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April 11, 2012

To: The Honorable David Ige, Chair, Michelle Kidani, Vice Chair, and
Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Date: Wednesday, April 11, 2012

Time: 9:35 a.m.

Place: Conference Room 211, State Capitol

From: Dwight Y. Takamine, Director
Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR)

**Re: SCR 94 Requesting the Department of Health and the Department of Labor
and Industrial Relations to Conduct a Study to Promote Workplace
Wellness Programs**

I. OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED LEGISLATION

This resolution requires the Departments of Health (DOH) and Labor and Industrial Relations to:

- conduct a study to promote workplace wellness programs and to include in that study:
 - subsidies or easing of regulatory barriers for companies that adopt workplace wellness programs;
 - methods of improving long-term health outcomes of employees; and
 - methods of reducing medical costs and health insurance premiums for employers; and
- submit a report on the study, including findings, recommendations, and proposed legislation no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the 2013 Legislative session.

The department supports the intent of this resolution, but requests formal exclusion from conducting the study in partnership with DOH. The departments

have discussed the matter and DLIR is willing to serve as a resource and assist with the wellness study, but not be tasked with formal co-sponsorship

II. CURRENT LAW

There are no requirements for the labor department to conduct wellness program studies. Further, the programs administered by the department do not address or involve wellness programs.

III. COMMENTS ON THE RESOLUTION

Although the department supports the worthwhile intent of this resolution, we do not believe the department is the appropriate agency to conduct this study, as we do not have the knowledge, the expertise, or the staffing to properly carry out the intentions of this resolution. Accordingly, we respectfully request that the department be excluded from conducting this study with the understanding we will assist and serve as a resource to the Department of Health.



SCR94

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS TO CONDUCT A STUDY TO PROMOTE WORKPLACE WELLNESS PROGRAMS.

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The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS** SCR94, which requests that a study be conducted by the State Departments of Health and Labor & Industrial Relations on the promotion or workplace wellness programs.

OHA's strategic priorities include Maui Ola (Health), which represents OHA's commitment to ensure the improvement of Native Hawaiians' quality of life and reduction in the onset of chronic diseases. Obesity is a common condition of chronic diseases, and data suggests that Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders are more likely to become obese and develop obesity-attributable health complications. As such, OHA's Health Advocacy Initiative Core & Advisory Team is focusing its efforts on decreasing Native Hawaiian obesity rates in relation to Hawai'i's general population. Consistent with this effort, OHA is interested in designing healthy worksites that support workplace wellness for employees and possibly embed positive attitudes and values in the larger beneficiary population.

Just a few years ago, OHA partnered with Papa Ola Lokahi - 'Imi Hale and the National Cancer Institute to assist in designing worksites that would have positive effects at organizations working with native Hawaiians. Our work is enormous, but we are optimistic. We support a comprehensive look at impacts on the labor industry and longitudinal health impacts of your proposed study. We offer to share what we've learned from our small study for the overall wellness of Hawai'i nei.

Workplace wellness initiatives have great potential to reorganize us and focus us on our most valuable commodity – our health. Therefore, OHA urges the committee to PASS SCR94. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this important measure.