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**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON  
LABOR & PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT**

**RE: HB 2937 – RELATING TO COLLECTIVE BARGAINING.**

February 5, 2010

**WIL OKABE, PRESIDENT  
HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION**

Chair Rhoads and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii State Teachers Association has reservations about this bill because we are unclear of its intent and its potential impact on our members.

HSTA members are part of the VEBA Trust and are pleased with the present situation of negotiating the contributions and the trust determining the benefits. In fact, teachers have been very satisfied with the results partly because the members of the trust are made up of their colleagues, not management. Will this mean the end to the trust?

With this bill it would seem teachers would no longer be able to determine benefits for themselves because it would now be negotiated. Thus would management have to agree to the benefits as well as the contributions?

Also with this bill, how are you going to balance the benefits versus the contribution? Which will come first?

Our VEBA Trust has been able to offset increased premiums by having the flexibility to negotiate cheaper plans with health care providers when premiums have increased. For example, when health care premiums went up last year, the VEBA Trust was able to negotiate two plans for members giving them a choice of plans to meet their needs. Will we have the same ability under this bill?

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.



## HAWAII FIRE FIGHTERS ASSOCIATION

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE FIGHTERS LOCAL 1463, AFL-CIO

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The Twenty-Fifth Legislature  
House of Representatives  
Committees on Labor and Public Employment  
February 5, 2010

Testimony by  
Hawaii Fire Fighters Association

**H.B. No. 2937**                      **Relating to Collective Bargaining**

My name is Robert H. Lee and I am the President of the Hawaii Fire Fighters Association, Local 1463, IAFF, AFL-CIO and also an active-duty fire captain with the Honolulu Fire Department. On behalf of the 1,800 active and 1000 retired professional fire fighters throughout the State, the Hawaii Fire Fighters Association supports H.B. No. 2937.

HFFA believes that this proposal is beneficial to both the unions and the employers. The ability to negotiate health benefits, in addition to the contribution amount for the benefits, provide the parties to enter into agreements which best meets the needs of the specific organizations on behalf of the rank and file members.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. We urge the Committee to support H.B. No. 2937.