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Legislation Means Hawaii Civil Servants Will Be Treated Unfairly

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I again opposed HB 1868 HD1, which punishes civil servants who accept political appointments.

The bill would prohibit civil service employees not covered by certain collective bargaining agreements from taking a leave of absence from their current position to accept an appointed position that lasts for at least one year. What this bill basically does is dumb down government in favor of unions.

Affected civil servants would consequently be unable to return to their former positions in the government when the term of their appointment is over.

The bill is anti-intellectual and hamstringing our government, which requires good, highly qualified people to run well. The State's ability to get those people would be severely limited by this bill.

Aside from limiting the government's ability to appoint the most qualified people available, HB 1868 is unfair towards civil servants who are not covered by certain collective bargaining agreements. This brings the bill in conflict with section 89C-3 of the Hawaii Revised Statutes, which requires employers to provide employees not covered by collective bargaining agreements with compensation and benefit packages that are at least equal to those with such agreements. Vacation leave and temporary assignment programs offered are covered under that rule.

Hawaii has an amazing resource in its civil servants. They should not be penalized for their willingness to step up but instead be praised for bringing their knowledge and expertise into government.

Representative Gene Ward is a member of the State House of Representatives and represents House District 17, Hawaii Kai—Kalama Valley.

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