



HAWAI‘I STATE ETHICS COMMISSION

State of Hawai‘i · Bishop Square, 1001 Bishop Street, ASB Tower 970 · Honolulu, Hawai‘i

Committee: Senate Committee on Judiciary
Bill Number: SB 1545
Hearing Date/Time: February 7, 2025, 9:25 a.m.
Re: Testimony of the Hawai‘i State Ethics Commission Offering **Comments** on SB 1545, Applying Nepotism Restriction to the Legislative Branch

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Committee Members:

The Hawai‘i State Ethics Commission (“Commission”) has not yet had the opportunity to consider SB 1545 in a regularly scheduled meeting. Commission staff believe the Commission would support this measure. Should this measure advance, the Commission would have the opportunity to take an official position.

The Commission has previously supported efforts to restrict nepotism and establish clear, enforceable limits. If this measure were to pass, the Commission staff believes it can effectively implement it.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Very truly yours,

/S/ Robert D. Harris
Robert D. Harris
Executive Director and General Counsel

SB-1545

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 7:19:06 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2025 9:25:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
B Smith	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in suport of this bill. Legislature should be held to the same ethical standards as State employees. Thank you.

SB-1545

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 10:16:22 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2025 9:25:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cindy Nawilis	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in suport of this bill. Legislature should be held to the same ethical standards as State employees. Thank you.

SB-1545

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 11:04:14 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2025 9:25:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
lynne matusow	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Finally, no longer caving into those legislators who keep family members on their payroll. This is a great bill which will improve trust in government. Please move forward.

SB-1545

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 8:54:00 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2025 9:25:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sara Yi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing this in strong support of SB 1545.

In 2023, the anti-nepotism law took effect prohibiting nepotism across state government but notably exempted the Legislature and Judiciary. Passing SB 1545 would be a significant step toward strengthening the integrity of Hawaii's government by ensuring that nepotism is prohibited across all branches, including the Legislature.

By extending the anti-nepotism law to include the Legislature, it would create a more consistent standard across almost all branches of government in Hawaii (the Judiciary is not included in the bill). This would help ensure that the public can trust the appointment and hiring processes are based on merit rather than family ties, reducing the risk of conflicts of interest or favoritism.

Also, SB 1545 aligns with broader goals of accountability and integrity in government, making sure that elected officials are not unduly influenced by personal relationships when making decisions about hiring or appointments. Passage of this bill would increase public confidence in the fairness of government operations and the overall transparency of state institutions.

I urge this committee to pass this bill. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

SB-1545

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 10:05:40 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2025 9:25:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michael Nomura	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a concerned citizen, I strongly support this bill to repeal the legislature's exemption from the nepotism law. It's vital that all branches of government are held to the same standards of fairness, transparency, and accountability. Allowing the legislature to be exempt creates an unfair situation where personal relationships could influence hiring and contract decisions, undermining public trust. I urge lawmakers to support this bill - help rebuild public trust in our government and make sure our resources are used fairly for everyone. Thank you.