

STAND. COM. REP. NO. 260

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 14 2023

RE: S.B. No. 1543
S.D. 1

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President of the Senate
Thirty-Second State Legislature
Regular Session of 2023
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Judiciary, to which was referred S.B. No. 1543 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO PUBLIC FINANCING FOR CANDIDATES TO ELECTED OFFICE,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to:

- (1) Establish a comprehensive system of public financing for all candidates seeking election to state and county public offices in the State of Hawaii, to begin with the 2024 general election year;
- (2) Require the Campaign Spending Commission to submit a report to the Legislature; and
- (3) Appropriate funds.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Campaign Spending Commission, Commission to Improve Standards of Conduct, Democratic Party of Hawaii District 8, Legislative Committee of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i, Pono Hawaii Initiative, Hawai'i Workers Center, Common Cause Hawaii, Global HOPE, HULI PAC, Our Hawai'i, Free Access Coalition, Chamber of Sustainable Commerce, HOPE Services Hawai'i, Washington for Equitable Representation, one senator from the Maine Senate, and



one hundred twenty individuals. Your Committee received testimony in opposition to this measure from seven individuals.

Your Committee finds that providing a mechanism to fully fund the elections of candidates for state and county offices who voluntarily agree to abide by campaign fundraising and expenditure guidelines will have significant public benefit. The common belief is that the current campaign finance system used in Hawaii (and most other states) unfairly favors a small handful of wealthy donors who use their donations to buy access to candidates and elected officials. Comprehensive, publicly-funded campaign programs are intended to improve the process by allowing candidates to compete without reliance on private funds and correspondingly by allowing elected officials to make decisions without the influence, or appearance of influence, of private individuals, lobbyists, political parties, political action committees, unions, corporations, and other entities. This measure will increase public confidence in the State's candidates and elected officials.

Your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Specifying that the minimum qualifying contributions for the Office of State Senator is two hundred fifty rather than two hundred;
- (2) Specifying that the minimum qualifying contributions for the Office of State Representative is one hundred twenty-five rather than one hundred;
- (3) Requiring the Campaign Spending Commission to submit a progress report to the Legislature no later than forty days prior to the Regular Session of 2024;
- (4) Requiring the Campaign Spending Commission to submit a final report to the Legislature no later than forty days prior to the Regular Session of 2026; and
- (5) Inserting an effective date of March 22, 2075, to encourage further discussion.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Judiciary that is attached to this report, your



Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of S.B. No. 1543, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 1543, S.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Ways and Means.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Judiciary,




KARL RHOADS, Chair



The Senate
 Thirty-Second Legislature
 State of Hawai'i

Record of Votes
Committee on Judiciary
JDC

Bill / Resolution No.:* SB 1543	Committee Referral: JDC, WAM	Date: 2/9/2023		
<input type="checkbox"/> The Committee is reconsidering its previous decision on this measure. If so, then the previous decision was to: _____				
The Recommendation is: <input type="checkbox"/> Pass, unamended 2312 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pass, with amendments 2311 <input type="checkbox"/> Hold 2310 <input type="checkbox"/> Recommit 2313				
Members	Aye	Aye (WR)	Nay	Excused
RHOADS, Karl (C)	✓			
GABBARD, Mike (VC)	✓			
ELEFANTE, Brandon J.C.	✓			
SAN BUENAVENTURA, Joy A.	✓			
AWA, Brenton				✓
TOTAL	4	—	—	1
Recommendation: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adopted <input type="checkbox"/> Not Adopted				
Chair's or Designee's Signature: 				
Distribution: Original Yellow Pink Goldenrod File with Committee Report Clerk's Office Drafting Agency Committee File Copy				

*Only one measure per Record of Votes