

**RES23-173
Testimony**

MISC. COMM. 486

COUNCIL

COUNCIL Meeting

Meeting Date: Sep 6, 2023 @ 10:00 AM

Support: 0

Oppose: 0

I wish to comment: 2

Name: Kamakana Kaimuloa	Email: kkaimuloa@upwhawaii.org	Zip: 96817
Representing: United Public Workers, AFSCME, Local 646, AFL-CIO	Position: I wish to comment	Submitted: Sep 5, 2023 @ 09:26 AM
Name: Ted Kefalas	Email: tkefalas@grassrootinstitute.org	Zip: 96813
Representing: Grassroot Institute of Hawaii	Position: I wish to comment	Submitted: Sep 5, 2023 @ 10:50 AM



UNITED PUBLIC WORKERS

AFSCME Local 646, AFL-CIO

**CITY COUNCIL
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU
REGULAR MEETING**

Councilmember Tommy Waters, Chair
Councilmember Esther Kia'āina, Vice Chair

Wednesday, September 6, 2023, 10:00 AM
City Council Chamber

Re: Resolution 23-173, CD1 – URGING THE HAWAII STATE LEGISLATURE TO ADOPT LEGISLATION TO ALLOW THE CITY TO PROVIDE INCENTIVES AND INCREASE SALARIES FOR HARD-TO- FILL POSITIONS.

Chair Waters, Vice Chair Kia'āina, and Members of the Council:

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 Hawai'i and each of the four counties.

UPW provides **comments** on Resolution 23-173, CD1, which urges the Hawai'i State Legislature to adopt legislation to allow the City and County of Honolulu to provide incentives and increase salaries for hard-to-fill positions.

UPW represents the public employees who proudly provide the essential services that the residents of O'ahu rely upon daily. While we understand City's need to fill numerous vacant positions, we believe that the Hawaii Revised Statutes ("HRS"), particularly Chapters 76 and 89, already allows the City's administration with the ability to increase salaries and provide incentives for the retention of current employees, as well as the recruitment of qualified candidates. Furthermore, we do not believe that the civil service system or our collective bargaining agreements ("CBA") are barriers to increasing pay or providing incentives for our hardworking members.

Any employer, including the City, can enter into negotiations with an exclusive representative to reprice job classifications or provide incentives through a supplemental agreement to an existing CBA, as provided in Section 89-6, HRS. Additionally, recruitment incentives are allowable under Section 79-23.5, HRS. As a result, we do not believe that this well-intentioned resolution is necessary.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide comments on this resolution.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kalani Werner", is written over a light blue circular stamp.

Kalani Werner
State Director

Hawaii's hard working union.

HEADQUARTERS

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September 6, 2023

10 a.m.

Honolulu City Council Chambers

To: Honolulu City and County Council

Councilmember Tommy Waters, Chair

Councilmember Esther Kiaʻāina, Vice Chair

From: Grassroot Institute of Hawaii

Ted Kefalas, Director of Strategic Campaigns

RE: RESOLUTION 23-170, RESOLUTION 23-171 and RESOLUTION 23-173

Comments Only

Dear Chair and Councilmembers:

The Grassroot Institute of Hawaii would like to offer its comments on [Resolution 23-170](#), [Resolution 23-171](#) and [Resolution 23-173](#).

Together, these resolutions would assist the city administration in hiring for critical positions, delete unfilled and unnecessary positions, and likely contribute to lower budgetary costs in the long run.

>> Resolution 23-170 would request the city Department of Human Resources to submit an annual report to the Council that details unfilled city jobs.

>> Resolution 23-171 would encourage the city administration to coordinate with public sector unions in order to create a policy to abolish unfilled city positions.

>> Resolution 23-173 would request the state Legislature pass legislation allowing Hawaii's counties greater hiring flexibility within civil service law for hard-to-fill positions.

As a unit, these three resolutions would provide the Council with critical tools to identify and mitigate the city's chronic hiring challenges.

These recommendations stem from a June 2023 audit of the city's hiring process. The Office of the City Auditor noted that Honolulu had 2,458 vacant positions. Meanwhile, the city could expect to wait 139 days between posting a job and filling the vacant position.¹

The auditor's report also found that "an analysis of the city's estimated 2,458 vacancies could not be conducted because DHR [the Department of Human Resources] was initially unable to provide data in a form we could utilize. Furthermore, the data that DHR did provide was inconsistent and contained errors that rendered the data potentially unreliable."²

Without reliable data, the city cannot effectively fill its vacant positions or provide reliable services to residents. The annual report, a formal policy for abolishing vacant jobs and greater hiring flexibility under civil service law would provide data and tools with which to act on the information.

In the long run, removing unnecessary positions from the city budget could save the city money, which could lower the tax burden for residents or improve the quality of service the city provides.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit our comments.

Sincerely,

Ted Kefalas
Director of Strategic Campaigns
Grassroot Institute of Hawaii

¹ "[Audit of Select Management Issues Impacting the City's Ability to Effectively Hire and Sustain Its Workforce](#)," Office of the City Auditor, Report No. 23-02, June 2023, p. 15, 17.

² Ibid, p. 15.