



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

February 26, 2025

To: The Honorable Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair,
The Honorable Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair, and
Members of the Senate Committee on Labor and Technology

Date: Wednesday, February 26, 2025
Time: 10:03 a.m.
Place: Conference Room 211, State Capitol

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

Re: S.B. 1233 SD1 RELATING TO WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

I. OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED LEGISLATION

The **DLIR offers comments** to SB1233 SD1, which establishes within the Department of Human Resources Development (DHRD) the state internship and workforce development program.

II. CURRENT LAW

The General Appropriations Act of 2022 established the Hele Imua program to connect government agencies with recent or soon-to-graduate students holding a degree or certification, offering a paid internship opportunity aimed at reducing brain drain.

Since its inception, the Hele Imua program has placed 665 interns, with 522 placed directly by the DLIR and 143 through a partnership with the DOE. Of those, 65 interns have secured positions within the Executive Branch. In FY2024, 275 interns were placed, and 46 of them obtained employment with the State.

III. COMMENTS ON THE SENATE BILL

The DLIR is currently coordinating the state public sector internship initiative (the Hele Imua Program) and suggests this measure may be duplicative of the existing internship efforts. Furthermore, the department is supporting legislative measures aimed at expanding the program to the private sector.



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Wednesday, February 26, 2025, at 10:03 a.m.

By

Debora Halbert, Vice President for Academic Strategy
University of Hawai'i System

SB 1233 SD1 – RELATING TO WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of SB 1233 SD1. The University of Hawai'i (UH) supports the establishment of a state-funded internship program within state departments and agencies as outlined in this bill. This program presents a strategic opportunity not only to address workforce shortages but also to cultivate a well-prepared, diverse talent pool for public service employees.

As the bill correctly identifies, many state departments and agencies are struggling with workforce shortages. One challenge in public service recruitment is that pathways into state jobs are not always clear or intuitive for students. A structured internship program is a possible way to address these challenges. By providing internships, the state can help fill positions in departments where vacancies are most pressing, providing short-term relief while simultaneously developing a pool of qualified candidates for future full-time roles.

The creation of an internship program specifically targeted at state departments and agencies offers students a direct, hands-on experience with the diverse career opportunities in public service. Internships are invaluable in helping students understand the types of roles available in government, from policy research and administration to technical and operational positions, and everything in between. By exposing students to these roles early, the state creates a natural pipeline for future public servants.

This internship program is not just an opportunity for traditional college students but is open to recent high school graduates, post-graduate students, and individuals seeking a career change. By providing these opportunities, the program ensures that students from diverse backgrounds, including those underrepresented in public service, have a clear pathway into state government positions. This inclusivity is vital to building a workforce that reflects the communities it serves, improving the state's ability to meet the needs of its people through inclusive and innovative policies.

Thank you for your time and consideration.



JOSH GREEN, M. D.
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KE KIA'ĀINA

SYLVIA LUKE
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KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA

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STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII
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Statement of
BRENNA H. HASHIMOTO
Director, Department of Human Resources Development

Before the
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
Wednesday, February 26, 2025
10:03AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 211

In consideration of
SB1233 SD1, RELATING TO WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and members of the committee:

The Department of Human Resources Development (HRD) is in **support** of SB1233 SD1.

The purpose of SB1233 SD1 is to establish within the Department of Human Resources Development the state internship and workforce development program, establishes positions, and appropriate funds.

This allows the State to support workforce development while addressing vacancies in public service positions by:

1. Recruiting and investing in interns interested in public service positions;
2. Developing standardized guidelines to align with internship duties and length of assignment with the qualifications required for employment; and
3. Providing consistent and relevant professional development skills and training.

As a central support agency for the Executive Branch, HRD is positioned to most effectively address the opportunities as listed above between several of our departmental programs: Recruitment, Classification, and Learning & Development.

Unlike other statewide internship programs, our primary purpose is to support the departments and all employees of the Executive Branch, therefore, our focus would be on the State of Hawai'i as the employer; filling vacancies, developing programs by partnering with the high schools, community colleges and universities to prepare

students at all levels seeking full-time employment to fill public sector positions in the Executive Branch. This is achieved by intradepartmental collaboration, utilizing the expertise of many divisions toward the common goal: Recruitment, Classification and Learning & Development. HRD has the knowledge and expertise to best match an intern with a department that aligns the intern’s educational and occupational goals as well as the department’s mission and needs.

Additionally, we can provide the host departments with training for mentors; well-trained mentors maximize the intern experience as well as provide leadership opportunities for our existing supervisors and managers. This continuum of developing, placing and growing interns as well as growing our leadership team is a comprehensive program opportunity the Department of Human Resources Development is uniquely positioned to champion.

HRD respectfully requests the following amendments to the SD1:

Remove language in Section 3(b) on page 3, lines 3 through 8.

~~“The program shall be funded through annual appropriations by the legislature. ; provided that state departments utilizing interns shall contribute a portion of program costs based on the number of interns placed within the department, as determined by the department of human resources development.”~~

Add language after page 8, line 2.

(C) \$ for 50.0 internship positions.
 (D) \$ for program operational costs”

The appropriation requested to implement this program is reflected in the chart below.

Position	Salary/Cost	Description
1.0 HR Spec V	\$83,064	Onboarding and offboarding interns
1.0 HR Spec V	\$83,064	Intern placements
1.0 HR Spec V	\$83,064	Intern placements
1.0 HR Spec V	\$83,064	Training and mentoring
1.0 Account Clerk V	\$59,508	Timesheets and payroll
50.0 Internship Positions	\$2,080,000	Cost per intern position is \$41,600 (\$20/hr x 40 hrs/wk x 52 weeks) Total Cost for 50 interns is \$2,080,000 (50 x \$20/hr x 40hrs/wk x 52 weeks)
Other Current Expenses	\$14,500	Non-recurring costs of \$2,900/employee
Other Current Expenses	\$5,000	Recurring costs. \$300/employee, \$3,500 for program intern recruitment
Total	\$2,491,264	

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



**Testimony to the Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Wednesday, February 26, 2025; 10:03 a.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 211
Via Videoconference**

RE: SENATE BILL NO. 1233, SENATE DRAFT 1, RELATING TO WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT.

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii Primary Care Association (HPCA) is a 501(c)(3) organization established to advocate for, expand access to, and sustain high quality care through the statewide network of Community Health Centers throughout the State of Hawaii. The HPCA **SUPPORTS** Senate Bill No. 1233, Senate Draft 1, RELATING TO WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT.

By way of background, the HPCA represents Hawaii's Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs). FQHCs provide desperately needed medical services at the frontlines to over 150,000 patients each year who live in rural and underserved communities. Long considered champions for creating a more sustainable, integrated, and wellness-oriented system of health, FQHCs provide a more efficient, more effective and more comprehensive system of healthcare.

This measure, as received by your Committee, would establish a state-funded internship program that provides participants with practical work experience, fosters interest in public service careers, and helps address workforce shortages in State departments and agencies.

The State of Hawaii is experiencing a severe shortage of health care professionals in the workforce, especially in rural areas. Recent studies note that the current shortage of physicians is at 20% of the total full-time equivalent positions throughout the State. The shortage is especially severe in the fields of primary care, infectious diseases, colorectal surgery, pathology, general surgery, pulmonology, neurology, neurosurgery, orthopedic surgery, family medicine, cardiothoracic surgery, rheumatology, cardiology, hematology/oncology, and pediatric subspecialties of endocrinology, cardiology, neurology, hematology/oncology, and gastroenterology.

The same can be said for registered and practical nurses, community health workers, social workers, pharmacists, and other disciplines in the field of health care.

Testimony on Senate Bill No. 1233, Senate Draft 1
Wednesday, February 26, 2025; 10:03 a.m.
Page 2

The HPCA believes this program would provide a needed service to our community by preparing students for meaningful employment, diversifying their learning opportunities, and promoting responsible citizenship. In addition, the program will facilitate partnerships between businesses and educators for the creation of mentoring ventures and other opportunities so that Hawaii's youth may gain the practical experience that will enable them to be productive members of our labor force. This is critical for the field of health care, especially in rural communities.

Because of this, the HPCA urges your favorable consideration of this measure.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Public Affairs and Policy Director Erik K. Abe at 536-8442, or eabe@hawaiiipca.net.

**Testimony to the Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair**

**Wednesday, February 26, 2025, at 10:03AM
Conference Room 211 & Videoconference**

RE: SB1233 SD1 Relating to Workforce Development

Aloha e Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Sherry Menor, President and CEO of the Chamber of Commerce Hawaii ("The Chamber"). The Chamber supports Senate Bill 1233 Senate Draft 1 (SB1233 SD1), which establishes within the Department of Human Resources Development the State Internship and Workforce Development Program. Establishes positions within the Department.

SB1233 SD1 aligns with our 2030 Blueprint for Hawaii: An Economic Action Plan, specifically under the policy pillar for Small Business. This bill promotes policies that drive economic growth, enhance workforce opportunities, and improve the quality of life for Hawaii's residents.

Addressing workforce shortages in state government is essential to improving efficiency and ensuring reliable public services. This bill creates the State Internship and Workforce Development Program to provide paid internships in state departments and agencies, helping fill vacancies with qualified candidates. Administered by the Department of Human Resources Development, the program prioritizes placements in departments with severe staffing shortages. It includes structured training, mentorship, and evaluations to prepare participants for public service careers. Open to Hawaii residents 18 or older, selection is based on academic achievement, experience, and interest in public service.

Host agencies must show both a need for interns and the ability to offer employment after program completion. Interns will receive stipends, professional development, and priority consideration for full-time state jobs. The bill also funds five positions to support program implementation. By creating a clear path into public service, this initiative strengthens workforce development, improves government efficiency, and addresses staffing shortages. The Chamber supports this bill as a sustainable workforce solution that fosters career growth and strengthens public sector effectiveness.

The Chamber of Commerce Hawaii is the state's leading business advocacy organization, dedicated to improving Hawaii's economy and securing Hawaii's future for growth and opportunity. Our mission is to foster a vibrant economic climate. As such, we support initiatives and policies that align with the 2030 Blueprint for Hawaii that create opportunities to strengthen overall competitiveness, improve the quantity and skills of available workforce, diversify the economy, and build greater local wealth.

We respectfully ask to pass Senate Bill 1233 Senate Draft 1. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

SB-1233-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 7:23:19 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ellen Awai	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I stand in full support of SB1233. Human Resources need to start training and building the workforce necessary to run our state efficiently. The younger generations really need help in communicating, especially answering the phones and being able to know what issues they can handle or need to refer to their supervisor. I've gone through internships at the University of Hawaii, which gave me a chance to understand the field I had chosen. Although my career in behavioral health, after experiencing everything a business could do, helped me expand my understanding of national and federal issues throughout the country and abroad. Training, education, and communication skills are so needed to work efficiently and create a better understanding of the community and not just your own goals of life!