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**Testimony of the Office of the Public Defender,
State of Hawai'i to the House Committee on Finance**

February 25, 2025

H.B. 395 HD1: RELATING TO JURY DUTY

Chair Yamashita, Vice-Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee:

The Office of the Public Defender **supports H.B. 395 HD1:**

The Office of the Public Defender submits that there is a need to increase the compensation to the public for jury duty service. The increase from \$30 to \$50 is an acknowledgment that participation as a juror is a valuable and honored service to our communities and to the administration of justice. Jurors are the backbone of the constitutionally protected right to a jury trial in the criminal courts. It is a fundamental part of our Democracy. It is understood that the fee is nominal. However, this increase helps offset the time away from work and family that our dedicated jurors spend participating in the administration of justice. It sends a strong message that citizen participation in the administration of justice is valued and encouraged.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.



The Judiciary, State of Hawai‘i

Testimony to the Thirty-Third Legislature, 2025 Regular Session

House Committee on Finance
Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair
Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair

Tuesday, February 25, 2025 at 12:00 PM (Agenda #2)
State Capitol, Conference Room 308 & Videoconference

By
Michelle D. Acosta
Deputy Chief Court Administrator
First Circuit

Bill No. and Title: House Bill No. 395, HD1, Relating to Jury Duty.

Purpose: Increases the amount each juror or prospective juror is paid for each day of actual attendance at court. Appropriates moneys.

Judiciary's Position:

The Judiciary strongly supports this bill, which is part of the Judiciary's 2025 legislative package. This bill proposes to increase juror compensation from a fixed flat rate of \$30 to \$50 per day.

Juror compensation was last increased in 1989 from \$20 to \$30 per day. Since that time, the cost of living in the State of Hawai‘i has drastically increased. While juror compensation is not meant to serve as a substitute for wages, raising the daily rate would provide some relief for those who serve this important civic duty.

By comparison, jurors who serve in the United States District Court, receive \$50 per day. The National Center for State Courts recommends that at the very least, state courts should review compensation rates in relation to the prevailing federal rate.¹

¹ Center for Jury Studies, National Center for State Courts, Juror Compensation in the United States, (April 2022).



House Bill No. 395, HD1, Relating to Jury Duty
House Committee on Finance
Tuesday, February 25, 2025
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An increase in juror compensation helps ensure a diverse jury pool by allowing people from varying socioeconomic backgrounds to participate in the judicial system. It further acknowledges the sacrifice our citizenry makes to serve on a jury and shows the state's appreciation for such service.

Any increase to the juror pay rate would require commensurate annual funding by the Legislature. We therefore also ask that the requested appropriation be supported by the Legislature and that any additional funding not supplant the Judiciary's other existing funding and budget requests.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill No. 395, HD1.



Committee on Finance
Chair Kyle Yamashita, Vice Chair Jenna Takenouchi

February 25, 2025, 12:00 pm, CR 308 via Videoconference
HB 395 Relating to Jury Duty

TESTIMONY

Stephen Munkelt, Legislative Committee, League of Women Voters of Hawaii

Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Committee Members:

The League of Women Voters of Hawaii supports BILL NUMBER HB 395

The League of Women Voters of Hawaii **SUPPORTS** HB 395 which will raise the fees for citizens serving jury duty from \$30/day to \$50/day. This bill is part of the Judiciary package and is also supported by the Public Defender, the Honolulu Prosecutor, and the Hawaii State Bar Association. These pillars of the justice system all recognize the value of juries and the need for increased financial support to make it possible for a cross-section of the community to serve.

The League of Women Voters of Hawaii advocates for a justice system that is equitable, effective, just, and that fosters public trust in the courts and the law. Our founding fathers placed the right to jury trial in the Constitution as a check on government power and secrecy in criminal cases, and to add the voice of the community to the resolution of civil cases. Experience over more than 200 years has shown the wisdom of their plan.

Very few people who receive a summons to jury duty are excited to serve. Most may wonder how much it will cost them in lost wages or opportunities, or how many days it will disrupt their normal routine. Paying a daily fee for their service is an acknowledgement of the important role they are playing and defrays the costs they incur. The fee was set at \$30 in 1989. Inflation since that year has been \$115% making the proposed adjustment to \$50/day quite reasonable. It will undoubtedly serve to improve the response to jury summonses, with more people from more diverse backgrounds able and willing to serve.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on HB 395.

Stephen Munkelt
Legislative Committee



TESTIMONY
House Committee on Finance
Hearing: Tuesday, February 25, 2025 (12:00 PM)

TO: Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair
Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair

FROM: Mark M. Murakami, HSBA President

RE: HB 395, HD1 - RELATING TO JURY DUTY

Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee on Finance:

Thank you for this opportunity to provide **STRONG SUPPORT** for HB 395, HD1 which would increase the amount each juror or prospective juror is paid for each day of actual attendance at court for that juror's service. Currently, jurors only receive \$30 per actual day in service, which is not extremely low as appreciation for a jurors' service. We strongly urge the court to raise this fee to \$50 per day to provide some additional compensation for jurors.

Mahalo for this opportunity to provide testimony in support.

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HB-395-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 1:51:56 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Frank Schultz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this initiative.