

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR



JADE T. BUTAY
DIRECTOR

WILLIAM G. KUNSTMAN
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS
KA 'OIHANA PONO LIMAHAHA

March 22, 2023

To: The Honorable Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Chair,
The Honorable Chris Lee, Vice Chair, and
Members of the Senate Committee on Labor & Technology

Date: Wednesday, March 22, 2023
Time: 3:00 p.m.
Place: Conference Room 224, State Capitol

From: Jade T. Butay, Director
Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR)

**Re: S.C.R. 122 URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES
DEVELOPMENT TO REEXAMINE THE QUALIFICATIONS FOR VACANT STATE
POSITIONS AND REPLACE THE REQUIREMENT OF A BACHELOR'S DEGREE
WITH AN ASSOCIATE DEGREE OR CERTIFICATE, WHERE APPLICABLE**

The DLIR **supports the intent** of this measure and defers to Department of Human Resources Development (DHRD) on provisions applicable only to DHRD. SCR122 urges DHRD to reexamine the qualifications for vacant state positions and replace the requirement of a bachelor's degree with an associate degree or certificate, where applicable.

The resolution also urges the DLIR to work with DHRD in considering and determining whether the completion of an apprenticeship program would adequately equip an individual with the skills and knowledge necessary for state employment. The DLIR is willing to collaborate with DHRD to fulfill this provision of the measure.

JOSH GREEN, M. D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA

SYLVIA LUKE
LT. GOVERNOR
KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



BRENN A H. HASHIMOTO
DIRECTOR
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

RYAN YAMANE
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT
KA 'OIHANA HO'OMŌHALA LIMAHANA
235 S. BERETANIA STREET
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-2437

Statement of
BRENN A H. HASHIMOTO
Director, Department of Human Resources Development

Before the
SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND TECHNOLOGY
Wednesday, March 22, 2023
3:00 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 224

In consideration of
**SCR 122, URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT
TO REEXAMINE THE QUALIFICATIONS FOR VACANT STATE POSITIONS AND
REPLACE THE REQUIREMENT OF A BACHELOR'S DEGREE WITH AN
ASSOCIATE DEGREE OR CERTIFICATE, WHERE APPLICABLE**

Chair Moriwaki, Vice Chair Lee, and the members of the committee.

The Department of Human Resources Development (DHRD) appreciates the intent of SCR 122 which urges the Department of Human Resources Development to reexamine the qualifications for vacant State positions and replace the requirement of a bachelor's degree with an associate degree or certificate, where applicable. DHRD offers the following comments on this resolution:

1. DHRD policy and procedure 200.004 requires departments to review the minimum qualifications for their vacant positions prior to recruitment to ensure they are current and appropriate. If changes in the work or other factors affect the relevance of the current qualification requirements, DHRD works with the employing department to make the necessary changes. This process ensures that the minimum qualifications reflect the knowledge, skills, abilities, and competencies required to perform the job.
2. When a degree is required, applicable substitutions are included to ensure the broadest applicant pool. Substitutions are not appropriate when they are a requirement for licensure or certification (e.g., physician, dentist).

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony and comments on this measure.



March 22, 2023

3 p.m.

Conference Room 224

VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

To: Senate Committee on Labor and Technology

Sen. Sharon Moriwaki, Chair

Sen. Chris Lee, Vice Chair

From: Grassroot Institute of Hawaii

Ted Kefalas, Director of Strategic Campaigns

RE: SCR122 — URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT TO REEXAMINE THE QUALIFICATIONS FOR VACANT STATE POSITIONS AND REPLACE THE REQUIREMENT OF A BACHELOR'S DEGREE WITH AN ASSOCIATE DEGREE OR CERTIFICATE, WHERE APPLICABLE.

Comments Only

Dear Chair and Committee Members:

The Grassroot Institute of Hawaii would like to offer its comments on [SCR122](#), which would urge the state Department of Human Resources Development to review its qualifications for vacant state positions to determine if such positions should have a bachelor's degree as one of its minimum requirements.

This resolution would also encourage the department to accept for certain jobs associate degrees or certificates instead of bachelor's degrees.

The intent of this resolution is to remove arbitrary barriers to entry for those seeking to work in state government — barriers that prevent many qualified applicants from applying.

A bachelor's degree is not necessary for many state jobs, even though some departments require one simply out of habit. A degree may indicate a certain set of skills, but it is by no means the only indicator.

A study from the Burning Glass Institute and Harvard University researchers stated “When employers drop degrees, they become more specific about skills in job postings, spelling out the soft skills that may have been assumed to come with a college education, such as writing, communication, and being detail-oriented.”¹

Maryland, Utah, Pennsylvania and Alaska have all enacted policies aimed at removing arbitrary degree requirements for state jobs.² Hawaii should follow their lead.

For the record, the U.S. Census Bureau estimates that only about a third of Hawaii residents age 25 or older have bachelor’s degrees.³

Similarly, the nonprofit Opportunity@Work reports that individuals who do not possess four-year bachelor degrees but who are “skilled through alternative routes” made up 59% of Hawaii’s workforce in 2019, compared to 53% of the workforce nationwide.⁴ Given this data, it is clear that this would broaden employment opportunities for local residents.

While we are supportive of this resolution, we do not support utilizing this measure as a means to expand government spending or the state workforce. Rather, this resolution should be focused on filling existing government positions.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit our comments.

Sincerely,

Ted Kefalas
Director of Strategic Campaigns
Grassroot Institute of Hawaii

¹ Joseph Fuller, Christina Langer, Julia Nitschke, Layla O’Kane, Matt Sigelman and Bledi Taska, “[The Emerging Degree Reset: How the Shift to Skills-Based Hiring Holds the Keys to Growing the U.S. Workforce at a Time of Talent Shortage](#),” Burning Glass Institute, 2022, p. 3.

² Kathryn Moody, “[Pennsylvania ends 4-year degree requirement for majority of state jobs](#),” HR Dive, Jan. 24, 2023; and Joey Klecka and Elena Symmes, “[4-year degree no longer required for some state jobs](#),” Alaska’s New Source, Feb. 14, 2023.

³ “[QuickFacts: Hawaii](#),” U.S. Census Bureau, accessed March 20, 2023.

⁴ Communication with Ashley Edwards, Director for Data Services at Opportunity@Work, Aug. 17, 2022.