
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO POLICE COMMISSIONS.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that domestic violence,
2 also known as intimate partner violence, is a public health
3 epidemic affecting individuals in every community, regardless of
4 age, economic status, race, religion, nationality, or
5 educational background. Intimate partner violence accounts for
6 fifteen per cent of all violent crime and is most common among
7 women between the ages of eighteen and twenty-four. However,
8 these domestic violence statistics may be underestimated, as
9 many victims do not report intimate partner violence to police,
10 family, or friends.

11 The legislature further finds that the Honolulu police
12 department was heavily criticized by lawmakers and the public in
13 the wake of a September 2014 high-profile incident involving an
14 off-duty Honolulu police department sergeant. The sergeant's
15 actions sparked concern about the way police handle domestic
16 violence cases and triggered an informational briefing at the
17 state capitol.



1 The legislature additionally finds that residents in the
2 State should be able to know that the county police departments
3 are being held accountable for the actions of county police
4 officers. Currently, the county police commissions are charged
5 with overseeing conduct of the county police departments or
6 officers. The legislature notes that the county police
7 commissions are a matter of statewide concern, as it was
8 originally a state law that established the commissions.
9 Furthermore, outside oversight and police department
10 transparency are vital to ensuring ongoing community trust in
11 the county police departments, particularly after high-profile
12 incidents such as the one in September 2014. Amending the
13 composition of the county police commissions to include
14 commissioners from a variety of backgrounds, especially in
15 women's issues, civil rights, and law enforcement, will
16 therefore improve transparency, accountability, and efficiency
17 in dealing with police misconduct in the State.

18 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to amend the
19 composition of the county police commissions to require that
20 there are commissioners on each police commission that have



1 experience or backgrounds in women's issues, civil rights, and
2 law enforcement.

3 SECTION 2. Section 52D-1, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
4 amended to read as follows:

5 "[+]§52D-1[+] Police commission. (a) A police commission
6 is created for each of the counties. The [~~composition,~~]
7 appointment, terms of office, staff, powers, duties, and
8 functions of each police commission shall be prescribed by the
9 charter of each county.

10 (b) The composition of each police commission shall be
11 prescribed by the charter of each county; provided that there
12 shall be commissioners on each county police commission that
13 have a background or experience in:

- 14 (1) Women's issues;
- 15 (2) Civil rights; and
- 16 (3) Law enforcement."

17 SECTION 3. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed
18 and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

19 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2016, and
20 shall apply to the county police commissions upon each police
21 commission's next vacancy; provided that:



1 (1) The first vacancy in each police commission shall be
2 filled with the individual specified in section
3 52D-1(b) (1), Hawaii Revised Statutes, as amended by
4 this Act;

5 (2) The second vacancy in each police commission shall be
6 filled with the individual specified in section
7 52D-1(b) (2), Hawaii Revised Statutes, as amended by
8 this Act; and

9 (3) The third vacancy in each police commission shall be
10 filled with the individual specified in section
11 52D-1(b) (3), Hawaii Revised Statutes, as amended by
12 this Act.
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INTRODUCED BY:

<u><i>Dele A. Keolu</i></u>	<u><i>Jirde Ichigane</i></u>
<u><i>J. Kahi Maithe</i></u>	<u><i>Cindy Evans</i></u>
<u><i>Lyn DeCrite</i></u>	<u><i>[Signature]</i></u>
<u><i>Geoffrey Hickson</i></u>	<u><i>[Signature]</i></u>
<u><i>John M. Myer</i></u>	<u><i>[Signature]</i></u>
<u><i>Tracie E. Low</i></u>	<u><i>[Signature]</i></u>
	<u><i>[Signature]</i></u>
	<u><i>[Signature]</i></u>
	<u><i>[Signature]</i></u>



H.B. NO. 1904

Report Title:

County Police Commissions; Police Commissioner; Composition;
Requirements

Description:

Amends the composition of the county police commissions to require that there are commissioners on each police commission that have experience or backgrounds in women's issues, civil rights, and law enforcement.

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