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GOVERNOR



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February 1, 2026

Chair Carol Fukunaga
Vice Chair Chris Lee
Senate Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs
State Capitol, Conference Room 016
415 S. Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

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

The Hawaii Law Enforcement Standards Board (LESB) submits this testimony in strong support of SB 2519. This bill amends HRS sections 139-6 and 139-7 and seeks to extend the current deadline for mandatory certification for state and county law enforcement officers from June 30, 2026, to June 30, 2028.

The LESB was created in 2018 but remained largely unfunded and unstaffed. This resulted in the certification deadlines in sections 139-6 and 139-7 being extended from July 1, 2019, to December 31, 2021, June 30, 2024, to the current deadline of June 30, 2026.

The difference this time is that the LESB expects to receive funding that will actually allow it to meet the proposed 2028 deadline. Currently staffed by only an administrator who was hired in 2024, the LESB anticipates having the capability to hire additional staff and have the necessary funding to have a valid certification system in place.

Significantly, failure to pass SB 2519 and extend the current deadline will jeopardize every criminal investigation and prosecution pending within the State and open law enforcement agencies to potential liability as a result of having law enforcement officers who are not duly certified as required by law. A lack of certification provides a mechanism to question the validity of a law enforcement officer's employment and any official actions taken in connection therewith.

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For these reasons, the Hawaii Law Enforcement Standards Board strongly supports SB 2519 and asks that it move forward.

Sincerely,

Adrian Dhakhwa
Chair, Hawaii Law Enforcement Standards Board