

**RES23-171  
Testimony**

**MISC. COMM. 489**

COUNCIL

## **COUNCIL Meeting**

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

Support: 0

Oppose: 0

I wish to comment: 1

Name: Ted Kefalas	Email: tkefalas@grassrootinstitute.org	Zip: 96813
Representing: Grassroot Institute of Hawaii	Position: I wish to comment	Submitted: Sep 5, 2023 @ 10:49 AM



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.<sup>1</sup>

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."<sup>2</sup>

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

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<sup>1</sup> "[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.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p. 15.