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The Twenty-Fifth Legislature, State of Hawaii
Hawaii State Senate
Committee on Ways and Means
Testimony by
Hawaii Government Employees Association
February 16, 2010

S.B. 2124 S.D. 1 – RELATING TO THE HAWAII HURRICANE RELIEF FUND

The Hawaii Government Employees' Association, AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO is opposed to S.B. 2124 S.D. 1 in its present form. We understand and appreciate the concern raised over restoring lost instructional days for the 2009-2010 school year. However, we believe that using the Hawaii Hurricane Relief Fund (HHRF) to pay for the restoration of furlough days only within the DOE is inherently unfair and much too limited.

Last session, the legislature chose not to use the HHRF to address the budget shortfall. With the governor's determination to realize savings through workers, negotiations resulted in wage cuts, furloughs and layoffs. While no one likes the effects of the furloughs in the DOE and elsewhere, they were part of the agreements negotiated under Chapter 89. It would be irresponsible for the legislature to limit its attention to only the DOE without addressing the loss of services in all vital programs that impact public health and safety throughout the state.

A number of other states have used rainy day and other special funds to mitigate the effects of budget cuts and furloughs on state programs, not just education. There are many other essential state programs handicapped by furloughs and layoffs where services should be restored through the use of the rainy day fund, the HHRF and other means of funding.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide written testify in opposition to S.B. 2124 S.D.1.

Respectfully submitted,

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