



Robin K. Matsunaga
Ombudsman

Yvonne M.F. Jinbo
First Assistant

**OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN
STATE OF HAWAII**

465 South King Street, 4th Floor
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
Tel: 808-587-0770 Fax: 808-587-0773 TTY: 808-587-0774
complaints@ombudsman.hawaii.gov

**TESTIMONY OF ROBIN K. MATSUNAGA, OMBUDSMAN,
ON H.B. NO. 2655, H.D. 1, A BILL FOR AN ACT
MAKING APPROPRIATIONS FOR PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT COST ITEMS**

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND TECHNOLOGY

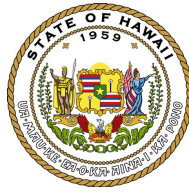
MARCH 13, 2024

Chair Aquino and Members of the Committee on Labor and Technology:

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony in support of H.B. No. 2655, H.D. 1. The purpose of this bill is to provide appropriations for public employment cost items and cost adjustments for employees of the legislative branch.

Your support and passage of this bill will allow it to serve as a vehicle during this session in the event appropriations are provided for public employment cost items and cost adjustments for employees of the executive and judicial branches.

Thank you for your consideration of this testimony and for your support.



HAWAI'I STATE ETHICS COMMISSION

State of Hawai'i · Bishop Square, 1001 Bishop Street, ASB Tower 970 · Honolulu, Hawai'i

Committee: Senate Committee on Labor and Technology
Bill Number: HB 2655 HD1
Hearing Date/Time: March 13, 2024, 3:00 p.m.
Re: Testimony of the Hawai'i State Ethics Commission in **SUPPORT** of HB 2655 HD1, Making Appropriations for Public Employment Cost Items

Aloha Chair Aquino, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Committee Members:

The Hawai'i State Ethics Commission ("Commission") **supports** HB 2655 HD1, which makes appropriations for public employment cost items and cost adjustments for legislative employees (including employees of the Commission).

The Commission's mission is to preserve public confidence in government by promoting high ethical standards among public servants. The Commission administers the State Ethics Code and Lobbyist Law (Haw. Rev. Stat. chapters 84 and 97). For purposes of the ethics code, the Commission has jurisdiction over approximately 60,000 state officials and employees. Under the lobbyist law, the Commission has jurisdiction over nearly 500 lobbyists representing more than 400 organizations that lobby the state legislature or executive branch.

In 2023, the Commission's modest staff of 12 employees responded to 1,179 requests for advice from state legislators, state employees, lobbyists, members of the public, and candidates for state elected office. Moreover, Commission staff successfully engaged 35,977 participants in a mandatory ethics training course and addressed 329 complaints related to violations of the ethics code and lobbyist law. In essence, the Commission effectively fulfills its Constitutional mandate, largely owing to the dedication and commitment of its staff.

Consequently, the Commission strongly supports ensuring its employees are adequately compensated, particularly when compared to similarly situated employees.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony on House Bill 2655 HD1.

Very truly yours,

/S/ Robert D. Harris
Robert D. Harris
Executive Director and General Counsel

Charlotte A. Carter-Yamauchi
Director

Shawn K. Nakama
First Assistant

Research 808-587-0666
Revisor 808-587-0670
Fax 808-587-0681



LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE BUREAU
State of Hawaii
State Capitol, Room 446
415 S. Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

WRITTEN COMMENTS IN SUPPORT

HB2655 HD1

MAKING APPROPRIATIONS FOR PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT COST ITEMS

Charlotte A. Carter-Yamauchi, Director
Legislative Reference Bureau

Presented to the Senate Committee on Labor and Technology

Wednesday, March 13, 2024, 3:00 p.m.
Conference Room 224 & Via Videoconference

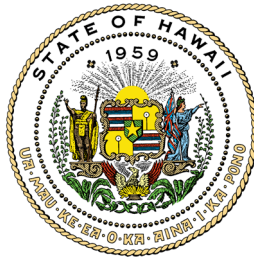
Chair Aquino and Members of the Committee:

Good afternoon, Chair Aquino and members of the Committee, my name is Charlotte Carter-Yamauchi, and I am the Director of the Legislative Reference Bureau. Thank you for this opportunity to provide written comments in **support** of H.B. No. 2655, H.D. 1, Making Appropriations For Public Employment Cost Items.

The purpose of this measure is to appropriate moneys for public employment cost items and cost adjustments for employees of the Senate, House of Representatives, and various legislative agencies who are excluded from collective bargaining for the 2024-2025 Fiscal Biennium.

The Bureau supports this measure and appreciates the Legislature's efforts to ensure that Bureau staff are compensated equitably with their civil service counterparts.

Thank you again for the opportunity to submit written comments in support of H.B. No. 2655, H.D. 1.



SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND TECHNOLOGY
The Honorable Henry J.C. Aquino, Chair
The Honorable Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

**H.B. NO. 2655, H.D. 1, MAKING APPROPRIATIONS FOR PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT
COST ITEMS.**

Hearing: Wednesday, March 13, 2024, 3:00 p.m.

The Office of the Auditor **supports** H.B. No. 2655, H.D. 1, which is intended to appropriate funds to certain legislative agencies, including the Office of the Auditor, to fund Hawai'i employer-union health benefits trust fund costs and other cost adjustments authorized by Chapter 89C, Hawai'i Revised Statutes, for employees of the Legislative Branch excluded from collective bargaining.

We support providing our staff, none of whom are members of collective bargaining units, the same benefits, including salary adjustments, as those employees included in collective bargaining.

We have submitted detailed budget information in our testimony in support of H.B. No. 2520, the appropriations bill for the legislative branch. Testimony previously submitted to the Committee on Finance on H.B. No. 2520 is available here:
https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/sessions/session2024/Testimony/HB2520_TESTIMONY_FIN_02-06-24_.PDF (beginning on page 38).

Thank you for considering our testimony related to H.B. No. 2655, H.D. 1.