

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR



THOMAS WILLIAMS
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

KANOE MARGOL
DEPUTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**STATE OF HAWAII
EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM**

TESTIMONY BY THOMAS WILLIAMS
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM

STATE OF HAWAII
TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
ON
HOUSE BILL NO. 2395 H.D. 1

February 27, 2024

2:00 P.M.

Conference Room 308 and VIA Videoconference

RELATING TO THE HAWAII NATIONAL GUARD.

Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Members of the Committees,

H.B. 2395 H.D. 1 proposes to exclude any member of the Hawaii National Guard (HING) who is ordered into State active duty (SAD) from membership in the Employees' Retirement System (ERS). It proposes a new Section in Chapter 88 of the Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) as well as amending the description of "Active service" under HRS § 121-29. The Employees' Retirement System (ERS) staff is providing the following comments.

Section 88-__ of H.B. 2395 H.D. 1 makes members of HING under SAD orders ineligible for ERS membership by virtue of their active duty while reinforcing that ERS membership may be maintained based on other State or county employment. The bill also affirms that ERS members on HING SAD orders may be eligible for service and compensation to be included in benefits calculations ("eligible compensation"), and that the employer provides payment of employee contributions pursuant to HRS § 88-132 as enumerated under subsection (c) of the bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on H.B. 2395 H.D. 1.



Employees' Retirement System
of the State of Hawaii

City Financial Tower • 201 Merchant Street, Suite 1400 • Honolulu, Hawaii 96813-2980
Telephone (808) 586-1735 • Fax (808) 586-1677 • <http://ers.ehawaii.gov>

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



KENNETH S. HARA
DIRECTOR OF EMERGENCY
MANAGEMENT

JAMES DS. BARROS
ADMINISTRATOR OF
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
KA 'OIHANA PILI KAUA
HAWAI'I EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY
4204 DIAMOND HEAD ROAD
HONOLULU, HAWAI'I 96816-4420

STATE OF HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
HAWAI'I EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 2395 HD1,
RELATING TO EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
FINANCE

BY

JAMES DS. BARROS
ADMINISTRATOR
HAWAI'I EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

FEBRUARY 27, 2024

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice-Chair Kitagawa, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony to **SUPPORT HB 2395 HD1**.

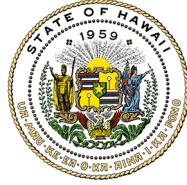
The invaluable support provided by the Hawai'i National Guard to the state and counties during emergencies cannot be overstated. As it relates to the Maui Wildfires, these dedicated soldiers and airmen, who were called to active duty by the Governor and Adjutant General, played a crucial role in ensuring the success of Lahaina's response missions. The Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency (HI-EMA) **strongly endorses** HB 2395 HD1 as it grants much-needed financial flexibility to National Guard members who do not work for the state and are required to take leave from their regular jobs.

Hawai'i National Guard members face unique challenges with their retirement system due to the temporary nature of their orders. Being exempt from Hawai'i's State's Retirement System would simplify their financial planning and alleviate any complications.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 2395 HD1.

James Barros: james.barros@hawaii.gov; 808-733-4300

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



KENNETH S. HARA
MAJOR GENERAL
ADJUTANT GENERAL
KA 'AKUKANA KENELALA

STEPHEN F. LOGAN
BRIGADIER GENERAL
DEPUTY ADJUTANT GENERAL
KA HOPE 'AKUKANA KENELALA

STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
KA 'OIHANA PILI KAUA
OFFICE OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL
3949 DIAMOND HEAD ROAD
HONOLULU, HAWAI'I 96816-4495

STATE OF HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 2395 HD1
RELATING TO THE HAWAII NATIONAL GUARD

BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

BY

MAJOR GENERAL KENNETH S. HARA
ADJUTANT GENERAL
AND DIRECTOR OF HAWAII EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

FEBRUARY 27, 2024

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice-Chair Kitagawa, and members of the committee:

I am MG Kenneth S. Hara, Adjutant General and Director of Hawaii Emergency Management Agency, State of Hawaii, Department of Defense.

The Department of Defense (DEF) provides written testimony in **SUPPORT** of HB2395 HD1.

This measure amends Hawai'i Revised Statutes (HRS) Chapter 88, Part II regarding the Employees' Retirement System (ERS) and provides an exemption for Hawai'i National Guard (HING) Servicemembers serving on State Active Duty (SAD) from requiring enrollment into the ERS once the Servicemember exceeds 90 days of service on SAD.

We have seen an increase in natural disasters throughout the State resulting in numerous HING Servicemembers being ordered to SAD in response for extended periods. With each activation, HING Servicemembers are asked to serve in an indeterminate timeframe, which has recently often exceeded 90 days. After a Servicemember exceeds 90 days on SAD, they are afforded certain employment rights as a temporary State employee, such as mandatory enrollment in the ERS.

However, to require HING Servicemembers exceeding 90 days on SAD orders to contribute to the ERS would result in them sacrificing earned compensation on a benefit they will never receive. Many Servicemembers who are ordered to SAD status are not current State or County employees in their civilian occupations and subsequently will never vest in the state's ERS nor receive the benefits of their ERS contributions. When the Servicemember requests a refund payment, the ERS will withhold at least 20% of the taxable portion of the refund and pay the Servicemember the remaining balance. The taxable portion of the contributions must also be rolled over into an IRA within 60 days of receipt of payment. Additionally, the refund is subject to an additional 10% federal income tax on the taxable portion of the refund payment for those below the age of 55. Additionally, the state will be unnecessarily burdened with expending additional resources to return the ERS contributions back to the Servicemember.

If passed, the bill will exempt HING Servicemembers from enrolling in the ERS for SAD periods that exceed 90 days. This will allow our Servicemembers to retain all their earned SAD compensation and help ensure an uninterrupted response force capability to the State.

The HING places great value on selfless service to the State of Hawai'i, as well as the well-being of our dedicated women and men of the HING who support the State during times of need. Please pass this bill and help our HING Servicemembers remain focused on their duty.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in **SUPPORT of HB2395 HD1**.

MG Kenneth S. Hara, Kenneth.s.hara@hawaii.gov; 808-672-1001

HB-2395-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2024 11:45:21 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/27/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mey Martin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support by approving HB2395 for the Airmen and Soldiers of the Hawaii National Guard that are defending and protecting the people of Hawaii.

HB-2395-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2024 11:49:47 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/27/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ricardo A. Martin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support approval of this bill in support of the Hawaii National Guard and its members.