

August 11, 2021

The Honorable Rick Blangiardi
Mayor, City and County of Honolulu
Honolulu Hale
530 South King Street, Room 300
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Mayor Blangiardi:

RE: Demand to Bargain the Impact of Mandatory COVID-19 Vaccinations and Testing

With the recent spread of the COVID-19 Delta variant, the public sector exclusive representatives continue to join with other community voices to strongly encourage residents and public employees to get vaccinated. We support vaccinations and working together with the Employers to keep our communities and front-line workers safe and government operating. To be clear, however, the particulars of any changes to City and County of Honolulu (“City”) employees’ working conditions must be properly negotiated.

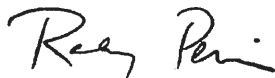
We have been made aware that you are set to require mandatory vaccinations for City employees without bargaining the impact of such mandates. This position effectively requires that employees get vaccinated or face job loss through termination. The option of frequent COVID-19 testing will be limited to those employees who qualify for a medical or religious exemption. On this the City & County of Honolulu stands alone among Hawaii employers; so far, the State (via Governor’s Ige’s public statements on the issue), University of Hawaii, County of Kauai, County of Hawaii and the Federal government have all indicated that employees who for whatever reason choose to invoke free choice and not be vaccinated will be subject to regular and frequent testing to ensure they remain COVID-free.

While we, like you, believe that all citizens who are able should be vaccinated, we do recognize a basic human and American right to make choices. Those choices, however, must come with stricter limitations and scrutiny due to the crisis that the pandemic presents. Such a belief seems at the core of the position of other Employer jurisdictions.

Instead of working together to collaboratively develop a plan that best serves the health, safety and wellbeing of our City employees who have been on the front lines throughout the pandemic and the communities they serve, you seemingly have chosen to disregard the basic right of employees to have a voice in the decision-making process affecting their terms and conditions of employment via their exclusive representatives. As stated above we believe that all citizens should get vaccinated unless they have a personal, medical or religious exception, and respectfully request that you reconsider your position and allow unvaccinated employees the option of regular and frequent COVID-19 testing in lieu of disciplinary action and job loss through termination.

As provided for in our State Constitution, we hereby demand bargaining over the impact of mandatory COVID-19 vaccinations and testing as these represent changes to the terms and conditions of employment of City & County employees. We remain willing and available to meet with you and your representatives immediately to come up with solutions that make sense for employees and safeguard our workplaces and communities.

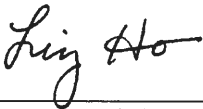
Sincerely,



Randy Pereira, Executive Director
Hawaii Government Employees Association



Malcolm Lutu, President
State of Hawaii Organization of Police



Liz Ho, Administrator
United Public Workers



Robert Lee, President
Hawaii Fire Fighters Association

cc: David Y. Ige, Governor, State of Hawaii
Ryker Wada, Chief Negotiator, State of Hawaii
Mayor Derek Kawakami, County of Kauai
Mayor Mitch Roth, County of Hawaii
Mayor Michael Victorino, County of Maui
David Lassner, President, University of Hawaii
Keith Hayashi, Interim Superintendent, Department of Education
Catherine Payne, Chairperson, Board of Education
Randy Moore, Chairperson, Board of Regents, University of Hawaii
Mark Recktenwald, Hawaii Chief Justice
Wilbert Holck, Executive Director, HSTA
Osa Tui, Jr. President, HSTA
Christian Fern, Executive Director, UHPA
Linda Rosen, CEO and President, HHSC
Noel Ono, DHR Director, City and County of Honolulu