

ACT 251

H.B. NO. 2231

A Bill for an Act Relating to Law Enforcement.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Hawaii:

SECTION 1. The legislature finds that, according to the Task Force on Twenty-First Century Policing, increasing the diversity of law enforcement agencies throughout the nation is critical to developing trust between law enforcement agencies and the public. Additionally, the legislature notes that nearly all modern national reports on law enforcement recommend the increased employment of women and people from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups in law enforcement. The legislature recognizes that, when compared to male law enforcement officers, female law enforcement officers generally use less force, including excessive force; are named in fewer lawsuits and complaints; are perceived by the public as being more honest and compassionate; achieve better outcomes for crime victims, especially victims of sexual assault; and make fewer discretionary arrests.

Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to:

- (1) Establish as a goal of the State the increased representation of female law enforcement officers in the State by 2030 and nonbinary law enforcement officers in the State; and

- (2) Require each law enforcement agency to recruit law enforcement officers from diverse backgrounds.

SECTION 2. Chapter 139, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated and to read as follows:

“§139- Law enforcement officers; diversity. (a) The State shall have a goal of each law enforcement agency increasing the employment of:

- (1) Female law enforcement officers to thirty per cent of all law enforcement officers employed by that law enforcement agency by 2030; provided that each law enforcement agency shall use the percentage of female law enforcement officers employed by that law enforcement agency as of January 1, 2023, as the benchmark for measuring the law enforcement agency’s progress toward achieving the goal set forth in this section; and
 - (2) Law enforcement officers who do not adhere to the gender binary.
- (b) To effectuate the purposes of this section, each law enforcement agency shall recruit law enforcement officers from diverse backgrounds, including diverse educational backgrounds.
- (c) As used in this section, “law enforcement agency” shall have the same meaning as defined in section 78-52.”

SECTION 3. New statutory material is underscored.¹

SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

(Approved July 9, 2024.)

Note

1. Edited pursuant to HRS §23G-16.5.