HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL

KE KANIHELA O KE KALANA O HONOLULU

CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

No. 25-160

RESOLUTION

ESTABLISHING A TASK FORCE TO ADDRESS HONOLULU POLICE DEPARTMENT VACANCIES AND OFFICER RETENTION.

WHEREAS, the Honolulu Police Department ("HPD") plays a critical role in maintaining public safety by preventing crime, enforcing laws, and responding to emergencies throughout the City and County of Honolulu ("City"); and

WHEREAS, the HPD is currently experiencing a severe staffing shortage, with 456 uniformed officer vacancies as of February 2025, compared to 345 vacancies in February 2021, despite ongoing efforts to reduce the shortage; and

WHEREAS, this staffing shortage has resulted in inadequate police coverage across O'ahu, increased emergency response times, unmanageable caseloads for police detectives, and increased safety risks for both officers and the public; and

WHEREAS, in 2024, the HPD conducted an internal "Commander Performance Survey," and survey responses noted concerns regarding high vacancy rates, increased workloads, insufficient resources, and overall safety risks; and

WHEREAS, according to the Status of the City's Finances 2025 report issued by the Office of Council Services, which covers Fiscal Year 2024, the HPD's Patrol Division had the largest appropriation lapse amount of any City departmental activity, totaling approximately $15 million, and the HPD overall lapsed more than $50 million; and

WHEREAS, the City Council ("Council") finds it necessary to hold the Chief of Police accountable for the failure to adequately address vacancies in a timely and effective manner, which has directly contributed to the current crisis, and to take swift action to resolve this issue; and

WHEREAS, the Council believes it is critical to establish a task force to develop actionable strategies for reducing vacancies, improving retention, and ensuring that the HPD can effectively serve and protect O'ahu communities; and

WHEREAS, under Council Rule 9A the Council may, by adoption of a resolution, create advisory committees to assist the Council in the resolution or study of issues; now, therefore,

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BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City and County of Honolulu that a Police Department Staffing and Retention Task Force ("Task Force") is hereby established to address the Honolulu Police Department vacancies and officer retention; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Task Force be composed of:

1. The Council Chair, or the Chair's designee;

2. A representative from the Mayor's office;

3. The Chief of Police, or the Chief's designee;

4. A representative from the Honolulu Police Commission;

5. A representative from the Department of Human Resources;

6. A representative from the State of Hawai'i Organization of Police Officers;

7. A representative from the Hawai'i Government Employees Association;

8. A current Honolulu Police Department officer, to be appointed by the Council; and

9. A representative from another police department with success in reducing officer vacancies, to be appointed by the Council; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Task Force shall:

1. Analyze the Honolulu Police Department recruitment and retention challenges and identify the primary causes of vacancies;

2. Review and evaluate existing hiring and retention initiatives, including financial incentives;

3. Assess the Honolulu Police Department's hiring standards to determine whether they are unnecessarily restrictive and preventing qualified applicants from being hired;

4. Develop a strategic plan with short-term and long-term recommendations to reduce vacancies and improve officer retention;

5. Evaluate the Honolulu Police Department's budget to ensure funding is directed toward staffing priorities; and

6. Submit a report to the Council within 90 days of the adoption of this resolution, which provides the Task Force's analysis and recommendations, and provide a copy of the report to the Honolulu Police Commission to support its evaluation of the Chief of Police; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Task Force shall remain in effect to monitor progress on its recommendations and may be dissolved by the Council once the Honolulu Police Department demonstrates sustained improvement in recruitment, retention, and staff levels; and

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BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Mayor, the Managing Director, the Chair of the Honolulu Police Commission, the Chief of Police, the President of the State of Hawai'i Organization of Police Officers, and the Executive Director of the Hawai'i Government Employees Association.

INTRODUCED BY:

A. Fpola

DATE OF INTRODUCTION:

MAY 22 2025

Honolulu, Hawai'i

Councilmembers

Report Title:
Honolulu Police Department ("HPD"); Honolulu Police Department Staffing and Retention Task Force; Vacancies; Retention; Staffing Crisis; Budget; Lapse of Funds; Report; Council Advisory Committee

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