

JOSH GREEN, M. D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA

SYLVIA LUKE
LT. GOVERNOR
KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



BRENN A H. HASHIMOTO
DIRECTOR
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

RYAN YAMANE
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT
KA 'OIHANA HO'OMŌHALA LIMAHANA
235 S. BERETANIA STREET
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-2437

Statement of
BRENN A H. HASHIMOTO
Director, Department of Human Resources Development

Before the
**SENATE COMMITTEES ON LABOR AND TECHNOLOGY
AND
GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS**

Friday, February 2, 2024
3:00 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 224

In consideration of
SB2598, RELATING TO TELEWORK

Chairs Aquino and McKelvey, Vice Chairs Moriwaki and Gabbard, and members of the committees.

The Department of Human Resources Development (DHRD) offers **comments** on SB2598.

The purpose of the bill is to revise any rules, policies, and guidelines relating to telework by state employees, including the State of Hawaii telework program guidelines, to limit telework to a maximum of two days per week for state employees, except during a declaration of a national or state emergency and to set forth guidelines and restrictions, including appropriate supervision and accountability standards.

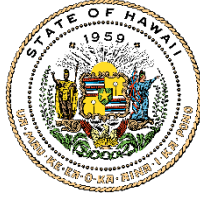
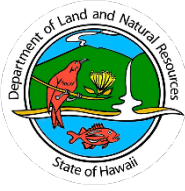
DHRD offers the following comments:

- 1) DHRD currently has a memorandum of understanding on the telework program guidelines that was implemented in March 2023 with the Hawaii Government Employees Association which does not specifically address the number of days an employee may work remotely. As such, any modifications to the guidelines will require consultation with the union.
- 2) Departments have the authority to set the parameters on the number of days employees may telework during the week.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR | KE KIA'ĀINA

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



STATE OF HAWAI'I | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
KA 'OIHANA KUMUWAIWAI 'ĀINA

P.O. BOX 621
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

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STATE PARKS

Testimony of
DAWN N.S. CHANG
Chairperson

Before the Senate Committees on
LABOR AND TECHNOLOGY
And
GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

Thursday, February 2, 2024
3:00 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 224

In consideration of
SENATE BILL 2598
RELATING TO TELEWORK

Senate Bill 2598 proposes to limit telework to a maximum of two days per week for State employees, except for during a declaration of a national or state emergency, and requires the telework rules, policies, and guidelines to set forth guidelines and restrictions, including appropriate supervision and accountability standards to ensure the provision of appropriate State services to the public. **While the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) acknowledges the intent of this measure, the DLNR offers the following comments.**

Existing State of Hawai'i Telework Program Guidelines provides for the following when State departments elect to participate in the telework program:

1. Regardless of whether telework is permitted on a full- or part-time basis and the number of employees who may be allowed to telework, departments must ensure that they are appropriately staffed and able to perform critical work to maintain the normal level of operations and services.
2. The best interest of the department and/or the State shall be the major factor in reviewing individual requests.
3. The decision whether to allow an employee to participate in a part-time, hybrid or full-time telework arrangement is at the discretion of the Department Head or designated representative.

4. Employees whose work and/or performance require supervision shall not be eligible for the telework program, e.g., employees on probational status, employees requiring training and monitoring, employees whose work performance requires close supervision for improvement, etc.
5. The amount of work teleworkers are expected to complete per day or per pay period remains unchanged.
6. Teleworkers are required to meet regularly with their supervisor/manager, either in person or virtually, to receive work assignments and to review work completed, as directed.
7. Work shall be performed in accordance with standard work procedures and guidelines. Program and work performance shall be measured by focusing on quality, quantity and timeliness of work.
8. During an employee's telework hours, the employees must be available to be reached at the remote work site by email, phone, and/or other communication method established by the supervisor/manager. The employee is expected to maintain the same response time as if they were at the central work site.
9. Supervisors/managers must be able to contact the teleworker at the remote work site at any time during the employee's telework hours. Supervisors/managers are expected to engage in regular contact with employees working at the remote work site.
10. Teleworkers shall be available for on-line meetings, conference calls, trainings and other required activities as directed by the supervisor/manager.
11. Teleworkers must notify their supervisor/manager immediately of any situation that interferes with their ability to perform their job duties at the remote work site and utilize the appropriate accrued time off in accordance with applicable policies, procedures, Executive Order, and/or collective bargaining agreements.
12. Departments are required to review, monitor and evaluate employee participation in the program as well as impact on overall operations at least on an annual basis.

In addition, prior to granting a telework request, the DLNR requires its supervisors and employees to establish expected deliverables while teleworking and utilize a production log that documents work completed while teleworking, and which is reviewed and certified by the supervisor that the work performed while teleworking was satisfactory.

Overall, the DLNR believes that the ability to telework can be used as a recruitment and retention tool to attract potential applicants for positions that are suitable for telework.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.

SB-2598

Submitted on: 1/31/2024 4:11:06 PM

Testimony for LBT on 2/2/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sherry Pollack	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairs, Vice Chairs, and Committee Members

I am writing in strong opposition to SB2598 which would require the Director of the Department of Human Resources Development to revise rules, policies, and guidelines to limit state employees' telework to a maximum of two days per week. By limiting telework to a maximum of two days per week, this measure represents backward thinking and ignores the many benefits that can be derived from offering telework as an option.

As a retired state worker who was employed with the State during the pandemic, I can attest to the benefits of telework, both for the employer and the employee. During the pandemic when I was allowed to telework, I was actually able to increase my productivity compared to days I needed to commute to the office. This was because the time spent to commute to work was eliminated, and I was able to take advantage of this extra time. If anything, I would have to say that I had to be disciplined to stop working at the end of the day as the need to catch the bus to return home was not a concern. Based on stories shared by fellow employees, I know this was not an isolated response.

However, even if a worker simply works their normal eight hours, it still benefits both the employer and employee. Studies find that employees who telework note:

- Savings on fuel, vehicle maintenance and parking.
- Reduces stress and produces an improved work/life balance.
- Increases productivity and job satisfaction.

All these things are a win:win for employers and their staff.

Teleworking is also an important policy that will address our critical need to reduce greenhouse gases by eliminating the commute, and as a result, help stop climate breakdown. If we are serious about addressing climate change, these types of policies need to be considered.

For the reasons stated above, I urge this committee to oppose this misguided measure.

SB-2598

Submitted on: 2/1/2024 10:56:02 AM

Testimony for LBT on 2/2/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shana Wailana Kukila	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Full support for bill SB2598.

There should also be required of DHRD to provide a proposed strategic plan for telework prior to full implementation and how this plan for telework fits into the overall workforce development plan statewide. It is also important to note the importance of providing options for the disabled or state retirees who left work because of the pandemic in terms of telework opportunities within state government. This is as swath of our community who are currently underemployed, and who could benefit greatly from telework. Therefore they should be considered a key stakeholder in any workforce development plan for the state in terms of telework.

Mahalo,

Shana W. Kukila

Hilo, HI

Dear Chairs Senator Aquino and Senator McKelvey, Vice Chairs, and Members of the Committees,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to Senate Bill SB2598, which seeks to limit state employees' telework to a maximum of two days per week and introduces unnecessary supervision and accountability standards. As a former state employee who has left the Executive Branch due to inflexible working conditions, I have witnessed firsthand the benefits and challenges associated with telework.

The [Government Best Practices Report](#) developed by the Office of Planning and Sustainable Development (OPSD) provides comprehensive guidance on establishing equitable and effective telework policies. Notably, the report does not recommend arbitrary telework maximums but emphasizes **establishing policies that provide clear guidelines for teleworking and that also allow departments to establish their own teleworking practices within those guidelines**. SB2598 deviates from these best practices and, instead, proposes restrictions that hinder the flexibility and productivity that telework can offer.

The 2021 OPSD telework study found that 54.5% of employees who teleworked during the pandemic reported that between 81 and 100 percent of their job responsibilities could be done remotely. **Moreover, among employees interested in future telework opportunities, the average preferred number of telework days was 3.7**. This statistic reflects a clear demand and desire among state employees in Hawaii for increased telework flexibility.

Telework has proven to be a valuable tool for businesses and employees alike, contributing to increased productivity, reduced commuting times, and improved work-life balance. For state government employees in Hawai'i, telework opportunities remain a crucial tool to recruit and retain dedicated, hard working employees.

It is crucial to acknowledge that telework is a privilege, not an entitlement. However, rather than imposing restrictive measures, state employees should be trusted and supported in teleworking arrangements. Fostering a culture of trust will contribute to a more positive and productive work environment.

I urge the committee to reconsider the provisions of SB2598 and align them with the best practices outlined in the Government report. Implementing a telework policy that reflects the needs and preferences of state employees will not only enhance job satisfaction but also contribute to the overall efficiency and effectiveness of state government operations.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Jordan Smith



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 Senate
Committee on Labor and Technology
Committee on Government Operations

Testimony by
Hawaii Government Employees Association

February 2, 2024

S.B. 2598 — RELATING TO TELEWORK

The Hawaii Government Employees Association, AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO strongly opposes the purpose and intent of S.B. 2598 which Requires the Director of the Department of Human Resources Development to revise rules, policies, and guidelines to limit state employees telework to a maximum of two days per week and set forth supervision and accountability standards to ensure appropriate state services to the public.

During the Regular Session of 1999, the Legislature passed S.B. 1518, which became Act 100, Session Laws of Hawaii, 1999. Section 2 of the legislation amended §89-9 HRS by denying the Exclusive Representatives and Employers the ability to negotiate health benefit cost items for the biennium 1999 – 2001. In 2002, the Hawaii Supreme Court upheld the 1999 Circuit Court ruling that Section 2 of Act 100, SLH 1999 violated the rights of public employees as stipulated under Article XIII, Section 2 of the Hawaii State Constitution, and that the Legislature went beyond its constitutional authority by abrogating the rights of public employees to organize for the purpose of collective bargaining.

We must stress that any changes to an included bargaining unit employee's wages, hours, and terms and conditions of work are constitutionally protected and must be negotiated and mutually agreed upon prior to implementation. Therefore, regardless of any legislative directives to update the current telework program guidelines and establish policies and procedures to limit the days of teleworking for state employees, the Employer and the Exclusive Representative must mutually agree upon the provisions of any telework or alternative work week agreement set forth in this measure.

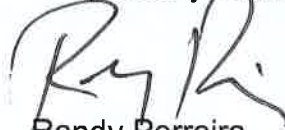
Telework and alternative work schedules are innovative solutions that ensure workplace flexibility, and we fully recognize the many benefits they can have on employees, the employer, and the public, including a better work-life balance, increased productivity, and

possible cost-savings from reduced energy and office space use. Workplace flexibility can also be utilized as a tool to help the employer recruit and retain the best and brightest employees, where government salary and benefits alone may not compete with what's offered in the private sector. Additionally, the younger generation appreciates the use of telework and views it as an essential part of any employment package – a generation that our state government desperately needs to recruit in its worsening vacancy crisis.

We find it extremely disheartening that Legislators have repeatedly questioned the integrity and productivity of our members. Degrading our members for allegedly not answering the phone, missing meetings, and not tending to every public need is not appropriate. We find it interesting that certain legislators are labeling teleworkers as the 'boogey man' for the reduction in services to the public –however, they fail to recognize the states vacancy crisis. The reason why phones aren't being picked up is not due to teleworking employees – they aren't being picked up because the call centers are severely understaffed. Our members are burnt out, overworked, fed up and limiting telework will only make it worse. Furthermore, limiting telework will prove to be a disincentive for future applicants from working for the state – telework is modern benefit that the state must utilize to recruit and retain a competitive workforce. We are not living in the 1980s anymore – we are in 2024.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in opposition to S.B. 2598.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Randy Perreira', written in a cursive style.

Randy Perreira
Executive Director

SB-2598

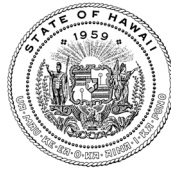
Submitted on: 2/1/2024 1:15:03 PM

Testimony for LBT on 2/2/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Johnvan Dias	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Employees need to get back to work.



JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

STATE OF HAWAII
HAWAII EMPLOYER-UNION HEALTH BENEFITS TRUST FUND
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HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813
Oahu (808) 586-7390
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TESTIMONY BY DEREK MIZUNO
ADMINISTRATOR, HAWAII EMPLOYER-UNION HEALTH BENEFITS TRUST FUND
DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
STATE OF HAWAII
TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND TECHNOLOGY AND COMMITTEE ON
GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS
ON SENATE BILL NO. 2598

February 2, 2024
3:00 p.m.
Conference Room 24 & Videoconference

RELATING TO TELEWORK

Chairs Aquino and McKelvey, Vice Chairs Moriwaki and Gabbard, and Members of the Committees:

The Hawaii Employer-Union Health Benefits Trust Fund (EUTF) Board of Trustees has not taken a position on this bill. EUTF staff would like to provide comments.

During the pandemic, EUTF information technology staff were able to establish secure access to our systems and certain EUTF staff, based on their position and work habits, were able to successfully telework. Employees who daily service the membership (e.g. call center staff) were not and are not eligible to telework. Teleworking continued after the pandemic under the State Department of Human Resources Development Telework Program Guidelines. The teleworkers complete timesheets and their productivity is monitored by their supervisors. Teleworking allowed us to reduce office space by 20% including corresponding rent and CAM charges (approximately \$100,000 annually) as of July 1, 2021. Teleworkers, who come into the office generally on the same day of the week, reserve a "hoteling" cubicle. The current system is working well for the EUTF.

EUTF's Mission: We care for the health and well being of our beneficiaries by striving to provide quality benefit plans that are affordable, reliable, and meet their changing needs. We provide informed service that is excellent, courteous, and compassionate.

The requirement to have staff come into the office three days a week would be difficult to accommodate:

- 48 required hoteling cubicle days per week = projected teleworkers (16) multiplied by 3 days per week exceeds available hoteling cubicles
- 40 hoteling cubicle days available per week = hoteling cubicles (8) multiplied by 5 days per week.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

LATE

I am against SB2598. I work for DHS and have been fortunate to telework full-time. Like many other parents in Hawaii, I am a working parent to make ends meet and have limited time with my children after work on weekdays. Teleworking has allowed me to gain more time after work by removing work travel time. My work hours hasn't changed, but I gain back 45 minutes at the minimum each work day. Those extra minutes have tremendously enhanced a work/life balance. I am less stressed and have time to spend with my family or have been able to finally put my kids in extracurricular activities. We all have been getting better sleep because we don't have to wake up earlier than we used to. Here are a few examples:

- Able to cook dinner earlier and actually take the kids to the park after work
- Finally put my kids in swimming lessons (I was embarrassed for my child who had to be the only one out of her friends that needs a floaty)
- Child is able to attend soccer practice
- Been able to be more present in child's education, more time to help with homework

In the church I am a member of, we keep the Sabbath Day holy and do not engage in extracurricular activities, which leaves us with only Saturday to do all these things. I know that there are parents out there that make it work while working physically in an office, and that's awesome! But for my family, telework has been a huge blessing.

Also, this will impact childcare. My toddler's sitter's hours are 7:00am – 4:30pm, I can make it to work at 7:30am but there is no way possible I can pick up my child at 4:30pm if I get off at 4:15pm. It took months for my son to be comfortable with his sitter and don't want to have go through all over again. If I have to go into the office, I will also have to enroll my children in early morning care (I can't pay for part-time morning care), which is an extra expense. Having that extra expense plus gas money will add up. Hawaii is already expensive as it is!

Our division has been amazing to make it possible to telework full-time. We all have laptops, multiple monitors, docking station, O365 (SharePoint), Microsoft Teams, VPN, Webex phone numbers, etc. There has been good communication and I am able to reach coworkers without any trouble. I'm a believer of the phrase, "if it's not broken, why fix it?" While allowing us to telework, there has been amazing work coming out of MQD. A few examples: provider application backlog decreased, effective communication/work with health plans and providers during COVID PHE, processing post-PHE member redeterminations, etc. I am in favor of allowing employees of any State agency to telework (if allowed due to job duties). It benefits the employee which benefits the company.

LATE

SB-2598

Submitted on: 2/2/2024 1:02:00 AM

Testimony for LBT on 2/2/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Priscilla	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Telework is productive. It cuts down stress in transporting between office and back home including driving in traffic. Telework staff can start a day of work fresh with full energy.

In addition, telework attends meetings virtually which removes the travel time from an individual staff's cubicle to the conference room. As a result, conference call can be back to back without any delay.

There also is a good chance that working in the office will interact with colleagues whom might pop into individual staff's cubicle to discuss issues. However, this approach actually takes away focus work time and not productive.

End products from various projects can prove telework is productive. This bill lacks of trust on the telework staff.

Thank you.

Priscilla

LATE

SB-2598

Submitted on: 2/2/2024 10:32:43 AM

Testimony for LBT on 2/2/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mary H Toves	Testifying for Med Quest	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We all need to have teleworking continue. For those who are able to telework it save us gas, time and provide a healthy work life balance and is a added benefit to be able to continue this type of work setting. Alot of my work is via computer system that already has been in place to assist clients. I get over 400 daily faxes, emails, via online application and enrollments that is a constant work load that I can tackle each day and over the weekend if need be. Teleworking is a benefit to employees. It doesn't even cost the state money to pay for my electricity and internet. To me it's a win win situation. We must work together to allow the ever changing workforce to keep your loyal employess happy. When you take away benefits like this then you will find it hard to find employees because the upcoming generation of worker want this. So please consider to keep teleworking going. I do understand those who think it not good. but we already rotate in to the office to do the work that needs to be done for our department and this has extremely work. To be restricted and limit the days for telework that is too much. We are all adults and we took this job to help people. That has not change. We are still reaching out to kupuna and all clients via our system. Mahalo for your time and understand!

LATE

SB-2598

Submitted on: 2/2/2024 11:10:38 AM

Testimony for LBT on 2/2/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Yvonne	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I believe workers should be able to telework M-F. This allows workers to be sick at home with enough strength to work but not get anyone else at the office sick and to save leave until they really need it. I do think coming into the office as needed but not only allowing 2 days a week to work from home. This saves space at the office and state offices/buildings can downsize its space since not everyone is in at the same time. I love to telework and I don't want it limited to only 2 days a week.

LATE

SB-2598

Submitted on: 2/2/2024 11:16:09 AM

Testimony for LBT on 2/2/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marcy Healey	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide my personal testimony against SB2598. I am a state employee with a hybrid in-office/telework schedule which my supervisor and I have agreed upon, based upon the nature of my work, and for which I would like to have the ability to continue, without a law stating how many days I can telework. I do not know the motive for SB2598 - if it is related to the assumption that telework contributes to lower work quality and decreased productivity, I disagree. I think poor work is a product of poor supervisor oversight.

Teleworking contributes to my increased productivity. Teleworking provides less distractions and attending virtual meetings increases my work time as there is no need to use work time to travel to and from in-person meetings. My job satisfaction is increased by teleworking because of the increase of uninterrupted work time and the elimination of commute and travel time.

I think arbitrarily setting a telework day limit will add more inflexibility for the state employee and this will contribute to the ongoing problem of low recruitment and retention rates.

Thank you for your time and attention. Please do not support SB2598.

LATE

SB-2598

Submitted on: 2/2/2024 11:22:26 AM

Testimony for LBT on 2/2/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Daniel Hironaka	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am submitting testimony in strong opposition to SB2598. Department directors of their respective departments should be the ones overseeing teleworking policies. Directors are the ones who are most aware of their department's needs and demands. Consolidating that authority to DHRD undercuts a director's ability to lead their department as they see fit. Department directors and leadership are perfectly capable of developing their own teleworking policy. They do not need the legislature's help in this regard.

Furthermore, setting a hard limit to teleworking will limit the state's negotiating power in trying to fill much needed vacancies. The state is hurting for talent that's being lost to the private sector and to the mainland. If anything, we should be doing all we can to recruit and retain talent that'll help overworked and understaffed state departments better service the public. Offering telework is one of the best bargaining chips we have.

Finally, teleworking brings forth positive externalities for the state such as a reduction of traffic during peak hours, slowing down the wear and tear of state buildings, and improves the quality of life for employees. Personally speaking, my ability to telework has allowed me to find a better work-life balance.

I am a staunch supporter of having as many jobs adopt teleworking as an option if possible and viable. My big fear about this bill is that it may eventually lead to the state scrapping teleworking as an option altogether or the very least, making it practically impossible to pursue. I'm not sure why so many workplaces are starting to get rid of well-established teleworking policies when it's been proven that workers still remain productive while working from home. Merely seeing butts in seats does not equate to being productive. Please reconsider the merits of this bill and do not move it forward.

Mahalo.

LATE

SB-2598

Submitted on: 2/2/2024 11:23:31 AM

Testimony for LBT on 2/2/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Megan Hironaka	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am strongly testifying against SB 2598, which requires the Director of the Department of Human Resources Development to revise rules, policies, and guidelines to limit state employees' telework to a maximum of two days per week, and set forth supervision and accountability standards to ensure appropriate state services to the public.

State employees are committed to serving and providing quality work whether they are in offices or working remotely. State directors are intelligent leaders that know front-facing employees need to do their jobs in person. They also have the leadership skills to determine which employees are able to efficiently complete their work remotely. Providing department directors the ability to have oversight of telework policies allows for this employee benefit where it is appropriate and makes state employment competitive with other private employers. Providing the benefit of telework promotes overall healthy work-life balance.

With the rising costs of living and ongoing transportation challenges, I firmly believe the state should do all it can to support its workforce, which will in turn lead to better services and programs. One significant way to support its workforce is allowing directors oversight of telework policies, rather than arbitrarily limiting policies to 2 days a week.

Mahalo.

LATE

SB-2598

Submitted on: 2/2/2024 11:25:18 AM

Testimony for LBT on 2/2/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Emerald Adams	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Kāko‘o ‘ole.

LATE

SB-2598

Submitted on: 2/2/2024 12:01:11 PM

Testimony for LBT on 2/2/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Brittany Johnson	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I oppose bill SB2598. I think that teleworking attracts more quality workers with being competitive with other states and private agencies. It allows citizens to spend more time with family as some people have to spend hours of their day commuting to and from the work site. As a recipient of state benefits I have been able to reach agencies by phone and email with ease allowing me to not have to take time out of me day to go into an office. I believe the choice of telework make for a happier and healthy employee --i believe the state would lose GREAT workers if the bill was to be passed. I encourage you to vote AGAINST this bill and stand with the workers of Hawaii.

LATE

SB-2598

Submitted on: 2/2/2024 12:23:50 PM

Testimony for LBT on 2/2/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jodeen Wai	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Jodeen Wai. I am testifying in opposition to SB2598 relating to Telework.

I started working for the State in 2015. The COVID Public Health Emergency in 2020 allowed for opportunity to work from home which was something I never knew could be an option working with the State.

I've been able to work from home since and have seen the differences in my quality of life, morale with co-workers and team having been able to work from home vs working at the office.

It should not be generalized that "every state worker should be required to report to work (in office) 2 days a week". I disagree for the following reasons:

1. Everyone's work styles are different.

Some people can and love to work from home. Some people can and love to work in office.

The main question I'd ask is if the individual is accountable and meeting work expectations?

Can they set their life boundaries?

When I worked in the office there was opportunity for a lot of distraction. Cubicles did not help me with hearing phone conversations and meeting conversations...I would always try to put my earphones on to be able to focus. Being at home I have my own space and can focus. We were also equipped with what was needed to work from home. We should have the opportunity to choose what works best and then show through our work efforts that we can be professional and account for the work we are doing.

2. Working from home has helped reduce additional cost.

By not being required to go to work everyday in person, I am saving costs on gas, car maintenance and in essence "Saving the Planet".

Cost of Living is rising...any opportunity to reduce costs is much appreciated.

3. Morale has grown in our workplace.

I think that because I do not see my coworkers in person everyday, I'm excited to see them when I do. Gossip/Drama is reduced and time is not wasted "wala'au" ing. If we look at pre and post teleworking I truly think numbers/reports regarding interpersonal conflicts to HR have been reduced. In turn saving a lot of time. Sick Leave is probably reduced too.

4. Its an appeal to our future state workers to be able to work from home full time.

How many individuals are retiring vs. younger work force applying. We need younger individuals to apply. When we look at the longevity of state worker here in Hawaii providing the telework option flexibilities that are not considered in this bill should be an option.

Being of the younger workforce who has 20+ years more until retirement, working from home appeals to me. My generation has also grown up with the flexibilities provided through technology.

I don't see an issue with why there needs to be a generalized standard for all DHS to need to return to work 2 days a week. Departments and their Administration should be provided the opportunity to operationalize addressing staff issues if working from home is not working.

Working from home full time should be an option to state workers. It allows for different types of work styles, brings increased morale, reduces costs and appeals to our future generations.

Happy Aloha Friday.

Mahalo to our council members for your time, consideration and review.

Jodeen Wai