



STATE OF HAWAII
CAMPAIGN SPENDING COMMISSION

235 SOUTH BERETANIA STREET, ROOM 300
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

March 31, 2025

TO: The Honorable Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senate Committee on Ways & Means

The Honorable Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Ways & Means

Members of the Senate Committee on Ways & Means

FROM: Kristin Izumi-Nitao, Executive Director
Campaign Spending Commission

SUBJECT: **Testimony on H.B. No. 370, H.D. 2, S.D. 1, Relating to Partial Public Financing of Elections.**

Tuesday, April 1, 2025
10:01 a.m., Conference Room 211 & Videoconference

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill. The Campaign Spending Commission (“Commission”) supports the intent of this bill as we agree that the partial public funding program should be boosted, but we have strong concerns regarding funding. Presently, there are insufficient funds in the Hawaii Election Campaign Fund (“HECF”) to run the program as proposed under this bill and an appropriation is necessary.

In contrast to the Commission’s original proposal set forth in H.B. 370 to enhance the partial public financing program, S.D. 1 proposes the following:

1. Increase the expenditure limits for elected offices by 20%; and
2. Increase the maximum amount of public funds available from ten or fifteen percent of the expenditure limit to **67%** of the expenditure limit (except for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs which will increase from a maximum amount of \$1,500 for the election year to 67% of the expenditure limit).

In reviewing #2 above, the Commission submits that if one candidate for each elected office¹ qualifies and receives the maximum amount available, the maximum amount available for public financing would be **\$10,298,546** in the 2026 primary election and another **\$10,298,546**

¹ The Commission is aware that not all elective offices appear on the ballot in an election year.

in the 2026 general election. For purpose of comparison, under the existing partial public financing program, if one candidate for each office qualified to receive funding in the 2026 elections, the maximum available for public financing would be \$1,474,306 in the primary election and another \$1,474,306 in the general election. By the Commission's calculations, the enhancements to the partial public financing program as proposed in S.D. 1 will significantly increase the funding available to qualified candidates to an amount more than that offered by S.B. No. 51 (specifically, \$5,487,092 more) which is the measure that proposed a full or comprehensive publicly funded campaign program. As of January 31, 2025, the HECF balance was \$2,224,511.20. Based on these numbers, the HECF has insufficient funding to administer such a robust partial public funding program absent an appropriation if this bill is passed.

With respect to the other sections in this bill that provide for a downward adjustment of the minimum amounts of qualifying contributions for the office of prosecuting attorney for the city and county of Honolulu (from \$30,000 to \$25,000), and counties of Hawaii (from \$10,000 to \$5,000) and Kauai (from \$5,000 to \$3,000), and for the office of county council for the county of Maui (from \$5,000 to \$4,000), the Commission supports these amendments as it makes it easier for candidates to qualify for partial public funding and was originally proposed in H.B. 370.

With respect to the increase in the matching fund ratio from \$1 for each \$1 of qualifying contributions raised to \$2 for every \$1 of qualifying contributions raised in excess of the minimum qualifying contributions that a candidate must raise to participate in the partial public financing program, the Commission supports these amendments as it doubles the matching funds available to qualifying candidates and was originally proposed in H.B. 370.

Finally, with respect to Section 7 of this bill, the Commission requests that an appropriation of \$200,000 for the addition of two full-time equivalent (2 FTE) permanent positions be inserted. The Commission has not had an increase in personnel for the past 29 years despite the number of candidate committees and noncandidate committees having almost doubled in size. Currently, there are only 5 staff members who oversee 700+ committees that have anywhere from 1-3 officers who require assistance on how to comply with the various requirements of campaign finance law thereby generating hundreds of staff hours assisting committees over the phone, in-person, and by email as well as a number of enforcement actions for violations. Under HRS §11-314(7), one of the Commission's 14 duties is to investigate and hold hearings for receiving evidence of any campaign finance violations. The Commission has no investigator on staff and has had to rely on contracts for investigative services with outside agencies.² In comparison to other State and county good government groups with compliance and enforcement duties, the Commission has had a modest budget and nominal staff despite a

²Act 10, Special Session 1995, was the single year that a sum of \$70,000 was appropriated for one investigator for the Commission for FY 1995-1996 and was then sunset. This request essentially restores this position and makes it permanent.

tremendous growth in committees, an expansion in its duties and responsibilities, and enforcement mandates. The Commission respectfully seeks your support so that the Commission may ensure that the integrity and transparency of the campaign finance process is upheld and approve our request for 2 new full-time permanent exempt excluded positions (i.e., an Elections Assistant and an Investigator).³

The Commission supports the intent of this bill with the suggested amendment and so long as the necessary funds are appropriated.

³ The Commission requested these 2 full-time permanent exempt excluded positions in its FY 2025-2027 budget to which the Governor has approved – specifically, the request was for \$200,000 for FY 2026 and \$180,000 for FY 2027-2029. Notably, the Commission is an administratively attached agency with the Department of Accounting and General Services.



COMMENTS ON HB 370_HD2_SD1
RELATING TO PARTIAL PUBLIC FINANCING OF ELECTIONS

Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Hawai'i State Capitol

April 1, 2025

10:01 a.m.

Room 211

Aloha e Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means:

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) respectfully submits COMMENTS on HB370_HD2_SD1, which increases the amount of public funds available to candidates for public office who participate in the State's Partial Public Financing program under Hawai'i Revised Statutes (HRS) Chapter 11, Part J, and increases expenditure limits.

OHA generally supports public financing as a good government measure. The amendments to HRS Chapter 11 proposed in HB370_HD2_SD1 will make the public financing program a more viable option for candidates by increasing the funding available to candidates who participate in the partial public financing system. Increased access to publicly financed campaigns makes elections more accessible, open, and fair.

OHA also appreciates the amendments made in the last committee that would set the public funds available to OHA candidates who run statewide elections at 67% of the relevant expenditure limit, consistent with all other candidates, thereby reducing existing disparities in public funding.

Nonetheless, because this measure leaves the significant disparities in HRS § 11-423(d) intact, OHA candidates are still not eligible to the same amount of funds as other candidates in statewide elections. This section sets candidate expenditure limits determined by multiplying the "number of voters in the last preceding general election registered to vote" in the relevant voting district by a specific dollar amount. **OHA trustees are the only candidates who run statewide election campaigns that are not explicitly listed in this subpart, and thus default to the lowest multiplier category with "other offices," or \$0.20 (20 cents). See HRS § 11-423(d)(5).** While this multiplier would increase to \$0.24 under this measure, this is still significantly less than other candidates who run statewide campaigns (see page 2 line 18 to page 3 line 4).

The total expenditure limits in HRS § 11-423(d) in turn affect the amount of public financing available to a candidate under HRS § 11-425, which sets public funding as a percentage of the total expenditure limits. As a matter of fairness and equity, OHA respectfully requests that OHA be treated comparably to other statewide office holders through necessary amendments to HRS § 11-423. **Specifically, the multiplier set in HRS § 11-423 should put OHA candidates' expenditure limit on parity with the lieutenant governor, another statewide office holder (increase from \$0.20 to \$1.68).**

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide comments on this measure.

HB-370-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/28/2025 4:28:08 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
John & Rita Shockley	Testifying for Free Access Coalition	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha W&M leaders!

The Free Access Coalition supports HB370 which is a step in making elections free of moneyed interests and leveling the political playing field for citizen candidates.

Pleas support and pass on this important legislation.

Mahalo for your time and hopefully, for your Kokua!



150 Hamakua Drive #341
Kailua, HI 96734

our-hawaii.org

Testimony in Support of HB370 HD2 SD1

Submitted to the Senate Ways and Means Committee
by Evan Weber, Managing Director, Our Hawai'i, 3/28/2025

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and all Committee members,

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify before you today. On behalf of Our Hawai'i's over 38,000 members and supporters across the pae 'āina, we write in strong support of HB370 HD2 SD1, which expands the state's Partial Public Financing Program to reduce the influence of big money in politics and make elections more accessible to everybody people.

In the historic 1978 Hawai'i Constitutional Convention, the public financing of elections was established as a key part of our constitution, stating that a public campaign fund could dilute "the effective influence of money and large contributors" and "equalize opportunity for all to participate meaningfully in the political process."

In the years that followed, public funding of elections played a meaningful role in major races up and down the ballot in Hawaii's local elections. But in recent decades, with rising costs, and the flood of unlimited political spending unleashed by the US Supreme Court's Citizens United decision in 2009, our public financing programs have not kept up with the reality of modern political campaigns. In fact, we have not made adjustments to our public campaign finance system since 1995 — before most people were using personal computers or cell phones.

The result of this is that we have seen an increase in big money in politics, and a declining use of our public financing system. **Why? Primarily because the campaign spending cap you must abide by when you opt in to taking public funds is too low to run and win an average State House and State Senate campaign.**

For example, the **current average expenditure limit for the upcoming 2026 election for a State House race is \$23,632**, for the primary or the general election. That means if you want to receive public funds, you have to agree to spend less than \$23,632 on your election.

However, the median amount spent by State House primary winners in 2024 was **\$31,311.60**, and the average amount spent in winning primary races was **\$37,473.95**. That means **currently, if you are a State House candidate who wants to do the right thing by opting into our public financing system, you have to agree to run on less than what it takes on average to win a race.**

This bill makes progress towards addressing this by increasing expenditure caps by 20% across the board, while also increasing the maximum amount of matching funds available to candidates to support them to run competitive races without having to be over reliant on private funds.

While campaign finance reform progress has been made in recent years, it is not enough. On April 17th, 2024 the New York Times dropped a [bombshell exposé on the front page of the New York Times](#), exposing to the world the deep culture of pay-to-play corruption that has existed at high levels of Hawai'i political leadership. With just days left in the legislative session, Hawaii Lawmak-

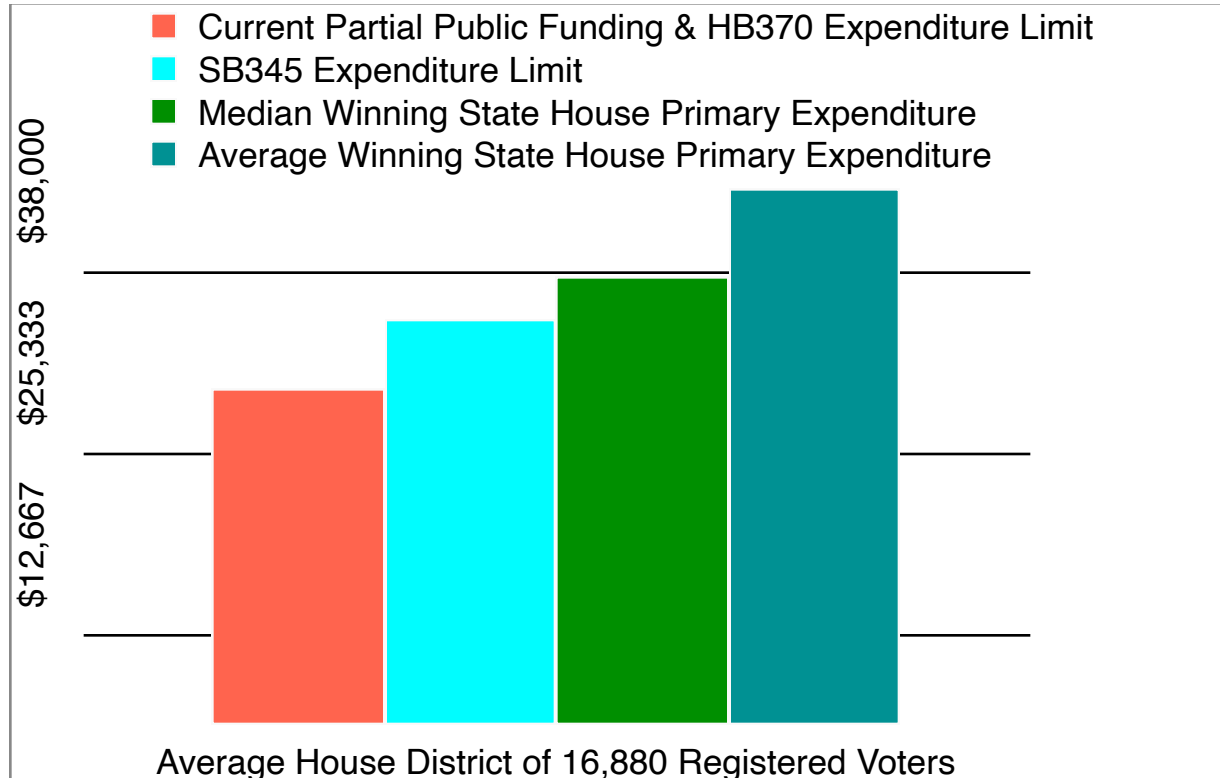


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ers did not act to correct these real problems of corruption or the crisis of public trust they have exacerbated. Now, you all have the opportunity to act.



Expanding public financing will allow more grassroots candidates—those without deep-pocketed backers—to run competitive campaigns. It will free elected officials from the constant pressure of fundraising and instead allow them to focus on what truly matters: delivering for their constituents.

This bill does not radically upend our system; instead, it improves an existing, underutilized program. Incumbents will still be able to compete, and the overall partisan makeup of the legislature will not significantly shift. What will change is who has influence—moving power away from big donors and lobbyists and back to the people.

The people of Hawai'i are tired of a system where wealthy donors call the shots. Expanding public financing won't fix everything overnight, but it is a necessary step toward a government that truly represents the people—not just those who can afford to bankroll campaigns.

Mahalo nui loa for your leadership and commitment to restoring trust in our democracy. Together, we can move toward a brighter future for Hawai'i.

Additional Comments:



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We support this bill as written, or any version of partial public financing reform that raises the expenditure limits for State House and State Senate seats to competitive enough levels for candidates to want to participate in the program.

If costs are of concern to lawmakers, it is important to understand that they are driven largely by the very expensive races at the top of the ticket, Governor and Lieutenant Governor's races. If these races did not have their matching proportions or expenditures limits increased, it could improve projected costs.

In addition, in the spirit of increasing participation in public financing programs while saving money overall, legislators could lower the percentage matched across all races from 67% to 35%, but consider a higher increase in the expenditure limit (a 30% increase instead of 20% would make the average House and Senate expenditure limits fully competitive). This would result in savings from the baseline projections of 43% in average annual costs. A 30% increase in expenditure limit at up to 22.5% matched would result in a 64% savings from baseline.

We've included tables demonstrating projected costs at these different match scenarios and expenditure limit levels for consideration.

HB370 HD2 SD1 at a 20% increase in expenditure limits and up to 67% matched

Office	Estimated Participants per seat	Average registered voters in District	expenditure maximum multiplier	expenditure limit	% of cap	Max match per election	Primary & General combined	Cost for all seats	Frequency (Elections per 10 years)	Average Annual Cost	Annual Cost per resident
Gov	1	839,618	\$3.00	\$2,518,854.00	67.0%	\$1,687,632.18	\$3,375,264.36	\$3,375,264.36	2.5	\$843,816.09	\$0.58
LG	1	839,618	\$1.68	\$1,410,558.24	67.0%	\$945,074.02	\$1,890,148.04	\$1,890,148.04	2.5	\$472,537.01	\$0.33
State Senator	25	33,585	\$1.68	\$56,422.33	67.0%	\$37,802.96	\$75,605.92	\$1,890,148.04	3	\$567,044.41	\$0.39
State Rep	51	16,880	\$1.68	\$28,358.40	67.0%	\$19,000.13	\$38,000.26	\$1,938,013.06	5	\$969,006.53	\$0.67
HI Mayor	1	131,358	\$2.40	\$315,259.20	67.0%	\$211,223.66	\$422,447.33	\$422,447.33	2.5	\$105,611.83	\$0.07
HI Attorney	1	131,358	\$1.68	\$220,681.44	67.0%	\$147,856.56	\$295,713.13	\$295,713.13	2.5	\$73,928.28	\$0.05
HI Council	9	14,595	\$1.68	\$24,520.16	67.0%	\$16,428.51	\$32,857.01	\$295,713.13	5	\$147,856.56	\$0.10
HNL Mayor	1	548,261	\$2.40	\$1,315,826.40	67.0%	\$881,603.69	\$1,763,207.38	\$1,763,207.38	2.5	\$440,801.84	\$0.30
HNL Attorney	1	548,261	\$1.68	\$921,078.48	67.0%	\$617,122.58	\$1,234,245.16	\$1,234,245.16	2.5	\$308,561.29	\$0.21
HNL Council	9	60,918	\$1.68	\$102,342.24	67.0%	\$68,569.30	\$137,138.60	\$1,234,247.41	2.5	\$308,561.85	\$0.21
Maui Mayor	1	91,138	\$2.40	\$218,731.20	67.0%	\$146,549.90	\$293,099.81	\$293,099.81	2.5	\$73,274.95	\$0.05
Maui Council	9	91,138	\$1.68	\$153,111.84	67.0%	\$102,584.93	\$205,169.87	\$1,846,528.79	5	\$923,264.40	\$0.64
Kauai Mayor	1	46,980	\$2.40	\$112,752.00	67.0%	\$75,543.84	\$151,087.68	\$151,087.68	2.5	\$37,771.92	\$0.03
Kauai Attorney	1	46,980	\$1.68	\$78,926.40	67.0%	\$52,880.69	\$105,761.38	\$105,761.38	2.5	\$26,440.34	\$0.02
Kauai Council	7	46,980	\$1.68	\$78,926.40	67.0%	\$52,880.69	\$105,761.38	\$740,329.63	5	\$370,164.82	\$0.26
OHA	9	839,618	\$0.24	\$201,508.32	67.0%	\$135,010.57	\$270,021.15	\$2,430,190.34	2.5	\$607,547.58	\$0.42
Total	128	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$5,197,764.22	\$10,395,528.45	\$19,906,144.67	N/A	\$6,276,189.72	\$4.34

HB370 HD2 SD1 at a 30% increase in expenditure limits and up to 35% matched

Office	Estimated Participants per seat	Average registered voters in District	expenditure maximum multiplier	expenditure limit	% of cap	Max match per election	Primary & General combined	Cost for all seats	Frequency (Elections per 10 years)	Average Annual Cost	Annual Cost per resident
Gov	1	839,618	\$3.25	\$2,728,758.50	35.0%	\$955,065.48	\$1,910,130.95	\$1,910,130.95	2.5	\$477,532.74	\$0.33
LG	1	839,618	\$1.82	\$1,528,104.76	35.0%	\$534,836.67	\$1,069,673.33	\$1,069,673.33	2.5	\$267,418.33	\$0.18
State Senator	25	33,585	\$1.82	\$61,124.19	35.0%	\$21,393.47	\$42,786.93	\$1,069,673.33	3	\$320,902.00	\$0.22
State Rep	51	16,880	\$1.82	\$30,721.60	35.0%	\$10,752.56	\$21,505.12	\$1,096,761.12	5	\$548,380.56	\$0.38
HI Mayor	1	131,358	\$2.60	\$341,530.80	35.0%	\$119,535.78	\$239,071.56	\$239,071.56	2.5	\$59,767.89	\$0.04
HI Attorney	1	131,358	\$1.82	\$239,071.56	35.0%	\$83,675.05	\$167,350.09	\$167,350.09	2.5	\$41,837.52	\$0.03
HI Council	9	14,595	\$1.82	\$26,563.51	35.0%	\$9,297.23	\$18,594.45	\$167,350.09	5	\$83,675.05	\$0.06
HNL Mayor	1	548,261	\$2.60	\$1,425,478.60	35.0%	\$498,917.51	\$997,835.02	\$997,835.02	2.5	\$249,458.76	\$0.17
HNL Attorney	1	548,261	\$1.82	\$997,835.02	35.0%	\$349,242.26	\$698,484.51	\$698,484.51	2.5	\$174,621.13	\$0.12
HNL Council	9	60,918	\$1.82	\$110,870.76	35.0%	\$38,804.77	\$77,609.53	\$698,485.79	2.5	\$174,621.45	\$0.12
Maui Mayor	1	91,138	\$2.60	\$236,958.80	35.0%	\$82,935.58	\$165,871.16	\$165,871.16	2.5	\$41,467.79	\$0.03
Maui Council	9	91,138	\$1.82	\$165,871.16	35.0%	\$58,054.91	\$116,109.81	\$1,044,988.31	5	\$522,494.15	\$0.36
Kauai Mayor	1	46,980	\$2.60	\$122,148.00	35.0%	\$42,751.80	\$85,503.60	\$85,503.60	2.5	\$21,375.90	\$0.01
Kauai Attorney	1	46,980	\$1.82	\$85,503.60	35.0%	\$29,926.26	\$59,852.52	\$59,852.52	2.5	\$14,963.13	\$0.01
Kauai Council	7	46,980	\$1.82	\$85,503.60	35.0%	\$29,926.26	\$59,852.52	\$418,967.64	5	\$209,483.82	\$0.14
OHA	9	839,618	\$0.26	\$218,300.68	35.0%	\$76,405.24	\$152,810.48	\$1,375,294.28	2.5	\$343,823.57	\$0.24
Total	128	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$2,941,520.80	\$5,883,041.60	\$11,265,293.31	N/A	\$3,551,823.78	\$2.46

HB370 HD2 SD1 at a 30% increase in expenditure limits and up to 22.5% matched

Office	Estimated Participants per seat	Average registered voters in District	expenditure maximum multiplier	expenditure limit	% of cap	Max match per election	Primary & General combined	Cost for all seats	Frequency (Elections per 10 years)	Average Annual Cost	Annual Cost per resident
Gov	1	839,618	\$3.25	\$2,728,758.50	22.5%	\$613,970.66	\$1,227,941.33	\$1,227,941.33	2.5	\$306,985.33	\$0.21
LG	1	839,618	\$1.82	\$1,528,104.76	22.5%	\$343,823.57	\$687,647.14	\$687,647.14	2.5	\$171,911.79	\$0.12
State Senator	25	33,585	\$1.82	\$61,124.19	22.5%	\$13,752.94	\$27,505.89	\$687,647.14	3	\$206,294.14	\$0.14
State Rep	51	16,880	\$1.82	\$30,721.60	22.5%	\$6,912.36	\$13,824.72	\$705,060.72	5	\$352,530.36	\$0.24
HI Mayor	1	131,358	\$2.60	\$341,530.80	22.5%	\$76,844.43	\$153,688.86	\$153,688.86	2.5	\$38,422.22	\$0.03
HI Attorney	1	131,358	\$1.82	\$239,071.56	22.5%	\$53,791.10	\$107,582.20	\$107,582.20	2.5	\$26,895.55	\$0.02
HI Council	9	14,595	\$1.82	\$26,563.51	22.5%	\$5,976.79	\$11,953.58	\$107,582.20	5	\$53,791.10	\$0.04
HNL Mayor	1	548,261	\$2.60	\$1,425,478.60	22.5%	\$320,732.69	\$641,465.37	\$641,465.37	2.5	\$160,366.34	\$0.11
HNL Attorney	1	548,261	\$1.82	\$997,835.02	22.5%	\$224,512.88	\$449,025.76	\$449,025.76	2.5	\$112,256.44	\$0.08
HNL Council	9	60,918	\$1.82	\$110,870.76	22.5%	\$24,945.92	\$49,891.84	\$449,026.58	2.5	\$112,256.64	\$0.08
Maui Mayor	1	91,138	\$2.60	\$236,958.80	22.5%	\$53,315.73	\$106,631.46	\$106,631.46	2.5	\$26,657.87	\$0.02
Maui Council	9	91,138	\$1.82	\$165,871.16	22.5%	\$37,321.01	\$74,642.02	\$671,778.20	5	\$335,889.10	\$0.23
Kauai Mayor	1	46,980	\$2.60	\$122,148.00	22.5%	\$27,483.30	\$54,966.60	\$54,966.60	2.5	\$13,741.65	\$0.01
Kauai Attorney	1	46,980	\$1.82	\$85,503.60	22.5%	\$19,238.31	\$38,476.62	\$38,476.62	2.5	\$9,619.16	\$0.01
Kauai Council	7	46,980	\$1.82	\$85,503.60	22.5%	\$19,238.31	\$38,476.62	\$269,336.34	5	\$134,668.17	\$0.09
OHA	9	839,618	\$0.26	\$218,300.68	22.5%	\$49,117.65	\$98,235.31	\$884,117.75	2.5	\$221,029.44	\$0.15
Total	128	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$1,890,977.66	\$3,781,955.31	\$7,241,974.27	N/A	\$2,283,315.29	\$1.58



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

Tuesday, April 1, 2025, 10:01am Room 211
HB370 HD2 SD1 — RELATING TO PARTIAL PUBLIC FINANCING OF ELECTIONS

TESTIMONY

Beppie Shapiro, 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 SB370 HD2 SD1, which would enhance the appeal of public financing by making its financial benefits more practical for current election campaign costs.

The League of Women Voters of the US believes that methods of financing political campaigns should enable candidates to compete equitably for public office and ensure that candidates have sufficient funds to communicate their messages to the public. Hawaii's Partial Public Funding Program (PPFP) is intended to support those goals.

The amount available through the PPFP to publicly funded candidates has not changed in over two decades. Inflation in media prices, postage, and labor costs make the current amounts far less than competitive. The current amounts available to qualified candidates for public funding are far below the amounts spent by privately funded candidates who won election to the same office. Not surprisingly, the number of candidates using the PPFP has decreased every year since at least 2016. The increases proposed in HB370 HD2 SD1 unquestionably offer an improvement on the status quo.

In addition, HB370 HD2 SD1 cuts the amount of qualifying contributions required to access public funding for several offices, making the program easier to access.

To enable the Campaign Spending Commission (CSC) to fulfill the requirements of this bill as well as its existing duties, SB370 added 2 positions to CSC staff; currently

CSC is sadly understaffed as detailed in CSC testimony on HB370. We urge this committee to

- 1) Restore language specifying two additional positions in CSC, which will be needed to administer the enhanced partial public funding program, and
- 2) Propose funding at the level suggested by JDC to adequately implement this valuable and popular bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB370 HD2 SD1, RELATING TO PARTIAL PUBLIC FINANCING OF ELECTIONS

SENATE COMMITTEES ON WAYS AND MEANS, AND JUDICIARY
TUESDAY, APRIL 1, 2025

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Ways and Means Committee:

The Democratic Party of Hawai'i **SUPPORTS** HB370 HD2 SD1, RELATING TO PARTIAL PUBLIC FINANCING OF ELECTIONS. Pursuant to the platform of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i and Resolution 2024-21, the Party supports full public-financing of elections and policies that will get the State of Hawai'i closer to that objective.

This measure would update the amount of public funds that a candidate running for public office can receive, while lowering the amount that a candidate would need to raise in order to qualify for the Partial Public Funding Program. The Democratic Party of Hawai'i supports this measure as it will bring the existing program much closer to meeting the current standards around campaign expenditures. The party also supports providing more resources to the Campaign Spending Commission to address the growth of the program. This will encourage more members of our community to participate in our electoral process, enhancing the accessibility and inclusivity of our democracy.

Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to testify in support of HB370 HD2 SD1, RELATING TO PARTIAL PUBLIC FINANCING OF ELECTIONS. Should you have any questions or require further information, please contact the Democratic Party of Hawai'i at legislation@hawaiidemocrats.org.

DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF HAWAII

PO Box 2041 • Honolulu, HI 96805 • www.hawaiidemocrats.org



**Senate Committee on Ways & Means
Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action (HAPA) Strongly Supports: HB370
Tuesday, April 1, 2025 at 10:00 am; Conference Room 211**

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee,

HAPA strongly supports HB370, which increases the partial public campaign financing available for all state and county elective offices.

Our state's public financing system has not been updated for 30 years. The value of the dollar has more than doubled since then with inflation. With that, this leaves our public financing system inadequate in today's political landscape.

Recent data also highlights the urgent need for campaign finance reform. For example, since 1994, incumbents in the Hawai'i House have spent an average of \$57,883 per election, while challengers spent only \$16,500 when adjusted for inflation. This disparity has resulted in a 90% reelection rate for incumbents over the past decade.

While there have been a few successful candidates who used the program and won their elections, it's not the norm. In 2024, 25 candidates initially signed up to seek matching funds, but only 10 actually used the program—6 for county council, 2 for OHA, and just 2 for the State House. We can do better.

By matching the funding amounts and raising the expenditure limits, we will get closer to making the partial public funding program a real viable option.

The bill also includes provisions for additional staffing at the Campaign Spending Commission, allocating \$200,000 for two full-time positions. This funding is necessary for the effective implementation and oversight of the expanded program. This is particularly important as the Commission has not received additional personnel in decades, even though campaign finance laws have become increasingly complex.

Please support HB370 as you have the opportunity to respond to public sentiment for an equitable and transparent electoral system.

Thank you for your support and consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anne Frederick', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Anne Frederick, Executive Director



Committee: Ways and Means
Hearing Date/Time: Tuesday, April 1, 2025 at 10:01am
Place: Conference Room 211 & Via Videoconference
Re: Testimony of the ACLU of Hawai'i in SUPPORT of HB370
HD2 SD1 Relating to Partial Public Financing of
Elections

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

The ACLU of Hawai'i **supports HB370 HD1 SD1 Relating to Partial Public Financing of Elections.**

In our view, the answer to concerns over the escalating cost of political campaigns is to expand, not limit, the resources available for political advocacy. **Thus, the ACLU supports a comprehensive and meaningful opt-in system of public financing that would help create a level playing field for every qualified candidate.**

A representative democracy functions best when it closely mirrors the electorate. And this is accomplished when access to public candidacy isn't limited by personal wealth or the deep pockets of private interests.

Financial means, or lack of such, can have a wide array of impacts. Access to wealth often results in better educational and health outcomes over the course of one's life. Those individuals and families impacted by our criminal justice system are predominately those who live in poverty. **So too do financial means impact our electoral system. Those with greater financial means and access to high-quality education are more likely to run for, and win, elected offices.**

Giving potential candidates the option to access a meaningful pool of public money will go a long way toward leveling the playing field against well-funded and entrenched incumbents. And a well-funded public financing system could very-well encourage individuals from these under represented demographics to run for public office.

When our legislative officials have in common shared lived experience, not just geographic proximity, with those they represent we can all be uplifted with bolder public policy that acknowledges our most vulnerable and works to uplift them.

American Civil Liberties Union of Hawai'i
P.O. Box 3410
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96801
T: 808.522.5900
F: 808.522.5909
E: office@acluhawaii.org
www.acluhawaii.org

We will continue to advocate for reform of the current system, including in support of our longstanding commitment to public financing of campaigns. In doing so, we will stress fidelity to the principles protected by the First Amendment with the goal of expanding, not limiting, political speech.

Please pass and HB370 HD2 SD1. Mahalo for your service!

Sincerely,

Josh Frost

Josh Frost

Policy Assistant

ACLU of Hawai'i

jfrost@acluhawaii.org

The mission of the ACLU of Hawai'i is to protect the fundamental freedoms enshrined in the U.S. and State Constitutions. The ACLU of Hawai'i fulfills this through legislative, litigation, and public education programs statewide. The ACLU of Hawai'i is a non-partisan and private non-profit organization that provides its services at no cost to the public and does not accept government funds. The ACLU of Hawai'i has been serving Hawai'i for over 50 years.

HB-370-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/27/2025 12:33:42 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marcia Kemble	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Greetings Committee Chair and Committee Members,

I am writing in **STRONG** support of HB370 HD2 SD1, which will modernize and improve Hawaii's partial public financing program for elections. By increasing the funding limits and adjusting qualifying contribution requirements, this measure reflects the economic realities of today and encourages more candidates to participate in the program. This bill is a significant step toward reducing the influence of big money in our election process.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Marcia Kemble

Makiki

HB-370-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/28/2025 12:01:02 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elisa W Johnston	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I write in strong support of HB370 and the increase in public election funding its passage would provi

Our democratic process has been captured by monied interests who know every trick in the book for maximizing their support of the candidate most likelt to serve their interests. Only an increase in public funding will enable those with legitimate, but often fewer, resources to fully participate in the election process.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Elisa W. Johnston

Makiki

HB-370-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/28/2025 1:44:45 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Linda Legrande	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

There would appear to be a real need to restore public trust in our elections. This bill could be a part of that effort. Please hear it and pass it.

Mahalo, Linda Legrande

HB-370-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/28/2025 3:58:44 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Chris Mentzel	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair & Committee Members,

With another story in the news this week about bribery and corruption, it's time for the legislature to act on money in politics. This is one of your last chances to do something on this issue this session. HB370 HD2 SD1 would fix the fundamental problem with Hawai'i's Partial Public Financing Program by raising the expenditure limits to ensure candidates can run winning campaigns on public financing, while also increasing the maximum amount of matching funds available to candidates. By increasing the cap on matching funds and adjusting expenditure limits, SB 345 empowers candidates with limited personal wealth or access to large donors to run competitive campaigns, and makes sure that they will still be able to run winning campaigns while receiving matching funds. The current expenditure limit when you opt-in to partial public financing for an average State House Race is around \$23,000, while the median and average expenditures for State House Race primaries are around \$31,000 and \$37,000, respectively. This makes the partial public funding system a handicap for these races, not a support system.

Reforming the partial public funding system will foster a more diverse pool of candidates, reduce the influence of wealthy donors and special interests in our political process, and amplify the voices of regular citizens by prioritizing voter engagement over large-scale donations. I urge you to pass HB370 HD2 SD1 to strengthen our democratic institutions and ensure that the voices of all Hawai'i residents are heard.

Mahalo for your time and consideration,

Chris Mentzel

HB-370-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/28/2025 4:01:00 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jeannine Johnson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB370 and hope that you will too.

HB-370-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/28/2025 4:15:03 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stephanie Austin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this important bill which helps level
the playing field for those running for political office!

HB-370-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/28/2025 4:18:24 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Greg Crawford	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair & Committee Members,

With another story in the news this week about bribery and corruption, it's time for the legislature to act on money in politics. This is one of your last chances to do something on this issue this session. HB370 HD2 SD1 would fix the fundamental problem with Hawai'i's Partial Public Financing Program by raising the expenditure limits to ensure candidates can run winning campaigns on public financing, while also increasing the maximum amount of matching funds available to candidates. By increasing the cap on matching funds and adjusting expenditure limits, SB 345 empowers candidates with limited personal wealth or access to large donors to run competitive campaigns, and makes sure that they will still be able to run winning campaigns while receiving matching funds. The current expenditure limit when you opt-in to partial public financing for an average State House Race is around \$23,000, while the median and average expenditures for State House Race primaries are around \$31,000 and \$37,000, respectively. This makes the partial public funding system a handicap for these races, not a support system.

Reforming the partial public funding system will foster a more diverse pool of candidates, reduce the influence of wealthy donors and special interests in our political process, and amplify the voices of regular citizens by prioritizing voter engagement over large-scale donations. I urge you to pass HB370 HD2 SD1 to strengthen our democratic institutions and ensure that the voices of all Hawai'i residents are heard.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

HB-370-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/28/2025 4:19:24 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Robert H. Pahia	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB370. Do the right thing !

HB-370-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/28/2025 4:52:28 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ted Bohlen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUPPORT!

HB-370-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/28/2025 5:01:34 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Georgia L Hoopes	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair & Committee Members,

With another story in the news this week about bribery and corruption, it's time for the legislature to act on money in politics. This is one of your last chances to do something on this issue this session. HB370 HD2 SD1 would fix the fundamental problem with Hawai'i's Partial Public Financing Program by raising the expenditure limits to ensure candidates can run winning campaigns on public financing, while also increasing the maximum amount of matching funds available to candidates. By increasing the cap on matching funds and adjusting expenditure limits, SB 345 empowers candidates with limited personal wealth or access to large donors to run competitive campaigns, and makes sure that they will still be able to run winning campaigns while receiving matching funds. The current expenditure limit when you opt-in to partial public financing for an average State House Race is around \$23,000, while the median and average expenditures for State House Race primaries are around \$31,000 and \$37,000, respectively. This makes the partial public funding system a handicap for these races, not a support system.

Reforming the partial public funding system will foster a more diverse pool of candidates, reduce the influence of wealthy donors and special interests in our political process, and amplify the voices of regular citizens by prioritizing voter engagement over large-scale donations. I urge you to pass HB370 HD2 SD1 to strengthen our democratic institutions and ensure that the voices of all Hawai'i residents are heard.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Georgia Hoopes, Kalaheo

HB-370-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/28/2025 6:09:50 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ruta Jordans	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha! It is way past time to get money out of politics. If every viable candidate has the same amount of support for like positions, supplied by the government, with no huge donations to influence them, we might finally be down to looking at their qualifications rather than how much money they spend to make their name known. Please, please make it an even playing field so that we can honestly listen to what they say.. Do they know what they are talking about? Are they familiar with the issues that they will be asked to discuss and vote on? That is more important than amassing funds.

HB-370-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/28/2025 6:13:06 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lorna Holmes	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I write in strong support of HB370. It would fix the fundamental problem with Hawai'i's Partial Public Financing Program by raising the expenditure limits and increasing the matching funds available to candidates.

Reforming the partial public funding system will foster a more diverse pool of candidates, reduce the influence of wealthy donors and special interests in our political process, and amplify the voices of regular citizens by prioritizing voter engagement over large-scale donations. I urge you to pass HB370 HD2 SD1 to strengthen our democratic institutions and ensure that the voices of all Hawai'i residents are heard.

Mahalo for your attention,

Dr. Lorna Holmes

Honolulu 96817

HB-370-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/28/2025 6:17:18 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Valerie Hoecke	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this and other bills to improve transparency and remove special interests' influence on our governance.

Now, more than ever, we need an independent and people-centered governance.

HB-370-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/28/2025 6:20:28 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christopher Egbo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Subject: Testimony in Support of HB370 HD2 SD1 – Strengthening Public Financing

Aloha Chair & Committee Members,

Will you ever begin to listen to demands of the your constituents? With yet another news story this week highlighting bribery and corruption, it’s clear that the time to act on money in politics is now. We cannot afford to do nothing once again—this is the last opportunity this session to make a meaningful change.

HB370 HD2 SD1 addresses a fundamental flaw in Hawai‘i’s Partial Public Financing Program by raising expenditure limits to ensure that publicly financed candidates can run viable, competitive campaigns. The bill also increases the maximum amount of matching funds available, making public financing a realistic option for candidates who lack personal wealth or access to large donors.

Currently, the expenditure limit for a State House race when opting into partial public financing is around \$23,000. Meanwhile, the median and average expenditures for State House primary races are approximately \$31,000 and \$37,000, respectively. Rather than being a support system, the current partial public financing system actually hinders candidates. By raising the cap on matching funds and adjusting expenditure limits, SB 345 ensures that publicly financed candidates can run competitive, winning campaigns.

Reforming the public financing system will:

- Encourage a more diverse pool of candidates
- Reduce the influence of wealthy donors and special interests
- Prioritize voter engagement over large-scale donations

I urge you to pass HB370 HD2 SD1 to strengthen our democratic institutions and ensure that the voices of all Hawai‘i residents—not just the wealthy and well-connected—are heard.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Christopher Egbo

HB-370-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/28/2025 6:43:28 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer Lum	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair & Committee Members,

With another story in the news this week about bribery and corruption, it's time for the legislature to act on money in politics. This is one of your last chances to do something on this issue this session. HB370 HD2 SD1 would fix the fundamental problem with Hawai'i's Partial Public Financing Program by raising the expenditure limits to ensure candidates can run winning campaigns on public financing, while also increasing the maximum amount of matching funds available to candidates. By increasing the cap on matching funds and adjusting expenditure limits, SB 345 empowers candidates with limited personal wealth or access to large donors to run competitive campaigns, and makes sure that they will still be able to run winning campaigns while receiving matching funds. The current expenditure limit when you opt-in to partial public financing for an average State House Race is around \$23,000, while the median and average expenditures for State House Race primaries are around \$31,000 and \$37,000, respectively. This makes the partial public funding system a handicap for these races, not a support system.

Reforming the partial public funding system will foster a more diverse pool of candidates, reduce the influence of wealthy donors and special interests in our political process, and amplify the voices of regular citizens by prioritizing voter engagement over large-scale donations. I urge you to pass HB370 HD2 SD1 to strengthen our democratic institutions and ensure that the voices of all Hawai'i residents are heard.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Jennifer Lum, 'Ewa Beach

HB-370-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/28/2025 7:15:37 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Daniel R Freund	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Senate Ways and Means Committee,

You have the power to make our democracy stronger and counter the efforts of the current administration in Washington to destroy it. **Please support HB370.**

Mahalo -

Dan Freund, Kapaa

HB-370-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/28/2025 7:52:47 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tara King	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Don't take money from private interests people paying to get their way

HB-370-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2025 6:59:17 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Vanessa Ott	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Get money out of politics! I support a political system that levels the playing field between the rich and the poor.

HB-370-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2025 7:42:33 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kelcy Durbin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair & Committee Members,

With another story in the news this week about bribery and corruption, it's time for the legislature to act on money in politics. This is one of your last chances to do something on this issue this session. HB370 HD2 SD1 would fix the fundamental problem with Hawai'i's Partial Public Financing Program by raising the expenditure limits to ensure candidates can run winning campaigns on public financing, while also increasing the maximum amount of matching funds available to candidates. By increasing the cap on matching funds and adjusting expenditure limits, SB 345 empowers candidates with limited personal wealth or access to large donors to run competitive campaigns, and makes sure that they will still be able to run winning campaigns while receiving matching funds. The current expenditure limit when you opt-in to partial public financing for an average State House Race is around \$23,000, while the median and average expenditures for State House Race primaries are around \$31,000 and \$37,000, respectively. This makes the partial public funding system a handicap for these races, not a support system.

Reforming the partial public funding system will foster a more diverse pool of candidates, reduce the influence of wealthy donors and special interests in our political process, and amplify the voices of regular citizens by prioritizing voter engagement over large-scale donations. I urge you to pass HB370 HD2 SD1 to strengthen our democratic institutions and ensure that the voices of all Hawai'i residents are heard.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Kelcy Durbin

HB-370-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2025 8:10:10 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Poi G.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair & Committee Members,

With another story in the news this week about bribery and corruption, it's time for the legislature to act on money in politics. This is one of your last chances to do something on this issue this session. HB370 HD2 SD1 would fix the fundamental problem with Hawai'i's Partial Public Financing Program by raising the expenditure limits to ensure candidates can run winning campaigns on public financing, while also increasing the maximum amount of matching funds available to candidates. By increasing the cap on matching funds and adjusting expenditure limits, SB 345 empowers candidates with limited personal wealth or access to large donors to run competitive campaigns, and makes sure that they will still be able to run winning campaigns while receiving matching funds. The current expenditure limit when you opt-in to partial public financing for an average State House Race is around \$23,000, while the median and average expenditures for State House Race primaries are around \$31,000 and \$37,000, respectively. This makes the partial public funding system a handicap for these races, not a support system.

Reforming the partial public funding system will foster a more diverse pool of candidates, reduce the influence of wealthy donors and special interests in our political process, and amplify the voices of regular citizens by prioritizing voter engagement over large-scale donations. I urge you to pass HB370 HD2 SD1 to strengthen our democratic institutions and ensure that the voices of all Hawai'i residents are heard.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

HB-370-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2025 8:17:22 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
kimdonghyeon	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Kidani, and Members of the Committee,

My name is kimdonghyeon, and I am writing in **STRONG** support of HB370, improving the partial public campaign financing program. By increasing the expenditure cap and adjusting matching funds to 2 to 1, this measure reflects today's economic realities and encourages more candidates to participate in the program. This bill is a significant step toward reducing the influence of big money in our election process. By increasing the Campaign Spending Commission funding, the office can continue to grow the program and assist with the increased workload.

Mahalo,

kimdonghyeon

HB-370-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2025 8:18:49 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Suellen Barton	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Suellen Barton and I am strongly in support of HB370. Increasing the public partial funding of campaigns will make elections more affordable for those without powerful lobbyist backing. It levels the playing field

HB-370-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2025 8:27:55 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ezgi Green	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Committee Members,

With yet another news story highlighting bribery and corruption, it is clear that **Hawai‘i must take action to address the influence of money in politics**. HB370 HD2 SD1 presents a critical opportunity to **fix the state’s Partial Public Financing Program** by adjusting expenditure limits and increasing the cap on matching funds—allowing candidates to run competitive, publicly financed campaigns without being at a disadvantage.

Currently, the expenditure limit for candidates who opt into partial public financing is approximately **\$23,000 for an average State House race**, while the median and average expenditures for primary races stand at **\$31,000 and \$37,000**, respectively. This disparity turns what should be a support system into a **barrier for participation**, discouraging candidates without personal wealth or access to large donors from running for office. By **raising expenditure limits and increasing matching funds**, this bill ensures that publicly financed candidates can remain viable and competitive, **leveling the playing field for those who wish to serve their communities, not special interests**.

A stronger public financing system means **more diverse representation, less influence from wealthy donors, and a political process that prioritizes voter engagement over big-money contributions**. I urge you to **pass HB370 HD2 SD1** and take this meaningful step toward restoring trust in our democracy.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Ezgi Green

HB-370-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2025 8:35:16 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Susan B Roberts Emery	Testifying for Green Party of Hawai'i	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Dela Cruz , Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of Committee,

My name is Susan RobertsEmery, I am co chair of the Green Party of Hawai'i. Wow, with corruption and bribery at the top of the Hawai'i news cycle, it's time for the legislature to show your constituents where you stand on corruption in politics! Seriously, we are watching very closely. The Green Party of Hawai'i stands in strong support of HB370 HD2 SD1. The Green Party of Hawai'i is a party for the people, we do not accept corporate donations. By increasing the cap on matching funds and adjusting expenditure limits, SB 345 empowers candidates with limited personal wealth or access to large donors to run competitive campaigns, and makes sure that they will still be able to run winning campaigns while receiving matching funds. This levels the playing field for candidates who want to be true public servants, and not corporate skills !

Reforming the partial public funding system will foster a more diverse pool of candidates, reduce the influence of wealthy donors and special interests in our political process, and amplify the voices of regular citizens by prioritizing voter engagement over large-scale donations. We urge you to pass HB370 HD2 SD1 to strengthen our democratic institutions and ensure that the voices of ALL Hawai'i residents are heard.

Mahalo,

Susan RobertsEmery
Green Party Hawai'i
Paauilo

HB-370-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2025 8:35:42 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Susan Stayton	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Kidani, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Susan Stayton, and I am writing in **STRONG** support of HB370, improving the partial public campaign financing program. By increasing the expenditure cap and adjusting matching funds to 2 to 1, this measure reflects today's economic realities and encourages more candidates to participate in the program. This bill is a significant step toward reducing the influence of big money in our election process. By increasing the Campaign Spending Commission funding, the office can continue to grow the program and assist with the increased workload.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Susan, Lawai, Kauai

HB-370-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2025 8:55:03 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
cheryl hendrickson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

By increasing the expenditure cap and adjusting matching funds to 2 to 1, this measure reflects today's economic realities and encourages more candidates to participate in the program. This bill is a significant step toward reducing the influence of big money in our election process. By increasing the Campaign Spending Commission funding, the office can continue to grow the program and assist with the increased workload.

HB-370-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2025 9:05:22 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jane E Arnold	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I urge the committee to support HB 371. This measure is essential for restoring trust in our democratic institutions and ensuring an equitable system of governance for all.

Jane E Arnold

1763 Iwi Way, Apt D

Honolulu, HI. 96816

HB-370-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2025 9:14:50 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Star S Brown	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair & Committee Members,

With another story in the news this week about bribery and corruption, it's time for the legislature to act on money in politics. This is one of your last chances to do something on this issue this session. HB370 HD2 SD1 would fix the fundamental problem with Hawai'i's Partial Public Financing Program by raising the expenditure limits to ensure candidates can run winning campaigns on public financing, while also increasing the maximum amount of matching funds available to candidates. By increasing the cap on matching funds and adjusting expenditure limits, SB 345 empowers candidates with limited personal wealth or access to large donors to run competitive campaigns, and makes sure that they will still be able to run winning campaigns while receiving matching funds. The current expenditure limit when you opt-in to partial public financing for an average State House Race is around \$23,000, while the median and average expenditures for State House Race primaries are around \$31,000 and \$37,000, respectively. This makes the partial public funding system a handicap for these races, not a support system.

Reforming the partial public funding system will foster a more diverse pool of candidates, reduce the influence of wealthy donors and special interests in our political process, and amplify the voices of regular citizens by prioritizing voter engagement over large-scale donations. I urge you to pass HB370 HD2 SD1 to strengthen our democratic institutions and ensure that the voices of all Hawai'i residents are heard.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

-Star Brown

HB-370-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2025 9:34:52 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Paul Kimo Pestana	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair & Committee Members,

With another story in the news this week about bribery and corruption, it's time for the legislature to act on money in politics. This is one of your last chances to do something on this issue this session. HB370 HD2 SD1 would fix the fundamental problem with Hawai'i's Partial Public Financing Program by raising the expenditure limits to ensure candidates can run winning campaigns on public financing, while also increasing the maximum amount of matching funds available to candidates. By increasing the cap on matching funds and adjusting expenditure limits, SB 345 empowers candidates with limited personal wealth or access to large donors to run competitive campaigns, and makes sure that they will still be able to run winning campaigns while receiving matching funds. The current expenditure limit when you opt-in to partial public financing for an average State House Race is around \$23,000, while the median and average expenditures for State House Race primaries are around \$31,000 and \$37,000, respectively. This makes the partial public funding system a handicap for these races, not a support system.

Reforming the partial public funding system will foster a more diverse pool of candidates, reduce the influence of wealthy donors and special interests in our political process, and amplify the voices of regular citizens by prioritizing voter engagement over large-scale donations. I urge you to pass HB370 HD2 SD1 to strengthen our democratic institutions and ensure that the voices of all Hawai'i residents are heard.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Dr Paul Kimo Pestana DC

HB-370-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2025 9:55:09 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shay Chan Hodges	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in STRONG support of HB370, improving the partial public campaign financing program. By increasing the expenditure cap and adjusting matching funds to 2 to 1, this measure reflects today's economic realities and encourages more candidates to participate in the program. This bill is a significant step toward reducing the influence of big money in our election process. By increasing the Campaign Spending Commission funding, the office can continue to grow the program and assist with the increased workload.

Mahalo,

Shay Chan Hodges

Haiku, Maui

HB-370-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2025 10:21:00 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nanea Lo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

My name is Nanea Lo, and **I am testifying in strong support of HB370 HD2 SD1.**

With yet another news story this week about bribery and corruption, it is clear that urgent action is needed to address the role of money in politics. This is one of the last opportunities this session to enact real change. HB370 HD2 SD1 strengthens Hawai‘i’s Partial Public Financing Program by raising expenditure limits, ensuring that candidates can run competitive, winning campaigns while relying on public financing. By increasing the cap on matching funds and adjusting expenditure limits, SB345 creates a fairer electoral system—one that allows candidates without personal wealth or large donor networks to compete on a level playing field.

Currently, the expenditure limit for candidates who opt into partial public financing in a typical State House race is around \$23,000. However, the median and average expenditures for State House primaries are approximately \$31,000 and \$37,000, respectively. Instead of serving as a support system, the current partial public financing model acts as a disadvantage, discouraging candidates from using it.

Fixing this system will foster a more diverse pool of candidates, reduce the undue influence of wealthy donors and special interests in our political process, and amplify the voices of everyday people. Public financing should prioritize voter engagement over large-scale donations. **By passing HB370 HD2 SD1, you can help strengthen our democracy and ensure that all Hawai‘i residents have a voice in the decisions that shape our future.**

me ke aloha ‘āina,

Nanea Lo

Mō‘ili‘ili, HI 96826

Sierra Club of Hawai‘i Executive Committee Member

Board Member, Hawai‘i Workers Center

Kanaka Maoli/Lineal Descendant of the Hawaiian Kingdom

HB-370-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2025 10:33:18 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Richard Bodien	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The time has come. Support this now.

Richard Bodien, Hawi, Hawaii

HB-370-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2025 10:39:17 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer Androes	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair & Committee Members,

With another story in the news this week about bribery and corruption, it's time for the legislature to act on money in politics. This is one of your last chances to do something on this issue this session. HB370 HD2 SD1 would fix the fundamental problem with Hawai'i's Partial Public Financing Program by raising the expenditure limits to ensure candidates can run winning campaigns on public financing, while also increasing the maximum amount of matching funds available to candidates. By increasing the cap on matching funds and adjusting expenditure limits, SB 345 empowers candidates with limited personal wealth or access to large donors to run competitive campaigns, and makes sure that they will still be able to run winning campaigns while receiving matching funds. The current expenditure limit when you opt-in to partial public financing for an average State House Race is around \$23,000, while the median and average expenditures for State House Race primaries are around \$31,000 and \$37,000, respectively. This makes the partial public funding system a handicap for these races, not a support system.

Reforming the partial public funding system will foster a more diverse pool of candidates, reduce the influence of wealthy donors and special interests in our political process, and amplify the voices of regular citizens by prioritizing voter engagement over large-scale donations. I urge you to pass HB370 HD2 SD1 to strengthen our democratic institutions and ensure that the voices of all Hawai'i residents are heard.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

HB-370-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2025 11:12:00 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Linda Pizzitola	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Linda Pizzitola and I am writing in STRONG support of HB370, improving the partial public campaign financing program. By increasing the expenditure cap and adjusting matching funds to 2 to 1, this measure reflects today's economic realities and encourages more candidates to participate in the program. **This bill is a significant step toward reducing the influence of big money in our election process. The influence of billionaires in our federal government is shameful enough. Hawai'i can do better honoring the democratic process.**

HB-370-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2025 12:17:52 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Priscilla Stuckey	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Kidani, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Priscilla Stuckey, and I am writing in STRONG support of HB370, improving the partial public campaign financing program. By increasing the expenditure cap and adjusting matching funds to 2 to 1, this measure reflects today's economic realities and encourages more candidates to participate in the program. This bill is a significant step toward reducing the influence of big money in our election process. By increasing the Campaign Spending Commission funding, the office can continue to grow the program and assist with the increased workload.

Mahalo,

Priscilla Stuckey, Kihei

HB-370-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2025 12:27:57 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Pamela Elders	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Kidani, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Pamela Elders, and I am writing in **STRONG** support of HB370, improving the partial public campaign financing program. By increasing the expenditure cap and adjusting matching funds to 2 to 1, this measure reflects today's economic realities and encourages more candidates to participate in the program. This bill is a significant step toward reducing the influence of big money in our election process. By increasing the Campaign Spending Commission funding, the office can continue to grow the program and assist with the increased workload.

Mahalo,

Pamela Elders

Laupahoehoe, HI 96764

HB-370-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2025 2:17:49 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
mary drayer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

STRONG support of my tax money and other public funds contributing to campaign funds of people who cannot compete with corporate, developer and other deep pocket entities that support THEIR candidate.

we here on Maui have been subjected to it for decades - and look where we are now :(

HB-370-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2025 2:26:43 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Judith White	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support! This is an important step toward increasing true representation in our state government, while reducing the risk of influence.

Judith C. White, Psy.D.

Kapaa

HB-370-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2025 3:44:23 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ann Dorsey	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I urge you to support HB370, which will improve the partial public campaign financing program by increasing the expenditure cap and adjusting matching funds to 2 to 1. This measure reflects today's economic realities and encourages more candidates to participate in the program and is a significant step toward reducing the influence of big money in our election process. By increasing the Campaign Spending Commission funding, the office can continue to grow the program and assist with the increased workload.

Thank you

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and members of the committee,

Strong support for HB370 HD2 SD1

Enhancing public financing amplifies the voices of regular citizens by prioritizing voter engagement over large-scale donations. Candidates will be encouraged to connect with a broader base of supporters, leading to policies that better reflect the needs and desires of our communities.

Reforming the public funding system will foster a more diverse pool of candidates, reduce the influence of wealthy donors and special interests in our political process, and amplify the voices of regular citizens by prioritizing voter engagement over large-scale donations. I urge you to pass HB370 HD2 SD1 to strengthen our democratic institutions and ensure that the voices of all Hawai'i residents are heard.

Respectively submitted,

Keith Neal
Waimea

HB-370-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2025 4:50:14 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Diane Ware	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair & Committee Members,

With another story in the news this week about bribery and corruption, it's time for the legislature to act on money in politics. This is one of your last chances to do something on this issue this session. HB370 HD2 SD1 would fix the fundamental problem with Hawai'i's Partial Public Financing Program by raising the expenditure limits to ensure candidates can run winning campaigns on public financing, while also increasing the maximum amount of matching funds available to candidates. By increasing the cap on matching funds and adjusting expenditure limits, SB 345 empowers candidates with limited personal wealth or access to large donors to run competitive campaigns, and makes sure that they will still be able to run winning campaigns while receiving matching funds. The current expenditure limit when you opt-in to partial public financing for an average State House Race is around \$23,000, while the median and average expenditures for State House Race primaries are around \$31,000 and \$37,000, respectively. This makes the partial public funding system a handicap for these races, not a support system.

Reforming the partial public funding system will foster a more diverse pool of candidates, reduce the influence of wealthy donors and special interests in our political process, and amplify the voices of regular citizens by prioritizing voter engagement over large-scale donations. I urge you to pass HB370 HD2 SD1 to strengthen our democratic institutions and ensure that the voices of all Hawai'i residents are heard.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Diane Ware

Volcano 96785

HB-370-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2025 6:59:04 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Robert Culbertson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair & Committee Members,

With another story in the news this week about bribery and corruption, it's time for the legislature to act on money in politics. This is one of your last chances to do something on this issue this session. HB370 HD2 SD1 would fix the fundamental problem with Hawai'i's Partial Public Financing Program by raising the expenditure limits to ensure candidates can run winning campaigns on public financing, while also increasing the maximum amount of matching funds available to candidates. By increasing the cap on matching funds and adjusting expenditure limits, SB 345 empowers candidates with limited personal wealth or access to large donors to run competitive campaigns, and makes sure that they will still be able to run winning campaigns while receiving matching funds. The current expenditure limit when you opt-in to partial public financing for an average State House Race is around \$23,000, while the median and average expenditures for State House Race primaries are around \$31,000 and \$37,000, respectively. This makes the partial public funding system a handicap for these races, not a support system.

Reforming the partial public funding system will foster a more diverse pool of candidates, reduce the influence of wealthy donors and special interests in our political process, and amplify the voices of regular citizens by prioritizing voter engagement over large-scale donations. I urge you to pass HB370 HD2 SD1 to strengthen our democratic institutions and ensure that the voices of all Hawai'i residents are heard.

Mahalo for your time and consideration,

R A Culbertson

Honokaa

HB-370-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2025 9:05:44 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Laura Gerwitz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Kidani, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Laura Gerwitz, and I am writing in **STRONG** support of HB370, improving the partial public campaign financing program. By increasing the expenditure cap and adjusting matching funds to 2 to 1, this measure reflects today's economic realities and encourages more candidates to participate in the program. This bill is a significant step toward reducing the influence of big money in our election process. By increasing the Campaign Spending Commission funding, the office can continue to grow the program and assist with the increased workload.

Mahalo,

Laura Gerwitz, Honolulu

HB-370-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/30/2025 12:17:34 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gregory Misakian	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB370 HD2 SD1.

Gregory Misakian

HB-370-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/30/2025 5:50:28 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mariana Monasi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Kidani, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Mariana and I am writing in STRONG support of HB370, improving the partial public campaign financing program. By increasing the expenditure cap and adjusting matching funds to 2 to 1, this measure reflects today's economic realities and encourages more candidates to participate in the program. This bill is a significant step toward reducing the influence of big money in our election process. We are seeing the awful effects and breakdown of social services, as we see oligarchs take over departments they know nothing about, to benefit their stocks and pockets. By increasing the Campaign Spending Commission funding, the office can continue to grow the program and assist with the increased workload.

Mahalo,

Mariana monasi, Kurtistown

HB-370-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/30/2025 7:02:38 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Danelle Guion	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Kidani, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Danielle Guion, and I am writing in STRONG support of HB370, improving the partial public campaign financing program. By increasing the expenditure cap and adjusting matching funds to 2 to 1, this measure reflects today's economic realities and encourages more candidates to participate in the program. This bill is a significant step toward reducing the influence of big money in our election process. By increasing the Campaign Spending Commission funding, the office can continue to grow the program and assist with the increased workload.

Mahalo,

Danielle Guion, Makakilo, O'ahu, Hawai'i

HB-370-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/30/2025 7:26:36 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jessica Kuzmier	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, as a citizen who is in favor of getting big money out of politics, I am writing in STRONG support of HB370, which will modernize and improve Hawai'i's partial public financing program for elections. It's a great start to getting dark money and corporate away from our elections, and back to way our democracy should be, one vote for one person. By increasing the funding limits and adjusting qualifying contribution requirements, this measure reflects the economic realities of today and encourages more candidates to participate in the program.

This bill is a significant step towards reducing the influence of big money in our election process. Reducing influence of outside money will help keep all of our elections, and governmental functioning itself, free and fair. Mahalo.

HB-370-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/30/2025 9:56:01 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
KEALA FUNG	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Kidani, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Keala Fung, and I am writing in STRONG support of HB370, improving the partial public campaign financing program. By increasing the expenditure cap and adjusting matching funds to 2 to 1, this measure reflects today's economic realities and encourages more candidates to participate in the program. This bill is a significant step toward reducing the influence of big money in our election process. By increasing the Campaign Spending Commission funding, the office can continue to grow the program and assist with the increased workload.

Mahalo,

Keala Fung, Honolulu

HB-370-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/30/2025 10:24:22 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michele Mitsumori	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair & Committee Members,

The latest news story about bribery and corruption underlines the urgency of taking meaningful action on money in politics.

I'm writing in support of HB370 HD2 SD1, which would fix fundamental problems with Hawai'i's Partial Public Financing Program by raising the expenditure limits to ensure candidates can run winning campaigns on public financing, while also increasing the maximum amount of matching funds available to candidates. By increasing the cap on matching funds and adjusting expenditure limits, SB 345 empowers candidates with limited personal wealth or access to large donors to run competitive campaigns, and makes sure that they will still be able to run winning campaigns while receiving matching funds. The current expenditure limit when you opt-in to partial public financing for an average State House Race is around \$23,000, while the median and average expenditures for State House Race primaries are around \$31,000 and \$37,000, respectively. This makes the partial public funding system a handicap for these races, not a support system.

Reforming the partial public funding system will foster a more diverse pool of candidates, reduce the influence of wealthy donors and special interests in our political process, and amplify the voices of regular citizens by prioritizing voter engagement over large-scale donations. I urge you to pass HB370 HD2 SD1 to strengthen our democratic institutions and ensure that the voices of all Hawai'i residents are heard.

Mahalo for your time and consideration,
Michele Mitsumori
Hilo

HB-370-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/30/2025 11:15:15 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
pamela burrell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Ways and Means Committee,

The legislature doing nothing to clean up money in politics and shift its culture of corruption! BUT there are still some meaningful campaign finance reform bills alive that can make an impact on lessening Big Money pay-to-play corruption in our politics.

Please keep campaign finance reform alive!

Regards,

Pamela Burrell, Kalihiwai, Kaua'i 96754

HB-370-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/30/2025 12:02:08 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
David Leake	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Kidani, and Members of the Committee,

My name is David Leake, and I am writing in STRONG support of HB370, improving the partial public campaign financing program. By increasing the expenditure cap and adjusting matching funds to 2 to 1, this measure reflects today's economic realities and encourages more candidates to participate in the program. This bill is a significant step toward reducing the influence of big money in our election process. By increasing the Campaign Spending Commission funding, the office can continue to grow the program and assist with the increased workload.

Mahalo,

David Leake, Kaneohe

HB-370-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/30/2025 12:25:43 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Malia Everette	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Greetings! Aloha! Our Nation is in crisis because of Citizen's United and sadly an erosion of the Rule of Law and Constitution due to the fact "we the people" have allowed corporations personhood and now an Oligarchy or New Robber Baron Class have taken over our political, economic and social systems!

In Hawaii, we still malama each other, and know the protection of our culture, aina, water and wellbeing depend on Transparency, being Pono and accountability!

I am thus in STRONG support of House Bill 371, as we must address the unlevel "playing field" and address money in politics. HB370 HD2 SD1 would fix the fundamental problem with Hawai'i's Partial Public Financing Program by raising the expenditure limits to ensure candidates can run winning campaigns on public financing, while also increasing the maximum amount of matching funds available to candidates. By increasing the cap on matching funds and adjusting expenditure limits, SB 345 empowers candidates with limited personal wealth or access to large donors to run competitive campaigns, and makes sure that they will still be able to run winning campaigns while receiving matching funds. The current expenditure limit when you opt-in to partial public financing for an average State House Race is around \$23,000, while the median and average expenditures for State House Race primaries are around \$31,000 and \$37,000, respectively. This makes the partial public funding system a handicap for these races, not a support system.

Reforming the partial public funding system will foster a more diverse pool of candidates, reduce the influence of wealthy donors and special interests in our political process, and amplify the voices of regular citizens by prioritizing voter engagement over large-scale donations. I urge you to pass HB370 HD2 SD1 to strengthen our democratic institutions and ensure that the voices of all Hawai'i residents are heard.

thank you! we need corporate free elections... Malia

HB-370-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/30/2025 1:57:04 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kaleiheana-a-Pohaku Stormcrow	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Kidani, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Kaleiheana Stormcrow, and I am writing in **STRONG support** of **HB370**, improving the partial public campaign financing program. By increasing the expenditure cap and adjusting matching funds to 2 to 1, this measure reflects today's economic realities and encourages more candidates to participate in the program. This bill is a significant step toward reducing the influence of big money in our election process. By increasing the Campaign Spending Commission funding, the office can continue to grow the program and assist with the increased workload.

Mahalo,

Kaleiheana Stormcrow, Mountain View

HB-370-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/30/2025 2:47:36 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kathy Shimata	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Kidani, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Kathy Shimata, and I am writing in **STRONG** support of HB370, improving the partial public campaign financing program. By increasing the expenditure cap and adjusting matching funds to 2 to 1, this measure reflects today's economic realities and encourages more candidates to participate in the program. This bill is a significant step toward reducing the influence of big money in our election process. By increasing the Campaign Spending Commission funding, the office can continue to grow the program and assist with the increased workload.

Mahalo,

Kathy Shimata

Honolulu. 96822



HOUSE BILL 370, HD2, SD1, RELATING TO PARTIAL PUBLIC FINANCING OF ELECTIONS

APRIL 1, 2025 · WAM HEARING

POSITION: Support.

RATIONALE: The Democratic Party of Hawai'i Education Caucus **supports** HB 370, HD2, SD1, relating to partial public financing of elections, which increases the amount of partial public campaign financing available for all elective offices; adjusts the minimum amount of qualifying contributions certain candidates must receive to participate in the program; increases the matching fund payments for excess qualifying contributions; and appropriates funds for the program and staff.

Our democracy belongs to we, the people. At a time when our nation is experiencing extreme political turmoil and basic civil liberties are under assault, we must take steps in Hawai'i to safeguard democratic participation. In the 2024 primary election, for example, our state experienced its lowest turnout in 65 years, with only 32.1 percent of registered voters filling out a ballot. This is, in part, a reflection of the public's deep cynicism with our electoral processes.

Hawai'i continues to be embroiled in public corruption scandals, following the bribery allegations that were levied against former Senate Majority Leader Kalani English and former State Representative Ty Cullen. Other public officials, such as employees at local permitting offices, have been ensnared in bribery scandals, in some cases with connections to Milton Choy, the lobbyist who was responsible for coordinating the bribery scheme that Sen. English and Rep. Cullen became a part of. These cases show that we have a moral crisis in our public institutions and must act to restore integrity to government. **Just last week, Civil Beat reported that an unnamed lobbyist gave \$35,000 to an unnamed legislator just before the 2022 legislative session, a case that remains under federal investigation.**

Kris Coffield, Chairperson • Camron Hurt, Vice Chairperson •
Amy Perruso and Justin Hughey, SCC Members

When candidates for public office are forced to rely on private donations to build relationships, those transactions can cause corruption or create the perception of it. Put simply, legislators are responsive to donors because donors fund their campaigns. Money is crucial to winning. Roughly 91 percent of candidates who outspend their opponents win their elections.

Relatedly, many people choose not to run for public office because they can't afford the cost of a campaign, leaving many incumbents routinely uncontested in their reelection bids. The average winner of a State House seat in Hawai'i spends approximately \$40,000 on their campaign, compared to only \$16,000 for the losing candidate. Over half of all campaign donations in 2022 came from just 980 donors, each of whom contributed at least \$6,000 in candidate donations during that election cycle.

This bill moves our islands toward an election system that is fair. We are also supportive of the proposed positional funding for the Hawai'i Campaign Spending Commission, which has not received additional staff since its inception decades ago. Robust public financing models, such as those being used in states like Maine. In the 2010 and 2012 election cycles, the Hawai'i Island County Council ran a pilot program for comprehensive public funding. Similarly, Connecticut and Maine have instituted comprehensive public financing programs, which have proven successful at increasing electoral participation and reducing candidates' reliance on private donations. Over 70 percent of Democratic legislators use public financing to fund their campaigns in Maine.

These models ensure that candidates no longer need to rely on contributions from wealthy donors. Instead, they can seek support from their constituents in the form of small donations that verify their credibility and subsequently obtain public funding in an amount sufficient to run effective campaigns. Legislators are, in turn, empowered to focus on engaging with their communities, rather than charming the donor class. Ultimately, this reorients our government toward the will of the people, not the wallets of the privileged.

We believe that government should work for the public interest, not special interests. It is in that spirit that we support reforms to uplift the transparency, accountability, and integrity of our state's election system.

Contact: educationcaucusdph@gmail.com

HB-370-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/30/2025 10:42:28 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kiana Otsuka	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Kidani, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Kiana Otsuka, and I am an O‘ahu resident writing in **STRONG support of HB370 HD2 SD1**, improving the partial public campaign financing program. By increasing the expenditure cap and adjusting matching funds to 2 to 1, this measure reflects today's economic realities and encourages more candidates to participate in the program. This bill is a significant step toward reducing the influence of big money in our election process. By increasing the Campaign Spending Commission funding, the office can continue to grow the program and assist with the increased workload.

Mahalo,

Kiana Otsuka

HB-370-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 6:27:21 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lois Langham	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill which would enable more candidates to compete against those with wealthy donors.

HB-370-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 7:39:51 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joseph Acosta	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Kidani, and Members of the Committee,

My name is [NAME], and I am writing in STRONG support of HB370, improving the partial public campaign financing program. By increasing the expenditure cap and adjusting matching funds to 2 to 1, this measure reflects today's economic realities and encourages more candidates to participate in the program. This bill is a significant step toward reducing the influence of big money in our election process. By increasing the Campaign Spending Commission funding, the office can continue to grow the program and assist with the increased workload.

Mahalo,

Joseph Acosta Lahaina

HB-370-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 8:15:07 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dennis O'Shea	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Keep criminals out of Hawaii government.

Mahalo

HB-370-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 11:02:24 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Greg Kahn	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Committee Members,

My name is Greg Kahn and I strongly support HB370 to increase the amount for Partial Public Funding. I believe that the increase in funds to candidates will help to eliminate a candidate's reliance on corporate, SuperPac, and non-resident donations.

Mahalo,

Greg Kahn

HB-370-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 11:12:50 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ann V Saffery	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair & Committee Members,

With another story in the news this week about bribery and corruption, it's time for the legislature to act on money in politics. This is one of your last chances to do something on this issue this session. HB370 HD2 SD1 would fix the fundamental problem with Hawai'i's Partial Public Financing Program by raising the expenditure limits to ensure candidates can run winning campaigns on public financing, while also increasing the maximum amount of matching funds available to candidates. By increasing the cap on matching funds and adjusting expenditure limits, SB 345 empowers candidates with limited personal wealth or access to large donors to run competitive campaigns, and makes sure that they will still be able to run winning campaigns while receiving matching funds. The current expenditure limit when you opt-in to partial public financing for an average State House Race is around \$23,000, while the median and average expenditures for State House Race primaries are around \$31,000 and \$37,000, respectively. This makes the partial public funding system a handicap for these races, not a support system.

Reforming the partial public funding system will foster a more diverse pool of candidates, reduce the influence of wealthy donors and special interests in our political process, and amplify the voices of regular citizens by prioritizing voter engagement over large-scale donations. I urge you to pass HB370 HD2 SD1 to strengthen our democratic institutions and ensure that the voices of all Hawai'i residents are heard.

Mahalo for your time and consideration,

Ann V Saffery

Honolulu, HI

HB-370-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 11:40:15 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Brodie Lockard	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair & Committee Members,

With another story in the news this week about bribery and corruption, it's time for the legislature to act on money in politics. This is one of your last chances to do something on this issue this session. HB370 HD2 SD1 would fix the fundamental problem with Hawai'i's Partial Public Financing Program by raising the expenditure limits to ensure candidates can run winning campaigns on public financing, while also increasing the maximum amount of matching funds available to candidates. By increasing the cap on matching funds and adjusting expenditure limits, SB 345 empowers candidates with limited personal wealth or access to large donors to run competitive campaigns, and makes sure that they will still be able to run winning campaigns while receiving matching funds. The current expenditure limit when you opt-in to partial public financing for an average State House Race is around \$23,000, while the median and average expenditures for State House Race primaries are around \$31,000 and \$37,000, respectively. This makes the partial public funding system a handicap for these races, not a support system.

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Mahalo for your time and consideration.

**Brodie Lockard
Kailua**

HB-370-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 1:09:09 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cheri Matsumura	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair & Committee Members,

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Reforming the partial public funding system will foster a more diverse pool of candidates, reduce the influence of wealthy donors and special interests in our political process, and amplify the voices of regular citizens by prioritizing voter engagement over large-scale donations. I urge you to pass HB370 HD2 SD1 to strengthen our democratic institutions and ensure that the voices of all Hawai'i residents are heard.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

HB-370-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 1:28:47 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carla Allison	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair & Committee Members,

We continue to experience bribery and corruption in our state government. It is time for the legislature to act on money in politics and this is one of your last chances to do something on this issue this session. I **strongly support** HD370 HD2 SD1 and ask that you do the same.

Please support HB370 HD2 SD1 to fix the fundamental problem with Hawai'i's Partial Public Financing Program by raising the expenditure limits to ensure candidates can run winning campaigns on public financing, while also increasing the maximum amount of matching funds available to candidates.

Reforming the partial public funding system will foster a more diverse pool of candidates, reduce the influence of wealthy donors and special interests in our political process, and amplify the voices of regular citizens by prioritizing voter engagement over large-scale donations.

I urge you to pass HB370 HD2 SD1 to strengthen our democratic institutions and ensure that the voices of all Hawai'i residents are heard.

Mahalo for your time and consideration

Carla Allison

Honolulu

HB-370-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 2:25:40 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
emily gambino	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Kidani, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Emily Gambino and I am writing in STRONG support of HB370, improving the partial public campaign financing program. By increasing the expenditure cap and adjusting matching funds to 2 to 1, this measure reflects today's economic realities and encourages more candidates to participate in the program. This bill is a significant step toward reducing the influence of big money in our election process. By increasing the Campaign Spending Commission funding, the office can continue to grow the program and assist with the increased workload.

Mahalo,

Emily Gambino
Makawao, HI

HB-370-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 2:46:49 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Scott Sutherland	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair & Committee Members,

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Reforming the partial public funding system will foster a more diverse pool of candidates, reduce the influence of wealthy donors and special interests in our political process, and amplify the voices of regular citizens by prioritizing voter engagement over large-scale donations. I urge you to pass HB370 HD2 SD1 to strengthen our democratic institutions and ensure that the voices of all Hawai'i residents are heard.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

HB-370-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 7:48:35 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kevin Faccenda	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this measure to reduce pay to play politics!

Kevin Faccenda, Honolulu

HB-370-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 11:29:35 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sherry Pollack	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I urge you to pass HB370 HD2 SD1 to strengthen our democratic institutions and ensure that the voices of all Hawaii residents are heard. Mahalo.

HB-370-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 2:24:34 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elizabeth Nelson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I fully support this bill.

Elizabeth Nelson