OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF WAR
1500 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-1500

MANPOWER AND RESERVE AFFAIRS

March 11, 2026

Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
Honorable Representative Kim Coco Iwamoto, Vice Chair
Committee on Public Safety

Hawai'i House of Representatives
415 S Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: Senate Bill 3082 SD 1 (Relating to military families.)

Dear Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of military families stationed in the State of Hawai'i, I would like to provide comments **in support** of the provisions reflected within Senate Bill (SB) 3082 SD 1, which would authorize eligible employees to take family leave for a qualifying military exigency under state law.

Currently, over 1.3 million Americans serve on active duty, supported by more than 1.5 million immediate family members. An additional force of National Guard and Reserve members stands ready to answer the call. These families form a community of nearly 3 million Americans whose employment stability directly impacts military readiness and operational effectiveness.

In Hawai'i, military families are an integral part of our community, with nearly 58,000 active duty, National Guard, and reserve service members and 21,500 spouses living in the Aloha State. These families contribute to Hawai'i's economy, schools, and civic life while managing the unique demands of military service.

Military families face circumstances that exist nowhere else in civilian employment. When service members receive deployment orders, activate for stateside missions, or require long-term care for combat injuries, their families must navigate challenges that civilian leave policies were never designed to address. Military readiness depends on more than equipment and training, it requires service members who can focus entirely on their mission without distraction.

When military spouses lack adequate leave options, service members deploy knowing their families are under financial and logistical stress, which can create dangerous distractions during high-stakes operations. Conversely, when military spouses can make needed preparations and arrangements related to deployments without losing income or job security, service members are able to accomplish their missions away from home with confidence that their families are ready and supported. This peace of mind translates directly into mission focus, unit cohesion, and operational effectiveness.

We thank the Committee for considering this important legislation and are especially grateful for the tremendous efforts Hawai'i continues to make in support of our service members and their families. Should you have any questions upon deliberation of this legislation, I can be reached at Kelli.M.Douglas.civ@mail.mil or 571-265-0075.

Sincerely,

DOUGLAS.KELLI.MAY.1143289490

Digitally signed by DOUGLAS.KELLI.MAY.1143289490
Date: 2026.03.11 13:01:26 -07'00'

Kelli May Douglas
Defense-State Liaison Office
Pacific Southwest Region

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIAʻĀINA

STEPHEN F. LOGAN
MAJOR GENERAL
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KA ʻAKUKANA KENELALA

PHILLIP L. MALLORY III
BRIGADIER GENERAL
DEPUTY ADJUTANT GENERAL
KA HOPE ʻAKUKANA KENELALA

STATE OF HAWAIʻI
KA MOKUʻĀINA O HAWAIʻI
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
KA ʻOIHANA PILI KAUA
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3949 DIAMOND HEAD ROAD
HONOLULU, HAWAIʻI 96816-4495

TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL 3082 SD1
RELATING TO MILITARY FAMILIES
BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY

BY

BRIGADIER GENERAL WALTER R. ROSS, JR.
DIRECTOR
JOINT STAFF, HAWAI'I NATIONAL GUARD

March 11, 2026

Aloha Chair Della Au Belatti, Vice-Chair Kim Coco Iwamoto, and Members of the Committee:

I am Brigadier General Walter Ross, Director of the Joint Staff, Hawaiʻi National Guard, State of Hawai'i, Department of Defense.

I am presenting this testimony in **SUPPORT** of SB3082 SD1.

This important legislation aims to empower eligible employees by granting them the right to take family leave for qualifying military exigencies. These exigencies may include last-minute deployments and other significant events that require an employee's emotional and logistical support due to a family member's military service. The core purpose of this provision is to provide meaningful assistance to employees during uncertain times, allowing them to take the necessary time off to manage essential family responsibilities when their loved ones are on active duty.

The implementation of this legislation will significantly enhance our collective ability to promote family readiness and resilience within the Hawaiʻi National Guard (HING). By addressing the unique and often challenging circumstances faced by military families, this initiative not only acknowledges their sacrifices but also strengthens the fabric of our community. Through our commitment to the families of servicemembers, we reaffirm that their well-being is a priority as they continue to support the State of Hawaiʻi and defend our nation. This legislation serves as a vital resource, creating an environment where military families feel supported, valued, and prepared to handle the demands of military life, thereby ensuring that HING remains a strong pillar of support for both our local communities and our country as a whole.

The Hawaiʻi National Guard, Department of Defense, supports this bill provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in the Executive Budget.

For these reasons, I humbly ask for your support with this measure.

Brigadier General Walter R. Ross, Jr., walter.r.ross2.mil@army.mil; 808-844-6087

DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM

KA ʻOIHANA HOʻOMOHALA PĀʻOIHANA, ʻIMI WAIWAI A HOʻOMĀKAʻIKAʻI

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
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Statement of
LAURIE MCALLISTER MOORE
Executive Director
Military and Community Relations Office
Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism
before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY

Friday, March 13, 2026
9:00 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 411

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB3082 SD1
RELATING TO MILITARY FAMILIES.

Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Military and Community Relations Office (MACRO) within the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism, I respectfully submit testimony in **strong support** of this measure to expand Hawaiʻi's family leave law to include qualifying military exigencies.

MACRO sees firsthand the often unpredictable demands military life places on families. Short-notice deployments, relocation orders, mandatory briefings, and urgent legal, financial, or childcare arrangements frequently require immediate time away from work. These responsibilities are not optional, they are simply part of supporting a loved one's service to our country. Yet, under current state law, these circumstances are not formally recognized as qualifying leave, often requiring employees and employers to rely on ad hoc arrangements rather than clear, consistent policy.

Aligning state law with established federal standards provides clarity for employers, consistency for employees, and ensures that Hawaiʻi's military families receive the same baseline protections already available elsewhere.

From a community and readiness perspective, the benefits are practical and immediate. When families have clear, reliable leave options to handle deployment preparations, childcare transitions, and essential administrative requirements, service members can focus on their missions and households experience less disruption and stress. Supporting family stability in this way strengthens force readiness, workforce continuity, and the overall well-being of Hawaiʻi's communities.

This bill represents a reasonable, targeted update that reflects the realities of military life in our state and demonstrates Hawaiʻi's continued commitment to those who serve and the families who stand beside them. MACRO respectfully urges your support.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

JADE T. BUTAY
DIRECTOR

WILLIAM G. KUNSTMAN
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAIʻI
KA MOKUʻĀINA O HAWAIʻI
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS
KA ʻOIHANA PONO LIMAHANA

March 13, 2026

To: The Honorable Della Au Belatti, Chair,
The Honorable Kim Coco Iwamoto, Vice Chair, and
Members of the House Committee on Public Safety

Date: Friday, March 13, 2026
Time: 9:00 a.m.
Place: Conference Room 411, State Capitol

From: Jade T. Butay, Director
Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR)

Re: S.B. 3082 S.D. 1 RELATING TO MILITARY FAMILIES

I. OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED LEGISLATION

The **DLIR supports** this measure as it aligns Hawaiʻi's Family Leave Law (HFLL) with federal standards and addresses the needs of families impacted by military service. Authorizing eligible employees to take family leave for a qualifying military exigency ensures that workers can respond to urgent situations related to active-duty service without jeopardizing their employment. Adding a clear definition of "qualifying military exigency" in §398-1, consistent with Title 29, Code of Federal Regulations §825.126, provides clarity and uniformity.

II. CURRENT LAW

Chapter 398, HRS, provides four weeks of family leave for eligible employees of employers with 100 or more employees, upon the birth or adoption of a child of the employee; or to care for the employee's child, spouse, reciprocal beneficiary, sibling, grandchild, or parent with a serious health condition.

III. COMMENTS ON THE HOUSE BILL

This measure extends protected leave under the HFLL to allow an employee to take family leave for a qualifying military exigency of an employee's child, spouse, reciprocal beneficiary, sibling, grandchild, or parent in the United States Armed Forces. This amendment recognizes the unique challenges faced by families of service members and strengthens Hawaiʻi's commitment to supporting military families.

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