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TESTIMONY FOR HOUSE BILL 1048, RELATING TO ELECTIONS

House Committee on Labor and Public Employment

Hon. Mark M. Nakashima, Chair

Hon. Jarrett Keohokalole, Vice Chair

Tuesday, February 10, 2015, 9:00 AM

State Capitol, Conference Room 309

Honorable Chair Nakashima and committee members:

I am Kris Coffield, representing IMUAlliance, a nonpartisan political advocacy organization that currently boasts over 300 local members. On behalf of our members, we offer this testimony in support of House Bill 1048, relating to elections.

As an organization involved in teacher advocacy, we frequently hear complaints from educators about the lack of teacher involvement in education governance. While educators have a powerful voice in public policy through their exclusive bargaining representative, the Hawaii State Teachers Association, their individual participation in government, particularly at the electoral level, is limited by inadequate resources, lack of time, and fear of administrative reprisal. We feel that this proposal would increase the number of educators running for public office by guaranteeing that their campaigns will not result in termination. If teachers and other employees know that their reemployment rights and financial livelihoods will not be revoked because of electoral participation, they are more likely to offer themselves up as candidates. That said, we wish to note that this measure is not a substitute for a robust public funding or other “clean elections” program that places candidates on more equal fundraising ground.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill.

Sincerely,
Kris Coffield
Executive Director
IMUAlliance



House Committee on Labor & Public Employment
Tuesday, February 10, 2015
9:00 a.m.

HB 1048, Relating to Elections.

Dear Chairman Nakashima and Committee Members:

The University of Hawaii Professional Assembly supports proposed measure HB 1048.

Currently the ability of public employees to seek and obtain public office is restricted by requirements that upon election to office the employee must resign or be terminated in their employment. These requirements are onerous and actively discourages citizens from participating in elected office simply because they are a public employee. HB 1048 seeks to redress the issue where public employees running for office do not get elected. This bill will allow for reemployment for these individuals so there is not an economic penalty for simply seeking office.

Respectively submitted,

Kristeen Hanselman
Associate Executive Director

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HAWAII GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION
AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO

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The Twenty-Eighth Legislature, State of Hawaii
Hawaii State House of Representatives
Committee on Labor and Public Employment

Testimony by
Hawaii Government Employees Association
February 10, 2015

H.B. 1048 – RELATING TO ELECTIONS

The Hawaii Government Employees Association, AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO, supports the purpose and intent of H.B. 1048, which establishes reemployment rights for public employees who resign to run for elective office. The reemployment rights contained in H.B. 1048 if they lose an election would encourage public employees who have much knowledge of state or county operations or other valuable experience to seek elective office.

If enacted, H.B. 1048 would likely expand the number of Hawaii's citizens who may consider becoming an elected official. The barriers to becoming an elected official are considerable and this legislation will help to bring some of those barriers down. We believe this important legislation could make our representative democracy more vibrant and inclusive.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of H.B. 1048.

Respectfully submitted,

Randy Perreira
Executive Director