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**THE SENATE  
THE TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE  
REGULAR SESSION 2018**

**LATE**

**March 29, 2018**

**Committee on Ways and Means**

**Testimony by  
Hawaii Fire Fighters Association, Local 1463, IAFF, ALF-CIO**

**H.B. No. 2114 HD2 SD1 RELATING TO COLLECTIVE BARGAINING**

The Hawaii Fire Fighters Association (HFFA), Local 1463, IAFF, AFL-CIO, represents more than 1,900 professional active-duty and 800 retired fire fighters throughout the State. The HFFA, on behalf of our members, **strongly supports H.B. No. 2114, H.D. 2 SD 1** clarifying the allowable scope of collective bargaining negotiations.

H.B No. 2114 HD 2 SD 1 clarifies that the subjects of bargaining between the employers and the exclusive representatives are negotiable when the implementation of HRS Section 89-9, paragraphs (1) through (8), *affects the terms and conditions of employment.*” (Emphasis added.) The employers are not prohibited from establishing new policies under this proposed amendment. However, this proposed legislation requires that the *impact of those policies* on public employment are subject to bargaining. Specifically excluded topics, such as all aspects of the Hawaii Retirement System and the health insurance coverages of the Employer Union Trust Fund, remain outside of the collective bargaining process.

This legislative proposal places the responsibility of good faith bargaining on both parties and effectively addresses the rights and benefits for public employees under the collective bargaining law.

HFFA appreciates your Committee’s favorable consideration of this measure and thank you for the opportunity to testify.

**LATE**



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**TESTIMONY FOR HOUSE BILL 2114, HOUSE DRAFT 2, SENATE DRAFT 1,  
RELATING TO COLLECTIVE BARGAINING**

**Senate Committee on Ways and Means  
Hon. Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair  
Hon. Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair**

**Thursday, March 29, 2018, 10:50 AM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 211**

Honorable Chair Dela Cruz and committee members:

I am Kris Coffield, representing IMUAlliance, a nonpartisan political advocacy organization that currently boasts over 400 members. On behalf of our members, we offer this testimony in strong support of House Bill 2114, HD 2, SD 1, relating to collective bargaining.

There is a power in a union.

Today, political pundits prognosticate about the possible onslaught of austerity facing our nation. Many of these same pundits believe that labor unions are an impediment to economic prosperity, arguing that collective bargaining sets wages and work conditions above what the free market demands.

They couldn't be more wrong. Collective bargaining is a civil right. Unionized employees' compensation and work protections, moreover, are essential to creating an upwardly mobile middle class and continually increasing economic prosperity. As economist Paula Voos of Rutgers University School of Management and Labor Relations notes, "It is no accident that the prosperity and consumer boom of the 1950s—a period of unprecedented middle-class expansion, broad business growth, increased home ownership, rising consumer spending, and the shared expectation that a college education was within the reach of everyone and that the lives of our children would be better than our own—followed the greatest sustained expansion of unionization in American history."

Unsurprisingly, decreasing American middle-class incomes and the rapidly widening wealth gap in our country parallel a significant decline in union membership. It is imperative, then, that we promote higher productivity by strengthening labor-management relations. Through a union, employees have a means to engage with management about workplace problems, inefficient

processes, unfair work conditions, and unsupportive compensation. Unions also reduce employee turnover and increase the retention of highly experienced employees, creating circumstances that favor professional development and mutual trust in the workplace. This measure, moreover, ensures harmonious management-worker relations by guaranteeing that employers cannot arbitrarily prevent management decisions that affect work conditions from being subject to negotiation, something that local unions face far too often to the detriment of our state's hardworking women and men. Labor rights are human rights and should be respected as such, particularly at a time when federal leaders have launched a corporate-backed war on workers.

Thomas Jefferson wrote, "Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty." The same is true with basic civil rights, including the right to bargain for better pay and work conditions. We must always put democracy before dollar signs and people before profits.

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

Sincerely,  
Kris Coffield  
*Executive Director*  
IMUAlliance