



HAWAII GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION
AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO

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LATE TESTIMONY

The Twenty-Seventh Legislature, State of Hawaii
The Senate
Committee on Judiciary and Labor

Testimony by
Hawaii Government Employees Association
March 18, 2013

H.B. 1177, H.D. 1 – RELATING TO
COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

The Hawaii Government Employees Association, AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO strongly supports the purpose and intent of H.B. 1177, H.D. 1 which makes fundamental changes to the structure and operating principles of the Hawaii Employer-Union Health Benefits Trust Fund (EUTF). There is widespread agreement that the EUTF is not operating as originally intended and has become a serious concern for both employees and employers.

The current system needs fundamental change. H.B. 1177, in conjunction with H.B. 1173, which would permit the negotiation of health care contributions, contains several significant reforms that will eliminate many of the problems that currently make the EUTF ineffective and expensive.

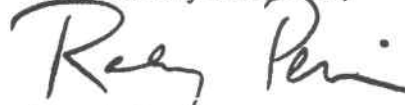
Benefits are an integral part of employee compensation and should be negotiated between unions and employers, as is the practice in the private sector. Other reform efforts can be achieved through negotiations and must include effective mechanisms for controlling costs, encouraging preventive care, implementing wellness programs, requiring information on provider performance and enhancing efficiency. H.B. 1177 contains the following reforms to the EUTF:

1. It changes the method of selecting benefit plan carriers, third party administrators, consultants and actuaries by exempting the process from Chapter 103-D, HRS. This will provide the necessary flexibility to respond to problems faster.
2. Board members must act as fiduciaries of the trust. As fiduciaries, board members are required to make decisions based solely on the interest of the participants and beneficiaries. Board members who willfully violate their fiduciary responsibilities may be liable for any loss suffered by the plan, increasing the accountability of the trustees.

3. The composition of the board and the method of selecting them are also changed. Six trustees representing employee-beneficiaries will be appointed by the various exclusive representatives instead of the Governor. The six trustees representing the employer will be better distributed among the different jurisdictions, with one trustee appointed by the Governor representing retirees. All trustees serve at the pleasure of their appointing authority.
4. It allows individual unions and employers to establish a sub-trust and sub-board of trustees to administer that bargaining unit's contributions and benefits if they negotiate a specific contribution to apply only to that unit.
5. The board can appoint or retain legal counsel who is independent of the Attorney General.
6. Health Plans shall be provided based on the collectively bargained contributions from both the employers and employees, not "at a cost affordable to both the public employers and employees."
7. For administrative purposes, the fund controlled by the board is placed under the Department of Human Resources Development, not the Department of Budget and Finance.

We appreciate the opportunity to testify in support of H.B. 1177, as the measure will make much needed changes to the EUTF.

Respectfully submitted,

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

Randy Perreira
Executive Director