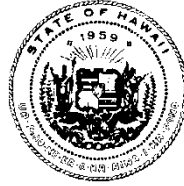


JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR



HAKIM OUANSAFI
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

BARBARA E. ARASHIRO
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

STATE OF HAWAII
HAWAII PUBLIC HOUSING AUTHORITY
1002 NORTH SCHOOL STREET
POST OFFICE BOX 17907
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96817

IN REPLY, PLEASE REFER TO:

Statement of
Hakim Ouansafi, Executive Director
Hawaii Public Housing Authority

Before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING

Wednesday, March 13, 2024
10:00 AM – Room 312, Hawaii State Capitol

In consideration of
SB 3120, SD1
RELATING TO THE HAWAII PUBLIC HOUSING AUTHORITY

Honorable Chair Evslin, and members of the House Committee on Housing, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on Senate Bill (SB) 3120, SD1, relating to the Hawaii Public Housing Authority.

The Hawaii Public Housing Authority (HPHA) is in **strong support** of the enactment of SB 3120, SD1. This Administrative measure establishes, exempt from chapter 76, HRS, the position of a Housing Policy and Program Coordinator in the Hawaii Public Housing Authority (HPHA), whose salary shall be set by the Executive Director of the HPHA. Clarifies that the employment of certain positions and the adjustment of salaries are authorized by the Executive Director and not the Board of Directors. Deletes the wage ceiling requirement for positions in the HPHA.

This bill will add the new Housing Policy and Program Coordinator position that will be responsible for the overall policy and program research and execution of program rules and regulations for the HPHA's Rental Assistance Program (Section 8), Federal Low-Income Public Housing, Moving-to-Work (MTW) Demonstration Program Designation, and other subsidized housing programs.

The United States Congress and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) have created numerous rule changes through the Housing Opportunity Through Modernization Act and Fair Housing Act. There is also the future program implementation of HUD's National Standards for the Physical Inspection of Real Estate (NSPIRE) to assist in improving low-income public housing quality, health, and safety. All of these new and future policy and program changes will be effectively and efficiently researched, coordinated, implemented, and monitored by the Housing Policy and Program Coordinator to keep the HPHA compliant with all current and future laws, rules and regulations.

Additionally, this bill will also clarify the title of the Chief Financial Officer, and codify into statute the currently exempt positions of Chief Compliance Officer, Housing Contract and Procurement Officer, and Human Resources and Safety Officer positions, which were established exempt from section 76-16(b) before 2014, clarify that the staff report to the Executive Director, and authorize the Executive Director to hire staff that may need salaries that are required to be above the Governor's salary due to the HPHA's redevelopment efforts.

The HPHA appreciates the opportunity to provide the Committee with the HPHA's testimony. We thank you very much for your dedicated support.



HAWAII GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION
AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO

RANDY PERREIRA, Executive Director • Tel: 808.543.0011 • Fax: 808.528.0922

The Thirty-Second Legislature, State of Hawaii
The House of Representatives
Committee on Housing

Testimony by
Hawaii Government Employees Association

March 13, 2024

S.B. 3120, S.D.1 – RELATING TO THE HAWAII
PUBLIC HOUSING AUTHORITY

The Hawaii Government Employees Association, AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO strongly opposes S.B. 3120, S.D. 1, which establishes, exempt from chapter 76, HRS, the position of a Housing Policy and Program Coordinator in the Hawai'i Public Housing Authority, whose salary shall be set by the Executive Director of the Hawai'i Public Housing Authority. Clarifies that the employment of certain positions and the adjustment of salaries are authorized by the Executive Director and not the Board of Directors.

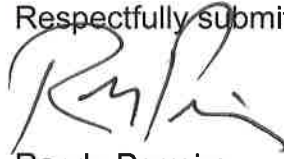
The HGEA has serious concerns and questions the need to exempt the Chief Compliance Officer, a Housing Contract and Procurement Officer, a Human Resource and Safety Officer, and a Housing and Policy and Program Coordinator. The use of exempt employees, which are considered "at will" by the state, is completely contrary to the principles of civil service. Exempt employees do not have the same rights and benefits of civil service employees, and that is inherently unfair. We have consistently opposed the creation of more exempt positions in state government and have advocated for sensible civil service reform.

Instead of creating more exempt positions, the civil service system must become more flexible and competitive. This measure goes to the larger issue which is that the state needs to invest in its current and future civil service workforce – increasing the position pay and offering modern and attractive recruitment and retention incentives, along with increasing the hiring time is paramount. Hiring of exempt employees is a band-aid fix to address the underlying issues within the state government workforce. We have seen many bills this session targeted at exempting positions, and we suspect that it is due to the Department of Human Resources and Development inability to reduce hiring time and/or unwillingness to provide competitive pay and it's unfortunate that current and future employees may have to pay the price because of this.

Additionally, in accordance with Hawaii Revised Statutes, Chapter 89-9 and the applicable collective bargaining agreement – **wages, hours, and other terms and conditions of employment are subject to negotiations between the employer and exclusive representative (union)**. Therefore, for employees covered under Chapter 89-9, both the employer and the union shall mutually agree before any changes are made to that individual's salary.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in opposition to S.B. 3120, S.D. 1.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Randy Perreira', written over the typed name.

Randy Perreira
Executive Director