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WRITTEN ONLY
TESTIMONY BY LUIS P. SALAVERIA
DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS
ON
SENATE BILL NO. 2644

February 6, 2024
3:10 p.m.
Room 225 and Videoconference

RELATING TO A LEGISLATIVE BUDGET OFFICE

The Department of Budget and Finance (B&F) offers comments on this bill.

Senate Bill No. 2644 establishes a Legislative Budget Office to provide reports and notes on fiscal impact legislation on the fiscal impact of proposed legislation. This bill would also repeal the currently non-functioning Office of the Legislative Analyst and Joint Legislative Budget Committee which was originally established to provide the Legislature with necessary revenue and expenditure data and analyses from which economic and fiscal policies can be developed.

B&F would like to point out that the functions sought by the proposed Legislative Budget Office could be carried out by the currently unimplemented Office of the Legislative Analyst and Joint Legislative Budget Committee if an appropriate funding source was used. It is also noted that currently, the Senate Committee on Ways and Means and House Committee on Finance share similar responsibilities and duties as proposed by this measure.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

SB-2644

Submitted on: 2/1/2024 5:48:06 PM

Testimony for GVO on 2/6/2024 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Justin Silva	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Establishes the legislative budget office to produce fiscal analyses and reports on bills impacting state or county finances

SB-2644

Submitted on: 2/2/2024 11:40:49 AM

Testimony for GVO on 2/6/2024 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
carol lee kamekona	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I fully support this Bill as Transparency is much needed to regain the People's Trust in our elected officials. This Bill will be manned by a separate entity and frees up the legislative staff to do other things.

SB-2644

Submitted on: 2/6/2024 9:13:41 AM

Testimony for GVO on 2/6/2024 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Charles Jonsson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair McKelvey, Vice Chair Gabbard, and members of the Government Operations Committee.

I'm offering this testimony in **STRONG SUPPORT** of Senate Bill 2644, relating to a Legislative Budget Office.

As a staffer with the House of Representatives currently working my second session here at the Legislature, something that strikes me is the apparent lack of publicly available financial analysis for most if not all the bills I see make their way through this place. Sure, I can read the dollar amount of the appropriation that shows up at the bottom of the bill, but that doesn't tell me anything about the impact this money will have. Will it have a negative or a positive effect on our local economy? Is it an investment or just wasteful spending? I can only guess.

By contrast, when I'm following the work of our representatives on the federal level, I have easy access to a vast database of detailed, reliable, and non-partisan financial reports that show the projected costs and revenues of proposed legislation, courtesy of the Congressional Budget Office of the US Congress. These reports remove a lot of the guesswork from the equation, providing an invaluable public service to those who prefer to form their opinions on the basis of robust and reliable data.

For the sake of a transparent and fact-based legislative process, I strongly urge you to vote in favor of the establishment of a Legislative Budget Office at the Hawai'i State Legislature.

Mahalo.

Charles Jonsson

Chinatown