

TESTIMONY

SB 2626



HAWAII GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION
AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO

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The Twenty-Fifth Legislature, State of Hawaii
Hawaii State Senate
Committee on Labor

Testimony by
Hawaii Government Employees Association
February 2, 2010

S.B. 2626 – RELATING TO
PUBLIC SERVICE

The Hawaii Government Employees' Association, AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO supports the purpose and intent of S.B. 2626 – Relating to Public Service, which requires every state agency to report to the Legislature all non-civil service, temporary employees employed by each agency for each quarter of the fiscal year.

The data requested by S.B. 2626 is needed by the Legislature to make informed decisions about the number of non-civil service employees in state government. We need to know which departments are repeatedly extending contract employees (emergency hires) instead of filling the position through civil service and the extent to which this is occurring.

A closely related problem is the number of exempt employees in state government. According to the most recent report to the Legislature as required by Act 300, SLH 2006, there were 2,565 exempt positions. Despite legislation facilitating the conversion from exempt to civil service, only 42 positions (1.6%) were converted between November 1, 2008 and October 31, 2009. This has been a consistent pattern since Act 300 took effect.

Exempt employees comprise approximately 9% of all state employees. Moreover, they are similar to contract employees because they do not have the same contractual rights as those who are civil service. Many of the employees in these exempt positions have been employed for more than 10 years. Therefore, we question the need for 2,565 exempt positions in state government.

We have consistently advocated that employees should have the opportunity to build a career in government through civil service employment. The use of contract and exempt appointment employees undermines civil service and should be reduced

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immediately to the 1-2% level. We appreciate the opportunity to testify in support of S.B. 2626.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nora A. Nomura", with a long, sweeping underline.

Nora A. Nomura
Deputy Executive Director