



Testimony to the House Committee on Labor & Public Employment
Friday, January 29, 2016, 10:00AM
State Capitol - Conference Room 309

RE: HOUSE BILL NO. 685 RELATING TO ADVANCED NOTICE OF PLANNED LAYOFF

Aloha Chair Nakashima, Vice Chair Keohokalole, and members of the committee:

I am John Knorek, the Legislative Committee chair for the Society for Human Resource Management – Hawaii Chapter (“SHRM Hawaii”). SHRM Hawaii represents more than 800 human resource professionals in the State of Hawaii.

We are writing to respectfully oppose HB 685, which requires entities and individuals that employ employees on a non-temporary basis to provide notice to employees at least thirty days in advance of any planned layoff.

At present, federal law, under the Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (“WARN”) Act, requires businesses employing more than 100 full-time employees to provide 60-days advance notice of any planned mass layoff. Additionally, the Hawaii Dislocated Workers Act requires entities employing more than 50 full-time employees to provide 60-days advance notice of any planned layoff due to divestiture, full or partial closure, or relocation.

This bill would unduly restrict workplace staffing flexibility, increase costs, and complicate the management of laid-off employees. Layoffs are a last resort based on economic necessity. A thirty-day waiting period would only extend the economic hardship another month. Whether advanced notice should be provided for layoffs not covered by the WARN Act or Dislocated Workers Act should be left to private market determination.

Human resource professionals are keenly attuned to the needs of employers and employees. We are the frontline professionals responsible for businesses’ most valuable asset: human capital. We truly have our employers’ and employees’ interests at heart. We respectfully oppose this measure because of the implementation challenges and administrative burden it would impose, and for the potential of unintended consequences.

We will continue to review this bill and, if it advances, request to be a part of the dialogue concerning it. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



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