



## HAWAI'I STATE ETHICS COMMISSION

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

Committee: Senate Committee on Judiciary  
Bill Number: SB 2216  
Hearing Date/Time: January 26, 2024, 9:30 a.m.  
Re: Testimony of the Hawai'i State Ethics Commission in **SUPPORT** of SB 2216, Relating to the State Ethics Commission

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

The Hawai'i State Ethics Commission ("Commission") **supports** SB 2216, which clarifies and modernizes the advice and investigative process for the Hawai'i State Ethics Commission.

The ethical landscape of public service is ever-evolving, and our state's ethics framework must adapt to those changes. A key component of a proactive ethical framework is the ability to provide timely advice. This measure addresses the need for clarity in the advice-seeking process, providing public officials with a secure mechanism to request advice, confidentially, and receive a written summary of any advice provided. It also provides the Commission with the means to provide general advisory opinions as to matters of general interest.

This measure also makes important house-keeping amendments to the investigative process. While many of these matters have been resolved over the years, modernizing the investigative process in statute helps provide clarity and reduce the potential for misreading the process.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony on SB 2216.

Very truly yours,

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



Committee on Judiciary  
Chair Karl Rhoads, Vice Chair Mike Gabbard

Friday, January 26, 2024, CR016  
SB2216– Relating to State Ethics Commission

TESTIMONY

Judith Mills Wong, Legislative Committee, League of Women Voters of Hawaii

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Committee Members:

**The League of Women Voters of Hawaii supports SB2216**

The League of Women Voters strongly supports efforts to encourage and enforce ethical actions by all public officials. This bill directs the State Ethics Commission to provide advice to any person questioning whether a state actor's actions constitute a violation of the code of ethics and to give timely response in writing. This will give the public more confidence in state government.

Further, the bill directs the ethics commission to act in a proactive way to give general advisory opinions and to investigate potential violations and take action as necessary. The League supports SB2216.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.