



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

February 5, 2026

To: The Honorable Jackson D. Sayama, Chair,
The Honorable Mike Lee, Vice Chair, and
Members of the House Committee on Labor

Date: Thursday, February 5, 2026
Time: 9:30 a.m.
Place: Conference Room 309, State Capitol

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

Re: H.B. 2446 RELATING TO THE WAGE AND HOUR LAW

I. OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED LEGISLATION

The **DLIR offers comments** on this measure. HB2446 amends Chapter 387, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), Wage and Hour Law, by adding a new section to establish a community wage theft enforcement partnership program to support enforcement of Chapter 387. This proposal authorizes DLIR to enter into contracts or memoranda of agreement with community-based organizations to educate workers on their rights, document potential wage and hour violations, refer suspected violations to DLIR, and provide navigation and language-access support during the enforcement process. The measure also requires DLIR to submit an annual report to the Legislature describing program activities and appropriates an unspecified amount of funds for implementation.

II. CURRENT LAW

Chapter 387 covers minimum wage, overtime, recordkeeping requirements, and authorizes DLIR to assess penalties and issue orders of wage payment violation to employers found in violation.

III. COMMENTS ON THE HOUSE BILL

The Intake and Certification Branch of the Wage Standards Division currently provides educational outreach services to the general public, including community organizations. These services include presentations and handouts on laws enforced by the division, such as wage and hour, payment of wages, prevailing wages, child labor, and family leave.

The Intake and Certification Branch also assists workers with filing complaints about unpaid wages, including minimum wage and overtime. Customers with limited English proficiency have the right to an interpreter at no cost. During the intake and investigation process, the Wage Standards Division uses telephone interpreters for oral interpretation and contracts interpreters for written translation when needed.

Given that DLIR already has enforcement authority under Chapter 387 and currently provides many of the services described in this proposal, the Department believes this measure may be duplicative and respectfully suggests that its necessity be further evaluated.

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



HAWAII APPLESEED

CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Testimony of the Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice
HB2446 – Relating to the Wage & Hour Law
House Committee on Labor
Thursday, February 5, 2026, at 9:30 AM, Conference Room 309 & Videoconference

Dear Chair Sayama, Vice Chair Lee, and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 2446, which would authorize the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR) to establish a Community Wage Theft Enforcement Partnership Program.

Wage theft is a profound injustice and a silent crisis in our economy. There is strong evidence that businesses throughout the U.S. frequently violate wage standards. A study conducted by the U.S. Department of Labor between 2010 and 2012 discovered that 5 out of every 6 restaurants under investigation had committed a wage violation.¹ These violations cost their employees millions of dollars in stolen wages.²

A 2017 study on the 10 most populous states in the U.S. found that 17 percent of workers were paid less than the minimum wage for their state. Based on this data, the Economic Policy Institute (EPI) estimated that U.S. workers were illegally underpaid by at least \$15 billion for that year.³

Here in Hawai'i, with the highest cost of living in the nation, every dollar counts. For our low-wage workers already living paycheck to paycheck, stolen wages aren't just an inconvenience—they are the difference between paying rent, buying groceries, and keeping the lights on.

The problem is not a lack of good laws; it is a gap in effective enforcement and outreach. The current complaint-driven system places the entire burden on workers who are often unaware of their rights, fearful of retaliation, or unsure how to navigate a complex bureaucratic process. As we saw in the 2023 [case](#) against Asian Restaurant Group Inc., which operated Max's of Manila restaurants, major wage theft occurs here. That case recovered hundreds of thousands of dollars in stolen wages, but it undoubtedly represents only a fraction of the violations that go unreported.

HB2446 offers a proven, common-sense solution by empowering DLIR to partner with trusted, community-based organizations. These organizations are already on the front lines, embedded in the communities most vulnerable to exploitation. They have the linguistic capabilities, cultural competency,

¹ Allegretto, Sylvia and David Cooper, "Twenty-Three Years and Still Waiting for Change: Why It's Time to Give Tipped Workers the Regular Minimum Wage," Economic Policy Institute, 2014, <https://www.epi.org/publication/waiting-for-change-tipped-minimum-wage/>

² Cooper, David and Teresa Kroeger, "Employers steal billions from workers' paychecks each year: Survey data show millions of workers are paid less than the minimum wage, at significant cost to taxpayers and state economies," Economic Policy Institute, 2017, <https://www.epi.org/publication/employers-steal-billions-from-workers-paychecks-each-year/>

³ *ibid*

and established trust to effectively:

- Educate workers about their rights in accessible ways.
- Assist in filing complaints and navigating the process.
- Serve as a critical bridge between workers and state enforcement agencies.

This model works. Cities like San Francisco, Seattle and Minneapolis have successfully implemented similar community-labor partnerships, dramatically improving outreach and recovery of stolen wages. A 2023 Economic Policy Institute study confirms that such Community Enforcement Programs strengthen enforcement overall.

This bill is a smart investment in fairness and our local economy. Effective enforcement ensures a level playing field for ethical employers who follow the law, protects our most vulnerable workers from exploitation, and puts rightfully earned wages back into our local communities where they will be spent on necessities.

For the dignity of our workers and the integrity of our businesses, we urge you to pass HB2446. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



HAWAII WORKERS CENTER

Advance and Defend the Rights of
Workers in Hawai'i

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hawaiiworkerscenter.org 🌐

February 4, 2026

**Executive Board
Committee**

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Board Chair

Mary Ochs
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Dr. Arcelita Imasa
Secretary and Treasurer

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Ananda Luttet

Rich Rath

Nanea Lo

Executive Director

Kami Yamamoto

House Committee on Labor
Hawai'i State Capitol
415 South Beretania St.
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Labor Committee Chair & Vice Chair,

My name is Kami Yamamoto and I am the Executive Director of the Hawai'i Workers Center (HWC). For those unfamiliar with HWC, we organize low-wage, non-union workers. While Hawai'i ranks the top in the nation for union membership at 26%, that leaves over 70% of workers without the benefit of a body that can stand up & fight for their rights – this is the gap we fill. For the past five years, we have been working diligently to get a champion for our campaign against wage theft and we found one this session. We are grateful for the support of Rep. Shirley Templo and the other sponsors for HB2446 to support our vision for a Hawai'i in which all workers are empowered to exercise their right to education and organization for their social, economic and political well-being.

Currently, the enforcement of wage theft law is carried out by the federal Department of Labor (DOL) and the state's Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR) through complaint-driven investigations and audits. To date, we have trained over 500 workers through our Know Your Workers Rights trainings. Almost immediately the trainings, workers will self-identify as victims of wage theft and ask if there's anything that they can do to get back their stolen wages. This shows us workers are not only unaware of their rights but they also do not feel empowered to assert them.

While we primarily organize COFA Micronesian and Filipino workers, I'd like to emphasize that this bill will not just protect the rights of migrant workers but all workers in Hawai'i. Low-wage earners in restaurants, care homes, and other industries are already living paycheck to paycheck – adding stolen wages into the equation only exacerbates this problem, and the outcome is a brutal effect for the working class that produces fallout effects like depression, anxiety, and violence in the household. We urge your full support of HB2446 as one concrete step to enhance DLIR's outreach, referral, and recovery process through this enforcement partnership programs with CBOs like us.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Kami Yamamoto, MPH
Executive Director
Hawai'i Workers Center

HB-2446

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 8:38:21 AM

Testimony for LAB on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Angela Kinere-Muller	RiMETO(Navigators of the Sea) Organization	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committees,

My name is Angela Kinere-Muller, and I am a Community Health Worker in Hawai‘i. I submit this testimony **in strong support of HB2446**.

In my work with individuals and families—particularly those in low-wage, immigrant, and Pacific Islander communities—I regularly encounter workers who experience wage theft but do not know how or where to seek help. Many are hesitant to report violations due to language barriers, fear of retaliation, limited understanding of their rights, or lack of trust in government systems.

HB2446 provides a practical and culturally responsive solution by authorizing the **Department of Labor and Industrial Relations** to establish a Community Wage Theft Enforcement Partnership Program. Community-based organizations are often the first and most trusted point of contact for workers experiencing wage theft. These organizations are well positioned to provide outreach, education, referrals, and support in culturally and linguistically appropriate ways.

By strengthening partnerships between DLIR and community-based organizations, this measure will enhance enforcement, improve recovery of stolen wages, and help prevent future violations. Appropriating funds for this program is an important investment in fairness, worker protection, and economic stability for Hawai‘i’s families.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to **pass HB2446**.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony and for your commitment to protecting Hawai‘i’s workers.

Respectfully,

Angela Kinere-Muller

Community Health Worker

RiMETO (Navigators of the Sea) Organization

Kapolei, Hawai‘i

HB-2446

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 10:38:03 AM

Testimony for LAB on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rev. Samuel L Domingo	Hawaii Workers Center	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

- ALOha Chair and Committee Members:
- I am the President of the Board of the Hawaii Workers Center
- Hawai‘i consistently ranks as the state with the highest cost of living and low-wage earners are already living paycheck to paycheck. Adding stolen wages into the equation only exacerbates the hardship that workers face.
- The problem of wage theft is not a lack of laws, but the enforcement of the laws in place. Effective enforcement would ensure fair compensation, prevent exploitation, and uphold labor standards that benefit both employees and employers.
- According to a study by the Economic Policy Institute in 2023, Community Enforcement Programs have improved wage theft enforcement.
- Several cities & counties including San Francisco, San Diego, Minneapolis, Chicago, Seattle, and Washington D.C. have established local labor enforcement programs similar to this bill.
- We have already seen major cases of stolen wages, such as the [2023 DOL investigation of Asian Restaurant Group Inc.](#), which operates the Max’s of Manila restaurants in Hawai‘i – there is a high probability that there are more wage theft cases which are not reported.
- I urge passage of HB 2446

HB-2446

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 3:06:12 PM

Testimony for LAB on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Liza Ryan Gill	Hawaii Coalition for Immigrant Rights	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is **Liza Ryan Gill from the Hawai‘i Coalition for Immigrant Rifhts**, and I submit this testimony **in strong support of HB2446**, which would strengthen Hawai‘i’s ability to prevent and recover **stolen wages** by expanding outreach, referrals, and enforcement capacity.

Wage theft is not just a workplace issue—it is a cost-of-living crisis issue. Hawai‘i consistently ranks among the most expensive states to live in, and many low-wage workers are already surviving paycheck to paycheck. When wages are stolen through unpaid overtime, off-the-clock work, or illegal tip practices, families fall behind on rent, food, childcare, and transportation. For immigrant workers and workers with limited English proficiency, the barriers are even higher: many are unaware of their rights, fear retaliation, or don’t know how to file a complaint.

While wage theft laws exist, the real gap is **enforcement and access**. Currently, enforcement relies heavily on complaint-driven investigations and audits by the U.S. Department of Labor and Hawai‘i’s DLIR. Workers have told us they often don’t feel confident navigating these systems alone. HB2446 helps close that gap by investing in proactive outreach and improving pathways for reporting, referrals, and recovery.

There is evidence that **community enforcement (co-enforcement) models improve outcomes**—including stronger wage theft enforcement when agencies partner with trusted community organizations that can reach workers where they are. Similar local labor enforcement approaches exist in places like **San Francisco** and **Seattle**, which pair enforcement with proactive education and community-facing support.

We have already seen significant wage theft cases impacting workers here at home—such as the federal investigation involving Max’s of Manila restaurants on O‘ahu, which resulted in back wages and damages owed to workers. That case underscores a larger truth: many more violations likely go unreported.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to **PASS HB2446**. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

HB-2446

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 1:15:40 PM

Testimony for LAB on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jodie Tonita	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in support of:

HB2446 would authorize the Hawai‘i Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR) to establish a Community Wage Theft Enforcement Partnership Program in collaboration with community-based organizations.

Hawai‘i consistently ranks as the state with the highest cost of living and low-wage earners are already living paycheck to paycheck. Adding stolen wages into the equation only exacerbates the hardship that workers face.

- The problem of wage theft is not a lack of laws, but the enforcement of the laws in place. Effective enforcement would ensure fair compensation, prevent exploitation, and uphold labor standards that benefit both employees and employers.
- According to a study by the Economic Policy Institute in 2023, Community Enforcement Programs have improved wage theft enforcement.
- Several cities & counties including San Francisco, San Diego, Minneapolis, Chicago, Seattle, and Washington D.C. have established local labor enforcement programs similar to this bill.
- We have already seen major cases of stolen wages, such as the **2023 DOL investigation of Asian Restaurant Group Inc.**, which operates the Max’s of Manila restaurants in Hawai‘i – there is a high probability that there are more wage theft cases which are not reported.

HB-2446

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 1:17:47 PM

Testimony for LAB on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
William Caron	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support stricter enforcement against wage theft. Wage theft is the largest form of theft in the United States, with employers stealing an estimated \$15 billion to over \$50 billion annually from workers. That surpasses the total of all robberies, burglaries, and motor vehicle thefts **combined**. This illegal practice impacts millions of workers, often through unpaid overtime, minimum wage violations, or forced "off-the-clock" work.

HB2446 would authorize the Hawai'i Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR) to establish a Community Wage Theft Enforcement Partnership Program in collaboration with community-based organizations. Currently, the enforcement of wage theft law is carried out by the federal Department of Labor (DOL) and the state's Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR) through complaint-driven investigations and audits.

Workers say that they are not aware of their rights; nor do they feel confident about how to assert them. This bill would address this issue by increasing outreach, referral, and recovery of stolen wages.

Hawai'i consistently ranks as the state with the highest cost of living and low-wage earners are already living paycheck to paycheck. Adding stolen wages into the equation only exacerbates the hardship that workers face. Effective enforcement would ensure fair compensation, prevent exploitation, and uphold labor standards that benefit both employees and employers.

According to a study by the Economic Policy Institute in 2023, Community Enforcement Programs have improved wage theft enforcement. Several cities & counties including San Francisco, San Diego, Minneapolis, Chicago, Seattle, and Washington D.C. have established local labor enforcement programs similar to this bill.

Mahalo for your consideration.

HB-2446

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 2:29:04 PM

Testimony for LAB on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nanea Lo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is **Nanea Lo**, and I submit this testimony **in strong support of HB2446**. As a board member of **Hawai'i Workers Center (HWC)** and in support of the members of the **Compact of Free Association (COFA) Workers Association**.

While Hawaii's minimum wage increased to \$16 per hour at the start of this year, this wage still falls drastically short of what workers need to survive in our state. According to the **MIT Living Wage Calculator**, a single adult with no children in Hawai'i now needs **nearly \$30 per hour** to meet basic living expenses. For many working families, especially immigrant and COFA workers, the gap between wages and cost of living is already unsustainable.

HB2446 would establish a **community partnership program** that strengthens worker education, awareness, and enforcement of Hawai'i's wage and hour laws by the Department of Labor (DOL) and the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR). This approach recognizes a critical reality: enforcement alone is not enough when workers fear retaliation, lack language access, or do not know their rights. Community-based organizations are often the first point of contact for workers experiencing wage theft and labor violations, and they play a vital role in ensuring laws are meaningfully enforced.

Other cities and counties—including **San Francisco, San Diego, Minneapolis, Chicago, Seattle, and Washington, D.C.**—have already implemented similar local labor enforcement models with proven success. Hawai'i should follow these examples and invest in systems that proactively protect workers rather than reacting after harm has already occurred.

The need for stronger enforcement is not hypothetical. In **2023, the Department of Labor investigated Asian Restaurant Group Inc., which operates Max's of Manila restaurants in Hawai'i**, revealing serious labor violations. As HWC Executive Director **Kami Yamamoto** has stated, *"Hawai'i's low-wage earners are already living paycheck to paycheck. Adding stolen wages into the equation will only exacerbate the hardship that people face. The outcome is a brutal effect for the working class in the state."*

HB2446 is an important step toward addressing wage theft, empowering workers, and ensuring employers are held accountable. In a state with one of the highest costs of living in the nation, we cannot afford weak enforcement of labor protections.

For these reasons, I urge this committee to **pass HB2446** and demonstrate a commitment to protecting Hawai'i's workers and strengthening our labor standards.

me ke aloha 'āina,

Nanea Lo, 96826

Hawai'i Workers Center Board Member

Honolulu Tenants Union Member

Hawai'i Tax Fairness Coalition

Compact of Free Association (COFA) Workers Association Supporter

HB-2446

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 5:45:30 PM

Testimony for LAB on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cassandra Chee	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Sayama, Vice Chair Lee, Rep. Satoru Kong, and the House Committee on Labor,

I am writing from ‘Aiea, House District 33 in strong SUPPORT of HB2446. Often those that earn the lowest wages, get the least appreciation and support for doing work that is essential to nourishing and caring for our community. Working people deserve detail oriented advocates and oversight support that can only come from us: the community.

Several cities & counties including San Francisco, San Diego, Minneapolis, Chicago, Seattle, and Washington D.C. have established local labor enforcement programs similar to this bill. According to a study by the Economic Policy Institute in 2023, Community Enforcement Programs have improved wage theft enforcement.

Please support HB2446 to create proactive protections against wage theft.

Mahalo piha,

Cassie Chee
‘Aiea, District 33

HB-2446

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 8:24:09 PM

Testimony for LAB on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alex Tam	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hawaii is consistently ranked among the states with the highest cost of living, and wages have not kept up. Not only that, but workers are being robbed of their rightfully earned wages by greedy corporations who don't want to pay them. Wage theft adds insult to injury for these workers, and we must take action to protect workers and seek accountability for those who commit wage theft. If someone walks into a store and takes \$100 out of the cash register, they would be arrested immediately. If a boss shorts their employee's paycheck by \$100, who is going to enforce the law and ensure the employee is paid for their work?

HB-2446

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 10:06:58 PM

Testimony for LAB on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Luke Withy-Berry	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Similar programs seemed to have worked in other states and in a community with as many diverse cultures as Hawaii's, miscommunication about employment from employers (whether intentional or not) resulting in stolen wages seems like it could be quite commonplace. Since the sky high cost of living has many locals stretching every dollar to the max, a Government program to get hard earned and well deserved dollars into the correct hands seems like a perfect fit for Hawaii. Dollars given back to employees from employers should have direct positive impacts on the local economies they live in.

Aloha Chair Sayama, Vice Chair Lee and members of the Committee on Labor,

My name is Lauren Taijeron and I am submitting this testimony in support of HB 2446. I keep in mind community members, namely those of COFA Micronesian communities, many of which are victims of wage theft, discrimination, insecure housing, and overall a system of neglect.

Working closely with community members I have learned about the conditions that COFA workers face in their workplace, school, and community. Coming here through the Compact of Free Association with their family members at the forefront of their minds, some work upwards of 60 hours every week and are not given overtime pay. Some are made to pay their bosses for every word they say in their own language. We have even heard from folks that the money they receive whether through their jobs, social security, or disability leaves them with almost nothing after paying their bills. Wage theft remains to be an incredible weight on working class families namely, the families of COFA and other migrant communities who work in low wage and high violations industries.

Building stronger protections against wage theft such as the ones described in this bill, would benefit the workers whose stories I have just shared. It would open up doors as we have seen in Santa Clara and San Francisco which stand as examples to the impacts that greater protections such as partnership programs with community organizations could have on workers. Overall, establishing a formal relationship with a community liaison would ensure that there is a greater trust from workers thus aiding in the process of recovering wages, and protecting working class families.

I ask the committee to consider these stories, support HB 2446, and protect the working class of Hawai'i.

Thank you,

Lauren Taijeron

HB-2446

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 9:14:53 AM

Testimony for LAB on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Julianna Davis	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Sayama, Vice Chair Lee, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of HB2446 which would enhance outreach, referral, and recovery of stolen wages through a community enforcement model. The community enforcement model has been implemented in cities such as San Francisco, San Diego, Minneapolis, Seattle, and Washington, D.C. and has proven successful in curbing wage theft. Here in Hawai‘i, wage theft impacts the most vulnerable workers, often immigrants/migrants working multiple jobs to support themselves and their families. Workers in Hawai‘i are already grappling with the highest cost of living of any state, and it is crucial that the State does everything it can to ensure that workers' hard earned wages are not taken from them. I respectfully urge you to pass HB2446 and enact a community enforcement model to combat wage theft.

Mahalo for your consideration and for the opportunity to testify.

Julianna Davis

LATE *Testimony submitted late may not be considered by the Committee for decision making purposes.

My name is Geral,

I come to you all to share my testimony about working under Tianos Restaurant. Only working for a couple of months I caught on quickly why we only get paid only minimum wage even though we are suppose to be a "high class" restaurant. I work part time as a host and I only get paid the minimum, plus, i get certain percent of the servers tip and its still not enough to get by, even though, we sell a prime rib plate with lobster tail for \$72 dollars. They brag about selling so many of those combo plates but when we get to talking about increasing our paychecks, silence fills the room. The owner mentions that they have multiple properties, both here and in the Philippines and that they go to the Philippines multiple times a year. So your telling me that you can afford all of these things but you cannot increase the pay for the people who work for you? It is truly ridiculous.

HB-2446

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 12:54:29 PM

Testimony for LAB on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Thomas Brandt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strong support!

HB-2446

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 1:27:31 PM

Testimony for LAB on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mary K Ochs	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Sadly this legislation--stronger enforcement--is veyr much needed to ensure workers are classified and paid fully for the work they do. Nothing could be more American vlaues that an honest wage for an honest days work. Again, sadly, wage theft is wide spread. I have experienced it myself. We are barely making it as is, and then to be cheated on our wages is just too much.

PLEASE vote to pass HB2446. Mahalo, Mary Ochs

HB-2446

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 8:15:34 PM

Testimony for LAB on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ken Reyes	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Committee on Labor,

I wholeheartedly support HB2446, which would authorize DILR to establish a Community Wage Theft Enforcement Partnership Program in collaboration with community-based organizations.

I have personally been impacted by wage theft and remember how disempowering it felt to be left hanging and "forced" to accept my situation. At the time, I was unaware of what rights I had as a worker and did not know how to contend for what was owed to me.

I know I'm not alone in this. There are hundreds, if not thousands, of workers across Hawai'i who have experienced or are currently experiencing wage theft as well. But there is such a lack of public education and awareness in our communities about how to assert our rights as workers.

This bill ensures that the working class communities of Hawai'i receive the support and advocacy they need, especially during a time when cost of living is already high and making ends need has become increasingly difficult for many living in Hawai'i.

Mahalo nui,

Ken Reyes