HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
TWENTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE, 2005
STATE OF HAWAII

H.C.R. NO. 265
H.D. 1

HOUSE CONCURRENT
RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT TO
REINSTATE THE SOCIAL WORKER SERIES IN ITS CLASSIFICATION
AND COMPENSATION PLAN.

WHEREAS, in 2003, the Department of Human Resources
Development (DHRD) conducted a Social Worker Occupational Study
to address the increasing demand for human services, the finite
number of social workers, and a lack of alternative occupational
options within the state system to meet the demand; and

WHEREAS, the Social Worker Occupational Study found that
there was a vacancy rate of approximately 19 percent in social
work positions as of December 2003; and

WHEREAS, state departments with social worker positions,
specifically, the Department of Human Services, Department of
Health, Department of Education, and Department of Public
Safety, reported that the existing social worker classification
system did not meet their needs; and

WHEREAS, DHRD authorized the elimination of the social
worker series and replaced it with a new human services
professional series as of May 1, 2004; and

WHEREAS, Hawaii continues to experience a shortage of
social workers with bachelor’s and master’s degrees in social
work to provide services within the executive branch; and

WHEREAS, the shortage of social workers is of concern
because necessary services may be provided but by staff with
lesser qualifications, or may be assigned to qualified staff who
are already carrying full caseloads, which will, in turn, create
more turnover; and

I do hereby certify that the within document
is a full, true and correct copy of the original
on file in this office.

Chief Clerk
House of Representatives
State of Hawaii

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WHEREAS, eliminating the social worker series effectively downgraded professionally educated social workers and devalued the expertise they bring to working with at-risk populations; and

WHEREAS, declassification will likely dampen demand for those with social work degrees in public agencies; and

WHEREAS, the social worker classification should be retained for use by those with degrees from institutions accredited by the Council on Social Work Education or the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, or a comparable regional body; and

WHEREAS, the demand for social workers will continue to grow across the program areas of child welfare, developmental disabilities, mental health, and school social work, as the population grows, diversifies, and ages; and

WHEREAS, a major source of this shortage is the limited number of individuals pursuing degrees in social work in Hawaii, despite the increasing demand for social services; and

WHEREAS, the limited number of social work graduates pursuing employment within the executive branch may be attributable to working conditions such as high caseloads; and

WHEREAS, the Legislature recognizes the need to comprehensively and effectively address the long-standing problem of the shortage of social workers in Hawaii; and

WHEREAS, the Legislature supports the re-establishment of the social worker series and revised minimum qualifications to require that persons possess a bachelors, masters, or doctoral degree in social work from a program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education or, the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, or a comparable regional accreditation body; and

WHEREAS, the Legislature recognizes the important role of social workers in providing vital services to the people of Hawaii and supports the state in showing a preference to hire social workers in the provision of social services to the public; now, therefore,
BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the Twenty-third Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2005, the Senate concurring, that DHRD is requested to develop a plan, in cooperation with the key stakeholders, regarding the implementation of a separate series for social workers to include persons who possess a social work degree from an accredited social work program and a human services professional series for persons who do not possess a social work degree; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DHRD shall develop its plan through consultation and coordination with the Hawaii Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers, University of Hawaii School of Social Work, Hawaii Pacific University School of Social Work, Brigham Young University School of Social Work, Hawaii Government Employees Association, Department of Education, Department of Health, Department of Human Services, and any other affected department or agency; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the plan shall call for and allow the transition of persons without social work degrees but who are in positions that were reallocated from the social worker series to the social worker/human service professional series and are still called social workers to obtain a social work degree by July 1, 2010; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the plan shall call for and allow the transition of persons without social work degrees by July 1, 2010, to be placed in the human services professional series; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the plan may also examine the intent of the Legislature to require licensure for social workers employed by the executive branch and appropriate compensation for those who are licensed; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the plan shall not include reclassification of social worker positions previously reclassified as part of the parole officer series and the child and adult protective services specialist series; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the plan shall not apply to the Judiciary, the Hawaii Health Systems Corporation, or the counties; and

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BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DHRD shall submit a report to
the Legislature no later than 20 days prior to the convening of
the Regular Session of 2006, which shall include the plan to
implement separate social worker and human services professional
series; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Director of Human
Resources Development, Director of Health, Director of Human
Services, Director of Public Safety, Chairperson of the Board of
Education, Superintendent of Education, Deans of the Schools of
Social Work of the University of Hawaii, Brigham Young
University at Hawaii, and Hawaii Pacific University, the Hawaii
Government Employees Association, and the Executive Director of
the Hawaii Chapter of the National Association of Social
Workers.

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