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**To:** [Standards of Conduct](#)  
**Subject:** Testimony for June 15, 2022 Mtg  
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**Attachments:** [Untitled.pdf](#)  
[DPH Anti-Corruption Resolution.png](#)

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Dear Chair Foley and Members of the House Commission to Improve Standards of Conduct,

Please allow me to share comments on the items listed on your agenda for your June 15, 2022 meeting. I apologize for the tardiness but I had difficulty finding the hearing notice for this meeting on the Hawaii Legislature website.

I hope to attend the hearing online and will be available to answer any questions you may have.

Thank you,

Kim Coco Iwamoto

**Regarding agenda item “Dominance of One Party in Hawaii”:**

On May 28, 2022, the Democratic Party of Hawaii adopted "Resolution 2022-40.a Urging Hawaii Lawmakers to Address Corruption at the Legislature," which states in relevant part:

Resolved, That the Democratic Party of Hawaii urges Hawaii State lawmakers to take the following immediate actions: adopt House and Senate rules that 1) restrict state legislators or their representatives from soliciting or accepting campaign contributions during the legislative session, 2) require legislators to comply with all State Sunshine and Ethics laws while working to amend the relevant statutes and codify this compliance, 3) adopt House and Senate Rules that restrict legislators from holding any leadership position if they were, within the preceding six months, a) hired as private-practice attorneys, or b) were profit-sharing law practice partners bound by attorney-client privilege from disclosing clients' names or businesses, 4) grant any bill sponsored by a majority of the members in the originating chamber at least one committee hearing, and, 5) prevent a bill from being deferred indefinitely without a recorded vote by committee members; and be it

It is clear by this action that Hawaii's Democrats want to see all lawmakers, including Democrats, Improve their Standards of Conduct. I have attached a copy of the full official Resolution below.

**Regarding agenda items “Dominance of One Party in Hawaii” and “Term-Limits”:**

It is important to note that during the same Democrat Party Convention on May 28, 2022, Resolutions that proposed allowing Hawaii voters an opportunity to decide whether Hawaii Constitution should be amended to impose term-limits on state legislators were voted down or amended to remove this one clause. Stalwart Democrat Bart Dame appeared to give the most convincing argument, and I paraphrase: term-limits could weaken Democratic Party control over the legislature. His comment in opposition to term limits can be heard on the video recording of the Convention: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rfois8VmuP8>)

I look forward to hearing Professor Milner's presentation on the "Dominance of One Party in Hawaii" and how he reconciles his insights with his public editorials against term-limits on state legislators.

**Regarding agenda item “Term-Limits”:**

The biggest conflict of interests that we must address is that getting this issue on the ballot before voters requires state-legislators to act against their own self-interests. Most legislative leaders have been serving in the state legislature beyond any generous definition of what might exceed a “term-limit”, so why would they vote to pass out legislation that puts this question on the ballot for voters across the state to deliberate when they know what the outcome would most likely be. A 2018 poll paid for by non-profit news media has demonstrated that 70% of voters support term limits on state lawmakers. (See <https://www.civilbeat.org/2018/10/civil-beat-poll-voters-want-term-limits-for-state-legislators/>)

Until we change our current "campaign fundraising" laws, the longer a state legislator holds office, the more campaign contributions they will be able to raise to pay for campaign mailers, technology, ads or collateral give-aways - tools used to connect to voters and increase likelihood of holding on to their seat. Last election, the then 13-term legislator for my district spent \$120K to hold on to his seat for a 14th term -- he actually raised double that amount through fundraisers held during session and the interims. While we may want to applaud his restraint, this is anecdotal evidence, taken to an absurd level, of the cumulative effects and impacts that undermine our representational democracy along the lines of *Citizens United v. FEC*.

**Regarding agenda item "prohibiting agents of candidates from assisting voters":**

Apparently we need clarification regarding permitted practices when it comes to “assisting voters” or future voters, and whether legislator/candidates may give “prizes” for registering new voters. Also complicated by the fact that voter contact information is only made available to candidates who purchase that information directly or indirectly through the office of election; so when a legislator/candidates conducts a “voter registration party” and the legislator/candidates (or agents) “helps” register voters - they may have access to that voter information directly — for free.

Here is one examples of the confusion of what is allowed and not allowed. I blocked out the name and number of the individual but will share it with any agency that wants to get first hand information about the event. Just for clarification, I decided not to attend this “party” because I wanted

to stay away from any potential impropriety.



**Regarding agenda item "Other Matters"**

State Contractors (Owners, Consultants, Lobbyists, Employees) Contributing to Candidate Campaigns.

Right now the law seems to only prohibit owners of companies contracted by state from donating to lawmaker's campaigns. We need to prohibit this type of closed circular economy as it extends to employees, lobbyists and consultants of state contractors: Contractor gets money from state, pays employees, consultants, and lobbyists with the state funds, and those individuals or their spouses are allowed to recycle state funds through back to lawmakers' campaigns.

This is especially problematic when it come to State Legislature's Grant In Aid Contracts/Awards because individual legislative leaders are hand-picking grantees, assigning amounts to be granted and voting on these identifiable GIA awards. Apparently lawmakers exempted GIA awards from from "state contract" so there is no oversights "kickbacks" to legislators campaigns from these GIA grantees.

For example: Legislative leaders awarded Hawaii Chamber of Commerce Military Affairs Council \$1.25M of taxpayer funded State Grant-In-Aid to lobby for support of military operations in Hawaii, including killing bills designed to monitor, regulate, or shut down the leaking Red Hill fuel tanks. The GIA contract says the state grant monies should not be used for lobbying reading their own GIA applications, it appears that is what they are designed to do.

Here is COCMAC's lobbying expenditures that seem to correlate to the amount of State GIA they received: <https://www.opensecrets.org/federal-lobbying/clients/summary?cycle=2020&id=F194193>

Ideally the Hawaii AG would ask for COCMAC's records to determine if funds were co-mingled, meaning the GIA funds were put into the same account that lobbyists were paid from and no other money was put in so it would be clear that the GIA was being used for lobbying as they had described in their applications.

Obviously so many issues are raised by all of this data: Why is the Legislature giving State GIA Funds to the Chamber of Commerce MAC - when all it appears to do is lobby. One might argue that Leasing Land from the state is a contract of value, especially if the value of the land is way above the compensation tendered by the military. GIA should count as a government contract and COC & MAC employees, consultants and spouses should be prohibited from donating to legislators who award them the grant?

Here are all the Chamber of Commerce Military Affairs Council GIA applications and awards:

2011 Application

<https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/session2011/2011GIA-AppsRedacted/The%20Chamber%20of%20Commerce%20of%20Hawaii%20101-Q.pdf> (\$166,175)

2012 Application & Award

<https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/session2012/2012GIA-AppsRedacted/The%20Chamber%20of%20Commerce%20of%20Hawaii-%20Redacted.pdf> (\$166,175)

<https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/budget/worksheets/2014-CD-OPERATING-GIA.pdf> (\$200,000) (The Legislature Rounded UP the amount!!! Gave them more than what they asked for)

2013 Two Applications (different application numbers)

[https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/session2013/2013GIA-Apps/Chamber%20of%20Commerce%20of%20Hawaii-Redacted%20\(2\).pdf](https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/session2013/2013GIA-Apps/Chamber%20of%20Commerce%20of%20Hawaii-Redacted%20(2).pdf) (\$204,350)  
<https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/session2013/2013GIA-Apps/Chamber%20of%20Commerce%20of%20Hawaii-Redacted.pdf> (\$204,350)

2014 Application & Award

[https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/session2014/2014GIA-Apps/The%20Chamber%20of%20Commerce%20of%20Hawaii\\_Redacted.pdf](https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/session2014/2014GIA-Apps/The%20Chamber%20of%20Commerce%20of%20Hawaii_Redacted.pdf) (\$564,450)  
<https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/budget/worksheets/2014-CD-OPERATING-GIA.pdf> (**\$200,000**)

2015 Application & Award

<https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/session2015/2015GIA-Apps/The%20Chamber%20of%20Commerce%20of%20Hawaii%20OP.pdf> (\$507,000)  
<https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/budget/worksheets/2015-CD-OPERATING-GIA.pdf> (**\$250,000**)

2016 Application & Award

[https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/session2016/2016GIA-Apps/Chamber%20of%20Commerce%20of%20Hawaii\\_Redacted.pdf](https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/session2016/2016GIA-Apps/Chamber%20of%20Commerce%20of%20Hawaii_Redacted.pdf) (\$100,000)  
<https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/budget/worksheets/2016-CD-OPERATING-GIA.pdf> (**\$100,000**)

2018 Application

[https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/session2018/2018GIA-Apps/Chamber%20of%20Commerce%20of%20Hawaii%20OP\\_Redacted.pdf](https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/session2018/2018GIA-Apps/Chamber%20of%20Commerce%20of%20Hawaii%20OP_Redacted.pdf) (\$50,000)  
<https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/budget/worksheets/2018-CD-OPERATING-GIA.pdf> (**\$45,000**)

2019

[https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/session2019/2019GIA-Apps/Chamber%20of%20Commerce%20Hawaii%20OP\\_Redacted.pdf](https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/session2019/2019GIA-Apps/Chamber%20of%20Commerce%20Hawaii%20OP_Redacted.pdf) (\$50,000)

This application states that **MAC revd \$550,000** in GIA during the preceding 5 years.

2020

[https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/session2020/2020GIA-Apps/Chamber%20of%20Commerce%20OP\\_Redacted.pdf](https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/session2020/2020GIA-Apps/Chamber%20of%20Commerce%20OP_Redacted.pdf) (\$25,000)

This application states that **MAC revd \$1,253,212 in GIA** during the preceding 5 years - not sure how they got that total?

**2022-40.a Urging Hawai'i Lawmakers to Address Corruption at the Legislature**

Whereas, Receiving communications during the legislative session from a legislator or their representative, that include invitations to donate to their re-election campaigns, may feel like an invitation to "pay-to-play" and disenfranchise those who cannot afford to "pay;"

Whereas, While the Legislature enacted the Sunshine Law for every government body, it exempted Legislative Committee hearings and meetings from complying with the Sunshine Law; and

Whereas, Lobbyists are required to disclose who is paying them to lobby, but lawmakers who are hired as private practice attorneys are bound by law to keep their attorney-client relationships confidential; now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the Democratic Party of Hawai'i urges Hawai'i State lawmakers to address corruption at the Legislature by adopting, implementing, and better enforcing anti-corruption safeguards; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the Democratic Party of Hawai'i urges Hawai'i State lawmakers to take the following immediate actions: adopt House and Senate rules that 1) restrict state legislators or their representatives from soliciting or accepting campaign contributions during the legislative session, 2) require legislators to comply with all State Sunshine and Ethics laws while working to amend the relevant statutes and codify this compliance, 3) adopt House and Senate Rules that restrict legislators from holding any leadership position if they were, within the preceding six months, a) hired as private-practice attorneys, or b) were profit-sharing law practice partners bound by attorney-client privilege from disclosing clients' names or businesses, 4) grant any bill sponsored by a majority of the members in the originating chamber at least one committee hearing, and, 5) prevent a bill from being deferred indefinitely without a recorded vote by committee members; and be it

*Ordered*, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to each Member of the Hawai'i State Legislature and to the Chair and State Central Committee of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i.

Aloha Kim- I want to invite you to this 'Voter Registration' Party held at Royal Kinau Apartments on May 25, 2022 from 11:00a-12:30. The attached flyer explains more in detail.

As you can see, Representative Saiki asked me if I could help in registering tenants in this building. It would be wonderful to have your presence also! Please call or text me- Agnes Kamana [808 295-2872](tel:8082952872).

Mahalo 😊

