



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
KA 'OIHANA HO'ONA'AUAO
P.O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

Date: 02/17/2026

Time: 09:00 AM

Location: 309 VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

Committee: LAB

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

Title of Bill: HB2455, RELATING TO EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES.

Purpose of Bill: Requires certain employers to provide unpaid and paid leave of absence for victims of workplace violence or threat of workplace violence. Expands the type of certification an employee may provide to an employer if the leave exceeds five days per calendar year.

Department's Position:

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) supports HB 2455, which would allow Department employees who are victims of workplace violence or threat of workplace violence to be entitled to paid leave through existing leave benefits for up to ten (10) days per calendar year for purposes directly related to the employee's safety or pursuit of legal protections. This bill also provides clarification of the definition of workplace violence or threat of workplace violence and the certification that an employee may provide to the employer if the leave exceeds five (5) days per calendar year.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on HB 2455.



February 15, 2026

Position: **Support of HB2455**, Relating to Employment Practices

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

From: Llasmin Chaîne, LSW, Executive Director, Hawaii State Commission on the Status of Women

Re: Testimony in Support of HB2455, Relating to Employment Practices

Hearing: Tuesday, February 17, 2026, 9:00 a.m.
Conference Room 309, State Capitol

The Hawaii State Commission on the Status of Women is dedicated to advancing the safety, equity, and well-being of girls and women across the state. The Commission **supports HB2455** because it **addresses the critical need for workplace protections and support for individuals who experience or are threatened by workplace violence**. Access to leave in these circumstances is essential for ensuring the physical and emotional safety of workers, particularly those who are at heightened risk of experiencing the intersectional impacts of gender-based violence and workplace harassment.

By requiring employers to provide both unpaid and paid leave for victims of workplace violence or threats thereof, this bill recognizes the complex challenges faced by employees. The ability to take leave, whether for medical care, counseling, or legal proceedings, can be a decisive factor in an individual's ability to recover and maintain employment. Expanding the types of acceptable certification for extended leave also reduces barriers for those who may not have immediate access to traditional documentation, such as police reports.

HB2455 aligns with research and trauma-informed best practices indicating that **workplace policies supporting victims of violence contribute to greater employee retention, productivity, and overall workplace safety**. Such policies are particularly crucial for women and gender minorities, who are statistically more likely to experience certain forms of workplace violence and may otherwise face retaliation or job loss for seeking help.

The Commission appreciates the Legislature's attention to this issue and urges **this Committee to pass HB2455** to further protect and empower Hawaii's workforce. Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony.



UNITED PUBLIC WORKERS

AFSCME Local 646, AFL-CIO

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
THE THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION OF 2026**

COMMITTEE ON LABOR
Rep. Jackson D. Sayama, Chair
Rep. Mike Lee, Vice Chair

Tuesday, February 17, 2026, 9:00 AM
Conference Room 309 & Videoconference

Re: Testimony on HB2455 – RELATING TO EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

Chair Sayama, 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.

UPW supports HB2455, which requires certain employers to provide unpaid and paid leave of absence for victims of workplace violence or threat of workplace violence.

Employers who respect, value, and care for their employees should be willing to provide leave, whether it be paid or unpaid, to victims of violence in the workplace. As the exclusive representative for Bargaining Units 1 and 10, we strongly believe that legislation like this is needed given the rise in incidents of workplace violence, or the threat thereof, in the public sector. State and county employees are responsible for providing essential government services. This often requires a level of engagement with the public that can leave public workers susceptible to these repulsive acts.

We further believe an employer should be required to provide additional paid leave beyond any existing leave benefits an employee has accrued or is entitled to. As such, should this measure be passed, we request the committee consider an amendment to Subsection (a) on Page 6, Line 1, by deleting the word "not".

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure.

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TESTIMONY TO THE HAWAI'I HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LABOR

Item: HB 2455 – Relating to Employment Practices

Position: Support

Hearing: Tuesday, February 17, 2026, 9:00 am, Room 309

Submitter: Osa Tui, Jr., President - Hawai'i State Teachers Association

Dear Chair Sayama, Vice Chair Lee, and members of the committee,

The Hawai'i State Teachers Association **strongly supports** H.B. 2455, which provides critical leave protections for employees facing workplace violence or credible threats. This measure addresses a rising and acute crisis in our schools, where educators and school-based staff increasingly report being subjected to harassment, intimidation, and threats of physical harm.

Currently, while Hawai'i law provides unpaid leave for victims of domestic or sexual violence, there is no explicit protection for those targeted by violence arising specifically from their employment. Educators are in public-facing roles and frequently interact with members of the community, making them vulnerable to incidents that require immediate legal or safety-related actions.

H.B. 2455 ensures that teachers do not have to choose between their safety and their livelihoods. By allowing a reasonable amount of paid leave which can be satisfied through an employer's existing leave benefits, the bill empowers employees to seek restraining orders, meet with law enforcement, or consult with attorneys during critical moments of risk.

These protections support employee safety, reduce the risk of escalation, and help maintain stable learning environments for our students. We urge the committee to pass this bill to ensure that those who dedicatedly serve Hawai'i's keiki are afforded the protection and peace of mind they deserve.

Mahalo.



The House Committee on Labor
February 17, 2026
Room 309
9:00 AM

RE: **HB 2455, Relating to Workers' Compensation**

Attention: Chair Jackson D. Sayama, Vice Chair Mike Lee, Members of the
Committee

The University of Hawaii Professional Assembly (UHPA), the exclusive bargaining representative for all University of Hawai'i faculty members, **supports the intent of HB 2455** to provide job-protected leave for victims of workplace violence. **However, we have concerns regarding the funding mechanism proposed in Section 2 and request amendments to ensure that victims of work-related violence are not financially penalized for seeking safety.**

Workplace Safety is the Employer's Responsibility. We strongly object to the provision stating that the paid leave requirement "may be satisfied through the use of accrued sick leave, vacation leave, administrative leave, or any other paid leave authorized by the employer." Under Article XX of our Collective Bargaining Agreement ("Agreement"), the Employer is obligated to provide a safe working environment, including "security and protection at all University facilities." When the Employer fails to maintain a safe environment—resulting in a threat "arising out of employment"—the cost of the remedy should be borne by the Employer. Forcing a faculty member to deplete their own accrued sick leave (a retirement benefit) or vacation leave to handle a work-related threat effectively penalizes the victim. **We respectfully request that the bill be amended to require that this leave be satisfied specifically through Administrative Leave** (Employer-paid time), ensuring the victim's personal accrued leave banks remain intact.

Inequity for Non-Vacation Accruing Faculty. Furthermore, reliance on 'existing leave benefits' creates a significant inequity for all 9-month and certain 11-month faculty who do not accrue vacation leave. Under Article VI, Section D of our Agreement, Sick Leave is strictly limited to absences due to illness or medical appointments and cannot be used for the non-medical safety proceedings authorized by this bill. Consequently, because HB 2455 does not require the employer to provide additional paid leave, these faculty members will have no applicable benefit to use. They would be forced into Leave Without Pay (LWOP) for seeking safety, effectively penalizing them for their appointment type while their vacation-accruing colleagues receive pay. **Mandating Administrative Leave is the only way to ensure equitable protection for all faculty.**

University of Hawaii
Professional Assembly

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Protecting the Collective Bargaining Process. Finally, we are concerned that this measure legislatively alters negotiated terms of employment. Article VI, Section D of our Agreement strictly limits the use of Sick Leave to absences due to sickness, medical appointments, or temporary disabilities; it does not include activities such as seeking restraining orders, participating in court proceedings, or meetings with law enforcement as proposed in HB 2455. By statutorily expanding the definition of sick leave to cover safety issues, the bill bypasses the negotiation process required under HRS Chapter 89. **We respectfully request the Committee to either mandate Administrative Leave to resolve this conflict or direct the parties to negotiate the method of compensation through the collective bargaining process.**

Respectfully submitted,

Christian L. Fern
Executive Director
University of Hawaii Professional Assembly



February 17, 2026

Representative Jackson D. Sayama, Chair
Representative Mike Lee, Vice Chair
Committee on Labor

Re: H.B. 2455, Relating to Employment Practices

Hearing: Tuesday, February 17, 2026, 9:00 AM, Conference Room 309 & Videoconference

Dear Chair Sayama, Vice Chair Lee, and the Members of the Committee on Labor:

Hawaii Women Lawyers is a lawyer's trade organization that aims to improve the lives and careers of women in all aspects of the legal profession, influence the future of the legal profession, and enhance the status of women and promote equal opportunities for all.

Hawaii Women Lawyers submits testimony in support of H.B. 2455, which requires certain employers to provide unpaid and paid leave of absence for victims of workplace violence or threat of workplace violence.

H.B. 2455 recognizes a growing and deeply concerning reality that employees are increasingly subjected to harassment, stalking, intimidation, and credible threats arising out of their employment. While existing law provides leave protections for victims of domestic or sexual violence, it does not clearly address workplace violence. This bill closes that gap by extending job-protected leave and creating a narrowly tailored paid leave provision, satisfied through existing accrued leave, so that employees may seek restraining orders, attend court proceedings, consult with law enforcement or attorneys, and take other necessary safety-related actions without risking retaliation or loss of income.

Women are disproportionately impacted by workplace harassment and often face unique safety risks. Ensuring that employees do not have to choose between their personal safety and their livelihood promotes both economic security and access to justice. By strengthening leave protections and reinforcing anti-retaliation provisions, H.B. 2455 advances workplace equity and helps ensure that Hawaii employees can respond promptly and safely to credible threats.

For the above reasons, we support H.B. 2455 and respectfully request that the Committee pass this measure.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure.

HB-2455

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 11:30:02 AM

Testimony for LAB on 2/17/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
HSDWC	Hawai'i State Democratic Women's Caucus	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Sayama, Vice Chair Lee and members,

We are aware that workplace violence is not specifically recognized in our laws. This is a remedy the we support.

Mahalo, Ann S. Freed, Co-Chair HSDWC

To: Representative Jackson D. Sayama, Chair
Representative Mike Lee, Vice Chair
Committee on Labor

From: Veronica Moore, Individual Citizen

Date: February 16, 2026

RE: House Bill 2455
Measure Title: RELATING TO EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES.
Report Title: Employment Practices; Paid Leave of Absence; Workplace Violence

To All Concerned,

My name is Veronica Moore and I support House Bill 2455. Thank you for introducing this bill.

Sincerely,

Veronica M. Moore

HB-2455

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 11:19:39 AM

Testimony for LAB on 2/17/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lindsay Chambers	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Sayama, Vice Chair Lee, and members of the committee:

I submit this testimony in support of HB2455, with comments.

I appreciate that this bill recognizes an important reality, that when someone is facing credible threats or workplace violence because of their job, they should not have to choose between their safety and their livelihood. Seeking a temporary restraining order, meeting with law enforcement, or preparing for court often happens during work hours and at the most urgent moments. Employees should not be penalized for taking those necessary steps.

I appreciate that the bill strengthens employment protections and makes clear that workers cannot be punished for using these rights. Employees need confidence that coming forward or taking protective action will not jeopardize their job.

I respectfully ask the Committee to reconsider the provision allowing paid leave to be satisfied through an employee's accrued sick or vacation leave. If someone is being harassed or threatened because of their job and position, they are not sick, and they are certainly not on vacation. Requiring them to use their earned leave shifts the burden of workplace-related harm onto the employee.

If the harm arises out of employment, there should be a shared responsibility. A narrowly tailored employer-provided paid leave component, separate from accrued leave, would better reflect that balance while still maintaining reasonable guardrails.

Thank you for your continued attention to employee safety. I respectfully urge you to pass HB2455 while considering this refinement.

HB-2455

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 8:23:11 AM

Testimony for LAB on 2/17/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Maria Barrows	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In existence is the revised Hawaii Statue 378-2. It addresses the same/similar proposals in HB2455. Recommend legislature review the statue and modify if needed.