, HB 1719 and HB 1725 out of your committee. While I am sure you all have been working very hard to come up with the best ways to deal with the current economic crisis our state is facing, implementing one or more of these bills is the wrong direction to take. All of these bills unfairly target public employees to bear a disproportionately heavy load in dealing with the economic crisis without listening to the ideas they have for finding better solutions. I'm sure we all agree that sacrifices need to be made by everyone in the short term, and I hope you agree that since that is true, that all stakeholders should be fully included in making the decisions that will effect them. Of course, allowing testimony at this hearing is one way of giving stakeholders a voice, but only in a very limited way. All we are able to do is ask you to reject bills that have been placed on the table for consideration. There need to be more substantive discussions than the structure of this hearing will allow.

I know there are better and more fair solutions out there and the best way to arrive at them is through honest, respectful, inclusive and collaborative dialogue at the bargaining table. I am not sure if you are aware of this or not, but all of the public sector unions have been extremely frustrated trying to negotiate new contracts because of the lack of substantive and ongoing dialogue.

Please do the right thing and insist that all parties return to the bargaining table with the goal of jointly finding the best solutions possible. The thousands of dedicated and loyal Hawaii public employees deserve to be heard and their ideas welcomed in exploring and deciding on the best solutions.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

--
Adrienne Valdez, faculty member at UH-West Oahu
Center for Labor Education and Research
96-043 Ala Ike
Pearl City, Hi, 96872

808-454-4781 (Direct)
808-454-4774 (Main Office)
808-454-4776 (Fax)
avaldez@hawaii.edu (email)

yamashita3-Chelsea

From: Gunter Schwab [schwab@hawaii.edu]
Sent: Friday, February 13, 2009 7:28 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: testimony

I strongly oppose the following measures:

HB 1106
HB 1718
HB 1719
HB 1725

This proposed legislation will do significant harm to UH faculty members in regards to health care and retirement benefits.

These proposals are being advanced to obtain major concessions from employee unions without the state meeting its obligation to bargain. They 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.

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.

Sincerely,

Günter Schwab
Asst. Professor, Mathematics
Kapiolani Community College

yamashita3-Chelsea

From: Bran-D Foster Heckman [brand808@gmail.com]
Sent: Friday, February 13, 2009 6:16 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: please vote no on....

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:

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 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.

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 vote no on these bills.

Please don't cut my benefits-if you have to cut something please offer a voluntary furlough once per month.

Thank you for your time.

Bran-D Foster Heckman

LATE

yamashita3-Chelsea

From: Doreenkai@aol.com
Sent: Friday, February 13, 2009 4:27 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Feb. 13, 2009 hearing at 8:30 am

Please accept this as my testimony:

I wish to express my indignation on House Bill Nos. 1106, 1719, 1718 and 1725.

I feel very stressed and pressured to make a decision on my future as a State employee by retiring by 6/30/09 according to HB 1719. I have 35 years of service with the State and am 60 years old. I was not planning on retiring this year but in the near future. Four months to retire is too abrupt and not enough time to plan. It's not fair to have to pay the health premiums after 7/1/09 per HB 1719.

Please do not pass these bills as they are creating a panic for senior employees of the State who are being forced to retire and/or pay our own health premiums.

Thank you for your consideration and time.

Doreen Kaibara
Department of Attorney General
2/13/09

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yamashita3-Chelsea

From: Bobby Bus [sjb@ifh.hawaii.edu]
Sent: Friday, February 13, 2009 7:24 AM
To: Rep. Faye Hanohano; Rep. Mark Nakashima
Cc: Rep. Karl Rhoads; Rep. Kyle Yamashita; LABtestimony
Subject: Letter to Committee on Labor and Public Employment

RE: HB1106, HB1718, HB1719, and HB1725

Dear Representative Hanohano and Representative Nakashima,

My name is Schelte Bus. I am a resident of Hilo, a research faculty member of the University of Hawaii, a member of UHPA, and a registered voter. I am also a taxpayer, and help support local businesses through my purchases of their products and services. While I find the economic situation facing our country, state and communities very sobering, I feel it is unfair for the House of Representatives to consider balancing the State budget in ways that would so adversely affect public employees as those proposed in the House bills now up for consideration.

I work hard at my job, and have been committed to serving the University by promoting its goals of higher education and research. While I know I could be making more money at other institutions on the Mainland or in the private sector, I was attracted to the University of Hawaii, in no small part, by the benefits and retirement plan offered to its employees, and by the representation offered by the UHPA.

I feel that asking employee unions to make the major concessions proposed before this committee without the State meeting its obligation to bargain in good faith is wrong. Taking away the right of unions to negotiate our health benefits will have long-lasting repercussions that will adversely affect state employees long after the economy recovers and prosperity has returned to Hawaii.

As a resident of this great State, I am willing to do my share in these troubling times. Though not enthusiastic about the prospects, I would be willing to accept furloughs or higher taxes for the short term, because I know that once Hawaii's economy rebounds, these measures would be repealed, and life would return to normal. However, tampering with my health benefits, retirement plans, and my voice as a member of a unified workforce are actions that will never be repealed, and will have lasting adverse affects on me and my family.

I ask you to please consider other options for balancing Hawaii's budget than those that are before you today.

Thank you,
Schelte J. Bus

I am Jo Ann Loa. I am 59.5 years old and I was looking at retiring in 3 years. I am currently separated after 40 years of marriage. That is a whole other story. But I want to express to you how the bills that you will be reviewing for consideration would affect my life.

HB1106 – Furlough - No work --- no pay. With my current financial situation, being the sole wage earner - I cannot financially make ends meet today. I live pay check to pay check. I try to be frugal in my lifestyle. I sew my clothes, I buy things that are on sale—my meals are planned based on items on sale. I have only 1 credit card – and I keep that one for emergencies. I have a balance on that account under \$500. I pay a mortgage for my home (which has been my family dwelling for 27 years). As mothers do – I sacrifice my needs for my children and grandchildren. Please don't take away wages from my already tight budget.

HB1718 – Halt Medical Part B After Retiring -- I am disappointed that after working for the government for 32 years and relying on the terms of retirement --- you are now with a stroke of a pen --- changing the course of my future. How would you feel if you were hired for a job and your boss kept changing the “rules” of the job? You work 32 years towards this retirement goal --- and oops changes occur. Working for the government and its consistency was what attracted me to be a civil service employee. I worked in the private sector for 7 years. One of my bosses had a heart attack and his family and mine experienced financial hardship during his illness until his death. Upon getting a government job, I felt secure that the government wasn't going to “die” or have a heart attack. But not having medical after retirement will again cause me and countless others severe financial hardships at a time in our lives that we are not healthy or energetic enough to go out and get a second or third job!

HB 1719 – Stop Employer Health Benefits after 7/1/2009 for Retirees --- how cruel can anyone be. I have worked over 32 years for the government with the anticipation of the assurance of medical benefits as a caveat for my loyal and dedicated service. I have not made any financial preparation for the cost of medical premiums upon my retirement. With the limited funds of retirement, I will not be able to survive and pay for needed medical premiums. I have never received state aid and if at all possible I want to continue to depend on my self to support my needs. Please do not make me rely on government aid for medical. I thought I had earned it --- I worked hard for the retirement package that the government offered including the free medical provision.

HB 1720 - Halt Prescription Drug and Vision coverage for Retirees after 7/1/2009. Why are the government workers being targeted. The Drug, Vision, etc. was all part of the retirement package that we worked towards. We will not have the financial means to pay for these benefits on the fixed income from retirement. Please do not force us to neglect our health, or to pursue government funded plans!

Please consider raising the excess tax to 6% so that all the people of Hawaii can share in the burden of our state's financial situation. Stop the “legacy” plan “fixing parks, trails, etc” --- what legacy will we have as individuals going on government funded plans. Is it our legacy to increase the homeless, and the hungry - these bills are redirecting government workers towards that path. And I am in the front of that line! JoAnn Loa (808) 959-6248 - Hilo

yamashita3-Chelsea

From: Renee Purdy [r_purdygirl@hotmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 9:54 PM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Requesting for your help

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

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning. My name is Renee Purdy. As a public employee for a year, I am deeply upset by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say. Specifically: HB 1106, 1108, 1715, 1718, 1719, 1720, 1721, 1722, 1723, 1725, 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 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 mideical benefits until the Medicare retirement age, is irresponsible. Instead of supporting public service, Speaker Say is telling us that the 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 oru 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, taht 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 durg coverage. This is literally a bill taht 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 taht 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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yamashita3-Chelsea

From: Pacheco, Kason [kpacheco@co.hawaii.hi.us]
Sent: Friday, February 13, 2009 8:34 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 Kason Pacheco. I am upset by the bills introduced by Speaker Calvin Say. Specifically: All of the below

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.
 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 would like the State not to make a decision on emotions of fear. I feel the state is reacting and not thoroughly thinking through all of the options the state has. Hawaii is a unique place to live and we should keep it that way and not follow other states on what has already been implemented in those states. I strongly feel the State has not exhausted all of these options and is jumping to a conclusion on emotion and finding the easiest way out of the problem which will result in causing more problems for the economy.

I would like to propose some options that I feel the state should do some changes in:

- 1) Increasing fines for illegal buildings with out building permits and increasing fines to homeowners and contractors for not having a building permit when constructing. With the increase in the housing market value these fines should have been increased as the economy increased.
- 2) ENFORCING the building permit on construction sites. I have worked in other states and I am totally shocked on how this state is really relaxed in issuing building permits and enforcing home owners and the fines associated. It is amazing to me, how easily people get away with not have the right permit and not having a permit; ex. Illegal structure in Kalihi. The state should increase all fee's and fines, they are too inexpensive and only a slap on the wrist to individuals who do not follow the law. Mainland builders that relocated to Hawaii are laughing on the way to the bank on how easy they can get away with things in Hawai'i.
- 3) Installing red light traffic cameras at intersections in Hawaii Kai and downtown Honolulu. Fines should be minimum \$200 per incident, not these Mickey Mouse fines.
- 4) As tourism increased the State should have increased the hotel tax charged. However since this was not completed we now do not have that extra money from an increase therefore we now have to take money from other places for not paying attention on what could have been capitalized on during the rise in tourism.

I appreciate your time in reading my testimony.

yamashita3-Chelsea

From: gmatsushima [gmatsushima@hawaiiantel.net]
Sent: Friday, February 13, 2009 10:38 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: Urgent Opposition To These Bills

Dear LABtestimony:

Please include by opposition to the following Bills.

There are many dedicated State and County employees working diligently like anyone else in Hawaii. It is inhumane to slash and cut at whim the very benefits that were promised to these workers who have dedicated themselves to decades of years of public service. Many employees do not earn enough to support their families as we are civil servants.

To pull the economic rug from under them is an inhumane, terribly cruel and destructive method to balance the State budget that is not caused by these people either individually or collectively. Many employees are willing to do their part to lessen the economic blow but these Bills are flawed and many employees are angry that we are being targeted as sacrificial lambs.

As shocked as i am that an elected representative would even consider these wide-across-the-board surgical cuts to working people is beyond comprehension.

Stop this madness, please do not approve these Bills that will ruin the lives of these employees and their families.

I do not support these bills and beg that you will not support these bills as well:

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.

Gregg Matsushima

HGEA member

Oahu, Hawaii

yamashita3-Chelsea

From: Bonnie Kim [raeya@alohasat.com]
Sent: Friday, February 13, 2009 8:39 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: HB 1725, HB 1719, HB 1718, HB 1106, HB 1536

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

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

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

Calvin Say. Specifically: HB1725, HB1719, HB1718, HB1106, HB1536.

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

yamashita3-Chelsea

From: Jay U. [jrman_001@yahoo.com]
Sent: Friday, February 13, 2009 8:22 AM
To: LABtestimony
Subject: TESTIMONY FOR 2/12 & 2/17

Hi, my name is JESSIE T. FERNANDEZ, and I 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.

Thank you,

JESSIE T. FERNANDEZ

See bill numbers below

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

Rep. Gilbert Keith-Agaran

From: Brian Schatz [hawaiischatz@yahoo.com]
Sent: Friday, February 13, 2009 7:24 AM
To: LABtestimony; Rep. Gilbert Keith-Agaran; Rep. Karl Rhoads
Subject: LATE TESTIMONY

Aloha Chair Rhoads and members of the committee

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on HB 1718, HB 1719, and HB 1725.

I understand that the House and Senate are in uncharted waters, and that all options are on the table with respect to achieving a balanced budget.

However I believe that these measures are not the wisest way to balance the budget as they disproportionately place the burdens of our current economic crisis on public employees. The savings incurred would not be worth the human cost and lost productivity.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, I think we ought to wait until we confirm from the Obama administration and our Congressional Delegation how much money is coming to Hawaii from the stimulus bill before entertaining such draconian measures as those contained in these bills.

Respectfully,

Brian Schatz
Chair
Hawaii Democratic Party

LATE TESTIMONY
02/13/2009

Attention Chair:

I, Lia Manu - **Oppose Proposal #HB1100: Furloughing Employess:**

I Oppose to this proposal

The "Hawaii State Employees are the working force" the contributors to the equation of the state budget.

-Taxes, etc..

-Working bodies providing hard work and services in the State of Hawaii.

I, Lia Manu –

Oppose Proposal#HB1718- Halt reimbursement of Medicare part B premiums for employees retiring after 12/31/09.

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

Oppose Proposal#HB1725-Halt prescription drug coverage under EUTF

Bothe my husband and I are State employees:

Dept. of Corrections- 27 years

Dept of Education- 13 years

We are both natives of Hawaii born, bread. Growing up in the State of Hawaii we were both raised by parents that were workers and retirees of the State Dept and/or City & County.

We were taught to get educated go to work and be productive workers in society.

My husband is a Diabetic – Insulin dependent, he takes 5 daily medications we count on our medical benefits through our employer to help us with the cost of his medications.

MY HUSBAND HAS DONE HIS CONTRIBUTION TO THE COMMUNITY AS A STATE WORKER. HE NEEDS HIS MEDICATION TO LIVE. WE NEED HIS PAY TO PAY THE BILLS. WE WON'T HAVE THE EXTRA TO PAY FOR ALL THE MEDICATIONS.

I have worked as a Medical Assistant prior to working for the state as a School Health Aide. The pay scale that the State School Health Aides are way below average compared to the services rendered in schools. (liability, more special needs students, more medications on campus, etc...) My ratio at my school is:

Health Aide (1) to 2,600 students

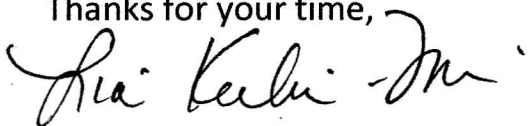
Health Aide (1) to 300 adult workers

I love my job and I am good at what I do, so the pay was NOT comparable to the private sector but the **BENEFITS way out.**(Medical, Dental, Life Insurance, Work schedule)

At school we encourage the kids “future of tomorrow”..To get in class and get educated so they can also be productive working adults in our community. When you take away the benefits that come with the job, you are changing the incentive of a working persons contribution. **DO NOT TAKE AWAY OUR BENEFITS. The Incentive for our future of tomorrow will have a drastic impact.**

I often see my father (retired HPD worker after 35 years) juggle his finances to pay for his medication and medical bills or food. **PLEASE HONOR YOUR CONTRIBUTORS “ THE WORKING FORCE” PEOPLE.**

Thanks for your time,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lisa Keelin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

LATE

Testimony of
Blair Wulfert
Deputy Sheriff
Department of Public Safety

COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT

DATE: Friday, February 13, 2009
TIME: 8:30 A.M.
PLACE: Conference Room 309
State Capitol
415 South Beretania St.

HB 1106
HB 1718
HB 1719
HB 1725

Good morning Chairman Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita and members of the committee. Thank you for this opportunity to offer testimony on the bills in front of you. My name is Blair Wulfert and I have worked for the state of Hawai'i for 14 years. I am a sworn Deputy Sheriff for the State of Hawaii. A Deputy Sheriff is a State Police Officer who put himself/herself in harms way to arrest felons, enforce criminal statutes and protect the public. I **strongly oppose** HB 1106, 1718, 1719, 1715 and 1725. All of these bills make it seem as though the Hawaii State Legislature is willing to undercut the hardworking public employees and future employees of Hawai'i. It is unacceptable and I hope that this committee understands just how unjust these bills truly are.

The Hawaii State Legislature is attempting to balance the State budget on the backs of the State employees by reducing the health benefits and passing on the cost to the employees. This equates to "pay cut," for States Employees and this does not even include the possible take-a way's that is expected from the Executive Branch, through collective bargaining, and the probable rate increase proposed by HMSA. This is not sharing the pain, this is suffering the serious wounds that will be imposed on not just state employees, but our families who depend on us.

Today I would like to specifically comment on HB 1715. This bill increases the minimum age and length of service for an unreduced service retirement allowance for new employees. As civil servants, we do not do this job because of the pay. We do this job because we care about our community. We care enough to even care about the next generation of public workers. It is hard enough to find good qualified people to work for the state. If we make it so that we offer less than industry standard pay as well a weak package of benefits and retirement plan, we will be scraping the bottom of the barrel of applicants. We cannot make it so that state work is the last choice for incoming recruits. We have also seen in the past that the same employees, in the same bargaining unit, doing the same job that has two different sets benefits is in violation of labor standards. These benefits were later re-instated.

There are several alternatives to reducing the cost of government, balancing the budget, and being fiscally responsible, without reducing services and the responsibility of the State Government. I implore the legislative branch to further explore, educate, and ponder to make government more efficient and reduce needless waste.

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 Lemuel Aweau. As a public employee for 2 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,

 2/13/09

LATE

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

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning. My name is Shana Takahashi.
As a public employee for 1 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?

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Yours Truly,

Shana Takahashi

02/13/09

LATE

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

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning. My name is Rep Kawahara. As a public employee for _____ 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?

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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,

Reid Kamb 2/13/09

LATE

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

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning. My name is Sanford Loo. As a public employee for 1/2 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.

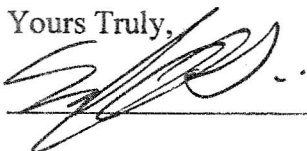
HB 1719 is also of concern to me. As a civil servant, I chose to work for less pay to be able to contribute to the community. On balance, I believed that I would be able to count on a safe retirement. Speaker Say's bill, which disregards my years of service and reduces medical benefits until the Medicare 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.

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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,



2/13/09

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

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning. My name is Marcia Weaver.
As a public employee for 1.5 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.

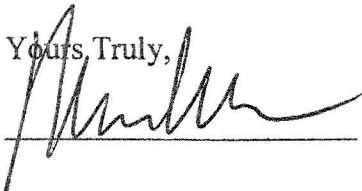
HB 1719 is also of concern to me. As a civil servant, I chose to work for less pay to be able to contribute to the community. On balance, I believed that I would be able to count on a safe retirement. Speaker Say's bill, which disregards my years of service and reduces medical benefits until the Medicare 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.

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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,



02-12-09

We the undersigned, oppose the following bills:

February 12, 2009

- 1) HB1106 - Furloughing employees
- 2) HB1718 - Halt reimbursement for Medicare part B premiums for employees retiring after 12/31/09
- 3) HB1719 - Stop employer contributions for those retiring after 7/1/09
- 4) HB1725 - Halt prescription drug coverage under EUTF
- 5) HB1723 - Limit employer contribution to 55% and make it non-negotiable
- 6) HB1726 - Curtail EUTF payment for life insurance benefits
- 7) HB1727 - Prohibits provision of dental and vision coverage
- 8) HB1737 - Excludes certain forms of pay in computing compensation for retirement purposes

LATE

For the following reasons:

- 1) The majority of us came to work for the State of Hawaii for its benefits, not the pay.
- 2) It's unfair to cut our benefits by passing a law. It should be negotiated by our Union and agreed upon with our members.
- 3) If we are to be furloughed, it should include everyone that works for the State of Hawaii. This includes the governor down to the legislators.
- 4) Some of our members may not be able to meet their monthly obligations' (mortgage payments, bill, etc) if they are furloughed.
- 5) Basically, we were led to believe that we would receive the above benefits when we applied to work for the State of Hawaii. The health-care contributions was already changed in 1996 and now our legislators want to change it again.
- 6) We want to know what benefits our legislators and governor are giving up. It's very unfair that our legislators can retire after 10 years of service with full benefits. Is this going to change?

Please print your name and sign.

| Name | Signature |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| Erwin KOSHINO | Erwin Koshino |
| Tulra English | Tulra English |
| Vera Yamasaki | Vera Yamasaki |
| Chanitel Suyat | Chanitel Suyat |
| Koren Wakatsuki | Koren Wakatsuki |
| Ray-Lynn Kawasaka | Ray-Lynn Kawasaka |
| Kristie Kwon | Kristie Kwon |
| Jodi Polendey | Jodi Polendey |
| Maile Horikawa | Maile Horikawa |
| Kim Fleming | Kim Fleming |
| Shori-Lynn Tateyama | Shori-Lynn Tateyama |
| Zee Higa | Zee Higa |
| Lana Kim | Lana Kim |
| Nancy Arakaki | Nancy Arakaki |
| Laureen Castro | Laureen Castro |
| Susan Hirokane | Susan Hirokane |
| Grace Takai | Grace Takai |
| Kenneth Ito | Kenneth Ito |
| Francis Kaneshiro | Francis Kaneshiro |
| Sandi Yamagata | Sandi Yamagata |
| Ten Sakaiyashi | Ten Sakaiyashi |
| Melanie Mousel | Melanie Mousel |
| Renee R Yamada | Renee R Yamada |
| Wade Okumura | Wade Okumura |
| Kristina Lum | Kristina M. Lum |
| Stanley Pan | Stanley Pan |
| SAMSON BELLUSLE | Samson Bellusle |
| Joy Green | Joy Green |
| Glenn Kunitake | Glenn Kunitake |
| | |
| | |

We the undersigned, oppose the following bills:

February 12, 2009

- 1) HB1106 - Furloughing employees
- 2) HB1718 - Halt reimbursement for Medicare part B premiums for employees retiring after 12/31/09
- 3) HB1719 - Stop employer contributions for those retiring after 7/1/09
- 4) HB1725 - Halt prescription drug coverage under EUTF
- 5) HB1723 - Limit employer contribution to 55% and make it non-negotiable
- 6) HB1726 - Curtail EUTF payment for life insurance benefits
- 7) HB1727 - Prohibits provision of dental and vision coverage
- 8) HB1737 - Excludes certain forms of pay in computing compensation for retirement purposes

LATE

For the following reasons:

- 1) The majority of us came to work for the State of Hawaii for its benefits, not the pay.
- 2) It's unfair to cut our benefits by passing a law. It should be negotiated by our Union and agreed upon with our members.
- 3) If we are to be furloughed, it should include everyone that works for the State of Hawaii. This includes the governor down to the legislators.
- 4) Some of our members may not be able to meet their monthly obligations' (mortgage payments, bill, etc) if they are furloughed.
- 5) Basically, we were led to believe that we would receive the above benefits when we applied to work for the State of Hawaii. The health-care contributions was already changed in 1996 and now our legislators want to change it again.
- 6) We want to know what benefits our legislators and governor are giving up. It's very unfair that our legislators can retire after 10 years of service with full benefits. Is this going to change?

Please print your name and sign.

| Name | Signature |
|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Wendell Oshiko | <i>Wendell Oshiko</i> |
| NATILYN RASALAN | <i>Natilyn Rasalan</i> |
| Linda Makua-Dudoit | <i>Linda Makua-Dudoit</i> |
| Glenn Lee | <i>Glenn Lee</i> |
| Lynn Nakamura | <i>Lynn Nakamura</i> |
| Lorraine Tanwasa | <i>Lorraine Tanwasa</i> |
| Jan Kim | <i>Jan Kim</i> |
| Paulette Akung | <i>Paulette Akung</i> |
| Susan Gost | <i>Susan Gost</i> |
| Kevin Okuna | <i>Kevin Okuna</i> |
| DAWN ARASATO | <i>Dawn Arasato</i> |
| Joyce Masumura | <i>Joyce Masumura</i> |
| Barbara Toledo | <i>Barbara Toledo</i> |
| Zenaida Bryan | <i>Zenaida Bryan</i> |
| Dawn Baker | <i>Dawn Baker</i> |
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LATE TESTIMONY

Chairman Representative Rhoads:

I am not in support to the following bills.

HB1718

HB1719

HB1723

HB1725

HB1727

I am a widow, a retiree (6/2008) and have a medical condition (diabetes) which requires doctor visits and drugs. The skyrocketing cost of drugs and medical care will always be a consistent burden for me without the medical benefits provided.

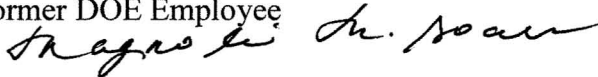
There are other widows like me both retired and currently employed who are facing this crisis with anger that our legislature /administration would do this to dedicated employees and fear of the unknown.

Please reconsider your decision to support these bills.

Respectfully submitted:

Magnolia Soares

Former DOE Employee

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Magnolia Soares". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned to the right of the typed name and title.

LATE

February 12, 2009

Aloha! I am a government employee and member of the 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 us.

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!!!

Deborah Schultz I.E.A. III

Deborah Schultz

Naalehu School
(808)939-2413

LATE

February 12, 2009

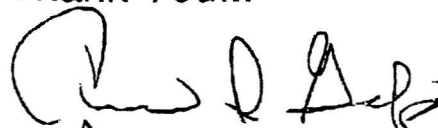
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Thank You!!!

 (E.A. III)
Annabelle H Galigo
Naalehu School
(808)939-2413

LATE

February 12, 2009

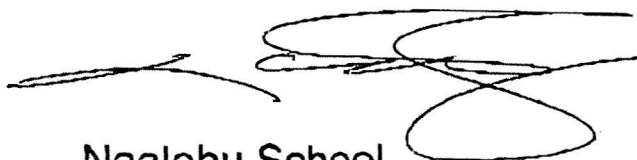
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Thank You!!!



School
(Security)

Naalehu School
(808)939-2413

LATE

February 12, 2009

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Thank You!!!

Luey GC. Makuakane (E.A. III)

Naalehu School
(808)939-2413

LATE

February 12, 2009

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Thank You!!!

Charmaine L. Keanu (E.A. II)

Charmaine L. Keanu

Naalehu School
(808)939-2413

LATE

February 12, 2009

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Thank You!!!

Leonora H. H.

(E.A. III)

Naalehu School

(808)939-2413

LATE

February 12, 2009

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Thank You!!!

Sherry L. Chee (E.A. III)

Sherry L. Chee

Naalehu School
(808)939-2413

LATE

February 12, 2009

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Thank You!!!



(E.A. III)

Naalehu School
(808)939-2413

RMF 4/21

LATE

REPRESENTATIVE JOEY MALLAHAN :

My name is BREUNDA J. VIERLES and I live in your district and voted for you. I work for the state and am a member of HGEA.

I am also a taxpayer and support local businesses to buy food, clothing and everyday necessities for myself and my family.

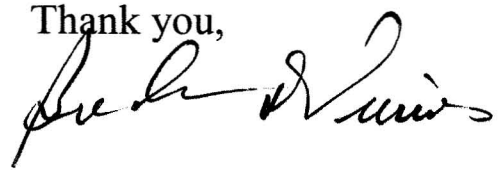
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I OPPOSE:

- HB 1106
- HB 1718
- HB 1719
- HB 1725
- HB 1723
- HB1715

HB 1726 & HB 1727 and I am asking you for your support in opposing these bills too.

Thank you,



BREUNDA J. VIERLES
600 PINEHURST RD. #2
1501 141 0600

HOUSE LABOR & PUBLIC EMPLOYEE COMMITTEE

Karl Rhoads, Chair
Kyle Yamashita, Vice Chair

LATE

My name is GINA G. AGUILAR and I work for the state and am a member of HGEA.

I am also a taxpayer and support local businesses to buy food, clothing and everyday necessities for myself and my family.

I don't believe that 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 decided that my retirement and health benefits for myself and my family were more important than the pay.

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HB 1106

HB 1718

HB 1719

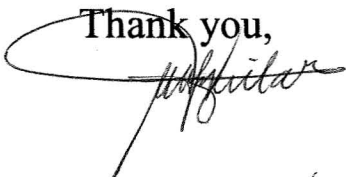
HB 1725

HB 1723

HB1715

HB 1726 & HB 1727 and I am asking you for your support in opposing these bills too.

Thank you,



1219 Wanaka St.
Hon. HI 96818

HOUSE LABOR & PUBLIC EMPLOYEE COMMITTEE
Karl Rhoads, Chair
Kyle Yamashita, Vice Chair

LATE

My name is Arsenia G. Basa and I work
for the state and am a member of HGEA.

I am also a taxpayer and support local businesses to buy food,
clothing and everyday necessities for myself and my family.

I don't believe that 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
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HB 1726 & HB 1727 and I am asking you for your support in
opposing these bills too.

Thank you,



HOUSE LABOR & PUBLIC EMPLOYEE COMMITTEE

Karl Rhoads, Chair

Kyle Yamashita, Vice Chair

LATE

My name is Carol Ching and I work for the state and am a member of HGEA.

I am also a taxpayer and support local businesses to buy food, clothing and everyday necessities for myself and my family.

I don't believe that 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 decided that my retirement and health benefits for myself and my family were more important than the pay.

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Thank you,

Carol Ching
94-608 Mulehu St.
Mililani, HI 96789

HOUSE LABOR & PUBLIC EMPLOYEE COMMITTEE
Karl Rhoads, Chair
Kyle Yamashita, Vice Chair

AM

LATE

My name is SHIRBLE MARUME and I work for the state and am a member of HGEA.

I am also a taxpayer and support local businesses to buy food, clothing and everyday necessities for myself and my family.

I don't believe that 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 decided that my retirement and health benefits for myself and my family were more important than the pay.

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Thank you, *Shirble Marume*

HOUSE LABOR & PUBLIC EMPLOYEE COMMITTEE

Karl Rhoads, Chair
Kyle Yamashita, Vice Chair

LATE

My name is JANICE B. MIURA and I work for the state and am a member of HGEA.

I am also a taxpayer and support local businesses to buy food, clothing and everyday necessities for myself and my family.

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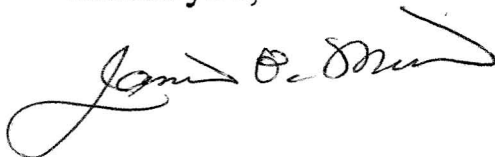
HB 1725

HB 1723

HB1715

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Thank you,



HOUSE LABOR & PUBLIC EMPLOYEE COMMITTEE **LATE**

Karl Rhoads, Chair
Kyle Yamashita, Vice Chair

My name is Estelle Ogino and I work for the state and am a member of HGEA.

I am also a taxpayer and support local businesses to buy food, clothing and everyday necessities for myself and my family.

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Thank you,

Estelle Ogino

LATE

HOUSE LABOR & PUBLIC EMPLOYEE COMMITTEE

Karl Rhoads, Chair
Kyle Yamashita, Vice Chair

My name is Sandra Sugawa and I work for the state and am a member of HGEA.

I am also a taxpayer and support local businesses to buy food, clothing and everyday necessities for myself and my family.

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Thank you,

Sandra Sugawa

422
LATE

HOUSE LABOR & PUBLIC EMPLOYEE COMMITTEE

Karl Rhoads, Chair

Kyle Yamashita, Vice Chair

My name is Annette Yoshida and I work for the state and am a member of HGEA.

I am also a taxpayer and support local businesses to buy food, clothing and everyday necessities for myself and my family.

I don't believe that 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 decided that my retirement and health benefits for myself and my family were more important than the pay.

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Annette Yoshida
2/12/09