

**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**

**GOVERNOR**

**SYLVIA LUKE**

**LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR**

# STATE OF HAWAI‘I

# KA MOKU‘ĀINA O HAWAI‘I

# DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

# KA ‘OIHANA PONO LIMAHANA

# WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

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**EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING**

**Thursday, April 13, 2023**

**1:00 P.M. – 2:30 P.M.**

**Online via Zoom**

**JADE T. BUTAY**

**DIRECTOR**

**WILLIAM G. KUNSTMAN**

**DEPUTY DIRECTOR**

**MARICAR PILOTIN-FREITAS**

**ADMINISTRATOR**

*Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, protecting the health and welfare of the community is a priority. The meeting was held remotely, with Board members and staff participating via an online meeting venue.*

# MINUTES

**ATTENDEES:**

Brian Tatsumura, Committee Chair, Principal Consultant, Briant808 LLC

Cheryl Cross, Committee Vice-Chair, Principal Owner, C.A. Cross & Associates, LLC

Trang Malone, Military and Veterans’ Affairs Vice-Chair, Workforce Initiatives Manager, CVS Health

**GUESTS:**

Rick Nakashima, Owner, Ruby Tuesday Hawaii, Gyu-Kaku Hawaii, and Rainbow Drive-In Kalihi

Derek Kanehira, Senior VP, Human Resources, Alexander & Baldwin

Melissa Gerber, Workforce Development Director, Abilities Unlimited

Evan Nakatsuka, Director of Workforce Programs, Lanakila Pacific

Deborah Leong-Yep, Human Resources Generalist, UHA Health Insurance

Adele Manera, Manager, Kauai County Workforce Development Division

Justin Puaoi, Lead Organizer, IBEW

Gwen Navarrete Klapperich, Chief Learning Consultant, Klapperich International Training Associates LLC

Mark Menard, Rapid Response/Business Services Coordinator, City and County of Honolulu

**STAFF:**

Jarret Yip, DLIR Workforce Development Division, Program Officer

Jacque Dacay, DLIR Workforce Development Division, Job Training Specialist

May Ferrer, DLIR Workforce Development Division, Program Specialist

Katrina Ramos, DLIR Workforce Development Division

Daven Kawamura, DLIR Workforce Development Division

# Call to Order………………………………………..……Committee Chair Brian Tatsumura

The Employer Engagement meeting was called to order at 1:03 p.m. by Committee Chair Brian Tatsumura.

# Approval of Minutes

# February 15, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Committee Chair Tatsumura requested a motion to approve the minutes for the February 15, 2023 meeting. Cheryl Cross moved to approve the minutes of the February 15, 2023 meeting. Derek Kanehira seconded the motion. There were no objections or abstentions. The motion to approve the minutes was approved unanimously.

# Presentation on the Post-COVID impacts on staffing in the restaurant industry and the outlook/way ahead given the labor market

Rick Nakashima mentioned that although post-pandemic effects on labor is a talking point brought up, the labor situation was already bad beforehand albeit not as bad. Rick stated that the decline in labor really started around five years ago and it has been getting worse and worse, a major part of the problem is people leaving the state.

Rick found some common threads of why people aren’t coming in when asking his GM’s:

* It’s not always all about money with the incoming workforce, the desire to do other things and to stay home is acceptable for the generation.
* The strenuous work environment presented in the restaurant business is a deterrent.
* With the unemployment presented by the pandemic and having people make as much if not more money staying at home.
* General lack of loyalty, in the sense that if another restaurant opens up next door many will migrate to the new restaurant not for money but for a change of pace.

A point that Rick wanted to emphasize was the housing issue and the need to address it. Also, just the general need to have people stay here in Hawaii or bring people in if needed.

Brian Tatsumura asked if Rick is feeling the inflation in the restaurant business. Rick let Brian know that thanks to the PRC and PPP programs are the only reason why he still has restaurants. Rick also mentioned that at least on the Ruby Tuesday side they are feeling the pressure of inflation as patty sizes continue to shrink, but the Hawaii chain isn’t doing this but rather raising prices slightly. He mentioned that to fight inflation becoming a to-go restaurant would work best.

Cheryl Cross asked Rick if he has ever considered the possibility of H-1B Visas, he asked about the housing situation along with the immigrants. Derek Kanehira mentioned that it may be hard with entry level positions, but it may present alternative options.

# Presentation on the Department of Defense SkillBridge Programs and how companies may engage to support the hiring of more veterans

Trang Malone presented on the DOD SkillBridge program. The presentation can be found at the following link:

<https://labor.hawaii.gov/wdc/files/2023/04/Employer-Engagement-Committee-Skillbridge-CVS-Health-4.12.2023.pdf>

# Opportunities Population Subcommittee Report

Evan Nakatsuka turned it over to Melissa Gerber who gave an update on some outreach activities that were happening during the last quarter at Abilities Unlimited.

* Abilities Unlimited partners with DVR and DOE to service students with disabilities and will be aging out of school soon.
	+ Several different services are offered, she focused on the jump-start class which is a pre-employment class that teaches a variety of topics, this year there was something a little different where they brought in different services to introduce the students to.
	+ Melissa invited Mark Menard from the AJC to talk to the students about the services, programs, and pathways that they have.

Deborah Leong-Yep gave an update on the Kinaole program. She mentioned that they have tried albeit unsuccessfully for three years to get the students to the AJC. In contrast to that, some people including Derek Kanehira, Brian Tatsumura, Evan Nakatsuka, Cheryl Cross, and herself were able to go into the schools and do the mock interviews and such. On May 20 the whole graduating class of 28 will be graduating with their Workforce Development Diploma.

Evan Nakatsuka just wanted to add that there are talks to have a way to connect people from education and workforce programs to employers and AJC resources. He wanted to thank Melissa, Mark, and Debby for building the connections that are at the school and AJC and hopes there will be more in the future.

# Updates from State Workforce Agency

1. **Workforce Development Division (WDD)**

Jacque Dacay gave the update for Workforce Development Division, she let the committee know the progress of the Hele Imua statewide Internship program which has around 100 participants placed in state agencies. A partnership with the DOE will be happening soon to recruit and hire students for internships during the summer.

# Announcements and Public Testimony (if any)

Brian Tatsumura announced that this will be his last meeting as the Employer Engagement Committee Chair. Vice-Chair Cheryl Cross will be his replacement as the committee chair at the next meeting as he will be terming out June 30th.

# Next Meeting

The Employer Engagement Committee will have their next meeting on July 13, 2023 from 1:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.

# Adjournment

Committee Chair Tatsumura adjourned the meeting at 2:07 p.m.