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February 2, 2026

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 2519
RELATING TO LAW ENFORCEMENT CERTIFICATION DEADLINES

TO:

Senate Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs
Senator Carol Fukunaga, Chair
Senator Chris Lee, Vice Chair

FROM:

Victor McCraw
Administrator, Hawai'i Law Enforcement Standards Board

Chair Fukunaga, Vice Chair Lee, and Members of the Committee:

I submit this testimony in strong support of SB 2519.

SB 2519 amends sections 139-6 and 139-7, Hawai'i Revised Statutes, to extend the statutory deadlines associated with law enforcement certification and employment eligibility. From an implementation standpoint, this measure aligns the certification deadline with the work the Law Enforcement Standards Board is required to complete under chapter 139 before certification can be administered statewide in a meaningful and consistent manner.

Chapter 139 assigns the Board responsibility for establishing minimum employment and training standards, issuing certifications, and maintaining a uniform certification framework applicable to all state and county law enforcement agencies. These responsibilities are administrative, regulatory, and statewide in scope. Certification under chapter 139 is not limited to issuing an individual credential. It requires administrative rules, standardized processes, and supporting systems so certification determinations are made consistently, documented accurately, applied uniformly across jurisdictions, and reported in a transparent manner that meets public expectations.

At present, the Board's administrative capacity is limited. Before certification deadlines take effect, the Board must complete foundational implementation work. This work includes adopting and operationalizing administrative rules. It includes establishing uniform certification and recordkeeping processes across agencies. It also includes implementing the systems needed to verify training completion and maintain certification status over time. Police certification under chapter 139 is a continuing regulatory function, not a one-time administrative act. It requires enforceable standards for basic recruit training involving hundreds of hours of approved and verified instruction, recurring annual or biannual in-service training that is developed, delivered, evaluated, and tracked for each officer, and clear codes of conduct with mechanisms for enforcement. These elements are necessary to obtain and maintain certification as a law enforcement officer. These steps are prerequisites to statewide certification.

SB 2519 does not alter certification standards or reduce requirements. It does not change who must be certified or what qualifications apply. It adjusts the timeline so that certification can be implemented after the foundational administrative work required by chapter 139 is completed.

Funding is also a sequencing reality. Any appropriations approved during the 2026 legislative session would not become available until July 1, 2026. The staffing and administrative capacity needed to fulfill the Board's statutory responsibilities depends on that funding. SB 2519 aligns the certification deadline with that timeline so that implementation can proceed in an orderly and practical manner.

From an implementation perspective, SB 2519 supports the Legislature's intent by allowing the certification framework established in chapter 139 to be administered as a functioning statewide system rather than as a statutory deadline unsupported by administrative capacity.

For these reasons, I respectfully support SB 2519.

Respectfully submitted,

Victor McCraw
Administrator
Hawai'i Law Enforcement Standards Board