



**House Committee on Labor & Public Employment**

The Hon. Mark M. Nakashima, Chair

The Hon. Kyle T. Yamashit, Vice Chair

**Testimony in Support of House Bill 2217, HD1**

**Relating to Workforce Development**

**Submitted by Robert Hirokawa, Chief Executive Officer**

**February 7, 2014, 9:00 am, Room 309**

The Hawaii Primary Care Association (HPCA), which represents the federally qualified community health centers in Hawaii, supports House Bill 2217 HD1, calling for the establishment of work groups to identify high job growth industries and workforce needs.

The HPCA is a staunch believer in the social determinants of health, those economic and social conditions that influence an individual and a community's health status. These conditions serve as risk factors endemic to a person's living and working environment, rather than their behavioral or genetic histories. Factors such as income, education, access to recreation and healthy foods, housing, and employment, can and do have measurable impacts on a person and a community, both in health and financial outcomes.

House Bill 2217 HD 1 speaks to one of these major determinants directly by seeking to expand the workforce population and provide Hawaii residents with necessary training.

For these reasons, we strongly support this measure and thank you for the opportunity to testify.



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February 7, 2014

HEARING BEFORE THE  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LABOR & PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT

TESTIMONY ON HB 2217  
RELATING TO WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
Room 309  
9:00 AM

Aloha Chair Nakashima and Members of the Committees:

I am Christopher Manfredi, President of the Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation (HFBF). Organized since 1948, the HFBF is comprised of 1,832 farm family members statewide, and serves as Hawaii's voice of agriculture to protect, advocate and advance the social, economic and educational interest of our diverse agricultural community.

**Hawaii Farm Bureau supports HB2217** authorizing DLIR to establish workgroups to identify workforce and training needs.

Hawaii's commercial farmers average age is more than 60 years. It is clear that we need a new generation of farmers and ranchers willing to carry on the task of growing crops and livestock to achieve Hawaii's goal of increased self sufficiency and sustainability. Two years ago DLIR in conjunction with HDOA conducted a series of meetings in all Counties to identify workforce needs of the industry. We expect that this measure is a follow up of these sessions and we applaud it.

We thank you for your support of this measure.



**STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS**

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February 5, 2014

To: The Honorable Mark Nakashima, Chair,  
The Honorable Kyle Yamashita, Vice Chair, and  
Members of the House Committee on Labor

Date: February 7, 2014

Time: 9:00 a.m.

Place: Conference Room 309, State Capitol

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

**Re: H.B. No. 2217 HD1 Relating to Workforce Development**

**I. OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED LEGISLATION**

- The proposed legislation amends Chapter 371, HRS, by adding a new section that allows the department to establish work groups for the purposes of identifying emerging or growing industries, determining necessary skill sets for jobs in those industries, and developing training programs to provide those skills.
- The work groups shall consist of representatives from education, post-secondary education, and business communities.
- Provides funding for the purposes of establishing the work groups and to design and implement training programs.

The department supports this bill if its passage does not replace or adversely affect priorities indicated in the Executive Budget.

**II. CURRENT LAW**

Act 99, Session Laws of Hawaii 2013, added a new section to Chapter 371, HRS, to establish an agricultural workforce advisory board to promote agricultural self-sufficiency. However, no funding was appropriated to implement its operation.

### III. COMMENTS ON THE HOUSE BILL

- Workgroups that identify and address skill shortages in specific areas will help remove silos among education, workforce, and business communities so that public resources can nimbly respond to business needs and create a highly skilled workforce to support growing demands.
- The workgroups are intended to quickly address immediate workforce needs and solve long-term workforce issues. Having a qualified workforce supports the establishment and growth of new industries and enables businesses to utilize local workers instead of recruiting from out-of-state.
- The workgroups would encourage companies normally in competition with each other to ~~solve~~ shared human resource problems and collaboratively develop training programs and materials for their workers.
- The success of workgroups has been demonstrated in different states, including Washington State, where over 30 work groups (called "skill panels") have identified and addressed skill shortages in numerous occupations.\* \
- A variation of the Washington skills panel model was used by the department to identify specific skill gaps in Hawaii's healthcare, agriculture, and software development industries. The department and the State Workforce Development Council convened industry leaders, educators, and workforce partners to identify skills shortages and recommend solutions in each area. (For Hawaii's Skill Panels Reports, go to <http://labor.hawaii.gov/wdc/reports/> )
- However, when the federal grants used to convene these work groups expired, the groups could not be sustained. There were no funds to develop recommended training. For a work group to be effective, additional funds would be necessary to develop training and to establish and sustain work group meetings over a longer period for feedback and redesigns to keep up with changing market demands.
- For these reasons, DLIR supports this proposal if its passage does not replace or adversely affect priorities indicated in the Executive Budget.

\*"Industry Skill Panels" State of Washington Workforce Training and Educational Coordinating Board. [www.wtb.wa.gov/IndustrySkillPanel.asp](http://www.wtb.wa.gov/IndustrySkillPanel.asp)