RES24-272
Testimony

MISC. COMM. 561

COUNCIL

COUNCIL Meeting

Meeting Date: Dec 11, 2024 @ 10:00 AM

Support: 67

Oppose: 1

I wish to comment: 2

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Kamakana Kaimuloa	kkaimuloa@upwhawaii.org	96817
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
UPW	I wish to comment	Dec 9, 2024 @ 02:36 PM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Noa Terada-Pagdilao	noatp12@gmail.com	96792
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Dec 9, 2024 @ 11:09 PM

Testimony:

I believe creating a task force to explore the merger of HFD and EMS is necessary for both those that support and oppose the merger.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
PJ Matsuura	pj.matsuura@gmail.com	96760
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Dec 9, 2024 @ 11:12 PM

Testimony:

EMS and HFD should merge together.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
William Ferrulli	wferrulli@gmail.com	96819-2606
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Dec 9, 2024 @ 11:13 PM

Testimony:

An expert group of stakeholders should be assembled to best integrate HEMS and HFD

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Brian Hokama	brian.hokama@yahoo.com	96816
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Dec 9, 2024 @ 11:16 PM

Testimony:

As a former law enforcement officer, I support this bill

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Lee Vierra	lvierrahi808@gmail.com	96734
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Dec 9, 2024 @ 11:19 PM

Testimony:

I am a paramedic with the C & C of Honolulu and I support the exploration of EMS intergrating with HFD.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Kameron Aceret	kameronaceret@hotmail.com	96796
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Dec 9, 2024 @ 11:20 PM

Testimony:

Aloha,

My name is Kameron Aceret, former City and County of Honolulu EMS Unit Supervisor. I am writing in full support of the integration of the Emergency Medical Services program into the Honolulu Fire Department for the betterment of its personnel and the community. I began my journey in this field over 12 years ago with Honolulu EMS, first as an EMT, then as a paramedic, and lastly, as a Unit Supervisor before departing. Having worked for Honolulu EMS was an unforgettable experience that afforded me many valuable opportunities to learn and grow, and I am very grateful to have been part of this organization. Although it was a learning experience, rapidly increasing 911 calls have taken their toll on personnel, which also has effects on the community. In 2023, Honolulu EMS responded to approximately 110,000 911 calls with just 21 ambulance crews to cover the island. On any given day, an HFD platoon has approximately 332 firefighters on duty, many of whom are EMTs and several paramedics. It may not be easy, but integrating these resources together would not only benefit personnel but also the surrounding communities as a whole. Throughout the years responding to emergencies, we (EMS) worked alongside our HFD family on numerous incidents to ensure that the patient had the necessary resources for the best outcome. I am a living example of how the efficient teamwork of EMS and HFD spared my life. According to one core value of HFD, it is said, "'a'ohe hana nui ke alu 'ia," no task is too great when done together by all. Teamwork promotes excellence. I hope our voices are considered and are able to progress forward on this important matter. Mahalo for your time and attention.

Respectfully,

Kameron Aceret

Firefighter Paramedic

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Leonard Chong	leonardchong808@gmail.com	96706
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Dec 9, 2024 @ 11:48 PM

Testimony:

I'm a paramedic with Honolulu EMS. I support the integration of EMS and HFD. With HFD having almost twice as many units as EMS, more patients will be assessed faster, lowering the amount of calls per unit thus decreasing burn out in a career notorious for a high turnover rate. Overall it would be beneficial for the public's safety and beneficial for the crews

on the road.		
Name: Eddy Aceret	Email: eddy.aceret@gmail.com	Zip: 96707
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Dec 9, 2024 @ 11:54 PM
Testimony: I WOULD MORE LIKELY STAY WITH THE DEPARTMENT IF THEY APPROVE THE INTEGRATION OF THE EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES PROGRAM INTO THE HONOLULU FIRE DEPARTMENT.		
Name: Marlon Cezar	Email: mcezar@hawaii.edu	Zip: 96789
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Dec 9, 2024 @ 11:58 PM
Testimony: I am a paramedic supervisor for HEMS. I worked this past weekend and for those 48 hours we had more than ten 12-hour units closed in total. Burnout is high and work life balance could improve for majority of our road personnel. “Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.”History will repeat itself so we need change NOW. I completely and utterly support this resolution as it is worth looking into unification of both departments.		
Name: Rachel Fujikawa	Email: ra.fujikawa@gmail.com	Zip: 96821
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Dec 10, 2024 @ 12:22 AM
Testimony: I have been in the EMS department for just under 5 years now, and I have been a paramedic for about 2. Although I am very new, the physicality and mentality of this job are already weighing heavily on me. With every ambulance closure, we take more calls out of our area, lengthening response and transport times and causing the community that we are assigned to cover to be without an ambulance. We seem to be spread too thin, while also trying to maintain the high standard of care that we have for ourselves. Given the increasing call volume and increasing stresses that the EMS personnel and subsequently HFD personnel face, I believe that the exploration of a potential integration of EMS and HFD should be pursued.		
Name: Branden Ige	Email: bigemedic@gmail.com	Zip: 96706
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Dec 10, 2024 @ 01:17 AM
Testimony:		

The absence of a commission that chooses EMS leaders create top-down problems and challenges that fail to improve the quality of leadership. Although there are years of paramedic seniority and experience in positions of EMS leadership, the lack of management competency stagnates any improvements or progress of our critically vital public services.
EMS workforce deserves longevity and RETENTION. This is only achieved with improved work lives, more manpower, improved retirements, and step-pay increases.
We think HFD structure and leadership provides stability and promise for EMS personnel who are career committed to the profession. We think HFD provides our EMS careers what others could not: RETENTION AND STABILITY.

Paramedic. MECS III

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Konner Sato	808Konner@gmail.com	96825
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Dec 10, 2024 @ 03:21 AM

Testimony:
My name is Konner Sato and I am in support of the creation of a Task Force to look at the possible integration of the Honolulu Fire Department, HFD, and Emergency Medical Services, EMS.

Growing up with a cousin in EMS I have seen and heard of the numerous challenges faced every day by our paramedics including but not limited to staffing shortages, unit closures, increased response times, and the increasing volume of 911 calls.

The Honolulu Fire Department has 43 strategically located stations around Oahu compared to 21 EMS ambulance units. Honolulu Fire and EMS work closely together every single day caring for those who are sick and injured in our community. I feel it is a sensible act to create this task force to look at the possible merger of EMS and HFD to better the safety and service of the island.

Every year the call volume for medical emergencies in Honolulu increases, however, the resources of EMS stay the same. With only 21 ambulances, it will soon be a struggle for residents and visitors to receive the care that they need in a timely fashion. In medical emergencies, time is a big factor in whether someone lives or dies.

The study and hopeful creation of a fire-based EMS system will bring great benefits to not only the effectiveness of our 911 system but it will bring benefits to the community as well. A fire-based EMS system brings a centralized dispatch network getting a fire suppression apparatus or ambulance dispatched and en route to the call faster. A fire-based EMS system creates more opportunities for career advancement in both HFD and EMS as more promotional and pay steps will be available for members of the department to take advantage of. Lastly, the integration of a fire-based EMS system will bring high-quality medical and fire service to the residents and visitors of Honolulu faster. With a combined force of firefighters and paramedics; care, treatment, and transport will be greatly enhanced.

I am in strong support of the creation of this task force to study the integration of HFD and EMS. The residents and visitors expect nothing but the best and most timely care in their time of need and supporting this task force is the best way we can give people the best care possible.

Thank you all for your time and consideration.

Konner S. Sato

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Karese Miguel-Hamakua	kpoulosfire@gmail.com	96789
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Dec 10, 2024 @ 07:03 AM

Testimony:

As a former Honolulu EMS paramedic, who is now a firefighter for HFD, I support the exploration of a merger between the two departments.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Kendell Elento	kendell.elento@honolulu.gov	96744
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Dec 10, 2024 @ 07:12 AM

Testimony:

Dear whom it may concern,

My name is Kendell Elento. I have been with CnC Honolulu EMS serving as an EMT and Paramedic for close to a decade. From my experience the work load of the community is exceeding EMS's natural ability to serve. With hopes of a merge of HFD and EMS I could see a solution. I encourage the approval of a task force so that the council and state may also see the benefits.

Much mahalos,

Kendell Elento

Name:	Email:	Zip:
AJ Ortaleza	ortaleza.aj@gmail.com	96706
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	I wish to comment	Dec 10, 2024 @ 07:27 AM

Testimony:

Aloha,

I am a paramedic with the City and County of Honolulu. I support a task force aimed towards the integration of EMS and HFD. I feel a merger would benefit both departments as well as the community. Adequate staffing and step pay increases are just two examples of how a merger would improve things for EMS.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Maple Yamada	mapleylyamada6@gmail.com	96826
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Dec 10, 2024 @ 07:28 AM

Testimony:

My name is Maple Yamada and I am in support of Resolution 24-272. I believe the integration of the Honolulu Fire Department and Emergency Medical Services will greatly benefit the community and improve care.

Thank you.

Maple Yamada

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Brandon Wolff	admin@hldsf.com	96821
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
ILWU	Support	Dec 10, 2024 @ 08:01 AM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Ryan Kalua	rkalua22@gmail.com	96789
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
City County Honolulu EMS	Support	Dec 10, 2024 @ 08:36 AM

Testimony:

I support the merger between HFD and Honolulu EMS.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Daniel Pomerantz	pomerantzlucas@yahoo.com	96734
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Dec 10, 2024 @ 08:45 AM

Testimony:

As a working Honolulu EMS paramedic with the city and county I support any efforts to further this merger. EMS is in a crisis, efforts must be made to open and staff more ambulances and I believe that merging with HFD will make a more efficient system to provide care to the people of Oahu.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Kaylen Mahuka-Kaawa	hawaiiangirlz_13@yahoo.com	96792
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:

Self	Support	Dec 10, 2024 @ 09:06 AM
Testimony: I am in support of creating a task force to discuss a possible merger with EMS & HFD as EMS is in dire need of help. We need More ambulances and personnel to help serve our communities.		
Name: Christopher Coloma	Email: colomanati@yahoo.com	Zip: 96816
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Dec 10, 2024 @ 09:20 AM
Testimony: I fully support the merger. EMS is in one of the worst states it's been in. Something needs to change		
Name: Allen Zhang	Email: canhuangzhang@gmail.com	Zip: 96706
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Dec 10, 2024 @ 09:22 AM
Testimony: Aloha, My name is Allen I'm a paramedic. I am in support of this bill. I think this would greatly benefit both departments and ultimately the residents and visitors in Oahu. Mahalo for your time.		
Name: Lee Lenchanko, MECS III Paramedic Unit Supervisor	Email: llenchanko@hawaii.rr.com	Zip: 96707
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Dec 10, 2024 @ 09:55 AM
Testimony: In my 25 year career, first as an EMT, then as a Dispatcher and Staffer, a Paramedic and now Unit Supervisor, I have seen many changes - some good and most bad. EMS as it is currently run is not sustainable; we have not increased our units and still maintain 21 ALS transport Units (on a good day when all Units are open -which is sadly a rare occurrence) despite yearly large call volume increases (we are now over 104,000 calls year to date) and population increase. This Task Force would greatly assist in exploring the option of merging HFD and EMS, developing a plan to do so and implementing that plan. To deny this task force would be keeping EMS in its current state which is akin to bailing out a sinking ship with a hole in the bucket. No blame should be placed on any one individual, to do so would only root us in negativity, let us look forward on how to improve public safety and continue providing amazing care to all those in need of our assistance throughout the island of O'ahu.		
Name: Kevin Twomey	Email: kevintwomey84@gmail.com	Zip: 96734

Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Dec 10, 2024 @ 10:08 AM

Testimony:

I am a Paramedic with 10 plus years service in Honolulu EMS. I support initiating a task force to look at integrating EMS into HFD. The ultimate goal is to provide the best service to our community. We have had the same running issues for 10 years, as well as before I started. We need to look at whether merging with HFD can be a feasible resolution. It seems the primary issue is retention. Combined with an ever increasing call volume, it is a two fold problem. HFD is already involved in nearly all serious 911 calls as is. If we look into merging, there may be routes to increase retention, better EMS service, and better fulfill our responsibility. I see no issue in looking for better ways to do so, including a task force looking into a merge.

Thank you for your time.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Richard Bevacqua	richbev125@gmail.com	96797
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Dec 10, 2024 @ 10:21 AM

Testimony:

I support the merger with HFD as it will solve all of EMS problems. Moral, staffing issues, equipment and facility issues, pay, retention, etc. We face these problems daily and with HFD, EMS could be a strong department.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Sean McGuire	kekaiola808@gmail.com	96744
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Dec 10, 2024 @ 10:25 AM

Testimony:

I am a Paramedic and have been with the department for 15 years. It seems like things have only gotten worse over the course of my career. This department is not sustainable at the pace we’re going. I am 100% for a merger between EMS and HFD that will only benefit the community and future employees.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Kelly Yamamoto	Kelryamamoto@icloud.com	96821
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Dec 10, 2024 @ 11:15 AM

Testimony:

December 10, 2024

Honorable Council Members,

Please accept my testimony in strong support of Resolution 24-272 relating to creation of a task force which would study the feasibility and value to the community of integrating the services of the Honolulu Fire Department with the Honolulu Emergency Medical Services.

My name is Kelly Yamamoto I have been a paramedic serving the City and County of Honolulu for nearly 40 years. I have spent many years advocating for EMS, my peers and the service that we provide to the citizens of Hawaii. Never have I imagine that I would be supporting the idea of a merger with HFD or any other organization. Unfortunately, the conditions of our organization is such that a change of some kind needs to be considered.

The inability to retain our staff, recruit quality candidates, provide minimal response times to emergencies, maintain advanced life support level of care, address safety concerns for both our staff and public, and turn the tide of what morale we have left as employees of this organization. These issues are not new to the service but, it will take serious changes to move it in the direction that will once again provide the emergency medical service that our community, our friends and family have come to expect!

Thank you for your service and for your consideration. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,
Kelly Yamamoto

Kelryamamoto@icloud.com
Ph: 808-497-3539

Name:	Email:	Zip:
ashryn lasconia	asklasconia@gmail.com	96782
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Dec 10, 2024 @ 11:38 AM

Testimony:
As an EMT with the C&C, I am in full support of the formation of a task force to explore the integration of EMS with HFD. I believe the merger would be of benefit for both departments as well as for the community.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Henry Kahula	eha_808@yahoo.com	96706
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Dec 10, 2024 @ 12:28 PM

Testimony:

I support the integration of the EMS program into HFD.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Mark Palting	marxamus808@gmail.com	96706
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Dec 10, 2024 @ 12:45 PM

Testimony:

Aloha,

As a current Paramedic with C&C of Honolulu EMS, I am in full support for a task force to be created for the potential integration of EMS and HFD. I believe with the right people, they can decipher the pros and cons with the potential integration of the two departments.

Mahalo

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Gabrielle Lennox	gabriellelennox@gmail.com	96706
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Dec 10, 2024 @ 01:42 PM

Testimony:

REQUESTING THE CITY ADMINISTRATION TO ESTABLISH A TASK FORCE TO EXPLORE THE INTEGRATION OF THE EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES PROGRAM INTO THE HONOLULU FIRE DEPARTMENT.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Duke Fujii	duke.fujii05@gmail.com	96821
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Dec 10, 2024 @ 03:26 PM

Testimony:

I support the task force. It’s time for a new point of view to help this community. EMS is overworked and short staffed. A merger will help in many ways not just to alleviate EMS problems but may offer a solution to it.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
tiffany pomaikai	t.pomaikai@yahoo.com	96706
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Dec 10, 2024 @ 04:20 PM

Testimony:

As a paramedic, I support this endeavor. A task force will work towards creating a stronger department that will benefit our community, increase morale, and increase retention of staff.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Kelly Kihe	kellykihe@hotmail.com	96817
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Dec 10, 2024 @ 04:28 PM

Testimony:

I am writing in support of this Resolution to request the City Administration assemble a Task Force to explore theintegration of EMS and HFD. I was employed by EMS for 18 years and retired in 2022 after 14 years as a Paramedic. I was and remain proud of the service I was able to provide to the O'ahu community. During a majority of my career, I was able to experience firsthand the many challenges the EMS department has struggled with. The content of this Resolution mentions news reports that have highlighted these challenges. I can confidently and truthfully speak to the fact that on asurface level, the news reports have accurately reflected as much. However, there is much more to these stories that deserve to be heard, require attention and sustainable resolution. Staffing shortages, unit closures, increased transfer/transport times and lost revenue are all symptomatic of the larger issue over time, which has been GROSS MISMANAGEMENT. The fact that a Task Force exploring integration of EMS and HFD is being proposed is evidence of this. And those who have been and are currently in those positions of authority within EMS have refused to admit that they have failed the EMS workforce as a whole in favor of their own professional and personal agendas. Further evidence of mismanagement is reflected in the low retention rate of personnel in just the past 5 years (including myself), retirement eligible employees aside. Although I am no longer a paramedic with EMS, I still have somewhat of an ear to the ground of the goings on within and care about what my friends and former co-workers have to contend with. As it is, the profession can be difficult and demanding enough and having to grapple with what has been a chronically toxic culture is insufferable. Simply put, as field personnel, we are trained to care for our community members who call 911, and do so expeditiously and gratefully, but those in management who were supposed to care for US, ignored OUR calls. Despite not knowing what the outcome here, or even in the future, might be I am hopeful that at the least, all of you in the Council and the City Administration, even the general public, will know that we who have worked or continue to work in the field in EMS, deeply and genuinely care. This Task Force can potentially be a positive step in not only improving conditions forpersonnel, but for the evergrowing O'ahu community as a whole. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Andrew Trejo	808Trejo@gmail.com	96826
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Dec 10, 2024 @ 06:07 PM

Testimony:

EMS needs help! Cease all other divisions of the department and let HFD take over. Put a paramedic on every fire apparatus. This will create best possible patient care and outcome. It’s preposterous that people have to wait for an ambulance to come from town to Waianae as an example. As an employee of EMS, it is embarrassing. HFD has always been there to save our “okole”, it only makes sense to join them. They can help us help others. That’s the true mission!

Name:	Email:	Zip:

Eddie Fujioka	puunui@msn.com	96818
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Dec 10, 2024 @ 06:40 PM

Name: gabriel majors	Email: majorsgabriel684@gmail.com	Zip: 96789
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Dec 10, 2024 @ 07:30 PM

Testimony:

My name is Gabriel Majors I am an EMT with city and county. I have worked for the department for a little over a year now. I am in support of merger between EMS and HFD and the task force being made to look into a merger. Some reasons of why I am in support of a merger are steps within the department and more opportunities for advancement, possibility of more workers to staff ambulances and better workplace morale. With steps within the department we would have more opportunities for advancement and i believe that would help with our retention of workers, giving them more goals to work towards. With being merged we then put together both of our departments and work forces and I think that would also help with our staffing issue of not being able to staff ambulances and having to shut them down some days. Our call volume is so high, it makes sense to merge our departments so then we can have more workers out in the community to better serve them. Looking at the lifestyle of the fire department, they look happier than some of our workers within our department, then are not running non stop and working from start to finish, they have more opportunities to get food, workout and live a better lifestyle.

I am in support of a task force being made to look into a merger between both our departments.

Name: Chris Sloman	Email: crsloman@gmail.com	Zip: 96818
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Dec 10, 2024 @ 07:56 PM

Testimony:

Please refer to my previous testimony submitted to the Public Safety Committee. I wholeheartedly support the creation of a task force to evaluate integrating EMS and the Fire Dept.

Name: Kea Smith	Email: keasmith20@gmail.com	Zip: 96734
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Dec 10, 2024 @ 09:23 PM

Testimony:

Aloha esteemed members of the Honolulu City Council,

I am writing testimony in favor and full support of Resolution 24-272 which would create a task force to look into the

feasibility of integrating Honolulu Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and the Honolulu Fire Department (HFD).

As a current Paramedic and Station Supervisor with EMS, I have held various positions in the department for the past 14 years and have seen firsthand, our service to the public deteriorate with closing of units, leading to prolonged response times and working conditions of EMS personnel become insufferable and unsustainable leading to high attrition rates, low morale and burnout.

I believe the creation of this task force will truly show that a merge between the two departments will extend far beyond operational efficiency. By combining the expertise of both departments, we can ensure that our first responders are better equipped to handle a wide range of emergencies, from medical and trauma incidents to fires and natural disasters. A unified, single department would also facilitate the development of innovative solutions to address the increasing demands on emergency services and ensure the safety of our community. Furthermore, I believe that the integration of these services will foster stronger relationships between HFD and EMS personnel, promoting teamwork and creating a more cohesive, well-trained workforce. This, in turn, will enhance the overall safety and preparedness of our community.

The synergy between HFD and EMS personnel is undeniable, as both are essential to saving lives during emergencies. By merging these two vital services, we can improve coordination, reduce response times and enhance training opportunities for all personnel involved. In addition, such a merger would enable more efficient use of resources, including staffing, equipment, and funding, while fostering a more collaborative approach to emergency response.

In closing, I wholeheartedly support the formation of the integration task force between EMS and HFD, and I am confident that it will lead to better outcomes for both responders, your constituency, and visitors we serve. Thank you for considering this important step toward improving emergency services in our island home.

Mahalo,

Kea Smith

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Darcy Shimizu	darcy.shimizu@honolulu.gov	96819
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Dec 10, 2024 @ 09:28 PM

Testimony:

Aloha, my name is Darcy Shimizu and I am a paramedic with the City & County of Honolulu EMS.

I fully support the city administration to establish a task force to explore the integration of the EMS program into the Honolulu Fire Department.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Makamae Shook	makamaeshook@gmail.com	96734

Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Dec 10, 2024 @ 09:37 PM

Testimony:
As a EMT with the City and County of Honolulu for the last 2 years, I fully support the formation of a Task Force for the integration of HFD and EMS so that the community can be better served by their first responders. A merger between the two departments will benefit all.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Micah Esteron	micah.esteron@honolulu.gov	96789
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Dec 10, 2024 @ 09:40 PM

Testimony:
In support of EMS/HFD Integration Task Force.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Nainoa Bishaw-Mokiao	nbishawmokiao@gmail.com	96748
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Dec 10, 2024 @ 09:42 PM

Testimony:
I support the task force integration with HFD and EMS on Oahu. The city and county of Honolulu EMS does not have the man power and resources to fully sustain the residents and visitors of Oahu. Speaking for experience, I do not want the personnel to face multiple unit closures and response times delays due to staff shortage, etc. Also, the public faced multiple delays in the past with numerous response delays to due numerous unit closures and that is not safe for the community. I'm in strong support for a task force with intervention with city and county of Honolulu EMS and Honolulu Fire Department. Honestly, that is the only resolution I see for that island and community. Mahalo.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Deo Amor Domingo	domingodeo@gmail.com	96817
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Dec 10, 2024 @ 09:42 PM

Testimony:
as a EMT and paramedic with the city for 10 years I support resolution 24-272 to create a task force looking to integrate ems and hfd

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Niko Fontanilla	nikofontanilla@gmail.com	96825
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Dec 10, 2024 @ 09:43 PM

Testimony:

Paramedic with the city. Been in the department for 8 years. I support resolution 24-272 to create a task force looking to integrate EMS and HFD.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Jonathan Detomaso	johndeto34@gmail.com	96744
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Dec 10, 2024 @ 09:45 PM

Testimony:

As an employee of EMS the merger would benefit not only the department but the community and have a better overall system for fire and EMS to thrive in.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Christopher Giacobone	giacobone45@gmail.com	96826
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Dec 10, 2024 @ 09:47 PM

Testimony:

I support a task force for examining the integration of EMS into HFD. As a MICT with EMS, I enjoy serving my community and if there is a way to better serve my community I would support it. A task force would help examine whether or not the integration of EMS into HFD could help this. EMS has limited staffing and resources. I feel like integration could help this and improve EMS ability to serve Honolulu. I believe a task force is a great first step to evaluate this.

Thank you,

Chris

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Shaun Takeshita	stakeshita808@gmail.com	96825
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Dec 10, 2024 @ 09:47 PM

Testimony:

Paramedic supervisor of 18 years. I am in full support of establishing a task force to look into the integration of EMS and HFD. Within the next 10 years EMS will have an unrecoverable staffing shortage due to retirement and the inability to retain new employees. When that happens the communities that they serve will be drastically affected. Major changes need to happen now to prevent that from happening.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Jeffrey Wilkinson	jwilk21@hotmail.com	96734
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Dec 10, 2024 @ 09:49 PM

Testimony:

As a paramedic with the City and County of Honolulu I believe that the integration of HFD and EMS should be explored. Current EMS resources are overwhelmed with call volume and metropolitan units far exceed the national standard for number of calls per hour worked. The nearly 3x larger network of HFD stations could be utilized to distribute the call volume and additional training of HFD personnel would help fill the holes in EMS' staffing shortage. Likewise, cross trained EMS staff would help staff HFD's units if needed. The integration of HFD and EMS only makes sense, particularly when you consider that the majority of HFD's call volume is medical assistance.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Christian Perkins	cmkp808@gmail.com	96789
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Dec 10, 2024 @ 09:50 PM

Testimony:

Aloha,

I am in favor of creating a task force that explores the integration of EMS and HFD.

Christian Perkins

Honolulu EMS Paramedic

Name:	Email:	Zip:
TYLER HENSHAW	jubjub414@hotmail.com	96741
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Dec 10, 2024 @ 09:50 PM

Testimony:

EmS should be with

emergency services and not with the workers union. Either let them merge with fire because they go on so many calls with fire or let them have their own.

I am a Police Officer for 16 years and I swear that the above facts are true and accurate.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Nicholas Higa	badhiga@gmail.com	96821
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Dec 10, 2024 @ 09:52 PM

Testimony:

The city and county EMS is a sinking ship and has been a sinking ship. A task force to look in to a merger is needed. EMS cannot staff units on almost a daily basis in an already overwhelmed system.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Leighton Takara	takaral8@honolulu.gov	96706
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Dec 10, 2024 @ 09:52 PM

Testimony:

I, Leighton Takara support the HFD/EMS merger. I have been with EMS for 10 years now. I have been an EMT for 5 years and a paramedic for 5 years. Ever since I started working EMS, there is a sad truth that we lose good workers EMTs and paramedics due to the increased 911 call volume and increased work load/stress that's associated with it. I've always wanted to serve my community and will continue to. However, with these increased demands it is rather impossible for EMS to handle it alone. Times have changed from decades ago which this merger from my understanding was talked before, but nothing has changed. In order for the survival of Oahu's medical emergency 911 system, change needs to happen. Being blunt, EMS needs HFD. We need the added personnel and resources. Ultimately, with a merger between EMS and HFD, the two departments will be united with the same training and education, hence, better medical emergency outcomes of patients/the community.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Keavy Brennan	keavybean@aol.com	96741
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Dec 10, 2024 @ 09:52 PM

Testimony:

Please look into merging them. City Ems is in desperate need of help. I am a paramedic on the beautiful island of Kaua`i

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Gregory Wong	greg_o34@hotmail.com	96707
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Dec 10, 2024 @ 09:57 PM

Testimony:

Paramedic

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Nathan Otto	nathano@hawaii.edu	96818
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Dec 10, 2024 @ 09:59 PM

Testimony:

I support the integration with HFD as it is paramount in providing better services to our community. With the amount of burnout and retention the city has shown within the past 5 year proves that the path we have been on is not sustainable or working. We need to work together as a single agency to provide what's best for the island and to support the employees working for the people. Thank you for your time.

-Nathan Otto

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Chadwick Tam	chadwicktam@gmail.com	96797
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Dec 10, 2024 @ 10:02 PM

Testimony:

My name is Chadwick Tam, and I have had the honor of serving as a member of the Honolulu Fire Department for the past 3 years. Prior to that, I spent 10 years working as a Paramedic, where I gained firsthand experience in Emergency Medical Services (EMS). Given my background, I am writing today to express my full support for the integration of the Honolulu EMS division into the Honolulu Fire Department. Throughout my career, I have witnessed the chronic staffing shortages and the overwhelming challenges faced by EMS personnel, both of which directly affect the quality of care we can provide to our community. The demanding nature of the job, coupled with the difficulties of balancing work and family life, makes the current schedule—12-hour shifts, 12 on and 12 off—unsustainable for many. These issues, along with a lack of effective solutions from the EMS division, are contributing to an alarming rate of burnout and attrition among paramedics and EMTs. Many of our most experienced staff have left Honolulu EMS for reasons that include these staffing shortages, the grueling schedule, and the escalating volume of medical and trauma calls. This situation is not just a challenge for EMS personnel—it is a crisis that directly impacts the people we serve. If these issues are not addressed, I fear that the situation will continue to deteriorate, and ultimately, our ability to provide critical emergency care will be compromised. I believe that the integration of Honolulu EMS into Honolulu Fire Department is the solution we need. By following the successful models of other Fire-EMS agencies—such as those on Hawai'i Island or several agencies on the mainland—we can begin to address these staffing shortages, improve scheduling flexibility, and, most importantly, better support our EMS personnel. This integration would allow us to work more cohesively, enhance retention, and ensure that both our teams and the communities we serve receive the best possible care. In conclusion, I wholeheartedly support this integration and strongly urge the decision-makers to consider the long-term benefits it will bring to our EMS personnel and the citizens of island of Oahu.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Drake Sheldon	drakesheldon@gmail.com	96813
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Dec 10, 2024 @ 10:03 PM

Testimony:

I agree with the proposal

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Ikaika Mollena	ikaikamollena@gmail.com	96816
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Dec 10, 2024 @ 10:15 PM

Testimony:

Win win for both community and the city. Will help save more lives and keep the community safer.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Brent Shimabukuro	bshimab@hotmail.com	96744
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Dec 10, 2024 @ 10:19 PM

Testimony:

I have been an employee for EMS for 11 year. It has been a common theme of low moral througout my career. I have been around long enough to see many EMTs and paramedics come and go as they see that better opportunities out there for a career. In our current situation there is little opportunity for promotion and little incentive to stay. I do not know for sure if a EMS/ HFD merger would solve this issue but through my experience and shared experiences from my veteran coworkers all options need to be explored.

Retaining employees would result in better service for the community. Less time training new EMTs to replace ones that leave the dept would result in a stronger work force.

There are successful models of a Fire department based EMS system all over the nation and it would be beneficial to look into what makes them successful and to see if they can be beneficial to Honolulu.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Daniel DeAnda	ddeanda@hawaii.edu	96816
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Dec 10, 2024 @ 11:06 PM

Testimony:

I support the potential integration of EMS into HFD for several reasons such as man power shortages, career paths and retirement and much more. A task force of our peers would provide ample and justified reasoning for such an integration given the chance.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Donovan Gomes	dgomes247@gmail.com	96826
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Dec 10, 2024 @ 11:07 PM

Testimony:

I am in support of the task force. I believe integrating the two departments together could help EMS with retention and Staffing numbers.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Andrew Fun	aa321360@gmail.com	96818
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:

Self	Support	Dec 10, 2024 @ 11:09 PM
Testimony: I am an EMT in support of creating such task force.		
Name: Micah DeSmet	Email: micah.desmet@honolulu.gov	Zip: 96706
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Dec 10, 2024 @ 11:09 PM
Testimony: I, an emt who works for C&C Honolulu EMS, support that the city administration establishes a task force to explore the integration of the EMS program into HFD.		
Name: Kanani Adams	Email: kaadam07@yahoo.com	Zip: 96816
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Dec 10, 2024 @ 11:19 PM
Testimony: I support this resolution!!!		
Name: Lei Wanstead	Email: lvw@hawaii.edu	Zip: 96817
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Dec 10, 2024 @ 11:24 PM
Testimony: N/a		
Name: Adam Ogden	Email: cheukin30@hotmail.com	Zip: 96821
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Dec 10, 2024 @ 11:47 PM
Testimony: I strongly support Please refer back to my previous written testimony Thank you Adam Ogden		

Mict		
Name: Zane Jansson	Email: zane.jansson@gmail.com	Zip: 96701
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Dec 11, 2024 @ 02:58 AM
Testimony: I believe the only way to alleviate staffing shortages, reduce burnout, and reduce response times is for EMS to merge with HFD		
Name: Korey Chock	Email: koreyc808@gmail.com	Zip: 96701
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Dec 11, 2024 @ 06:04 AM
Testimony: I support a task force looking into a merger between the Honolulu Fire Department and Honolulu Emergency Medical Services.		

UNITED PUBLIC WORKERS

AFSCME Local 646, AFL-CIO

CITY COUNCIL
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

REGULAR MEETING
Councilmember Tommy Waters, Chair
Councilmember Esther Kiaʻāina, Vice Chair

Wednesday, December 11, 2024, 10:00 AM
City Council Chamber

Re: Resolution 24-272 – TASK FORCE ON INTEGRATION OF THE EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES PROGRAM INTO THE HONOLULU FIRE DEPARTMENT

Chair Waters, Vice Chair Kiaʻāina, 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 Hawaiʻi and each of the four counties.

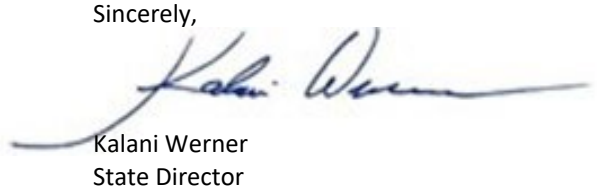
UPW provides comments on Resolution 24-272, which requests the City Administration to establish a task force to explore the integration of the Emergency Medical Services ("EMS") Program into the Honolulu Fire Department.

While UPW supports improving emergency services on Oahu, and perhaps, improving the working conditions of our EMS members, we are concerned with the loss of positions that may come as a result of a possible integration. This is a longstanding concern that has been voiced by UPW when the prospect of the integration of EMS into the Fire Department has been considered in years past.

With the possibility of additional requirements and/or certifications, some current Mobile Intensive Care Technicians ("MICT") and Emergency Medical Technicians ("EMT") may not be able to meet the physical standards required by the Fire Department. Moreover, other positions that provide auxiliary support to EMS, such as mechanics and dispatchers, could be eliminated as a result of a merger.

At this time, UPW is not opposed to the creation of a task force, but it is our hope that the task force will be able to meaningfully analyze EMS' challenges as it considers the feasibility of its integration into the Fire Department, as well as the impact such a merger may have on current employees. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this resolution.

Sincerely,



Kalani Werner
State Director

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Honolulu, Hawaii 96817-1914
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362 East Lanikaula Street
Hilo, Hawaii 96720-4336
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Honolulu City Council
Public Safety Committee Meeting
December 11, 2024 - 10:00 a.m.

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF RESOLUTION 24-272

Honorable Members of the Honolulu City Council,

I am writing to express strong support for Resolution 24-272, which seeks to establish a task force to evaluate the integration of the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) program into the Honolulu Fire Department (HFD) and consider the migration of the Health Services and Crisis Outreach Response and Engagement (CORE) programs to other departments or agencies.

This resolution is a forward-thinking step toward addressing critical challenges in our emergency response systems while maximizing efficiency and enhancing community services. Integrating EMS with HFD has the potential to significantly improve emergency response times by streamlining dispatch and communication systems, ensuring faster and more efficient responses to emergencies. Combining personnel and resources under one department can increase the availability of emergency units during peak demand, alleviating current staffing shortages.

Additionally, this integration offers an opportunity to foster cross-training among EMS and HFD personnel, creating a versatile workforce equipped to handle both medical and fire emergencies, thereby strengthening Honolulu's emergency response capabilities.

There may be an increase in costs initially however, consolidating administrative functions and eliminating redundancies will likely result in long-term cost savings. These savings can be reinvested into improving services and purchasing modern equipment. The transition also provides an opportunity to modernize outdated systems and practices, ensuring Honolulu's emergency services remain efficient and innovative.

Furthermore, relocating CORE and Health Services programs to other departments or the Mayor's office would allow these programs to align more closely with their unique missions, such as mental health and crisis outreach, improving their impact on the community.

While transitions of this scale can pose challenges, they also present immense opportunities. Addressing operational differences between EMS and HFD can lead to the creation of a unified, multidisciplinary response system. Any fiscal risks involved are investments in long-term savings and sustainability. Disruptions during the transition can be mitigated with planning and implementation of modern systems.

Overall, this resolution demonstrates a commitment to innovation, collaboration and community well-being, and I strongly urge the Council to adopt Resolution 24-272.

Respectfully,

Brandon Wolff
ILWU Vice President – Hawaii

December 10, 2024

Council Chair Waters and Members of the City Council Members

Testimony of Edward Fujioka in Support of Transitioning to a Fire-Based EMS System

Introduction:

Honorable Council Chair Waters and members of the City Council

Aloha Members

My name is Edward (Eddie) Fujioka, and I am in support of Resolution 24-272 relating to forming a task force to investigate the migration of EMS and the Honolulu Fire Department. I have over 45 years of service in Honolulu EMS dating back to 1976, I am Chair of the Hawaii State 911 Finance Committee and am testifying as an individual. The current delivery of 911 EMS service is unsustainable and a change is needed to ensure public safety to residents and visitors to Honolulu. Unit closures are unacceptable as a 911 Public Service Provider. The Public expects 100% rapid response to a request for 911 medical emergencies without delay.

In my early years as a Paramedic, we never closed units, they were unheard of, and we did what we needed to do to keep the units open. We even had occasional "stacked" units with 3 Paramedics on duty. Also in my first few years with EMS the Administration recognized the need to open and staff units so three units were contracted out to private ALS services to ILS and Pacific ambulance. As the City graduated and hired more personnel, these contact units transitioned back to the City. The Directors and leadership were focused on Emergency Medical Services and very little else, EMS was the priority. Currently HESD has CORE and EMS services as shared services and many EMS personnel feel that EMS has taken a back seat to CORE.

CORE has hired former EMS EMT's and Medic both terminated or in a lateral movement due to injury, Special Assignment or light duty status. CORE has newer vehicles both Ambulances and SUV's. They have their own supply, warehouses, offices and unit quarters. CORE, this branch has grown into a secondary Ambulance service and has required funding and many hours of the Directors, staff and labor to operate. HESD primary mission is to 911 Emergency services. Many EMS employees feel that they have been neglected and CORE and the "Black OPS" teams has been a priority over EMS services and employees. There are several EMT's, and Paramedics assigned to CORE that originally were employed by EMS. These employees either staff the CORE units or are in management and Special Operations Services.

- When I networked with the city of Houston that started a similar service like CORE several years ago, they mentioned they do not use Ambulances, EMT's or Paramedics. Rather they use trained staff specializing in homelessness and social outreach. They try to manage cases within their teams and do not transport unless medically necessary. They do have clinics and housing like the facilities the City recently set up.

- Las Vegas Fire uses Uber, Lyft and Taxi's to help transport low level pt's including homeless to clinics, doctor's offices, City resources when applicable. They can monitor the movement and locations of these types of transportation and are able to redirect and terminate the transportation if needed. They have a special account to pay the fares. Dispatchers are trained to filter these types of calls and arrange alternate transport within the call center and track the delivery/transport to the destination.
- REMSA in Reno has a Nurse embedded in dispatch that manages low level calls. These calls are sent over from the 911 dispatchers in the same dispatch center. Alternate transport is scheduled either the same day or in the future if the caller does not need immediate transportation.

The AMR and Fed fire mutual Aid (Back up service) that the Directors have mentioned are not always available. AMR has staff shortage issues of their own and are not always available. This can be due to no personnel available and or due to employee contracts a mandatory break is required during certain durations. Fed fire has a Geo fence area for each ALS unit and will not respond outside of the Geo Fence unless it is a high-profile type of case. It is my understanding that Fed Fire has raised concerns about the high number of requests to back up the City EMS calls. Keep in mind the Federal Fire's primary mission is for Federal property and assets. Fed Fire responses "HOT" (lights and Siren) will an Ambulance and either an Engine or Ladder truck on every call with their Ambulance

Please Amend Reso 24-272– I would suggest the Resolution be amended to add retired EMS and Fire Chiefs or supervisors to the task force. They have valuable experiences that they can communicate with the task force and help be a solution to this issue. I also stand on my previous testimony submitted for the November Safety Committee meeting.

In summary I support the formation of a task force to conduct an assessment and plan for integration of Honolulu EMS and Honolulu Fire. Migration will create a more robust EMS service and it will be readily available for all 911 calls for medical assistance.

Respectfully submitted

Eddie Fujioka

Retired District Chief

Former EMS Communications Chief SA