

Chair Scot Matayoshi
Vice Chair Andrew Garrett

House Committee on Labor & Government Operations

Tuesday, March 14, 2023
9:30AM

**TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF SB879 SD1 RELATING TO THE
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS**

Aloha Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Garrett, Members of the House Committee on Labor & Government Operations,

My name is Jun Shin. I am a recent graduate of the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, a member of the Hawai'i State Youth Commission, a member of one of many families who received much needed relief from unemployment insurance benefits during the height of the COVID pandemic, testifying as an individual in **Strong Support** of **SB879 SD1**, Relating to the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations.

I am hoping that a just and fair amount goes toward keeping the current staff and also recruiting new personnel to work at the Department of Labor & Industrial Relations Unemployment Insurance Division. The unemployment system crashed in Hawai'i and the rest of the country during the worst of the pandemic when working people were laid off and needed relief. While my family eventually got relief after sporadic to nonexistent contact with the office for a very long time, I'm wondering how many claims were never processed to this day. As frustrating, upsetting, and scary it was, in hindsight, it was never the fault of the staff.

The staff at the Unemployment Insurance Division did the best that they could with limited resources and I'm sure they were just as scared and frustrated as we all were. They deserve as much support as we can give them to do their jobs and provide for their families, but I also hope that we can learn from the pandemic and also work to create a better unemployment system. Please **PASS Senate Bill 879 SD1** out of your committee.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Jun Shin,
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