

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR



STATE OF HAWAII  
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS  
KA 'OIHANA PONO LIMAHANA

JADE T. BUTAY  
DIRECTOR

WILLIAM G. KUNSTMAN  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

April 4, 2025

To: The Honorable Henry J.C. Aquino, Chair  
The Honorable Chris Lee, Vice Chair, and  
Members of the Labor and Technology Committee

Date: Friday, April 4, 2025  
Time: 3:00 p.m.  
Place: Conference Room 224, State Capitol

From: Jade T. Butay, Director  
Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR)

**Re: G.M. 744, Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Hawai'i Workforce Development Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, AMBER AKANA, for a term to expire 06-30-2029.**

The Department of Labor and Industrial Relations **supports** the confirmation of Amber Akana to the Workforce Development Council.

Ms. Akana has been with the Seafarers International Union since 2012. During her tenure she has risen to be its Safety Director and Business Representative ensuring merchant mariners' safety on ships and vessels, addressing crew members grievances and recruitment initiatives in the maritime industry. Her strong dedication to safety and protecting the job security of her members is fundamental to the wellbeing and prosperity of our State.

Over the course of her career, Ms. Akana has demonstrated that she possesses the ability, know-how, and passion that will make her an invaluable member of the Council.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Governor's Message 744.



## UNITED PUBLIC WORKERS

AFSCME Local 646, AFL-CIO

### THE SENATE KA 'AHA KENEKOA

### THE THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE REGULAR SESSION OF 2025

### COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND TECHNOLOGY

Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Chair

Senator Chris Lee, Vice Chair

Friday, April 4, 2025, 3:00 PM  
Conference Room 224 & Videoconference

**Re: Testimony on GM744 - Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Hawaii Workforce Development Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, AMBER AKANA, for a term to expire 06-30-2029**

Chair Aquino, Vice Chair Lee, and Members of the Committee:

The United Public Workers, AFSCME Local 646, AFL-CIO ("UPW") is the exclusive bargaining representative for approximately 14,000 public employees, which includes blue collar, non-supervisory employees in Bargaining Unit 1 and institutional, health, and correctional employees in Bargaining Unit 10, in the State of Hawaii and various counties. The UPW also represents 1,500 members in the private sector.

UPW **strongly supports** GM744, which nominates Ms. Amber Akana to the Hawaii Workforce Development Council, for a term to expire 06-30-2029.

Ms. Akana's work as the Safety Director & Business Representative for the Seafarer's International Union requires her to conduct regular visits to work sites and conduct safety checks and address any concern. She is also tasked with recruitment and ensuring the proper training for those joining their trade. As an Administrative Assistant she was tasked with running daily operations. UPW is confident her background and professional experiences make her an asset to the Council.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of Ms. Akana's nomination.

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**HAWAII GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION**

AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO

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

The Thirty-Third Legislature, State of Hawaii  
The Senate  
Committee on Labor and Technology

Testimony by  
Hawaii Government Employees Association

April 4, 2025

GM744 – SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION TO THE  
HAWAII WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL, GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE,  
AMBER AKANA, FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE 6-30-2029.

The Hawaii Government Employees Association, AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO strongly supports the nomination of Amber Akana, to the Hawaii Workforce Development Council.

Ms. Akana graduated from Farrington High School and earned a Bachelors Degree of Culinary Arts from the Western Culinary Institute. Ms. Akana has over sixteen years of experience with the Seafarers International Union where she has supported members by advocating for workplace safety, addressing worksite issues through the grievance process, and the recruitment of new mariners by actively participating in job fairs. We believe that Ms. Akana will be a valuable asset on the Council as they play a vital role in aligning our workforce programs with the state's economic development strategies and addressing unmet workforce and economic development needs across the state.

We offer our unequivocal support and endorsement of Amber Akana's nomination to the Hawaii Workforce Development Council and kindly ask the favorable consideration of your committee for his candidacy.

Respectfully submitted,

Randy Perreira  
Executive Director



## **HAWAII STATE AFL-CIO**

888 Mililani Street, Suite 501 • Honolulu, Hawaii 96813  
Telephone: (808) 597-1441 • Fax: (808) 593-2149

The Thirty-Third Legislature  
The Senate  
Committee on Labor and Technology

Testimony by  
Hawaii State AFL-CIO

April 4, 2025

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF GM744 – SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION  
TO THE HAWAII'I WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL, GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE, AMBER  
AKANA, FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE 06-30-2029**

Chairs Aquino, Vice Chair Lee, and members of the committee:

The Hawaii State AFL-CIO is a state federation of 76 affiliate labor organizations representing over 69,000 union members across Hawaii in industries including healthcare, construction, hospitality, entertainment, transportation, and government. The Hawaii State AFL-CIO serves its affiliates by advocating for the rights of working families, promoting fair wages, safe working conditions, and policies that strengthen Hawaii's workforce.

We are in strong support of GM744, which confirms Amber Akana to the Workforce Development Council (WDC) for a term to expire on June 30, 2029.

Ms. Akana brings over 16 years of experience with the Seafarers International Union, where she has supported members with job placement, workplace safety, and employment-related concerns. She understands the barriers that working people face when trying to access stable jobs and advance in their careers. Her work has focused on ensuring that individuals not only find employment, but are able to stay employed with the support, training, and protections they need.

We believe Ms. Akana's appointment to the WDC will help elevate the voices of working families and contribute to policies that expand access to long-term, meaningful employment. We respectfully request the committee's favorable consideration of this measure.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Randy Perreira".

Randy Perreira  
President

# Marine Firemen's Union

AFFILIATED WITH THE SEAFARERS INTERNATIONAL UNION OF N.A., AFL-CIO

HONOLULU BRANCH  
707 Alakea Street Suite 102  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

(808) 538-6077 telephone  
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HEADQUARTERS  
San Francisco, California

BRANCH  
Wilmington, California

PORT SERVICED  
Seattle, Washington

The Thirty-Third Legislature  
The Senate Committee on Labor and Technology  
Testimony by Mario Higa, Honolulu Port Agent  
Marine Firemen's Union  
March 31, 2025

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF GM744 – SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION TO THE  
HAWAII WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL, GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE, AMBER AKANA, FOR A  
TERM TO EXPIRE 06-30-2029

Chairs Aquino, Vice Chair Lee, and members of the committee:

I am writing on behalf of the Marine Firemen's Union in strong support of GM744, which confirms Amber Akana to the Workforce Development Council (WDC) for a term to expire on June 30, 2029.

As the Honolulu Port Agent for the Marine Firemen's Union, I represent dedicated maritime workers who play a crucial role in Hawaii's economy and supply chain. Our members depend on policies that protect their rights, ensure job stability, and promote workforce development in our industry and beyond.

Ms. Akana's extensive experience with the Seafarers International Union has demonstrated her commitment to improving job placement, workplace safety, and employment conditions for workers. She understands the challenges that working people face and has worked tirelessly to support career advancement opportunities and fair labor standards. Her appointment to the WDC will bring a vital perspective to workforce policy discussions, ensuring that the needs of Hawaii's workers remain a priority.

I urge the committee to confirm Ms. Akana's appointment and recognize the value she will bring to the Workforce Development Council.

Respectfully submitted,

Mario Higa  
Honolulu Port Agent  
Marine Firemen's Union



**Rosalee Agas Yuu, RN**  
President

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Honolulu, HI 96815

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The Thirty-Third Legislature  
The Senate  
Committee on Labor & Technology

Testimony by  
Hawaii Nurses Association  
April 4, 2025

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF GM744 – SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND  
CONFIRMATION TO THE HAWAII WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL,  
GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE, AMBER AKANA, FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE 06-30-2029

Chair Aquino, Vice Chair Lee, and Members of the Committee

**The Hawai'i Nurses' Association – OPEIU Local 50 is affiliated with the AFL-CIO, was founded in 1917, and represents 4,000 nurses in the State of Hawai'i.**

The Hawaii Nurses' Association strongly supports GM744 and the appointment of Amber Akana to the Workforce Development Council through June 30, 2029. With over 16 years of experience at the Seafarers International Union, Ms. Akana has proven her ability to support job placement, workplace safety, and other employment-related concerns, ensuring that workers overcome barriers to stable, long-term employment.

Her proven record in advocating for essential supports, training, and protections will help elevate the voices of working families and shape policies that promote enduring career opportunities. We respectfully urge the committee's favorable consideration of this measure.

Respectfully,

Carol Philips,  
Legislative Liaison, Hawaii Nurses' Association





# HAWAII PORTS MARITIME COUNCIL

affiliated with  
Maritime Trades Department  
AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR and CONGRESS OF INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATION

606 Kalihi Street Honolulu, Hawaii 96819

TELEPHONE: (808) 845-5222

FAX: (808) 841-1191

April 2, 2025

Member Unions:

*American Federation Of  
Government Employees*

*Hawaii Government  
Employees Association,  
AFSCME Local 152*

*Hawaii Pilots Association,  
MM&P Pilots Division*

*Inlandboatmen's Union  
of the Pacific*

*International Brotherhood of  
Boilermakers, Iron Ship  
Builders, Blacksmiths,  
Forgers and Helpers  
Lodge 627*

*International Brotherhood of  
Electrical Workers Local 1186*

*International Brotherhood of  
Electrical Workers Local 1260*

*International Longshore and  
Warehouse Union Local 142*

*International Union of  
Elevator Constructors  
Local 126*

*Ironworkers Union  
Stabilization Fund  
Local 625*

*Laborers' International Union  
of North America Local 368*

*Marine Engineers'  
Beneficial Association*

*Marine Firemen,  
Watertenders, Oilers & Wipers*

*Masters, Mates and Pilots,  
Offshore Division*

*Sailors' Union of the Pacific*

*Seafarers International Union*

*Sheet Metal Workers Local 293*

*United Food and Commercial  
Workers International Union  
Local 480*

Senate Committee on Labor and Technology

Honorable Henry Aquino, Chair

Honorable Chris Lee, Vice Chair

Members of the Senate Committee on Labor and Technology

RE: GM744 SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION  
TO THE HAWAII'I WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL,  
GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE, AMBER AKANA, FOR A TERM TO  
EXPIRE 6-30-29

Dear Chair Aquino and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii Ports Maritime Council strongly supports Amber Akana to serve as a  
board member to the Hawai'i Workforce Development Council.

Amber has over 16 years of experience in the maritime industry serving the  
Seafarers International Union membership. Her dedication to protect mariners  
working rights, a safe workplace environment, and advocate for fair wages  
reflects her strong commitment for the labor community and Hawaii's working  
families.

The Hawaii Ports Maritime Council believes Amber will be a valuable addition to  
the Workforce Development Council. Therefore, we respectfully encourage a  
favorable recommendation.

Sincerely,

Randy Swindell  
President

**GM-744**

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 2:18:10 PM

Testimony for LBT on 4/4/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Patrick Max Weisbarth	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha. I am submitting written testimony in support of the confirmation of Amber Akana as a member of the Hawaii Workforce Development Council. I have had the pleasure of working with Amber several times over the years concerning U.S. Merchant Mariner issues, as well as workers rights issue. I feel she is very earnest, yet pragmatic with her opinions and ideas. She is humble and hard working. Amber would be a blessing to the WDC.

Should you have any questions or concerns. Please feel free to contact me...



**GM-744**

Submitted on: 4/2/2025 9:55:37 AM

Testimony for LBT on 4/4/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Edward Romson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Committee Members:

I am writing to express my strong support for the appointment of Wes Lo to the Education Committee.

I have known and worked closely with Wes Lo for the past ten years, primarily through our collaborative efforts at Hale Makua Health Services. Through this professional relationship, I have witnessed Wes's exceptional leadership qualities, strategic thinking abilities, and unwavering commitment to community service firsthand.

Wes brings to this appointment an extensive network of connections among key influencers not only on Maui, but throughout the State of Hawai'i and at the national level. These relationships will prove invaluable in advancing educational initiatives and securing necessary resources for Hawai'i's students and educational institutions.

What truly distinguishes Wes is his compassionate advocacy. Throughout our decade of collaboration, I have consistently observed his ability to listen attentively to stakeholder concerns and transform those insights into meaningful action. This quality is essential for someone serving on the Education Committee, where decisions directly impact the futures of Hawai'i's keiki and young adults.

Wes approaches complex challenges with both analytical rigor and genuine empathy. His varied professional experience has equipped him with the skills to navigate complicated systems while never losing sight of the human element at the center of policy decisions.

I believe Wes Lo's appointment would significantly strengthen the Education Committee. His strategic vision, extensive professional network, and compassionate advocacy make him exceptionally qualified to contribute to Hawai'i's educational governance.

I respectfully urge you to confirm his appointment.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Ed Romson

**LATE**

**GM-744**

Submitted on: 4/4/2025 8:49:44 AM

Testimony for LBT on 4/4/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lei Faanunu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To Whom It May Concern,

I am honored to provide this testimonial in support of Amber Akana's candidacy for the Workforce Development Council. As an educator in the community, I am pleased to support Amber Akana and appreciate her dedication to improving workforce opportunities, especially in the maritime industry.

She has shared her deep commitment to empowering individuals with the skills and resources they need to succeed in the workforce. Amber has demonstrated a unique ability to understand the educational and professional challenges faced by many across the state and has consistently worked to bridge the gap between education and career development. She attends career fairs on various islands and is providing students with options they may have never thought possible here in Hawai'i.

Amber Akana is not only passionate about workforce development but also takes a proactive approach in fostering partnerships between educational institutions, local businesses, and workforce development organizations. Collectively, they understand the importance of a strong, skilled workforce and are dedicated to ensuring that community members, particularly those in the maritime industry, have access to the tools they need to thrive.

I strongly believe that Amber would be an invaluable addition to the Workforce Development Council. Her dedication to education, workforce development, and community building makes her an excellent candidate for this position. I fully support her application and have no doubt that she will make significant contributions to the council's work.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,  
Lei Fa'anunu  
Kumu at Keaukaha Elementary School  
808-938-9438