



Committee on Ways and Means
Chair Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Sharon Y. Moriwaki

2/26/25 at 10:44 a.m. in CR 211 and Videoconference
SB 428 Relating to Witness Fees

TESTIMONY

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

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Committee Members:

The League of Women Voters of Hawaii supports BILL NUMBER SB 428

Bill SB 428 will increase the fees for witnesses in both civil and criminal cases and will cover the basic costs of transportation to attend court. The League of Women Voters supports fair and equitable procedures which can build public trust in court proceedings and judgment. This bill will lower barriers to appearing in court to testify, especially for those with limited financial means.

The jury or judge hearing a case in our courts makes a decision based on the facts presented in evidence. Most facts are presented through witnesses, and if a witness does not appear the jury or court is missing facts, which could make the decision less reliable or accurate. Many witnesses may not need a financial incentive to appear, and may not even request witness fees. For others the compensation for expenses incurred and the implied appreciation of their service in support of justice may be the nudge that gets them to court.

For these reasons the League of Women Voters of Hawaii **supports SB 428.**

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Stephen Munkelt
Legislative Committee