RES26-119
Testimony

MISC. COMM. 231

COUNCIL

COUNCIL Meeting

Meeting Date: Jun 3, 2026 @ 10:00 AM

Support: 1

Oppose: 0

I wish to comment: 0

Name:	Email:	Zip:
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Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Ohana Unity Party	Support	May 31, 2026 @ 08:41 AM

Testimony:

Oppose Resolution 26-119, CD1 – Transfer of Funds for Honolulu Police Department Overtime Costs

Chair Waters and Members of the Honolulu City Council:

I respectfully submit this testimony in OPPOSITION TO RESOLUTION 26-119, CD1, OR IN THE ALTERNATIVE, REQUEST ADDITIONAL OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY BEFORE APPROVAL.

This resolution authorizes the transfer of up to **$5,500,000** in General Fund taxpayer money within the Honolulu Police Department to address projected salary deficits resulting from overtime expenditures, vacant positions, and unforeseen weather events.

The numbers alone should raise concerns.

This is not a $50,000 adjustment.

This is not a $100,000 adjustment.

This is a **$5.5 MILLION transfer** within HPD's salary budget.

The largest component of the transfer moves **$4.3 million** from Administrative Services into Patrol operations.

Additional transfers move:

• $450,000 from Special Field Operations to Patrol

• $300,000 into Investigations

• $100,000 into Support Services

• Additional funds into the Office of the Chief of Police

These transfers are being requested because HPD projects significant overtime expenditures due to staffing shortages and vacant positions.

THE REAL QUESTION IS NOT THE TRANSFER.

THE REAL QUESTION IS WHY THIS PROBLEM EXISTS.

If HPD is short millions of dollars because overtime is replacing vacant positions, taxpayers deserve answers.

QUESTIONS TAXPAYERS SHOULD ASK

• How many sworn officer positions are currently vacant?

• How long have those vacancies existed?

• What is the annual overtime expenditure for HPD?

• How much overtime has increased over the last five years?

• How much of the $5.5 million transfer is directly attributable to staffing shortages?

• What is HPD's plan to reduce overtime dependency?

• At what point does overtime become more expensive than filling vacant positions?

The public deserves answers before another multi-million-dollar transfer is approved.

OVERTIME SHOULD NOT BECOME THE BUSINESS MODEL

Overtime has legitimate uses during emergencies, disasters, and extraordinary circumstances.

However, overtime should not become a permanent staffing strategy.

When departments become dependent on overtime year after year, taxpayers end up paying a premium price for labor while underlying staffing problems remain unresolved.

That is not a sustainable model.

It is a symptom of deeper management and workforce challenges that must be addressed.

FISCAL DISCIPLINE MATTERS

Honolulu taxpayers are already facing:

• Rising property taxes

• Rising sewer fees

• Rising utility costs

• Rising insurance costs

• Rising housing costs

Meanwhile, City departments continue returning to taxpayers requesting additional transfers, appropriations, and budget adjustments measured in the millions of dollars.

Each individual request may appear reasonable.

But taken together, they raise legitimate concerns regarding long-term budget planning and fiscal management.

ACCOUNTABILITY BEFORE APPROVAL

Before approving this transfer, I respectfully request that the Council publicly disclose:

• Current sworn officer vacancy numbers

• Total FY2026 overtime expenditures

• Total projected FY2026 overtime expenditures

• Historical overtime spending trends

• Recruitment and retention plans

• Long-term strategies to reduce overtime dependency

Taxpayers deserve transparency before another $5.5 million is shifted within the budget.

PUBLIC SAFETY AND FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY CAN COEXIST

Supporting public safety does not require abandoning fiscal accountability.

In fact, true support for public safety means ensuring that taxpayer dollars are used efficiently, staffing levels are sustainable, and departments are managed effectively.

The public should not be asked to repeatedly fund overtime shortfalls without understanding why they continue to occur.

CONCLUSION

This resolution highlights a larger issue: a police department that appears increasingly dependent on overtime to compensate for vacancies and staffing shortages.

Before approving a $5.5 million transfer, taxpayers deserve a full explanation of the underlying causes, the long-term financial impact, and the plan to prevent similar deficits in the future.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Council to defer Resolution 26-119, CD1, until additional transparency and accountability measures are provided to the public, or alternatively amend the measure to require public reporting on overtime expenditures and staffing vacancies.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Master Shelby "Pikachu" Billionaire, HRM

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