

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/15/2023 1:09:09 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Daniel Foley	Commission to Improve Standards of Conduct	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Mr. Chairman and members of the Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs Committee,

As Chair of the Commission to Improve Standards of Conduct, I support SB 1543, SD 2, for the reasons stated in the Commission's December 1, 2022 Final Report at page 32.

Although the Commission proposed a bill to increase public financing of elections, the Commission noted "that the increased amounts of partial public funding of elections proposed in this bill are intended as a floor, or minimum level. If fiscal resources are or become available, the Commission encourages the Legislature to be bold and devote additional resources to further the purpose of this bill and to seek additional permanent funding sources for future elections. Implementation of this proposal would assist in diminishing the impact and influence resulting from Citizens United." Id.

Mahalo, Judge Daniel Foley (ret.)

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Speaker Saiki, and Members of the House:

We urge you to pass SB1543 SD2. The current campaign financing system in Hawai'i can be reformed to counter the influence of money in our electoral process, which has accelerated since the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Citizens United v. FEC*, 558 U.S. 310 (2010).

As noted in the Final Report of the Commission to Improve Standards of Conduct, the bill that would raise the maximum amount of public funds available is intended to be a starting point. The Final Report notes: "If fiscal resources are or become available, the Commission encourages the Legislature to be bold [and] seek additional permanent funding sources for future elections."

Connections formed between candidates and donors may create opportunities for corruption or give rise to the appearance of corruption. SB1543 could help fix this by reducing the impact of big money in politics, and given the Senate's overwhelming support, we ask members of the House of Representatives to follow suit.

Over half of the money donated to candidates in the 2022 election cycle came from fewer than 1,000 contributors.¹ These donors expect to have more influence on legislators than the rest of their constituents. This concentration of campaign donations undermines the integrity of our elections and erodes public trust in government. Research suggests permitting legislators to conduct their work without worrying whether donors support their decisions would benefit the public at large.²

This bill addresses this problem by proposing a robust public financing system for candidates. This system would require eligible candidates to finance their campaigns with small \$5 contributions from individuals, combined with block grants from state funds. Candidates who receive the block grants would forgo raising other private contributions. Such a system would level the playing field, thereby promoting genuine representation of the people and equal participation in the democratic process.²

The proposal in SB1543 is not a new idea to Hawai'i. Article II, Section 5 of Hawai'i's Constitution required the legislature to "establish a campaign fund to be used for partial public financing of campaigns of the State and its political subdivisions." This Hawai'i Election Campaign Fund still exists but is no longer well-utilized. In 2010 and 2012 Hawai'i County Council elections had a successful fully financed program in place that's very similar to what SB1543 proposes. In 2013 HB1481 proposed expanding this program statewide, but it died in conference committee.

This year, the House did not hear the companion bill to SB1543, but did pass HB95, HD2 which offers a small increase in funding to the partial funding program. The Final Report recommended that the legislature provide more funds to candidates than what HB95 offers,

¹ <https://ags.hawaii.gov/campaign/cc/view-searchable-data/>

² <https://uhero.hawaii.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Public-Campaign-Financing.pdf>

"because public funding expands the reach of many small donors and can relieve candidates of the need to rely on the support of special interest groups or large donors." SB1543 would achieve this objective.

A recent brief from the University of Hawai'i Economic Research Organization (UHERO) suggests that a generous public financing program in Hawai'i could be highly beneficial. The brief found that similar programs in Connecticut and Maine are effective at increasing electoral competition, contributing to greater diversity among candidates and donors, and encouraging more contact between candidates and voters.³

The cost of a block grants financing program would be quite manageable. Connecticut's program is very popular with candidates and has generous levels of funding, but only cost \$13.5 million during the 2020 election year.⁴ This cost would be less than 0.05% of Hawai'i's state budget. Even if full public funding cost \$30 million in some cycle, this would still be less than 0.1% of the state budget.

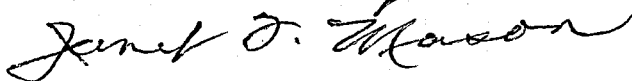
We believe that we deserve fair and equal representation in our government. The passage of SB1543 would be a crucial step towards achieving this goal. We strongly encourage you to pass this bill and work towards the implementation of a more adequate public campaign financing program.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



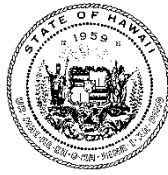
Nikos A. Leverenz



Janet F. Mason

³ <https://uhero.hawaii.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Public-Campaign-Financing.pdf>

⁴ <https://seec.ct.gov/Portal/data/CEP/news/2020StatusofFundReport.pdf>



STATE OF HAWAII
CAMPAIGN SPENDING COMMISSION

235 SOUTH BERETANIA STREET, ROOM 300
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

March 16, 2023

TO: The Honorable David A. Tarnas, Chair
House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs

The Honorable Gregg Takayama, Vice Chair
House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs

Members of the House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs

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

SUBJECT: **Testimony on S.B. No. 1543, SD2, Relating to Public Financing for Candidates to Elected Office.**

Friday, March 17, 2023
2:00 p.m., Conference Room 325 & Videoconference

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill. The Campaign Spending Commission (“Commission”) supports the intent of this bill.

This bill establishes a comprehensive system of public financing for all candidates seeking election to state and county public offices to beginning with the 2026 general election year, appropriates funds to the Hawaii Election Campaign Fund, and appropriates funds to the Commission.

The bill establishes the maximum amount of comprehensive public funds (“CPF Max”) for each office. The CPF Max ranges from a low of \$20,000 for candidates for Hawaii County Council to a high of \$2,500,000 for candidates for Governor. However, as a percentage of the amounts spent by winners, or an average spent by winners, for office in recent elections, these amounts range from 87% (\$2,300,000/\$2,647,817.52) for candidates for Honolulu Mayor to a high of 133% (\$20,000/\$15,062.42) for candidates for Hawaii County Council.

In order to qualify for comprehensive public funding, the bill establishes the minimum number of qualifying contributions each candidate must receive from registered voters residing within the respective district from which the candidate seeks nomination or election to office. It appears that the minimum number of qualifying contributions is equal to .25 percent of the CPF Max for each office. This bill makes it easier for candidates to raise the minimum qualifying contributions and receive more in public financing in the comprehensive public financing

scheme when compared to the state's partial public financing program. For example, under this bill, a candidate for the office of Governor would have to raise 6,250 \$5 qualifying contributions amounting to **\$31,250** to receive a maximum amount of **\$2,500,000** in public funds. Under the state's partial public financing program, a candidate for the office of Governor would have to raise 1,000 \$100 qualifying contributions amounting to **\$100,000** to receive the minimum amount of public financing and raise an additional amount of **\$330,680** in qualifying contributions to receive **\$430,680**, the maximum amount of public funding for that office. A candidate for the office of Honolulu Mayor would have to raise 5,750 \$5 qualifying contributions amounting to **\$28,750** to receive a maximum amount of **\$2,300,000** in public funds. Under the state's partial public financing program, a candidate for the office of Honolulu Mayor would have to raise 500 \$100 qualifying contributions amounting to **\$50,000** to receive the minimum amount of public financing and raise an additional **\$176,750** to receive **\$226,750**, the maximum amount of public financing for that office.

Finally, the balance in the Hawaii Election Campaign Fund is \$1,687,121.83 as of June 30, 2022. Obviously, that amount is insufficient to pay for the comprehensive public funding program, including the additional personnel the Commission will need. The appropriation sections of the bill have been blanked out and would need to be reinstated with sufficient amounts to run the comprehensive funding program.

The Commission requests that this committee pass this measure with the described amendments.



Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs
Chair David A. Tarnas, Vice Chair Gregg Takayama

Friday, March 17, 2 PM Videoconference

SB1543 SD2 — RELATING TO PUBLIC FINANCING FOR CANDIDATES TO ELECTED OFFICE.

TESTIMONY

Beppie Shapiro, Legislative Committee, League of Women Voters of Hawaii

Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Takayama, and Committee Members:

The League of Women Voters of Hawaii strongly supports SB1543 SD2, which establishes 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 2026 general election year; requires the Campaign Spending Commission to submit a progress and final report to the Legislature; and appropriates unspecified funds. We also offer comments.

The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that methods of financing political campaigns should enhance political equality for all citizens; protect representative democracy from being distorted by big spending in election campaigns; ensure the public's right to know who is using money to influence elections; enable candidates to compete equitably for public office; ensure that candidates have sufficient funds to communicate their messages to the public; and combat corruption and undue influence in government.

Delegates and voters in the 1978 Constitutional Convention in Hawaii realized the importance of this concept, resulting in the creation of the Hawaii Election Campaign Fund and Hawaii's partial public funding option. Below is a quote from the Convention during the discussion of the HECF:

League of Women Voters of Hawaii
P.O. Box 235026 ♦ Honolulu, HI 96823
Voicemail 808.377.6727 ♦ my.lwv.org/hawaii ♦ voters@lwvhi.org

“ . . . if we think these tremendous sums being spent [on elections], these tremendous sums being contributed, **are not sums for which we are going to ultimately pay** because of poor government . . . and because of undue influence . . . we are fooling ourselves.” -Delegate Naomi Campbell during the 1978 Constitutional Convention.

Who funds privately funded elections? Wealthy businesses and individuals. Over half of all Hawaii campaign donations in 2022 came from just 980 donors who each gave at least \$6,000¹. (The sources of campaign contributions changed markedly in Connecticut legislative races after implementation of full public funding. In 2018, 99% of campaign funds used by legislative candidates came from individuals, in sharp contrast to preprogram practices when less than half of the contributions made to political candidates came from individuals.²)

Why could this be a problem? **The affluent have different priorities:** 68 percent of the general public believes politicians ought to see to it that everyone who wants to work can find a job, while only 19 percent of the wealthy believe the same; the general public is twice as likely to support raising the minimum wage high enough to keep families out of poverty as affluent respondents; a majority of Americans think that wealth should be taxed at the same rate as work, but the wealthiest 20% of Americans, who are most likely to make substantial contributions to political campaigns, are those most likely to profit from low taxes on capital gains.³

The broader public is short-changed by policies which may be influenced by wealthy business interests. Publicly funded elections let the voting public have more influence on political decisions, **as is widely appreciated by voters.** A survey of Hawaii voters in 2022 showed that 74% of the Hawai'i voting public would be more likely to support a candidate who refused campaign donations from out-of-state developers, major landowners, hotel conglomerates, and energy companies and 70 percent of voters were more likely to support a candidate who refused donations from lobbyists and corporate PACs.⁴ When large contributions are made by business interests, it's likely that the **customers of those businesses indirectly pay, in higher prices, for these contributions.** Again, the **public pays for the costs of privately funded**

election campaigns. When candidates are funded by the public, politicians are free to make decisions based on the merit of ideas, not biased, consciously or not, by consideration of who gave or will give money to their election campaigns.

Connecticut's Citizen's Elections program (CEP) shows how **full public funding can repay its cost:** "For many years, environmentalists tried to expand the bottle bill recycling program..., but the powerful beverage industry and its paid lobbyists were able to stop every effort at reform because they gave thousands of dollars to legislators. This year (2016), the legislature—with three-quarters of members having participated in the CEP—voted to expand the bottle bill. We also voted to reclaim millions of dollars' worth of unclaimed bottle deposits, which takes approximately \$25 million a year out of the pockets of the beverage industry and puts that money into the general fund where it belongs. This alone recoups more money than the CEP costs".²

Instead of fundraising, candidates can spend more time talking to their constituents or analyzing and discussing solutions to Hawaii's problems as quoted by CT state legislators.²

SB1543 SD2 will support a more diverse field of candidates. Currently people without wealth or wealthy families and friends, who may be politically akamai and interested in running for office, often feel (probably rightly) that they will not be able to conduct winning campaigns, since 90% of races in nationally and in Hawaii are won by the candidate who spends most in an election contest.

These campaign finance objectives, which I believe are widely shared, lead directly to recommending full and realistic public financing of election campaigns and supporting SB1543 SD2.

Comments: We recommend that the amounts to be appropriated for the purpose of the bill in Sections 6 and 7 of SB1543 SD2 be restored to the amounts in SB1543 SD1.

The League of Women Voters of Hawaii strongly urges this Committee to pass this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Citations

¹ Analysis of CSC database on contributions to 2022 elections

² Rotman, B.A. & Nightingale, L. Amplifying Small-dollar Donors in the *Citizens United* Era: Connecticut's Citizen's Elections Program Shifted the Balance of Power to the People. Common Cause Education Fund, 2017

³ Callahan, D. & Mijin Cha, J. Stacked Deck: How the Dominance of Politics by the Affluent & Business Undermines Economic Mobility in America. Demos, Feb. 2013

⁴ Hawaii Voter Candidate Preference Memo. Data for Progress, 2023

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 4:54:25 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Maki Morinoue	HULI PAC	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members,

HULI PAC is in full support of getting big money out of our local politics. Vote YES on Clean Elections!

It's crucially important that this body does everything in its power to remove the influence money has on our politics. Corruption is far too rampant in Hawai'i and the pay-to-play behavior of our politicians needs to end now. Money in politics holds back progress on all the issues important to local working families: from affordable housing to cost of living, to protecting our environment, and more.

SB1543 would set up a system of fully publicly financed elections. It would provide participating candidates with competitive amounts of funding they need to run an effective campaign, and would ban them from receiving any private donations at all. This system worked very well for Hawai'i County Council races in 2010 and 2012 and currently works very well statewide in places like Connecticut and Maine. Partial public financing is not enough. As long as candidates need to rely on private donations to get elected, there will always be the risk of corruption, or the perception of it.

This is an opportunity to lessen the influence of money in politics, give political power to the people, and restore the people's trust in this body and in you all. All of these things are badly needed. Voters rank government corruption as the #3 top issue facing Hawai'i, and 74% of the Hawai'i voting public favors enacting publicly financed elections and ending the influence of corporate and private donations.

That's because we know that it's the single biggest thing we could do to end pay-to-play corruption in our politics and start building a Hawai'i that puts kama'āina and kānaka maoli, local people, first — not big money interests.

Please, do the right thing.

Mahalo nui loa for this opportunity.

Maki Morinoue
96725

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/15/2023 8:52:36 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members,

This is your chance to demonstrate a sincere intention to put power back in the hands of residents and voters of this state. Voter funded elections is the antidote for the corrupt 'pay to play' practices emanating from the 'donor class', the very same people you must devote so much time to stoking, as it is now.

The publicly financed system we need now worked very well for Hawai'i County Council races in 2010 and 2012. We know how to do this!

Let's make it work statewide and show the country that indeed, Hawaii, the "Aloha State", knows how to restore integrity to our democracy!

Speaking to you from the Hamakua district of the Big Island, I respectfully ask that you return respect and trust to the people of Hawaii.

R A Culbertson,

member, HULI PAC

Honokaa, HI



150 Hamakua Drive #341
Kailua, HI 96734

(808) 224-0644
our-hawaii.org

Testimony in Support of SB1543

Submitted to the House Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs Committee
by Evan Weber, Managing Director, Our Hawai'i, 3/16/223

Committee members,

Mahalo for the opportunity to speak before you today. On behalf of Our Hawai'i's thousands of members and supports, I stand in strong support for Senate Bill 1543, relating to public financing of candidates to elected office. Our members and supporters are local people — kama'āina and kānaka maoli, keiki and kūpuna, from Kailua to Kapolei to Kaua'i, Kohala, and every corner of our islands. They have joined our movement to fight for a Hawai'i that puts local people — not big money interests — first, because they are deeply worried about the direction of our islands and believe now is the time for change.

Our supporters are not alone. Our corruption and public trust in government crisis has reached a tipping point. After years of the FBI putting our officials in handcuffs, resignations, and scandals, [Hawai'i voters as a whole in this past election ranked government corruption as their number 3 top issue, only behind inflation and affordable housing, and 74% favor the adoption of a policy like SB1543 which would provide full public financing of elections and ban corporate and private donations.](#) With public trust at an all time low, now is not time for band-aids, it's time for real solutions. While you all have advanced a number of important pieces of reform-minded legislation this session, none of them go far enough in addressing the overriding issue of money in our politics where it begins, in our elections.

SB1543 would go as far as is legally possible under the constitution, by providing a viable alternative for campaigning from the private-money driven status quo. It's a historic opportunity to get big money out of our elections, allow every day people an equal voice with the rich and powerful, and allow candidates and legislators like you all to be beholden only to their voters, their constituents, their values, and their conscience. No longer would legislators have to look over their shoulders, worried about how their donors who will fund their next campaign might react to each and every vote. They can be fully focused on delivering for their constituents, the people. That's how democracy is supposed to work!

And, we know that programs like this work: we've seen it in places like Connecticut, Maine, and now Seattle. And we know it's popular. In addition to previously mentioned strong public support, the bill has the backing of the state Democratic Party, current and former legislators from both the Republican and Democratic Parties, support from dozens of leading organizations in Hawai'i, was introduced by a historic 40% of legislators in both chambers, and now has passed the Senate in a bipartisan manner on a nearly unanimous vote. **And we know we have the resources: the program would cost around 0.1-.2% of the general budget and could be funded with our current surplus alone for 100-250 years or more.** On that manner, I've attached a memo on the cost of the program to my testimony which was previously sent to all House members on the day of Senate passage.

We have the policy. We have the resources. We have the public desire for change. The only question is do we have the political will? That will be up to you to make it so. As you deliberate, know the public is watching.



MEMORANDUM:

Democracy Is Worth It, Pass Clean Elections Now

Date: 3/7/23

To: All House Representatives & Other Interested Parties

From: Evan Weber, *Our Hawai'i & Clean Elections Hawai'i Coalition*

Subject: SB1543 Clean Elections Cost Estimates

Today, SB1543 to fully fund publicly financed “clean elections” officially passed the Hawai'i Senate with a vote of 23-1. This historic and transformational legislation, which would help put an end to pay-to-play corruption as we know it in our islands, now heads over to the Hawai'i House of Representatives where House Leadership, relevant Committee Chairs, and all House members will decide its fate.

The premise of this Clean Elections legislation is simple, but its impact would be profound: *allow candidates who demonstrate adequate grassroots support from their community access to competitive public funds to run their campaigns, and in exchange, prohibit them from raising or spending private dollars.* Through this program, more and more candidates could be elected only being accountable to their voters, not to private donors. As a result the influence of big money in our politics would wane, as has been the case in Connecticut, Maine, and other places that have implemented similar systems.

There are many, many reasons to pass and implement a Clean Elections system. It's [sound policy](#). It's got the backing of [dozens of organizations, current and former politicians, scholars, and advocates](#). It's favored by [74% of voters](#). As the legislation now advances to the House and its respective committees, and the potential of a change to the status quo becomes more possible, some people might ask what a program like this will cost. **We want to share the facts, and highlight how inexpensive Clean Elections would be. We hope legislators will agree: democracy is a worthy investment.**

Fact #1 — Clean Elections would not be costly: Our estimates show that this program would likely cost the state *less than \$10 million per year, less than 0.1% of the overall general budget*. With an over \$2.6 billion surplus in state coffers this year, Hawai'i could pay for over 260 years of Clean Elections. Even if the program somehow ended up costing \$25 million/year, we could pay for over 100 years of Clean Elections with this year's surplus alone. **See our charts below for further breakdown.**

Fact #2 — We have the resources: The House “Commission to Improve Standards of Conduct states in its final report, “If fiscal resources are or become available, the Commission encourages the Legislature to be bold and devote additional fiscal resources to further the purpose of [publicly financed elections] and to seek additional permanent funding sources for future elections.” This is that moment. With a historic surplus and a number of new

revenue-raising proposals such as Marijuana Legalization and the Green Fee advancing, now is the time to be bold and invest in our democracy and the public trust.

Fact #3 — Clean Elections have been cheap and effective in other states: The following are clean election costs for House and Senate races in Connecticut and Maine who have been running clean election programs for over a decade.

Connecticut Costs: Connecticut's participation has slowly grown from 1.45 participating candidates per seat to 1.73 from 2008 to 2020. Their annual cost is currently just below \$6.8 million. With a population of 3.6 million people, that is a cost of \$1.65 per person per year.

Year	Legislative Participants	Participants per Seat	Cost per Election	Annual Cost	Annual Cost per Resident
2008	274	1.45	\$9,238,775	\$4,619,388	\$1.30
2010	253	1.34	\$9,550,480	\$4,775,240	\$1.33
2012	273	1.44	\$10,785,371	\$5,392,686	\$1.50
2014	280	1.48	\$11,375,131	\$5,687,566	\$1.58
2016 & 2018	No Data				
2020	327	1.73	\$13,537,603	\$6,768,802	\$1.88

Maine Costs: Maine had strong participation with 1.68 legislative candidates per seat using clean elections in 2006. However, just over 1 candidate per open seat uses the program now. The annual cost of the program is currently just below \$2.3 million. With a population of 1.38 million people, that is a cost of \$1.65 per person per year.

Year	Legislative Participants	Participants per Seat	Cost per Election	Annual Cost	Annual Cost per Resident
2006	313	1.68	\$3,347,775	\$1,673,888	\$1.26
2008	303	1.63	\$2,954,035	\$1,477,018	\$1.11
2010	295	1.59	\$3,301,006	\$1,650,503	\$1.24
2012	242	1.30	\$2,102,850	\$1,051,425	\$0.79
2014	199	1.07	\$1,990,380	\$995,190	\$0.75
2016	227	1.22	\$3,344,830	\$1,672,415	\$1.26
2018	206	1.11	\$3,552,017	\$1,776,009	\$1.33
2020	192	1.03	\$3,868,858	\$1,934,429	\$1.42
2022	214	1.15	\$4,568,030	\$2,284,015	\$1.65

SB1543 Cost Estimate Breakdown: Clean Elections for Hawai'i: The following estimates assume 2 candidates per office. This number was chosen conservatively, because it exceeds the average number of actual candidates in other states. In addition this figure is similar to or exceeds the current number of candidates in Hawai'i for most races. Costs per election are calculated by multiplying the number of candidates by the max amount of funds available for

that office. The annual cost is calculated by dividing the cost per election by how often the elections occur. Seats that have 2-year terms divide the cost per election by 2. Seats that have 4-year terms divide the cost per election by 4, except annual Senate costs are calculated based on 3 elections every 10 years. The totals for scenarios beyond 2 participants per seat are included at the bottom. 3 candidates per seat along with excluding some high cost races are provided. No matter how you cut it, this is a program we can afford. With rampant corruption at the top of voters' minds, the question should be: can legislators afford not to make this change?

Office	Estimated Participants	Participants per Seat	Max Funds Available	Cost per Election	Annual Cost	Annual Cost per Resident
Governor	2	2	\$2,500,000	\$5,000,000	\$1,250,000	\$0.87
LG	2	2	\$1,200,000	\$2,400,000	\$600,000	\$0.42
State Senator	50	2	\$100,000	\$5,000,000	\$1,500,000	\$1.04
State Representative	102	2	\$50,000	\$5,100,000	\$2,550,000	\$1.77
HNL Mayor	2	2	\$2,300,000	\$4,600,000	\$1,150,000	\$0.80
HNL Attorney	2	2	\$225,000	\$450,000	\$112,500	\$0.08
HNL Council	18	2	\$135,000	\$2,430,000	\$607,500	\$0.42
HI Mayor	2	2	\$360,000	\$720,000	\$180,000	\$0.12
HI Attorney	2	2	\$40,000	\$80,000	\$20,000	\$0.01
HI Council	18	2	\$20,000	\$360,000	\$180,000	\$0.12
Maui Mayor	2	2	\$600,000	\$1,200,000	\$300,000	\$0.21
Maui Council	18	2	\$30,000	\$540,000	\$270,000	\$0.19
Kauai Mayor	2	2	\$350,000	\$700,000	\$175,000	\$0.12
Kauai Attorney	2	2	\$25,000	\$50,000	\$12,500	\$0.01
Kauai Council	14	2	\$30,000	\$420,000	\$210,000	\$0.15
OHA	18	2	\$40,000	\$720,000	\$180,000	\$0.12
Total All Races	256	2			\$9,297,500	\$6.46
Different Scenarios						
Excluding Gov and LG	252	2			\$7,447,500	\$5.17
Excluding Gov, LG and Mayors	244	2			\$5,642,500	\$3.92
3 Candidates per Seat	384	3			\$13,946,250	\$9.68
3 Candidates per Seat Excluding Gov and LG	378	3			\$11,171,250	\$7.76
3 Candidates per Seat Excluding Gov, LG and Mayors	366	3			\$8,463,750	\$5.88

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 1543: RELATING TO PUBLIC FINANCING FOR CANDIDATES TO ELECTED OFFICE

TO: Committee Chair, Vice-Chair and Members
FROM: Brandee Menino, CEO, Hope Services Hawai'i, Inc.
Hearing: JHA on 03-17-23

Aloha,

My name is Brandee Menino and I am the CEO of Hope Services Hawai'i, which is Hawai'i Island's largest nonprofit homeless services provider. We are pleased to support SB1543, which would establish a comprehensive system of public financing for all candidates seeking election to state and county public offices in the State of Hawai'i.

Our team uses evidence-based practices to help our neighbors avoid and overcome homelessness, and we achieve above-average results in helping people get housed and stay housed. However, as a non-governmental organization, we cannot change the laws that have led to the status quo.

In the United States, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders are 39 times more likely to experience homelessness than Asians.¹

This is not the result of outsiders flying to Hawai'i to become homeless.

In Hawai'i County, 28% of people experiencing homelessness are children.²

This is not the result of failure to pull oneself up by one's bootstraps. This is the result of government policy that deprioritizes the well-being of its people, while pushing the responsibility onto individuals who cannot survive in a system that is stacked against them.

¹ National Alliance to End Homelessness. June 1, 2020. <https://endhomelessness.org/resource/racial-inequalities-homelessness-numbers/>

² Bridging the Gap: The Continuum of Care for Hawai'i, Maui and Kaua'i Counties & Homeless Management Information System. July 1, 2021-June 30, 2022. btghawaii.org

The policies some lawmakers will support or oppose can often be predicted by looking at the major contributors to their campaigns. Lawmakers may receive pressure to keep these contributors happy if they want to keep the dollars flowing so they can win the next election. Candidates who reject this quid-pro-quo support are often unable to raise enough funds to stand a chance at winning. We all know it's wrong, we all know it happens anyway, and we all know that our local people suffer because of it.

This committee has the opportunity to ensure that leaders from communities across Hawai'i, and not just those who have the financial means, have an equitable chance to make good policies. When donors who profit by displacing local people are no longer needed to win an election, the people of Hawai'i can be more confident that legislators are acting in their best interest. This investment is worth it.

I want to share the insight of someone like you, who was elected to serve her community in 2022. Representative Ambureen Rana serves in the Maine State Legislature, and when we asked about her experience with public campaign financing, this is what she had to say:

“I was publicly financed and it's the only way it was possible for me to run, as a working class person. It goes a long way in removing barriers to allow young people to run for office, and people of color. As a 28 year old, first generation American, this made it possible for me.”

Please pass SB1543. Our people are worth it.

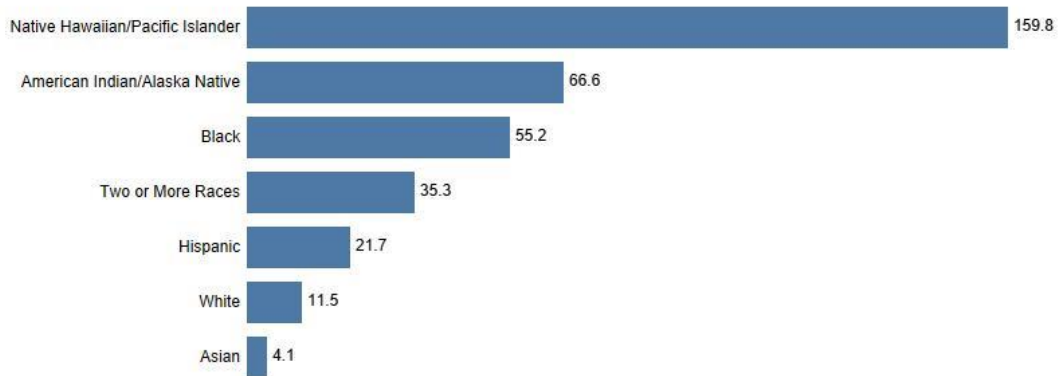
Mahalo nui,

Brandee Menino,
Chief Executive Officer

See enclosures with additional homelessness data on the following page.

Most Minority Groups Experience Homelessness at Much Higher Rates than Whites

Number of people experiencing homelessness per 10,000 in population by race and ethnicity



Homeless population data are for a given night in 2019.
Source: Annual Homeless Assessment Report Report to Congress, Part 1, 2020



Figure 1: National Alliance to End Homelessness. June 1, 2020. <https://endhomelessness.org/resource/racial-inequalities-homelessness-numbers/>

THE IMPACT OF HOMELESSNESS HAWAI'I COUNTY AT A GLANCE

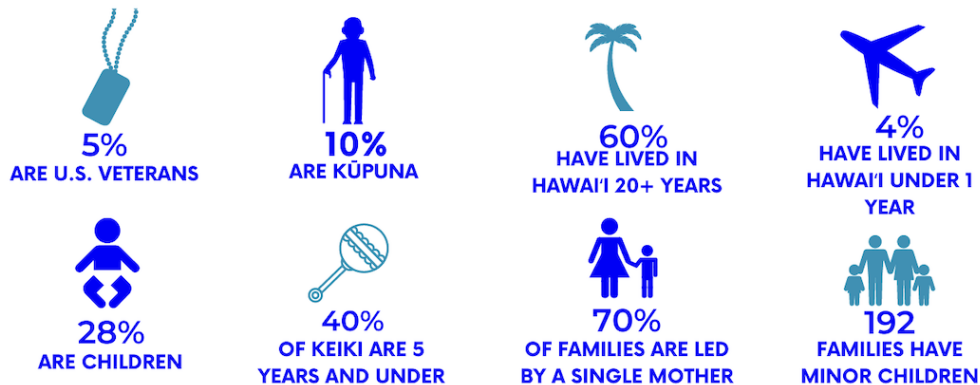


Figure 2: Bridging the Gap: The Continuum of Care for Hawai'i, Maui and Kaua'i Counties & Homeless Management Information System. July 1, 2021-June 30, 2022. www.btghawaii.org

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2023 3:41:18 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
David McCluskey	Former Deputy Speaker, CT House of Representatives	Support	In Person

Comments:

Good Afternoon, my name is David McCluskey, a former 6 term Connecticut State Representative and one of the members of then-Governor Rell's Campaign Finance Reform Working Group. I am honored to testify in support of Senate Bill 1543 concerning Public Financing For Candidates To Elected Office. I am excited that the legislation passed the Senate and hope the House will give it your strongest consideration with any needed revisions. Of course, the House is always more democratic - small D - and in touch with residents than the "upper" chamber!

In 2005, Connecticut became the first state in the nation where legislative incumbents passed a full public financing law that applies to their own political campaigns. Every state has unique legislative and political environments and I am not here to tell you to simply adopt Connecticut's Public Financing law which has been modified, for good and for bad, since its inception. However, I am testifying that our system works. It has significantly reduced the influence of large moneyed interests in our legislative deliberations and it has made our elections more democratic by having more competition in our primaries and elections.

Since the 1800s, Connecticut has been called the land of steady habits. Change continues to be very hard in my state and asking legislators who know how to get reelected under the existing rules to adopt new campaign financing rules was particularly tough. But we were successful after a lot of struggle both inside and outside our State Capitol. Hawai'i can and should enact public financing of elections to improve the credibility of the legislative process for your state residents and to free legislators from the increasingly chaotic and escalating rush to raise funds.

In Connecticut, candidates must raise small to moderate amounts from residents in the towns they represent. Once they reach the necessary number of in-district contributions and the necessary dollar amount, the state provides them with a reasonable amount to campaign. This process is heavily regulated by the State Elections Enforcement Commission to prevent fraud and abuse. Asking your family, friends and neighbors for reasonable contributions is actually very liberating. I am not burdening them multiple times in a campaign for more and more money. Instead of spending an enormous amount of time raising dollars, I can spend it talking to voters.

Since Public Financing has been adopted, there has not been wholesale ouster of incumbents as was feared. Yes, some incumbents do lose in primaries and general elections, but mostly

because they are no longer in touch with their voters, a policy issue or an economic situation, NOT because their opponent was publically funded. Yes, our system can punish incumbent complacency, but their opponent is equally funded, no more, no less. Incumbents still have the advantage in elections if they are doing their job and are talking to their constituents.

In terms of legislative deliberations, incumbents can now vote their convictions and without having to worry as much about being punished in re-election campaigns by well-healed lobbyists and interest groups who used to provide the lion's share of campaign dollars. Again, this is very liberating to most incumbents and has, in my opinion, significantly improved policy outcomes for Connecticut residents.

In conclusion, I strongly urge the House to adopt public financing for Hawai'i's state legislative races. I would be happy to answer your questions.



holomua

COLLABORATIVE

OUR MISSION

To support and advance public policies that make Hawai'i affordable for all working families.

OUR VISION

Collaborative, sustainable, and evidence-based public policies that create a diverse and sustainable Hawai'i economy, an abundance of quality job opportunities, and a future where all working families living in Hawai'i can thrive.

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HolomuaCollaborative.org

Page 1 of 1

Committee: House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs
Bill Number: SB 1543, SD2, Relating to Public Financing for Candidates to Elected Office
Hearing Date and Time: March 17, 2023 at 2:00pm (Room 325)
Re: Testimony of Holomua Collaborative in support

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Takayama, and Committee Members:

We write in support of SB 1543, SD2, Relating to Public Financing for Candidates to Elected Office. The purpose of this bill is to 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 2026 general election year. The bill also requires the Campaign Spending Commission to submit a progress and final report to the Legislature.

The Commission to Improve Standards of Conduct (the "Commission") had recommended a legislative proposal for partial public financing for elections. As several of the Commission members have previously noted, however, the Final Report of the Commission also specifically noted that "the increased amount of partial public funding of elections proposed in this (partial public funding) bill are intended as a floor, or minimum level. If fiscal resources are or become available, the Commission encourage the Legislature to be bold and devote additional fiscal resources to further the purpose of this bill and to seek additional permanent funding sources for future elections. Implementation of this proposal would assist in diminishing the impact and influence resulting from *Citizens United*."¹

We believe this bill clearly furthers the intent of the Commission's work and are pleased to support it.

As part of Holomua's mission, we aim to build cross-sector collaborative support to work alongside our appointed and elected government leaders and partners to co-create viable, sustainable solutions that benefit all working families in Hawai'i. We believe policies that help improve government functions, and public confidence in government, further that goal. We appreciate the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Josh Wisch
President & Executive Director

¹ See page 32 of the Final Report of the Commission to Improve Standards of Conduct (<https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/CommitteeFiles/Special/CISC/Document/FinalReport.pdf>).

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 10:50:29 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Patrick F. Hurney	Habitat for Humanity Hawaii Island, Inc.	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Hawaii State Legislators,

We strongly support SB 1543 which establishes a comprehensive public financing system for all candidates seeking election to state and county public offices in the State of Hawai‘i, to begin with, the 2026 general election year. Requires the Campaign Spending Commission to submit a progress and final report to the Legislature.

We need to remove significant contributions from companies and individuals and change the system within the election process. This will provide an equal playing field for all people interested in running for office, the government will operate/legislate on merit and limit corruption in the process.

Mahalo,

Patrick F. Hurney

Executive Director

Habitat for Humanity Hawaii Island.



Hawaii
Holding Power Accountable

To: Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs Chair Tarnas and Committee Members
From: Brodie Lockard, Common Cause Hawaii Board Member
Date: Friday, March 17, 2023

In strong support of SB1543

A reform like public financing has been due in Hawaii for many years. With last year's convictions of Senator J. Kalani English and Representative Ty Cullen for cash bribes, ethics in our state government has leapt to the front of the public's collective mind.

Some incumbents dislike public financing because they see it as a threat to their reelection. This is not necessarily the case. The 2012 Maine Policy Review found that "challengers are only more likely to win if they participate in MCEA [the 1996 Maine Clean Elections Act] and the incumbent does not. When incumbents accept public funding, they are actually more likely to win reelection" [1].

SB1543 is a fair bill. It includes every major state and county office, not singling out any one group for a trial, as some previous bills have done. After qualifying, candidates are "barred from soliciting, accepting, or using contributions from" anyone but voters in their districts. Violating the rules brings appropriate penalties, and thorough, regular reporting requirements should prevent abuse.

Publicly-funded elections will make you and future elected officials better at your jobs. You can spend your time meeting with many constituents, not just a few large donors. Owning only your voters lets you take a principled stand on every issue. You can work on the needs of all voters, not just a few moneyed interests. And you can spend more time doing your real job.

To qualify for public financing, candidates must show a broad base of support in their community (something incumbents already have). That makes any lawmaker more effective and more respected.

Public financing will make your campaign easier. No one likes asking individuals for large sums of money. Public financing will free you from fundraisers and countless phone calls. And the steps required to qualify will help you get to know your constituents better, so you can better speak to their concerns.

It will improve the state legislature overall. Public financing has been shown to increase the diversity of candidates, including women and people of color, and to encourage interaction between candidates and low- and moderate-income communities. Our elected officials will no longer be just career politicians or people who know the right people, but regular folks from all walks of life—nurses, veterans, small business owners, teachers. Candidates can spend more time on ideas and less time

raising money that tends to commit them to special interests.

SB1543 will serve the people who elected you far better than the current system. One of the primary reasons for public funding is to avoid situations like Oahu's rail boondoggle, and the myriad more subtle ways voters' money is wasted. The role of special interests in government decision making will be greatly reduced; the voices of regular people amplified. This is one reason that rates of participation in Clean Election systems are high. They decrease real or apparent conflicts of interest for elected officials.

Public financing will help to restore faith in our elections and political system. After six years of questions about the integrity of our elections, Americans' confidence in voting needs a boost. Fraud in elections has always been extremely rare, but the corrupting influence of money in politics—real and perceived—continues to erode our confidence in the system.

It will improve Hawaii's political reputation. Thirteen states use some form of publicly-funded elections, as do 20 local governments [2]. Hawaii's partial public funding program is woefully out of date and underused. With Supreme Court decisions like *Citizens United* deforming our campaigns, a robust public funding system is long overdue. Following our recent passage of reforms like Vote by Mail and Automatic Voter Registration, passing public funding will arguably make Hawaii the most forward-looking state in the union in terms of elections.

Finally, SB1543 is fiscally responsible. This year the state has plenty of money to fund the 2024 general election cycle. In the future, if funds are insufficient, the program will not be run for that cycle. Amounts will be adjusted with any change in the consumer price index.

SB1543 is a thorough, well-conceived bill with an array of benefits. Common Cause Hawaii strongly urges the Judiciary Committee to pass it. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Brodie Lockard
Common Cause Hawaii Board Member

[1] <https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1081&context=mpr>

[2] <https://www.commoncause.org/resource/the-for-the-people-act-in-the-states/>

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/15/2023 7:07:50 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
laurel brier	Kauai women's caucus	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The power of money is corrupting to our democracy. We must remove the influence money has on our politics. Corruption is far too rampant in Hawai'i and the pay-to-play behavior of our politicians needs to end now. Money in politics holds back progress on all the issues important to local working families: from affordable housing, to cost of living, to protecting our environment, and more.

Let's create a system of fully publicly financed elections. It would provide participating candidates with competitive amounts of funding they need to run an effective campaign, and would ban them from receiving any private donations at all. This system works well in places like Connecticut and Maine. Partial public financing is not enough. As long as candidates need to rely on private donations to get elected, there will always be the risk of corruption, or the perception of it.

This is brave legislation that legislators with integrity will support. It will give political power to the people, and restore the people's trust in you, our representatives. Voters rank government corruption as one of the top concerns, and 74% of the Hawai'i voting public favors enacting public financed elections and ending the influence of corporate and private donations. Please represent us.

It is what is pono

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/15/2023 7:27:20 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lynette Cruz	Malama Makua	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This is a wonderful bill! The idea of clean elections has come around before. Let's see if we can change things up so more people can participate with confidence in the governing system.



To: The House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs (JHA)
From: Sherry Pollack, Co-Founder, 350Hawaii.org
Date: Friday, March 17, 2023, 2:00 pm

In strong support of SB1543 SD2

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Takayama, and JHA Committee members;

I am Co-Founder of the Hawaii chapter of 350.org, the largest international organization dedicated to fighting climate change. 350Hawaii.org **strongly supports SB1543 SD2** that establishes 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. This measure also requires the Campaign Spending Commission to submit a progress and final report to the Legislature.

SB1543 SD2 will help restore the people's trust in government. With last year's convictions of Senator J. Kalani English and Representative Ty Cullen for cash bribes, it is clear that the legislature must do everything in its power to remove the influence that money has on our politics, including reforms like public financing. Public financing of elections is one of the most important ways to free our state political system from undue influence from corporations, businesses, and special interest groups. Three quarters of Hawaii voters support a system of fully publicly financed elections.

Public financing will make campaigning easier. No one likes asking individuals for large sums of money. Public financing will free candidates from fundraisers and countless phone calls. Reducing or even eliminating candidates' reliance on wealthy donors and the need to perpetually fundraise frees candidates and officials to spend more time with their constituents and to focus on the most pressing issues of their community, such as the impacts from the growing climate crisis. It also promotes public trust in officials and in government.

SB1543 SD2 would provide participating candidates with competitive amounts of funding they need to run an effective campaign, and would ban them from receiving any private donations at all. This system worked very well for Hawaii County Council races in 2010 and 2012, and currently works very well statewide in places like Connecticut and Maine.

Please take this opportunity to get money out of politics. Pass SB1543 SD2.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in **strong support** of this important legislation.

Sherry Pollack
Co-Founder, 350Hawaii.org

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 7:36:18 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
John & Rita Shockley	FREE ACCESS COALITION	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha!

The Free Access Coalition supports SB1543 because it levels the playing field for political candidates and allows free access to the election process for all citizens, not just the ones supported by private interests.



House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs

Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action (HAPA) Supports: SB1543 SD2

Friday, March 17th, 2023 2 p.m. Conference Room 325

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Takayama and Members of the Committee,

We support SB1543 SD2 which establishes a comprehensive system of public financing for all candidates seeking election to state and county public offices in the State of Hawai'i, to begin with the 2026 general election year. Requires the Campaign Spending Commission to submit a progress and final report to the Legislature.

It's crucially important that the legislature does everything in its power to remove the influence money has on politics. Candidates work for donations that create relationships that can cause corruption or the perception of it. Money is crucial to winning, for example 91% of candidates who outspend their opponent go on to win. Many elections are uncontested because potential candidates can't afford the high price tag. Furthermore the average house winner spends \$40,000 compared to only \$16,000 for the loser. Over half of all campaign donations in 2022 came from just 980 donors who each gave at least \$6,000.

Clean Elections will create a fairer system. Publicly financed elections will allow candidates to get support from their constituents rather than wealthy donors. As a result, elections will become more competitive with a more diverse set of candidates. Legislators will be free to act on behalf of voters without being concerned about what their donors think. Candidates will also be able to spend more time with constituents rather than fundraising. Furthermore, a system of fully publicly financed elections is supported by 74% of Hawai'i voters.

In addition to being good for our local democracy, the cost of this program is very small. At less than \$25 million, the program will cost less than 0.2% of the state budget. In fact, the state's current general funds balance of \$2.6 billion could pay for over 100 years of clean elections.

Publicly funded elections are already being successfully implemented locally and in other jurisdictions. Hawai'i Island County Council races had this program in 2010 and 2012. Connecticut and Maine have clean elections statewide which are both very popular and successful. Over 70% of Democratic legislators use this program in Maine. Connecticut's program was established to get money out of politics following large corruption scandals.



SB1543 SD2 would set up a system of fully publicly financed elections, a.k.a. clean elections. It would provide participating candidates with competitive amounts of funding they need to run an effective campaign, and would ban them from receiving any private donations at all. This system worked very well for Hawai'i County Council races in 2010 and 2012, and currently works very well statewide in places like Connecticut and Maine.

Please take this opportunity to get money out of politics and give political power to the people!

Winning publicly financed elections is the single biggest thing we could do to end pay-to-play corruption in our politics and start building a Hawai'i that puts Hawai'i's land and people first — not big money interests.

Please support SB1543 SD2! Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anne Frederick', written in a cursive style.

Anne Frederick
Executive Director



SIERRA CLUB OF HAWAI'I

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

March 17, 2023 2:00 PM Conference Room 325

In **SUPPORT** of **SB1543 SD2**: RELATING TO PUBLIC FINANCING FOR CANDIDATES TO ELECTED OFFICE

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Takayama, and Committee Members,

On behalf of our 20,000 members and supporters, the Sierra Club of Hawai'i **SUPPORTS SB1543 SD2**, which will help to relieve candidates of the need to fundraise from private entities, and thereby foster more rigorous discussion and refinement of candidates' policy platforms for the betterment of our islands and communities.

Our democratic system of governance is premised on the concept of an informed electorate choosing candidates whose policy priorities align with what their constituents care about the most. Unfortunately, the modern day costs of running a "viable" campaign often require candidates to expend considerable time and energy raising funds from private sources, rather than developing, debating, and refining campaign platforms, and engaging voters in this critical process.

Moreover, candidates must often solicit donations from private, corporate entities whose interests may be inherently narrower than those of the public at large. As a result, conflicts or perceived conflicts too often arise between policymaking that may be of particular benefit to certain classes of private entities, and the more comprehensive concerns of the broader community – including with regards to the environmental and cultural integrity, and the long-term livability, of our islands.

By providing for more meaningful public financing of campaigns for elected office, this measure would help us take a transformative step towards enabling our candidates and elected representatives more time to engage with their grassroots constituents during the campaign season; research, debate, and refine their campaign policy platforms; and thereby come into or return to office with a stronger and more comprehensive vision for policies that will ultimately benefit the public interest, as well as the public trust in our democratic system of governance.

Accordingly, the Sierra Club of Hawai'i respectfully urges the Committee to **PASS** SB1543 SD2. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 11:49:24 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gary Hooser	Pono Hawaii Initiative	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee Chair and Members,

I offer this testimony in strong support of SB1543 SD2.

A strong publicly funded elections measure as is outlined in SB1543 SD2 presents the opportunity for this committee and the Hawaii legislature to remove significant barriers to entry for new candidates. Equally important, the passage of SB1543 SD2 offers all candidates an opportunity to avoid the need to seek campaign contributions from private interests that are impacted by the actions of the candidate-turned-lawmaker.

Without question in states and localities that have implemented a strong public election funding program, the results have increased voter turnout, the number and diversity of candidates (including women and people of color), candidate interaction with low- and moderate-income communities, and the number of contested races. This is clearly good for democracy and will go a long way toward restoring faith and confidence in the election process and in our government.

Please support SB1543 SD2

Sincerely,

Gary Hooser - Executive Director - Pono Hawaii Initiative



AMERICANS FOR DEMOCRATIC ACTION

OFFICERS	DIRECTORS	MAILING ADDRESS		
John Bickel, President	Melodie Aduja	Jan Lubin	Bill South	P.O. Box 23404
Alan Burdick, Vice President	Keola Akana	Shannon Matson	Michael Vernon	Honolulu
Dave Nagajji, Treasurer	Juliet Begley	Jenny Nomura		Hawaii 96823
Doug Pyle, Secretary	Stephanie Fitzpatrick	Stephen O'Harrow		

March 16, 2023

TO: Chair Tarnas and members of JHA Committee

RE: SB 1543 SD2 RELATING TO PUBLIC FINANCING FOR CANDIDATES TO ELECTED OFFICE.

Support for hearing on March 17

Americans for Democratic Action is an organization founded in the 1950s by leading supporters of the New Deal and led by Patsy Mink in the 1970s. We are devoted to the promotion of progressive public policies.

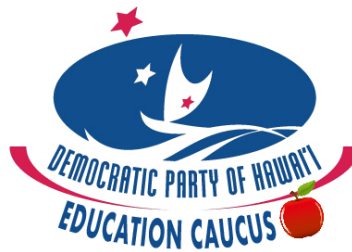
We support this bill as it would establish a comprehensive system of public financing for all candidates seeking election to state and county public offices in the State of Hawai'i beginning with the 2026 general election year. In the wake of the scandals involving Senator English and Representative Cullen, fighting corruption is a high priority – not just the blatantly illegal bribes but also the subtle but palpable influence some campaign contributions have on politicians. We need to clear the appearance of inappropriate actions. Campaign finance reform can do this.

This bill would provide participating candidates with competitive amounts of funding they need to run an effective campaign, and would ban them from receiving any private donations at all. This system worked very well for Hawai'i County Council races in 2010 and 2012, and currently works very well statewide in places like Connecticut and Maine. It would improve the ethics of our state.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

John Bickel, President



SENATE BILL 1543, SD2, RELATING TO PUBLIC FINANCING FOR CANDIDATES TO ELECTED OFFICE.

MARCH 17, 2023 · HOUSE JUDICIARY AND
HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE · CHAIR REP.
DAVID A. TARNAS

POSITION: Support.

RATIONALE: The Democratic Party of Hawai'i Education Caucus **supports** SB 1543, SD2, relating to public financing for candidates to elected office, which establishes a comprehensive system of public financing for all candidates seeking election to state and county public offices in the State of Hawai'i, to begin with the 2026 general election year; and requires the Campaign Spending Commission to submit a progress and final report to the State Legislature.

Government should work for the public interest, not corporate interests.

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 statewide clean elections 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.

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 also recently 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 do all we can to restore integrity to government.

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, since 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. Notably, 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 the last election cycle.

At less than \$25 million, this bill will create an election system that is fair for our island home. Candidates will no longer be beholden to wealthy donors. Instead, they can receive support from their constituents. Elections, in turn, will become more competitive, preventing career politicians from being perpetually unchallenged if they fail to produce results that benefit their communities. Ultimately, this will lead to a situation in which our elections reflect the will of the people, not the wallets of the privileged.

Kris Coffield · Chairperson, DPH Education Caucus · (808) 679-7454 · kriscoffield@gmail.com



SB 1543, SD2, RELATING TO PUBLIC FINANCING FOR CANDIDATES TO ELECTED OFFICE.

MARCH 17, 2023 · HOUSE JUDICIARY AND
HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE · CHAIR REP.
DAVID A. TARNAS

POSITION: Support.

RATIONALE: Imua Alliance supports SB 1543, SD2, relating to public financing for candidates to elected office, which establishes a comprehensive system of public financing for all candidates seeking election to state and county public offices in the State of Hawai'i, to begin with the 2026 general election year; and requires the Campaign Spending Commission to submit a progress and final report to the State Legislature.

Government should work for the public interest, not corporate interests.

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 statewide clean elections 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.

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 also recently 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 do all we can to restore integrity to government.

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, since 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. Notably, 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 the last election cycle.

At less than \$25 million, this bill will create an election system that is fair for our island home. Candidates will no longer be beholden to wealthy donors. Instead, they can receive support from their constituents. Elections, in turn, will become more competitive, preventing career politicians from being perpetually unchallenged if they fail to produce results that benefit their communities. Ultimately, this will lead to a situation in which our elections reflect the will of the people, not the wallets of the privileged.

Kris Coffield · Executive Director, Imua Alliance · (808) 679-7454 · kris@imuaalliance.org

March 16, 2023

Rep. David A. Tarnas, Chair
Rep. Gregg Takayama, Vice Chair
Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs
Friday, March 17, 2023
2:00 pm
Via Videoconference



RE: **SB1543 SD2** Public Financing for Candidates to Elected Office (**SUPPORT**)

Dear Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Takayama & Members of the Committee,

Chamber of Sustainable Commerce testifies in support of SB1543 SD2, which establishes 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 2026 general election year, requires the Campaign Spending Commission to submit a progress and final report to the Legislature and appropriates funds.

As small business owners who believe we can strengthen our economy without hurting workers, consumers or the environment, we urge this committee to vote in favor of passing SB1543 SD2, because this bill brings us one step closer towards a democracy that protects small business owners, workers, consumers and the environment not and – not just large corporate campaign donors who can afford to pay to play.

Luxury developers, defense contractors, big pharma, agri-chemical corporations and others give incumbent candidates the max allowable contributions, then they hire lobbyists who give max contributions to these same candidates; and then some of those unchallenged incumbents buy max donation tickets to fundraisers for incumbents who have contested races; all of these max contributions quickly add up to a campaign war chest that is almost impossible to challenge.

Furthermore, the campaigns of many legislative leaders have already benefited from state taxpayer money being funneled through state Grant-In-Aid (GIA) recipients that were hand-picked by legislative leaders with a portion of that money ending up in their campaign accounts. For examples of "GIA campaign kickbacks" take a look at how much taxpayer money went to GIA recipients Navatek and Chamber of Commerce Military Affairs Council and compare those numbers to campaign contributions from employees, consultants, lobbyists and family members of those GIA recipients. The legislature has exempted the millions of dollars of GIA awards from the Ethics Commission's oversight.

**Hawaii
Legislative
Council**

Maile Meyer
Na Mea Hawaii
Honolulu

Russel Rudderman
Island Naturals
Hilo / Kona

Tina Wildberger
Kihei Ice
Maui

Joell Edwards
Wainiha Country Market
Kauai

Kim Coco Iwamoto
AQuA Rentals, LLC
Honolulu

Publicly financing campaigns through SB1543 gives candidates who are not receiving GIA kickbacks or pay-to-play contributions, a more equitable opportunity to educate voters in their district that they are a viable candidates.

This bill offers just one step toward clean elections; the legislature should also make the following changes: cap the max allowable contribution at \$100 per donor per candidate, prohibit candidate campaigns from making contributions to other candidate campaigns and ensure the Ethics Commission has oversight over GIA recipients as the do other recipients of state funded contracts.



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Kim Coco Iwamoto
AQuA Rentals, LLC
Honolulu

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 11:16:51 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lisa H. Gibson	Indivisible Hawaii	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Indivisible Hawaii and its members strongly support SB1543, the bill which proposes to publicly finance clean campaigns for the first time in Hawaii.

There is overwhelming public support in Hawai'i for a "Clean Elections" program to get big money out of our politics by providing for full public financing of elections while prohibiting private contributions, with 74% of voters saying they'd be more likely to support a candidate who backed such a policy.

This is a powerful tool which begins to address the cancer of Citizens United at least on a local level.

Please pass this bill.

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 1:33:05 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Barbara Shimei	Indivisible Hawaii	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

IN SUPPORT.

Indivisible Hawaii supports SB 1543 SD2.

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 12:41:22 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
A Kathleen Lee	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

A Kathleen Lee 3-16-2023

PO Box 190705

Hawi, HI 96719

RE: Testimony in Support for SB1543 SD2

Honorable Judiciary Hawaiian Affairs Committee Members; Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Takayama, and member Representatives Ganaden, Hashimoto, Holt, Ichiyama, Ilagan, Kong, Mizuno, and Sousa,

The current campaign finance system unfairly favors the usurpation of the rule of democracy by a small handful of wealthy donors, unions & corporations. Small donor public financing could fix that.

SB1543 states; “publicly-funded campaign programs are intended to improve the process by allowing candidates to compete without reliance on private funds...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”.

By demonstrating support from voters (w/initial \$5 donations) in the relevant district, the participating candidate justifies receipt of public funding sufficient to run in a primary and, if successful, general election campaign.

Honorable Committee Members, There is a growing disconnect between elected officials and the majority of people they represent. I am one of those who have witnessed the abuse. I have the hard-copy of our current Governor’s campaign contribution disclosure. I also have seen Sylvia Luke’s. This caused me such consternation that I reserved time from work to urge you to Malama pono this vital issue. Born in Hawai’I nei, I know what we used to be...governance like it was during Queen Liliuokalani’s administration. We must recover our connections and ahonui.

It's easy to see why small donor public financing incentivizes candidates to seek out many supporters, not just a few big donors. It enables more candidates from diverse backgrounds to run and it amplifies the voices of regular people bringing us closer to a democracy where everyone participates.

Mahalo for being the political leaders we will always hold in high esteem. The ones who brought back the pono virtues of governance, nobility & trustworthiness,

A. Kathleen Lee

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Takayama, and Committee Members:

I am writing in strong support of SB 1543, SD 2.

I had the privilege of serving on the Commission to Improve Standards of Conduct (CISC) last year, which was convened by Speaker Saiki in the wake of the federal indictment of two veteran lawmakers. Your committee and the House have rightfully forwarded most of the CISC's recommendations. HB 95, HD 2, which is now under consideration in the other chamber, raises the maximum amount of public funds available to those candidates who seeking financing from the Hawai'i Election Campaign Fund (HECF). The HECF is currently under utilized, with [a recent policy brief from the Economic Research Organization at the University of Hawai'i \(UHERO\)](#) observing that partial funding programs are generally "ineffective."

The [CISC Final Report](#) states that, should additional resources become available, the Legislature should "be bold [and] seek additional permanent funding sources for future elections." This could include an increase in the amount that that can be "checked off" on state income tax forms under HRS Section 235-102.5(a).

The UHERO report also finds that "most scholarship shows that generous public financing programs increase electoral competition, contribute to greater diversity among candidates and donors, and encourage more contact between office-seekers and voters."

Recent experiences with Hawai'i County Council elections in 2010 and 2012 indicate that implementation of a fully financed program can be successful with adequate funding.

Moving toward a full public financing of electoral contests in Hawai'i will not eliminate the influence of money so long as *Citizens United* remains in force. However, public financing can give those candidates with community support the opportunity to be competitive.

Former Gov. George Ariyoshi put it very well in his most recent volume, *Hawai'i's Future* (2020):

I hope that we do not give up on campaign reform.... Most people are sick of the campaign finance system. That includes business people. While the average voter may look at large campaign contributions as a means of achieving undue advantage, many a businessperson resents the inherent pressure exerted by political campaigns. [We] have a regulatory Campaign Spending Commission with all the right elements, and its role is widely accepted. We now need an enlightened discussion and a purposeful movement for more far-reaching reforms. This is a leadership challenge waiting for a group of emerging legislators to take action.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.



Nikos A. Leverenz
Aliamanu

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 2:29:59 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jordan Hocker	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

My name is Jordan Hocker, I was previously a candidate for Maui County Council in the prior 2022 election. First and foremost, I'm a mother who cares deeply about our community and is committed to work for it. I can say that when I decided to run for office, the hardest pill to swallow was the amount of pay to play politics that existed. I don't come from money and connections, but we know what a head start those things are in a political career. Recent scandals and corruption amongst Maui County politicians has eroded the community trust in government.

As a researcher, good policy that serves the people is my ultimate goal. I shouldn't have to rely on catering to large donors, when in reality my \$5 donors should matter just as equally. I support publicly funded elections. Please pass SB 1532 SD2

**Testimony to the Thirty-Second Legislature, 2023 Regular Session
Senate Committee on Judiciary**

By
Colin D. Moore, Ph.D.

Senate Bill No. 1543, SD2 Relating to Public Financing for Candidates to Elected Office

Position: STRONG SUPPORT

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Takayama, and Committee Members:

I am Colin Moore, a political scientist and professor at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. I strongly support SB 1543, SD2. It follows the successful “clean elections” model of public campaign financing currently used in the states of Arizona, Maine, and Connecticut.

In the United States, politics costs money. To raise sufficient funds, candidates rely on wealthy donors and organized interests for support – and this can invite corruption and distort public policy. Challengers often struggle to raise funds because they lack the name recognition and access to networks that benefit incumbents. Over the past decade, an average of 90% of incumbents were reelected during each election cycle in Hawai‘i.

Public financing can solve this problem by providing challengers with sufficient resources to run competitive campaigns. More competitive elections often lead to stronger voter mobilization and communication efforts – and this reduces ballot “roll off,” which is the tendency of voters to leave ballots blank for less-visible legislative and municipal races. Furthermore, public financing eliminates the need to raise private funds, allowing candidates to spend more time connecting with voters and discussing public policy. This is good for candidates and good for citizens.

A large body of research in political science indicates that generous public campaign financing programs can increase electoral competition, contribute to greater diversity among candidates and donors, and encourage more contact between office-seekers and voters.

For these reasons, I urge you to support SB 1543, SD2.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 2:48:03 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Keani Rawlins-Fernandez	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

I stand on my previous testimony.

**Testimony to the House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs
Friday, March 17, 2023 at 2:00pm - Conference Room 325, State Capitol
RE: SB1543 Relating to Public Financing For Candidates To Elected Office**

Position: Strong Support

Members of the Judiciary Committee:

It's crucially important that we remove the impact money has on our elections. Just like other positions within government, elected officials should not be dependent upon private donations to stay in their seat. We instead need a robust full public financing of elections system that SB1543 would provide.

We Need Money Out Of Politics Now

The influence that money has on our elections needs to end. If we want our government officials to act on behalf of its residents rather than those who fund their campaigns, we need to end the current system. The potential for corruptive behavior is too large when people are giving thousands of dollars every year to help get legislators elected.

Money is incredibly crucial in our elections, as candidates who outspend their opponents win at a 91% rate. Of all campaign donations candidates received in the 2022 election cycle, over half of the money was given by just 980 donors who gave at least \$6,000 each. This massive political power by a small group is not democratic.

Too many candidates are reliant on their donors to stay in office and an even larger number of potential candidates don't have the wealthy donor connections that are needed to win. This is a formula for uncompetitive elections and elected officials that respond to a few private interests rather than the public at large.

It's Well Past Time for Fully Publicly Financed Elections

In order to get money out of politics, we need to provide a pathway for candidates to win without private campaign donations. SB1543 would do just that. SB1543 would allow participating candidates to receive enough public funds to win their elections and ban them from receiving any private donations.

Hawai'i County Council races had a very successful public funding program in 2010 and 2012. Both Connecticut and Maine have statewide public funding programs that are hugely popular. Over 60% of all legislators in Maine and 80% in Connecticut participate in their program and receive no private donations. Connecticut's system was established as a response to their huge corruption scandals and with more than twice our population still costs them less than \$14 million per election cycle.

If we are serious about ending the corruptive practices that plague our state we need to establish a fully publicly financed elections program now.

Mahalo,

Nate Hix
808.469.8740

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/15/2023 1:49:20 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

SB1543, under referral to JHA, is a thorough, well-conceived bill with an array of benefits. Common Cause Hawaii strongly urges you to hear it and pass it. We also ask you to promote it with your fellow JHA members, and with the House leadership.

Among SB1543's many strong points:

- * It's not necessarily any threat to your reelection.
- * It's a fair bill, affecting every state- and county-level office.
- * It's fiscally responsible. If future budgets are insufficient, the program will not be run for that general election cycle.
- * You can work on the needs of all voters, not just a few moneyed interests. It will free you from fundraisers and countless phone calls.
- * It will improve the state legislature overall by promoting more diverse candidates, including women and people of color.
- * It will serve the people who elected you far better than the current system, avoiding boondoggles.
- * It will help to restore faith in our elections and political system.
- * It will improve Hawaii's political reputation.

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/15/2023 4:27:28 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
I. Robert Nehmad	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am a resident of the City & County of Honolulu and support this bill

I hope that you also support this bill

Mahalo

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/15/2023 4:29:52 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members,

It's crucially important that this body does everything in its power to remove the influence money has on our politics. Corruption is far too rampant in Hawai'i and the pay-to-play behavior of our politicians needs to end now. Money in politics holds back progress on all the issues important to local working families: from affordable housing, to cost of living, to protecting our environment, and more.

SB1543 would set up a system of fully publicly financed elections. It would provide participating candidates with competitive amounts of funding they need to run an effective campaign, and would ban them from receiving any private donations at all. This system worked very well for Hawai'i County Council races in 2010 and 2012, and currently works very well statewide in places like Connecticut and Maine. Partial public financing is not enough. As long as candidates need to rely on private donations to get elected, there will always be the risk of corruption, or the perception of it.

This is an opportunity to lessen the influence of money in politics, give political power to the people, and restore the people's trust in this body and in you all. All of these things are badly needed. Voters rank government corruption as the #3 top issue facing Hawai'i, and 74% of the Hawai'i voting public favors enacting public financed elections and ending the influence of corporate and private donations.

That's because we know that it's the single biggest thing we could do to end pay-to-play corruption in our politics and start building a Hawai'i that puts kama'āina and kānaka maoli, local people, first — not big money interests. Please, do the right thing. Mahalo.

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/15/2023 4:36:56 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members,

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That's because we know that it's the single biggest thing we could do to end pay-to-play corruption in our politics and start building a Hawai'i that puts kama'āina and kānaka maoli, local people, first — not big money interests. Please, do the right thing.

Mahalo.

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/15/2023 4:52:15 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jim Cooper	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members,

I am writing in support of SB1543.

It's crucially important that this body does everything in its power to remove the influence money has on our politics. The pay-to-play behavior of our politicians needs to end now.

SB1543 would:

- **set up a system of fully publicly financed elections**
- **provide participating candidates with competitive amounts of funding they need to run an effective campaign**
- **ban candidates from receiving any private donations at all**

This system worked very well for Hawai'i County Council races in 2010 and 2012, and currently works very well statewide in places like Connecticut and Maine. Partial public financing is not enough.

This is an opportunity to lessen the influence of money in politics, give political power to the people, and restore the people's trust in this body and in you all. Voters rank government corruption as the #3 top issue facing Hawai'i, and 74% of the Hawai'i voting public favors enacting public financed elections and ending the influence of corporate and private donations.

SB1543 is the single biggest thing we could do to end pay-to-play corruption in our politics and start building a Hawai'i that puts kama'aina and kānaka maoli, local people, first — not big money interests.

Please, do the right thing.

Mahalo.

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/15/2023 4:54:29 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members,

It's crucially important that this body does everything in its power to remove the influence money has on our politics. Corruption is far too rampant in Hawai'i and the pay-to-play behavior of our politicians needs to end now. Money in politics holds back progress on all the issues important to local working families: from affordable housing, to cost of living, to protecting our environment, and more.

SB1543 would set up a system of fully publicly financed elections. It would provide participating candidates with competitive amounts of funding they need to run an effective campaign, and would ban them from receiving any private donations at all. This system worked very well for Hawai'i County Council races in 2010 and 2012, and currently works very well statewide in places like Connecticut and Maine. Partial public financing is not enough. As long as candidates need to rely on private donations to get elected, there will always be the risk of corruption, or the perception of it.

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That's because we know that it's the single biggest thing we could do to end pay-to-play corruption in our politics and start building a Hawai'i that puts kama'āina and kānaka maoli, local people, first — not big money interests. Please, do the right thing.

Mahalo,

Michele Nihipali

54-074 A Kam Hwy.

Hauula, HI 96717

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/15/2023 5:01:38 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Barbara Barry	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I strongly support this important SB 1642 HD 2 Bill.

Lord knows we need cleaner elections and more transparency in who is financing our candidates for public office.

Mahalo,

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/15/2023 5:03:27 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marya Grambs	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

It's crucially important that this body does everything in its power to remove the influence money has on our politics. Corruption is far too rampant in Hawai'i and the pay-to-play behavior of our politicians needs to end now. Money in politics holds back progress on all the issues important to local working families: from affordable housing, to cost of living, to protecting our environment, and more.

SB1543 would set up a system of fully publicly financed elections. It would provide participating candidates with competitive amounts of funding they need to run an effective campaign, and would ban them from receiving any private donations at all. This system worked very well for Hawai'i County Council races in 2010 and 2012, and currently works very well statewide in places like Connecticut and Maine. Partial public financing is not enough. As long as candidates need to rely on private donations to get elected, there will always be the risk of corruption, or the perception of it.

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That's because we know that it's the single biggest thing we could do to end pay-to-play corruption in our politics and start building a Hawai'i that puts kama'āina and kānaka maoli, local people, first — not big money interests. Please, do the right thing. Mahalo.

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/15/2023 5:14:09 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha mai kākou,

I have long supported Clean Elections in Hawai‘i and give my strong support for SB1543. It’s crucially important that this body does everything in its power to remove the influence money has on our politics. Corruption is far too rampant in Hawai‘i and the pay-to-play behavior of our politicians needs to end now. Money in politics holds back progress on all the issues important to local working families: from affordable housing, to cost of living, to protecting our environment, and more.

SB1543 would set up a system of fully publicly financed elections. It would provide participating candidates with competitive amounts of funding they need to run an effective campaign, and would ban them from receiving any private donations at all. This system worked very well for Hawai‘i County Council races in 2010 and 2012, and currently works very well statewide in places like Connecticut and Maine. Partial public financing is not enough. As long as candidates need to rely on private donations to get elected, there will always be the risk of corruption, or the perception of it.

This is an opportunity to lessen the influence of money in politics, give political power to the people, and restore the people’s trust in this body and in you all. All of these things are badly needed. Voters rank government corruption as the #3 top issue facing Hawai‘i, and 74% of the Hawai‘i voting public favors enacting public financed elections and ending the influence of corporate and private donations.

That’s because we know that it’s the single biggest thing we could do to end pay-to-play corruption in our politics and start building a Hawai‘i that puts kama‘āina and kānaka maoli, local people, first — not big money interests. I humbly ask for your strong support of SB1543 too. Mahalo! Jeannine Johnson

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/15/2023 5:16:40 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marlies Lee	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members,

It's crucially important that this body does everything in its power to remove the influence money has on our politics. Corruption is far too rampant in Hawai'i and the pay-to-play behavior of our politicians needs to end now. Money in politics holds back progress on all the issues important to local working families: from affordable housing, to cost of living, to protecting our environment, and more.

WE NEED A HEARING ON THIS!
fair elections for Hawaii

Marlies Lee

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/15/2023 5:21:10 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

This is our chance to uproot one of the the primary obstacles to a more vibrant democracy. As it is, our system has been contaminated by the influence of profit motives that overbalances benefits to the individual. Popular reforms and potentially solid candidates are too often stymied by lobbying interests and political donations. Why am I even telling you this? You know it better than I. Please vote your conscience on this bill with support.

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/15/2023 5:21:30 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ellior Marcus	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members,

It's crucially important that this body does everything in its power to remove the influence money has on our politics. Corruption is far too rampant in Hawai'i and the pay-to-play behavior of our politicians needs to end now. Money in politics holds back progress on all the issues important to local working families: from affordable housing, to cost of living, to protecting our environment, and more.

SB1543 would set up a system of fully publicly financed elections. It would provide participating candidates with competitive amounts of funding they need to run an effective campaign, and would ban them from receiving any private donations at all. This system worked very well for Hawai'i County Council races in 2010 and 2012, and currently works very well statewide in places like Connecticut and Maine. Partial public financing is not enough. As long as candidates need to rely on private donations to get elected, there will always be the risk of corruption, or the perception of it.

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That's because we know that it's the single biggest thing we could do to end pay-to-play corruption in our politics and start building a Hawai'i that puts kama'āina and kānaka maoli, local people, first — not big money interests. Please, do the right thing. Mahalo

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/15/2023 5:39:06 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I support SD1543 SD2.

Leveling the money field so the best person can win without their needing to sell their soul to the money devils is a good thing.

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/15/2023 5:51:46 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kanani Kai	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support SB1543 SD2

Aloha Committee Members,

It's crucially important that this body does everything in its power to remove the influence money has on our politics. Corruption is far too rampant in Hawai'i and the pay-to-play behavior of our politicians needs to end now. Money in politics holds back progress on all the issues important to local working families: from affordable housing, to cost of living, to protecting our environment, and more.

SB1543 would set up a system of fully publicly financed elections. It would provide participating candidates with competitive amounts of funding they need to run an effective campaign, and would ban them from receiving any private donations at all. This system worked very well for Hawai'i County Council races in 2010 and 2012, and currently works very well statewide in places like Connecticut and Maine. Partial public financing is not enough. As long as candidates need to rely on private donations to get elected, there will always be the risk of corruption, or the perception of it.

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Kanani Kai

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/15/2023 6:07:03 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
PAMELA SUMMERS	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support SB1543 SD2

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/15/2023 6:09:15 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I support SB1543 SD2

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/15/2023 6:12:09 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
irene kloepfer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha committee members. Ua mau ke ea o ka'aina ka pono - the life of the land is perpetuated in righteousness This bill is an opportunity to return to the rule of the people, not big money, not wealthy corporations, not greed nor power. Here in Hawaii, it is either pono or pilikia - cannot be both. We are living on a tiny fragile island in the middle of the pacific, You know what is pono, please do it. Aloha. Irene

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/15/2023 6:30:34 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elisabeth Sherman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support SB1543 SD2 which would make our elections fairer.

Mahalo.

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/15/2023 6:33:26 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Julia Estigoy-Kahoonei	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Transparency is critical on all levels if you want the public to trust government. I support this bill

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/15/2023 6:34:39 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dylan Ramos	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Dylan Ramos, I was born and raised in Hawai'i, and I am testifying in **STRONG SUPPORT** of SB1543. This measure is not a cure-all, but it is a strong, important step toward a better, healthier democratic process.

Mahalo,

Dylan Ramos

96816

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/15/2023 6:38:52 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jeff Ugai	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs Committee Members,

I write in support of SB1543 and strongly encourage this body to do everything in its power to remove money's influence on our politics.

We know publically financed elections work--funding effective and competitive campaigns while eliminating pay-to-play behavior. The approach proved successful for *Hawai'i County Council races in 2010 and 2012, and statewide in places like Connecticut and Maine. Partial public financing is not enough. As long as candidates need to rely on private donations to get elected, there will always be the risk of corruption or the perception of it.*

SB1543 is an opportunity to lessen the influence of money in politics, give political power to the people, and restore the people's trust in government. Please, do the right thing. Mahalo.

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/15/2023 6:48:45 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
G L Hutchinson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

It's crucially important that this body does everything in its power to remove the influence money has on our politics.

Money in politics holds back progress on all the issues important to local working families: from affordable housing, to cost of living, to protecting our environment, and more.

Than you for your consideration!

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/15/2023 6:50:53 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shannon Oberle	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Senators and members of the Hawaii State Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs Committee,

Mahalo for your roles as civil servants for Hawaii's people.

There is no place for PILAU big money interests in honorable politics. The people recognize a pattern and watch big money driving political outcomes.

This is why voters **STRONGLY SUPPORT** a SB1543 hearing in the Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs Committee.

The crux of the matter is restoring trust in honorable politics with "Clean" Elections financed by the public.

Government corruption has tarnished Hawaii.

Federal probes of the Hawaii State Judiciary Branch, which include Hawaii's finest police department, begs the question: How can we trust our Hawaii State Judiciary Branch again?

The people deserve better.

As a former precinct official in Koolauloa, I see the need for public financing and volunteers in Hawaii elections.

Also, restoring volunteers in our precincts encourages political engagement in our home communities.

SB1543 is supported by the Hawaii Democratic Party, which voted to include full public financing of elections in the official party platform.

Please, stand with the people, your family and neighbors by supporting a hearing of SB1543 this 2023 legislative session.

Mahalo piha,

Shannon Lokelani Oberle

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/15/2023 7:30:31 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members,

It's crucially important that this body does everything in its power to remove the influence money has on our politics. Corruption is far too rampant in Hawai'i and the pay-to-play behavior of our politicians needs to end now. Money in politics holds back progress on all the issues important to local working families: from affordable housing, to cost of living, to protecting our environment, and more.

SB1543 would set up a system of fully publicly financed elections. It would provide participating candidates with competitive amounts of funding they need to run an effective campaign, and would ban them from receiving any private donations at all. This system worked very well for Hawai'i County Council races in 2010 and 2012, and currently works very well statewide in places like Connecticut and Maine. Partial public financing is not enough. As long as candidates need to rely on private donations to get elected, there will always be the risk of corruption, or the perception of it.

This is an opportunity to lessen the influence of money in politics, give political power to the people, and restore the people's trust in this body and in you all. All of these things are badly needed. Voters rank government corruption as the #3 top issue facing Hawai'i, and 74% of the Hawai'i voting public favors enacting public financed elections and ending the influence of corporate and private donations.

That's because we know that it's the single biggest thing we could do to end pay-to-play corruption in our politics and start building a Hawai'i that puts kama'āina and kānaka maoli, local people, first — not big money interests. Please, do the right thing. Mahalo.

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/15/2023 7:31:37 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cheryl Bellamy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I Support SB1543 DD2

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/15/2023 7:45:13 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Andrew Crossland	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this Bill.

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/15/2023 8:42:48 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
gabrielle davidson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members,

It's crucially important that this body does everything in its power to remove the influence money has on our politics. Corruption is far too rampant in Hawai'i and the pay-to-play behavior of our politicians needs to end now. Money in politics holds back progress on all the issues important to local working families: from affordable housing, to cost of living, to protecting our environment, and more.

SB1543 would set up a system of fully publicly financed elections. It would provide participating candidates with competitive amounts of funding they need to run an effective campaign, and would ban them from receiving any private donations at all. This system worked very well for Hawai'i County Council races in 2010 and 2012, and currently works very well statewide in places like Connecticut and Maine. Partial public financing is not enough. As long as candidates need to rely on private donations to get elected, there will always be the risk of corruption, or the perception of it.

This is an opportunity to lessen the influence of money in politics, give political power to the people, and restore the people's trust in this body and in you all. All of these things are badly needed. Voters rank government corruption as the #3 top issue facing Hawai'i, and 74% of the Hawai'i voting public favors enacting public financed elections and ending the influence of corporate and private donations.

That's because we know that it's the single biggest thing we could do to end pay-to-play corruption in our politics and start building a Hawai'i that puts kama'āina and kānaka maoli, local people, first — not big money interests. Please, do the right thing. Mahalo.

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/15/2023 9:01:45 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

Please support SB 1543. This measure is a very important step to a fair election process and representation for the people, by the people.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify,

Laura Acasio

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/15/2023 9:13:49 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Strongly support!

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/15/2023 9:54:50 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mary Lu Kelley	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members,

It's crucially important that this body does everything in its power to remove the influence money has on our politics. Corruption is far too rampant in Hawai'i and the pay-to-play behavior of our politicians needs to end now. Money in politics holds back progress on all the issues important to local working families: from affordable housing, to cost of living, to protecting our environment, and more.

SB1543 would set up a system of fully publicly financed elections. It would provide participating candidates with competitive amounts of funding they need to run an effective campaign, and would ban them from receiving any private donations at all. This system worked very well for Hawai'i County Council races in 2010 and 2012, and currently works very well statewide in places like Connecticut and Maine. Partial public financing is not enough. As long as candidates need to rely on private donations to get elected, there will always be the risk of corruption, or the perception of it.

This is an opportunity to lessen the influence of money in politics, give political power to the people, and restore the people's trust in this body and in you all. All of these things are badly needed. Voters rank government corruption as the #3 top issue facing Hawai'i, and 74% of the Hawai'i voting public favors enacting public financed elections and ending the influence of corporate and private donations.

That's because we know that it's the single biggest thing we could do to end pay-to-play corruption in our politics and start building a Hawai'i that puts kama'āina and kānaka maoli, local people, first — not big money interests. Please, do the right thing. Mahalo.

- Connecticut and Maine have clean elections statewide which are both very popular and successful.**
- Over 70% of Democratic legislators use this program in Maine.**
- Connecticut's program was established to get money out of politics following large corruption scandals.**
- HB1481 would have offered statewide clean elections in 2013 but it died in conference committee.**

Please pass this bill of maximum importance to the integrity of Hawaii.

Mary Lu Kelley

Lawai, Kauai, HI

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/15/2023 10:13:37 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Will Caron	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SB1543 SD2 would set up a system of fully publicly-financed elections. It would provide participating candidates with competitive amounts of funding they need to run an effective campaign, and would ban them from receiving any private donations at all. This system worked very well for the Hawai'i County Council races in 2010 and 2012, and currently works very well statewide in places like Connecticut and Maine.

It's crucially important that this body does everything in its power to remove the influence money has on politics. Corruption is growing problem that won't simply go away on its own. Please take this opportunity to get money out of politics and help get our democracy back on track. Mahalo!

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/15/2023 10:24:57 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ruth Robison	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I live in Hilo and am a member of the League of Women Voters, but am only speaking for myself in this testimony. We all know about the recent examples of corruption among a few elected officials that have caused the public to lose trust in state government in general. This bill would help restore that faith by moving to get big money out of politics. Hawaii Island County Council races had this program in 2010 and 2012. Connecticut and Maine have clean elections statewide which are both very popular and successful. Over 70% of Democratic legislators use this program in Maine. I urge you to support this bill. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Subject: SB1543 SD2 | Submitted Date: March 15, 2023

Testimony For: House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs

From: Alison Hartson | Testifier Position: Support | Testify: Written Testimony Only

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Takayama, and Committee Members.

No doubt you are well aware that the distaste and distrust in government is growing, and that alone is a great concern for the functioning of democracy. The support for publicly funded elections is strong and growing stronger. There will always be pros and cons. There will rarely, if ever, be a silver bullet for a perfect system. But publicly funded elections are perhaps the best example of government that is of the people, by the people, and for the people.

The real question is: Do we have the courage to do what is right?

Let us provide a clearer path for concerned citizens to make their voices heard in the halls of government, while providing even greater accountability for candidates.

Our elections were never intended to be the play thing of millionaires, billionaires, and special interests.

One of my favorite stories I've come across from the years I was working and volunteering around the country concerning the issue of money in politics is from the state of Maine. When they implemented publicly funded elections, the opportunity for real, average citizens to run for office was opened up. A small town grocery store checker was able to become a member of the Maine legislature. This is not the person who owns the grocery store. This is not someone who manages the store. This is someone who checks out people at the cash register, and she's a state representative. She said, "Oh, I don't have to worry about knowing what my constituents want. I see them every day in the checkout line and they tell me."

Publicly funded elections pave the way for elections that are free of the corrupting influence of outside spending in elections, and fair enough that anyone can run for public office. It builds trust in government, and that is what strengthens democracy.

Mahalo for all that you do,
Alison Hartson
Small Business Owner
Constituent in Moiliili

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/15/2023 11:22:07 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cards Pintor	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members,

It's crucially important that this body does everything in its power to remove the influence money has on our politics. Corruption is far too rampant in Hawai'i and the pay-to-play behavior of our politicians needs to end now. Money in politics holds back progress on all the issues important to local working families: from affordable housing, to cost of living, to protecting our environment, and more.

SB1543 would set up a system of fully publicly financed elections. It would provide participating candidates with competitive amounts of funding they need to run an effective campaign, and would ban them from receiving any private donations at all. This system worked very well for Hawai'i County Council races in 2010 and 2012, and currently works very well statewide in places like Connecticut and Maine. Partial public financing is not enough. As long as candidates need to rely on private donations to get elected, there will always be the risk of corruption, or the perception of it.

This is an opportunity to lessen the influence of money in politics, give political power to the people, and restore the people's trust in this body and in you all. All of these things are badly needed. Voters rank government corruption as the #3 top issue facing Hawai'i, and 74% of the Hawai'i voting public favors enacting public financed elections and ending the influence of corporate and private donations.

That's because we know that it's the single biggest thing we could do to end pay-to-play corruption in our politics and start building a Hawai'i that puts kama'āina and kānaka maoli, local people, first — not big money interests. Please, do the right thing. Mahalo.

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/15/2023 11:23:50 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tony Radmilovich	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

A step in the right direction...

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 1:44:08 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cynthia Punihaole Kennedy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Public financing for candidates to elected offices is pono. I respectfully ask for your strong support for this measure.

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 2:07:17 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Phil Barnes	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

It is the hallmark of democracy that public elections are conducted in a manner that allows equal power

to all registered voters. When large financial interest have undue influence there is no true democracy.

Public funding with small donations from

individuals who reside in the state is the best way to ensure clean government. Citizens United has

proved beyond a doubt the corrosive influence of big money in federal elections. We can do better in our

state.

Chair David Tarnas
Vice Chair Gregg Takayama

House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs

Friday, March 17, 2023
2:00PM

TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF SB1543 SD2 RELATING TO PUBLIC FINANCING FOR CANDIDATES TO ELECTED OFFICE

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Takayama, Members of the House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs,

My name is Jun Shin. I am a graduate of the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, a labor activist, and a member of the Hawai‘i State Youth Commission, testifying as an individual in **STRONG SUPPORT** of **SB1543 SD2**, Relating to Public Financing for Candidates to Elected Office.

This measure would set up fully publicly financed elections, going beyond our partially financed system. This means that if you participate as a candidate, you will be given an amount that will allow you to run a viable, effective campaign. If enacted, this measure would ban participating candidates from receiving any private donations at all. This means that working people who don’t come from well-to-do, well-connected, or “professional” jobs (with all due respect) will also have the opportunity to step up and have the funding to seriously run for office in order to serve their communities. It is good for democracy when we have more competitive elections that can get people interested and engaged.

That’s the important part of Senate Bill 1543 for, it encourages candidates to spend time in their constituencies and actually get buy-in/support from the broader community, which includes going to meetings and events in order to share why they are running for office, what their plans are, what are their thoughts on issues of the day, etc. It encourages you as a candidate to continue to seek and encourage public input and participation in your work once elected. It also slowly builds trust, it builds hope that the government can actually help make people’s lives easier and better. Hope that we are in desperate need of after all the corruption scandals. But even if you’re an incumbent now, this will make your life easier too. You won’t need to deal with the pressure of having to keep raising money in order to be reelected and you can just focus on doing the work of the people. You as an incumbent will be able to save costs in your overall campaign budget as well!

This system worked very well for Hawai‘i County Council races in 2010 and 2012, and currently works very well statewide in places like Connecticut and Maine. This is an opportunity to lessen the influence of money in politics, give political power to the people, make your lives as candidates easier, and restore the people’s trust in this body and in you all. Please **PASS Senate Bill 1543 SD2** out of your committee.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Jun Shin,

State House District 23 | State Senate District 12

Cell: 808-255-6663

Email: junshinbusiness729@gmail.com

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 5:46:40 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Motte Anne Snell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I'm a coffee farmer on BI. I support clean elections - stop big money lobbyists

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 6:07:37 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Caroline Kunitake	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members,

It's crucially important that this body does everything in its power to remove the influence money has on our politics. Corruption is far too rampant in Hawai'i and the pay-to-play behavior of our politicians needs to end now. Money in politics holds back progress on all the issues important to local working families: from affordable housing to cost of living, to protecting our environment, and more.

SB1543 would set up a system of fully publicly financed elections. It would provide participating candidates with competitive amounts of funding they need to run an effective campaign, and would ban them from receiving any private donations at all. This system worked very well for Hawai'i County Council races in 2010 and 2012 and currently works very well statewide in places like Connecticut and Maine. Partial public financing is not enough. As long as candidates need to rely on private donations to get elected, there will always be the risk of corruption, or the perception of it.

Please support SB1543 SD2.

Mahalo,

Caroline Kunitake

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 6:14:02 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rexann Dubiel	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please, don't be bought.

You represent the citizens of Hawaii.

Show your integrity and willingness to be elected on your merits.

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 6:32:40 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Melissa Barker	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Honorable Members,

I respectfully ask that you support SB1543 which would set up a system of publicly financed elections. This would lessen the influence of money in politics and restore the people's trust in our state government.

Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Melissa Barker

Kapaa, HI

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 7:19:30 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Zack Stoddard	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members,

It's crucially important that this body does everything in its power to remove the influence money has on our politics. Corruption is far too rampant in Hawai'i and the pay-to-play behavior of our politicians needs to end now. Money in politics holds back progress on all the issues important to local working families: from affordable housing, to cost of living, to protecting our environment, and more.

SB1543 would set up a system of fully publicly financed elections. It would provide participating candidates with competitive amounts of funding they need to run an effective campaign, and would ban them from receiving any private donations at all. This system worked very well for Hawai'i County Council races in 2010 and 2012, and currently works very well statewide in places like Connecticut and Maine. Partial public financing is not enough. As long as candidates need to rely on private donations to get elected, there will always be the risk of corruption, or the perception of it.

This is an opportunity to lessen the influence of money in politics, give political power to the people, and restore the people's trust in this body and in you all. All of these things are badly needed. Voters rank government corruption as the #3 top issue facing Hawai'i, and 74% of the Hawai'i voting public favors enacting public financed elections and ending the influence of corporate and private donations.

That's because we know that it's the single biggest thing we could do to end pay-to-play corruption in our politics and start building a Hawai'i that puts kama'āina and kānaka maoli, local people, first — not big money interests. Please, do the right thing. Mahalo.

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 7:27:21 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Hello,

SB1543 would set up a system of fully publicly financed elections. It would provide participating candidates with competitive amounts of funding they need to run an effective campaign, and would ban them from receiving any private donations at all. This system worked very well for the Hawai'i County Council races in 2010 and 2012, and currently works very well statewide in places like Connecticut and Maine.

It's crucially important that this body does everything in its power to remove the influence money has on politics. Corruption is growing problem that won't simply go away on its own. Please take this opportunity to reduce the influence big money has on politics and help get our democracy back on track.

me ke aloha 'āina,

Nanea Lo, Mō'ili'ili

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 7:33:47 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice-Chair Takayama, and Members of the JHA Committee:

I'm writing in **strong support** of SB1543 SD2. Following this and recent legislative sessions, I've seen too many bills with great public support fail to get a hearing or a vote because of the influence of big money. For a small cost of less than \$10 million per year, which is less than 0.1% of the state budget, we can set up a system that will lead to cleaner elections and help end pay-to-play corruption in our politics and start building a Hawai'i that puts kama'āina and kānaka maoli, local people, first — not big money interests.

SB1543 would provide participating candidates with competitive amounts of funding they need to run an effective campaign, and would ban them from receiving any private donations at all. This system worked very well for Hawai'i County Council races in 2010 and 2012, and currently works very well statewide in places like Connecticut and Maine. Partial public financing is not enough. As long as candidates need to rely on private donations to get elected, there will always be the risk of corruption, or the perception of it.

This is an opportunity to lessen the influence of money in politics, give political power to the people, and restore the people's trust in this body and in you all. All of these things are badly needed. Voters rank government corruption as the #3 top issue facing Hawai'i, and 74% of the Hawai'i voting public favors enacting public financed elections and ending the influence of corporate and private donations.

So please hear the voice of the public and fulfill their wish for a fairer and cleaner election system by passing this important bill out of your committee.

Respectfully,

Paul Bernstein

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 7:37:02 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Committee Members,

It's crucially important that this body does everything in its power to remove the influence money has on our politics. Corruption is far too rampant in Hawai'i and the pay-to-play behavior of our politicians needs to end now. Money in politics holds back progress on all the issues important to local working families: from affordable housing, to cost of living, to protecting our environment, and more.

SB1543 would set up a system of fully publicly financed elections. It would provide participating candidates with competitive amounts of funding they need to run an effective campaign, and would ban them from receiving any private donations at all. This system worked very well for Hawai'i County Council races in 2010 and 2012, and currently works very well statewide in places like Connecticut and Maine. Partial public financing is not enough. As long as candidates need to rely on private donations to get elected, there will always be the risk of corruption, or the perception of it.

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That's because we know that it's the single biggest thing we could do to end pay-to-play corruption in our politics and start building a Hawai'i that puts kama'āina and kānaka maoli, local people, first — not big money interests. Please, do the right thing.

Thank you

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 7:44:18 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I am in **STRONG SUPPORT** for public financing of elections of candidates who voluntarily agree to abide by campaign fundraising and expenditure guidelines!

Please pass this bill!

Mahalo! Ted Bohlen

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 7:53:26 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shannon Rudolph	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 7:54:13 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lilinoe De Gruy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello Committee Members,

It's crucially important that this body does everything in its power to remove the influence money has on our politics. Corruption is far too rampant in Hawai'i and the pay-to-play behavior of our politicians needs to end now. Money in politics holds back progress on all the issues important to local working families: from affordable housing, to cost of living, to protecting our environment, and more.

SB1543 would set up a system of fully publicly financed elections. It would provide participating candidates with competitive amounts of funding they need to run an effective campaign, and would ban them from receiving any private donations at all. This system worked very well for Hawai'i County Council races in 2010 and 2012, and currently works very well statewide in places like Connecticut and Maine. Partial public financing is not enough. As long as candidates need to rely on private donations to get elected, there will always be the risk of corruption, or the perception of it.

This is an opportunity to lessen the influence of money in politics, give political power to the people, and restore the people's trust in this body and in you all. All of these things are badly needed. Voters rank government corruption as the #3 top issue facing Hawai'i, and 74% of the Hawai'i voting public favors enacting public financed elections and ending the influence of corporate and private donations.

That's because we know that it's the single biggest thing we could do to end pay-to-play corruption in our politics and start building a Hawai'i that puts kama'āina and kānaka maoli, local people, first — not big money interests. Please, do the right thing.

Thank you for your consideration,
Lilinoe De Gruy, Honolulu, HI

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 7:57:08 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
bill parker	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

It's simply time to get private money out of what should be PUBLIC decision making. It can't and won't go on like it has been. Pass SB1543!!!

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 8:01:49 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Frances Salvato	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello Committee Members,

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Thank you for your consideration,
Frances Salvato, Pukalani, HI

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 8:03:37 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Hunter Heavilin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for SB1543, a bill that establishes a comprehensive system of public financing for all candidates seeking election to state and county public offices in Hawaii. This proposed legislation is a significant step towards promoting transparency and fairness in our political system by reducing the influence of big-money donors and promoting the involvement of everyday citizens in the electoral process.

By establishing a public financing system, SB1543 aims to make running for office more accessible for individuals who are not independently wealthy or well-connected. Furthermore, this legislation provides an avenue for candidates to compete on a level playing field, without being beholden to special interests.

The establishment of a comprehensive system of public financing for all candidates seeking election to state and county public offices in Hawaii is a crucial step towards creating a more transparent and democratic election process. The legislation ensures that candidates will be accountable to the people they represent, rather than to wealthy special interests. I urge lawmakers to support SB1543 and help to promote transparency, accountability, and fairness in our political system.

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 8:04:44 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ken Stover	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello Committee Members,

It's crucially important that this body does everything in its power to remove the influence money has on our politics. Corruption is far too rampant in Hawai'i and the pay-to-play behavior of our politicians needs to end now. Money in politics holds back progress on all the issues important to local working families: from affordable housing, to cost of living, to protecting our environment, and more.

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Thank you for your consideration,

Ken Stover

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 8:22:09 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Troy Schacht	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members,

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SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 8:39:02 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Please pass this bill.

It is past time we move on from special interests controlling government and allow the people to experience true democracy.

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 8:39:32 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Emily Gambino	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members,

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SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 8:39:44 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bruce L Hultgren	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly urge the passage of SB 1543. This bill will be a start at assuring public financing of elections. There is very strong support among my acquaintances, friends and family for this bill. and for this concept in general, (public funding for elections)

Younger voters in particular seem to be energized by the thought that we could eliminate at least some of the money involved in campaigning for public office. We have many talented and capable individuals who might be more likely to seek office themselves,, or to be more involved in the process as voters and advocates, if some of the money from vested interests were removed from campaigns.

This is a step on the way to better govenment for all our citizens. Please support its/' passage.

Respectfully,

Bruce Hultgren

Kailua, HI

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 8:41:36 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Please support SB1543, which would establish public financing for candidates for elected office. Thank you.

Jane E Arnold

1763 Iwi Way, Apt D

Honolulu, HI 96816

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 8:43:22 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mark Van Horne	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Publicly financed election campaigns are best because they level the playing field for all candidates, more voices are heard, and the corrupting influence of individual contributors is reduced or eliminated.

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 8:59:53 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I am in full support of elections that are not dominated by special interest money. Any true democracy should not be in service to those with the most money. And to that end public financing of candidates would serve us all.

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 9:02:58 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members,

It's crucially important that this body does everything in its power to remove the influence money has on our politics. Corruption is far too rampant in Hawai'i and the pay-to-play behavior of our politicians needs to end now. Money in politics holds back progress on all the issues important to local working families: from affordable housing, to cost of living, to protecting our environment, and more.

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That's because we know that it's the single biggest thing we could do to end pay-to-play corruption in our politics and start building a Hawai'i that puts kama'āina and kānaka maoli, local people, first — not big money interests. Please, do the right thing.

Mahalo.

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 9:04:23 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joan Heller	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Commission Chairman and Rep. S.

Support SB 1543 is not a political party

issue...take the money and parties out

of our current out-dated election process

(start with our state to show D.C. what

Democracy truly means).

I am grateful for this opportunity to submit

my comment!

Joan Heller

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 9:06:00 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

It's crucially important that this body does everything in its power to remove the influence money has on our politics. Corruption is far too rampant in Hawai'i and the pay-to-play behavior of our politicians needs to end now. Mahalo!

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 9:09:37 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sue Felt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass this bill. The influence of money has skewed our election processes throughout the United States. Let Hawaii be one to get the private money out of our election system.

Thank you,

Sue Felt

Kailua Kona, 96740

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 9:09:46 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

please support this bill to clean up our elections

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 9:21:54 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

This could go a long way toward reducing corruption.

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 9:22:33 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lori Kizer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support SB1543 SD2. Mahalo.

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 9:29:34 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
William R. Higa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

For the sake of a democratic system of fair and just elections, please adopt this bill! Mahalo & Aloha!

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 9:30:00 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I strongly support public financing of elections.

In Maine and Arizona, publicly financed elections costing under \$5 per taxpayer have increased voter turnout, the number and diversity of candidates (including women and people of color), candidate interaction with low- and moderate-income communities, and the number of contested races.

Our elected officials would no longer be just career politicians or people who know the right people, but regular folks from all walks of life: nurses, veterans, small business owners, teachers. Candidates could spend more time on ideas and less time raising money that tends to commit them to special interests.

Public financing elsewhere has decreased the spending gap between winning and losing candidates, the role of special interests in government decision making, and the time candidates and officeholders spend fundraising.

Mahalo for your yes vote.

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 9:33:15 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
John Witeck	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this public financing of elections bill, SB1543, and urge you to pass it! It is long overdue! Other states have passed similar measures. It is time to end the unfair advantage well-heeled and corporate-backed candidates have over other candidates. Let's have an equal playing field and allow more candidates and their ideas to be considered.

Please pass this measure! John Witeck

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 9:46:08 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

To: Ways and Means Chair Dela Cruz and Committee Members

From: Ann Pitcaithley

I am in strong support of SB 1543. Hawaii is long overdue for public financing.

The recent history of J. Kalani English and Representative Ty Cullen accepting cash bribes, have caused a loss of faith in the ethics of state government. The influence of big money in state government has been a known source of corruption and is undemocratic.

Evidence clearly indicates that publicly financed elections increase voter turnout, the number and diversity of candidates (including women and people of color), candidate interaction with low- and moderate-income communities, and the number of contested races.

Commission Chair Judge Foley and other Commission members. Common Cause also is a strong advocate. The Democratic Party of Hawai'i Platform states "We support full public-financing of elections government. Thirteen states already have adopted forms of publicly funded elections as do 20 local governments.

SB1543 passed out of the Senate with unanimous support by Democrats (and one of two Republicans. It's also strongly supported by the CISC Reform.

Please pass Bill 1543

Thank you for allowing me to testify.

Ann Pitcaithley, Maui

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 9:49:59 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Isis Osborne	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members,

It's crucially important that this body does everything in its power to remove the influence money has on our politics. Corruption is far too rampant in Hawai'i and the pay-to-play behavior of our politicians needs to end now. Money in politics holds back progress on all the issues important to local working families: from affordable housing, to cost of living, to protecting our environment, and more.

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This is an opportunity to lessen the influence of money in politics, give political power to the people, and restore the people's trust in this body and in you all. All of these things are badly needed. Voters rank government corruption as the #3 top issue facing Hawai'i, and 74% of the Hawai'i voting public favors enacting public financed elections and ending the influence of corporate and private donations.

That's because we know that it's the single biggest thing we could do to end pay-to-play corruption in our politics and start building a Hawai'i that puts kama'āina and kānaka maoli, local people, first — not big money interests. Please, do the right thing. Mahalo.

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 9:59:29 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members,

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More Talking Points

Talking Point #1 - Money currently has huge impact on our election

- **Candidates work for donations that create relationships that can cause corruption or the perception of it.**
- **Legislators are responsive to donors, since they fund their campaigns.**
- **Money is crucial to winning. 91% of candidates who outspend their opponent go on to win.**
- **Many elections are uncontested because potential candidates can't afford high price tag**
- **Average house winner spends \$40,000 compared to only \$16,000 for the loser.**
- **Over half of all campaign donations in 2022 came from just 980 donors who each gave at least \$6,000.**

Talking Point #2 - Clean Elections will create a fairer system

- **Candidates can get support from their constituents rather than wealthy donors.**
- **Elections will become more competitive with a more diverse set of candidates.**
- **Legislators will be free to act on behalf of voters without being concerned about what their donors think.**
- **Candidates can spend more time with constituents rather than fundraising.**
- **A system of fully publicly financed elections is supported by 74% of Hawai'i voters.**
- **Corruption is the third biggest issue for Hawai'i voters after affordable housing and cost of living concerns.**
- **The House Commission to Improve Standards of Conduct strongly supports public financing in its final report.**

Talking Point #3 - Cost of this program is very small

- **At less than \$10 million per year, this is less than 0.1% of the state budget.**
- **The state's current general funds balance of \$2.6 billion could pay for over 200 years of clean elections.**
- **A \$1 visitor fee or marijuana legalization would generate more revenue than this program.**
- **Legislators who aren't beholden to donors can save costs elsewhere in the budget.**
- **SB1543 would likely cost about \$6.50 per resident per year.**
- **Clean Elections have been cheap and effective in other states**

Talking Point #4 - We aren't reinventing the wheel

- **Big Island County Council races had this program in 2010 and 2012.**
- **Connecticut and Maine have clean elections statewide which are both very popular and successful.**

- **Over 70% of Democratic legislators use this program in Maine.**
- **Connecticut's program was established to get money out of politics following large corruption scandals.**
- **HB1481 would have offered statewide clean elections in 2013 but it died in conference committee.**

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 9:59:30 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha to Committee Members,

Please, please, PLEASE support SB1543, which would set up a system of fully publicly financed elections. I am strongly supportive of ALL the legislative reforms proposed by the Commission to Improve Standards of Conduct, and **the clean elections bill is the top priority one for me**. In Hawaii we have had ample evidence in recent years of the corrupting influence of money in politics. When politicians depend on donations in order to get elected, it's just too easy for corruption to creep in. Also, without publicly financed elections, politicians have to spend far too much of their time doing fundraising -- time better spent just concentrating on working on crafting good legislation!

Thank you very much for your consideration of my comments.

Aloha, Marcia Kemble (Makiki)

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 9:59:33 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Wendy Arbeit	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill because I believe it will increase voter turnout as well as encourage non-incumbants to run for office, resulting in more of our citizens being educated about our bills and laws and engaged in the voting process.

Yes, yes to public-financed elections to balance moneys from special interests.

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 9:59:33 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jamie Chaney	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members,

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That's because we know that it's the single biggest thing we could do to end pay-to-play corruption in our politics and start building a Hawai'i that puts kama'āina and kānaka maoli, local people, first — not big money interests. Please, do the right thing. Mahalo,

Jamie Chaney

Haiku resident

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 10:27:31 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kilihea Inaba	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members,

This testimony is in support of SB1543. By setting up a system of fully publicly financed elections, we would be ridding Hawaii's governing body of corruption through private donations. This would be beneficial for all, if the candidates themselves are acting in a pono manner. This affects all of us and puts the power back into the hands of the people who truly care about the wellbeing of Hawaii and her people, removing the interest that big money and big players have in this process.

Please please please do the pono thing and support SB1543.

Mahalo nui,

Kilihea Inaba (Kaloko, Kona, Hawaii)

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 10:27:32 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Doris Segal Matsunaga	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support SB 1543. Mahalo

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 10:27:37 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Dear Senators,

Please support SB1543. It has been shown that publicly financed local elections can work well. They increase voter turnout, the number and diversity of candidates (including women and people of color), candidate interaction with low- and moderate-income communities, and the number of contested races.

Hawaii needs this action.

Thanks for your consideration,

Susan Stayton, Lawai, Kauai, HI

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 10:29:42 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marilyn Mick	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

Please support this Bill. This is an opportunity to lessen the influence of money in politics, give political power to the people, and restore the people's trust in this body and in you all. All of these things are badly needed. Voters rank government corruption as the #3 top issue facing Hawai'i, and 74% of the Hawai'i voting public favors enacting public financed elections and ending the influence of corporate and private donations.

That's because we know that it's the single biggest thing we could do to end pay-to-play corruption in our politics and start building a Hawai'i that puts kama'āina and kānaka maoli, local people, first — not big money interests. Please, do the right thing.

Mahalo, Marilyn Mick. Honolulu

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 10:29:51 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lauren Ballesteros-Watanabe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice-Chair Takayama, and members of the committee,

It's crucially important that this body does everything in its power to remove the influence money has on our politics. Corruption is far too rampant in Hawai'i and the pay-to-play behavior of our politicians needs to end now. Money in politics holds back progress on all the issues important to local working families: from affordable housing, to cost of living, to protecting our environment, and more.

SB1543 would set up a system of fully publicly financed elections. It would provide participating candidates with competitive amounts of funding they need to run an effective campaign, and would ban them from receiving any private donations at all. This system worked very well for Hawai'i County Council races in 2010 and 2012, and currently works very well statewide in places like Connecticut and Maine. Partial public financing is not enough. As long as candidates need to rely on private donations to get elected, there will always be the risk of corruption, or the perception of it.

This is an opportunity to lessen the influence of money in politics, give political power to the people, and restore the people's trust in this body and in you all. All of these things are badly needed. Voters rank government corruption as the #3 top issue facing Hawai'i, and 74% of the Hawai'i voting public favors enacting public financed elections and ending the influence of corporate and private donations.

That's because we know that it's the single biggest thing we could do to end pay-to-play corruption in our politics and start building a Hawai'i that puts kama'āina and kānaka maoli, local people, first — not big money interests. Please, do the right thing.

Thank you for your consideration,
Lauren Ballesteros-Watanabe, Makiki

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 10:38:07 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
TOM DIGRAZIA	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support SB1543. Public financing is the first towards more democratic elections.

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 10:40:04 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Martha Nakajima	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this bill which passed the Senate with a huge majority. It's an excellent move for HI.

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 11:06:37 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Doorae Shin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Doorae Shin and I strongly support this measure.

Mahalo,
Doorae

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 11:09:22 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Victoria Anderson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass this important bill! Get money out of politics!

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 11:23:41 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
ANDREW ISODA	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members,

It's crucially important that this body does everything in its power to remove the influence money has on our politics. Corruption is far too rampant in Hawai'i and the pay-to-play behavior of our politicians needs to end now. Money in politics holds back progress on all the issues important to local working families: from affordable housing, to cost of living, to protecting our environment, and more.

SB1543 would set up a system of fully publicly financed elections. It would provide participating candidates with competitive amounts of funding they need to run an effective campaign, and would ban them from receiving any private donations at all. This system worked very well for Hawai'i County Council races in 2010 and 2012, and currently works very well statewide in places like Connecticut and Maine. Partial public financing is not enough. As long as candidates need to rely on private donations to get elected, there will always be the risk of corruption, or the perception of it.

This is an opportunity to lessen the influence of money in politics, give political power to the people, and restore the people's trust in this body and in you all. All of these things are badly needed. Voters rank government corruption as the #3 top issue facing Hawai'i, and 74% of the Hawai'i voting public favors enacting public financed elections and ending the influence of corporate and private donations.

That's because we know that it's the single biggest thing we could do to end pay-to-play corruption in our politics and start building a Hawai'i that puts kama'āina and kānaka maoli, local people, first — not big money interests. Please, do the right thing. Mahalo.

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 11:25:26 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
tia pearson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The answer to getting rid of the houseless is to ensure we all have access to permanently affordable housing. Also, we need to keep corporation from buying up homes for profit. The prices can come down where more people can afford homes.

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 11:25:48 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dale Jensen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Committee Members,

Like most of the voting public, I have been distressed and discouraged to see the recent incidents of publically exposed corruption within members of the state legislature. While other members of the state legislature and administration have expressed outrage at such corruption, true action to end the influence of money in politics has yet to be achieved. SB1543 SD2 is a step toward honest government that truly serves the people of the Hawaii. Please support this measure.

Our state faces major problems, many of which have plagued us for years such as homelessness and subpar education of our young people. Other problems such as the gradual and unending threat of climate change have only been widely recognized in the last 20 years, but looms large on our future. Clearly, the state and country governments have a lot of work to do and an infusion of energy and new ideas is required to help resolve these problems. I would hope that this bill, in addition to ending corruption, will also help "level the playing field" in our election process and allow new voices, different ideas and personalities into our legislature. It could incentivize more young people to run for office and provide the energy, ideas and enthusiasm needed to find long term solutions to our problems.

Please vote in favor of this bill and in favor of a fairer and more equitable election process for Hawaii.

Sincerely

Dale Jensen, Kailua, Oahu

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 11:34:18 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Charlene K. Rowley	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Tarnas and Committee members,

Campaign finance reform is one of the most pressing issues facing fair elections and government reform that ultimately trickles down into a fair democratic process and increasing representation for marginalized communities.

Publicly financed elections increase voter turnout, the number and diversity of candidates (including women and people of color), candidate interaction with low- and moderate-income communities, and the number of contested races.

Please SUPPORT this measure!

Sincerley,

Kiana Rowley, BSN RN, SNM/SWHNP

'Oma'opio Kula Maui

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 11:37:23 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Eileen McKee	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am writing in strong support for SB1543. The passage of this bill will hopefully help level the playing field for all of Hawai'i's citizens, not just those that are affiliated with big money pacs. Mahalo for considering my testimony.

Eileen McKee, Kihei

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 11:43:20 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Please support this important bill, which will widen all voter's choices!

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 11:57:15 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
John Fitzpatrick	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Honorable House Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs committee,

My name is John Fitzpatrick and I support SB 1543 SD2 which would publicly fund elections and give a stronger voice to the people. Because so much money can be given to a certain candidate it is hard for normal teachers, fire fighters, police officers, and nurses to name a few to run for public office. There is such a huge gap between the haves and everybody else that it is hard to compete in an election against huge money and super pacs.

Getting rid of the perceived pay for play politics would go a long way to bringing power back to the people.

Imagine what we could do if you did not have to seek tens of thousands of dollar campaign contributions every year and you only had to get a bunch of \$5 donations from real working class people?

As a constituent who had their Senator Kalani English arrested I feel campaign finance reform is essential to bring trust back between government and the citizens of Hawaii.

Please pass this legislation and give power back to the people, reject citizens united at the State and County level!

Mahalo,
Fitz

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 12:09:48 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Beth Anderson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I support SB 1543 because it is so important the legislature does everything in its power to eliminate the influence money has on our politics, who gets elected and what issues and projects they support. Corruption has been widespread in Hawaii, especially lately, and much of it has involved pay back to politicians. Politicians are often given campaign money to influence their decisions. This money often comes from corporations, developers, unions, and others who can donate big money to campaigns and give pay to play offers.

This often leaves out the influence the average constituent has on politicians. Money in politics hold back progress on all the issues important to local working families: from affordable housing, to cost of living, to protecting our environment, repairing our infrastructure, roads we use every day to go to work, schools in disrepair and lacking resources that our keiki attend, dismal conditions and disrepair of our parks, recreation center facilities, beaches and trails, and needed care of our natural resources.

SB1543 would set up a system of fully publicly financed elections which would level the playing field and stop the influence of wealthy campaign donors. It would provide participating candidates with competitive amount of funding they need to run an effective campaign, and ban them from receiving any private donations. In the past election, we even saw mainland organizations coming in and running ads on TV for some candidates. It is out of control.

The system to rid the influence of campaign donors and set up fully publicly financed elections worked very well for Hawaii County races in 2010 and 2012 and currently works very well statewide in places like Connecticut and Maine. Partial public funding is not enough. As long as candidates rely on private donations to get elected, there will always be the risk of corruption, or perception of it.

I have seen this personally in regard to an issue I have been involved in advocating for. The opposing side includes one of the most powerful political entities and biggest contributors to campaign funds in the state. It is difficult to get some politicians to even consider listening to the people on the side I am on because of this. I think many politicians would be able to look at certain issues objectively instead of being obligated to people who donate heavily to their campaign if elections were publically funded.

This is an opportunity to lessen the influence of money in politics, give political power to the people, restore the people's trust in this body and in all of you. All of these things are badly needed. Voters ranked government corruption as the #3 top issue facing Hawaii, and 74% of the Hawaii voting public favors enacting public financed elections and ending the influence of corporate and private donations.

Please do the right thing and put the people of Hawaii first and end pay-to-play corruption in our politics.

Mahalo.

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 12:27:19 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
janice palma-glennie	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

aloha,

there is no more important effort for this legislature than working to reign in the funding of campaigns for elections to public office. Our system is increasingly corrupted and owned by the special and corporate interests that pay obscene amounts of money to insure that their favorite candidates (or those they wish to have indebted to them) support their causes. Those causes are often, if not usually, not in the best interest of We the People and generally cost taxpayers more than if those entities weren't involved in legislating.

i'm going through a demoralizing process of getting my home reinstured. Having had 3 (small) claims happen in one year (first time ever) due to very bad luck, we were left with only one option: pay exorbitant fees or face the potential of having a devastating future loss due to unforeseen causes. As we went through the grueling, sleep-stealing process, it became more and more clear that the insurance industry is far more interested in insuring their own bottom line and insulation from loss than the homes of regular people who don't use their homes to make money (STVRs, 2nd home, etc) but to actually live in are.

Insurance companies are just one example of corporate entites who pay to play. They apparently have no obligation to insure anyone who poses even the slightest risk to them, even if their clients have paid their dues on time and in good faith for decades. Only by paying through the nose and being at their mercy were we able to get insurance to protect ourselves and all we've worked for our entire lives.

Please sign this bill and help work toward even stronger, public-protective legislation in the future.

mahalo and sincerely,

janice palma-glennie

kailua-kona

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 12:34:23 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lennart Lundstrom	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha

This may not be the solution to all the problems with campaign financing but it is at least a move in the right direction. Our current system is designed for big money donors and corporate influence, not the citizens of our state.

Please vote for clean,fair elections.

Mahalo

Lennart Lundstrom

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 12:56:13 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shannon Matson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members,

As a candidate who has run on partial public funding twice now, I can strongly vouch for an expansion of this program. This is a crucial step towards creating an even playing field for all candidates and having true accountability in our election process.

SB1543 would set up a system of fully publicly financed elections. It would provide participating candidates with competitive amounts of funding they need to run an effective campaign, and would ban them from receiving any private donations at all. This system worked very well for Hawai'i County Council races in 2010 and 2012, and currently works very well statewide in places like Connecticut and Maine. Partial public financing is not enough. As long as candidates need to rely on private donations to get elected, there will always be the risk of corruption, or the perception of it.

This is an opportunity to lessen the influence of money in politics, give political power to the people, and restore the people's trust in the system. All of these things are badly needed. Voters rank government corruption as the #3 top issue facing Hawai'i, and 74% of the Hawai'i voting public favors enacting public financed elections and ending the influence of corporate and private donations.

Please pass this bill.

**Mahalo,
Shannon Matson
Hawai'i Island Resident**

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 1:16:40 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Matthew Thomas	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Committee chair Tarnas, SB1543 fights the Citizen's United decision and it's abusers. SB1543 enables Hawaii voters to field it's best candidates. We the people can empower candidates focused on the entire Hawaii state. We need SB1543 YESTERDAY. The less-than-best legislative efforts cannot continue. SB1543 enables legislative candidates to bear down on problems, free from concerns re campaign funding. Free up our state to meet our challenges with our most capable, concerned candidates

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 1:23:05 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jeffrey Mermel	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Legislators....I stand IN SUPPORT of SB1543 that provides public funding of candidates for public office.

It's time to take BIG MONEY OUT of politics.

Let's follow the good example of several other states that have passed Public Financing of elections.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Jeffrey Mermel

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 1:24:35 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Thomas Brandt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strong support!

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 1:28:32 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
RoxAnne Lawson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I sincerely request you vote yes on SB1543. From my view our democracy is at a tipping point. It's time to hero up.

This is an opportunity to empower, respect & positively engage with the citizen's of Hawaii. The rich and powerful should not be the only voices heard. We need to rely on democratic principles.

By passing publicly financed elections (SB1543) you are sending a clear message that every voice counts. Please take the money out of politics so you might more easily do the job of governing.

Aloha, RoxAnne Lawson D8

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 1:39:05 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Barbara Best	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Of course we should take the opportunity to lessen corruption from money in politics. It's supposed to be a government for the people.

Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs

Chair David A. Tarnas, Vice Chair Gregg Takayama

Wednesday, March 17, 22, 2023, 2:00 p.m., Room 325 & Via Videoconference

SB1543 SD2 - RELATING TO PUBLIC FINANCING FOR CANDIDATES
TO ELECTED OFFICE

TESTIMONY- Janet Mason, Honolulu

Chair Tarnas, Vice-Chair Takayama and Committee Members:

I strongly support SB 1543, SD2, which would **establish a comprehensive system of public financing for all candidates seeking election to state and county public offices in the State of Hawaii, beginning with h the 2026 general election year.**

Public funding for candidates, not political parties, should be available for all State and County elective offices in both the primary and general elections. I am gratified that your Committee is considering this measure in addition to considering HB95, HD2 which offers a slight increase in funding under the existing partial funding program.

Recently I was honored to serve as a Commissioner on the Hawaii House “Commission to Improve Standards of Conduct (CISC). Our Commission did recommend that the legislature provide more funds to candidates than HB95 offers, “because public funding expands the reach of many small donors and can relieve candidates of the need to rely on the support of special interest groups or large donors.” SB1543 could help achieve this objective since there is still an unfortunate perception that elected officials are making decisions with undue influence from private lobbyists and campaign donors.

Some people have objected to this bill on the basis that future publicly funded candidates would not have to devote the time and energy to raising private campaign money in the same way incumbent elected officials have. This argument reminds me of my girlhood, when I was struggling to finance my college education and skeptics thought I shouldn't rely on public Pell grants or Federal student loans. Without this financial aid college was out of reach for me, but I benefited from the equal opportunity offered to me. The public made an investment in me in hoping I would contribute somehow to the economic development of my country. At heart isn't full public campaign financing also an “equal opportunity,” for those who are not wealthy or who do not have access to wealth through conventional fundraising? I think so. This measure is a better alternative. Furthermore, candidates are required to raise qualifying contributions sufficient to demonstrate they are viable candidates, meriting public investment in their candidacy.

Concerns have also arisen about the ongoing cost of operating a State program such as that provided in the bill. An initial appropriation of \$30 million was contained in the original version of SB 1053, but was subsequently deleted. I do not know how this figure was derived – at first glance it may be equivalent to operation of two election cycles (with a primary and general election in each cycle) of campaigning.

It is impossible to know with certainty what the initial “take up rate” would be for the proposed program, and this probably explains concerns about the adequacy of a \$30 million appropriation or whether this amount is too large. But this ignores the fact that there will be a period of evaluation following an initial public investment, and this evaluation centers around the Legislature’s normal budgeting review process, where our elected representatives can weigh in on the advisability (and affordability) of the next round of campaign financing. Operation of the program envisioned by this bill is not guaranteed!

In addition to the initial appropriation to the fund, the original version of this bill authorized \$200 thousand from this fund for fiscal year 2023-24 and \$200 thousand for fiscal year 2024-25 to prepare for elections taking place in 2024. I defer to the Campaign Spending Commission on the adequacy of these amounts, but it is essential to provide for additional staff for the Campaign Spending Commission for the new and broader mission they would carry under this bill. If the measure does not take effect until the General Election of 2026, these amounts and dates need to be adjusted accordingly.

It is my sincere hope that the spending limits for elective offices described in the bill will be accepted by potential candidates. Hawaii is searching for a “sweet spot,” where candidates find the limits adequate, but taxpayers are not overly burdened. Other states like Maine have successfully taken the plunge, so Hawaii can learn from their success.

The U.S. Supreme Court in its “Citizens United,” ruling has already decided that spending limits are unconstitutional unless candidates accept public funding. Let’s try a different path here in Hawaii - a public financing program that helps reduce the escalating cost of campaigns, eliminating the reliance on big contributions from wealthy donors. Let’s also make it likely that qualified first-time candidates without wealth or access to wealth could be more confident about paying for campaign expenses.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 2:05:45 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Hello Committee Members,

It's crucially important that this body does everything in its power to remove the influence money has on our politics. Corruption is far too rampant in Hawai'i and the pay-to-play behavior of our politicians needs to end now. Money in politics holds back progress on all the issues important to local working families: from affordable housing, to cost of living, to protecting our environment, and more.

SB1543 would set up a system of fully publicly financed elections. It would provide participating candidates with competitive amounts of funding they need to run an effective campaign, and would ban them from receiving any private donations at all. This system worked very well for Hawai'i County Council races in 2010 and 2012, and currently works very well statewide in places like Connecticut and Maine. Partial public financing is not enough. As long as candidates need to rely on private donations to get elected, there will always be the risk of corruption, or the perception of it.

This is an opportunity to lessen the influence of money in politics, give political power to the people, and restore the people's trust in this body and in you all. All of these things are badly needed. Voters rank government corruption as the #3 top issue facing Hawai'i, and 74% of the Hawai'i voting public favors enacting public financed elections and ending the influence of corporate and private donations.

That's because we know that it's the single biggest thing we could do to end pay-to-play corruption in our politics and start building a Hawai'i that puts kama'āina and kānaka maoli, local people, first — not big money interests. Please, do the right thing.

Mahalo Nui,

Noelani Ahia, Wailuku Maui

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 2:06:03 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joyce Baker	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members,

It's crucially important that this body does everything in its power to remove the influence money has on our politics. Corruption is far too rampant in Hawai'i and the pay-to-play behavior of our politicians needs to end now. Money in politics holds back progress on all the issues important to local working families: from affordable housing, to cost of living, to protecting our environment, and more.

SB1543 would set up a system of fully publicly financed elections. It would provide participating candidates with competitive amounts of funding they need to run an effective campaign, and would ban them from receiving any private donations at all. This system worked very well for Hawai'i County Council races in 2010 and 2012, and currently works very well statewide in places like Connecticut and Maine. Partial public financing is not enough. As long as candidates need to rely on private donations to get elected, there will always be the risk of corruption, or the perception of it.

This is an opportunity to lessen the influence of money in politics, give political power to the people, and restore the people's trust in this body and in you all. All of these things are badly needed. Voters rank government corruption as the #3 top issue facing Hawai'i, and 74% of the Hawai'i voting public favors enacting public financed elections and ending the influence of corporate and private donations.

That's because we know that it's the single biggest thing we could do to end pay-to-play corruption in our politics and start building a Hawai'i that puts kama'āina and kānaka maoli, local people, first — not big money interests. Please, do the right thing. Mahalo.

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 2:45:56 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha, Committee Members,

The undue influence of money in politics not only distorts our democratic processes, but it also erodes public confidence. Voters rank government corruption as the #3 top issue facing Hawai`i. 74% of the Hawai`i voting public favors enacting public financed elections and ending the influence of corporate and private donations.

SB1543 SD2 would set up a system of fully publicly financed elections. It would provide participating candidates with competitive amounts of funding they need to run an effective campaign, and would ban them from receiving any private donations at all. This system worked very well for Hawai`i County Council races in 2010 and 2012, and currently works very well statewide in places like Connecticut and Maine. Partial public financing is not enough. As long as candidates need to rely on private donations to get elected, there will always be the risk of corruption, or the perception of it.

Critically, it implements recommendations of the Commission to Improve Standards of Conduct.

Money in politics holds back progress on all the issues important to local working families, from affordable housing to the cost of living here, to stewarding our environment across the generations, and more. SB1543 SD2 is a critical part of establishing a system with greater integrity.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in SUPPORT of SB1543 SD2.

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 2:47:51 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members,

SB1543 would set up a system of fully publicly financed elections. It would provide participating candidates with competitive amounts of funding they need to run an effective campaign and would ban them from receiving private donations. This system worked well for Hawai'i County Council races in 2010 and 2012 and worked well statewide in Connecticut and Maine. Partial public financing is not enough. As long as candidates need to rely on private donations to get elected, there will always be the risk of corruption or the perception of it.

This is an opportunity to lessen the influence of money in politics, give political power to the people, and restore the people's trust in this body and in you all. All of these things are badly needed. Voters rank government corruption as the #3 top issue facing Hawai'i, and 74% of the Hawai'i voting public favors enacting publicly financed elections and ending the influence of corporate and private donations.

That's because we know that it's the single biggest thing we could do to end pay-to-play corruption in our politics and start building a Hawai'i that puts kama'āina and kānaka maoli, local people, first — not big money interests.

Thank you for your consideration and kind hearts, and believing the goodness will win on this earth.

Kind Regards,

Ezgi Green/ Kaimanu/ Waialua

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 2:52:10 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dana Keawe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 2:54:34 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members,

It's crucially important that this body does everything in its power to remove the influence money has on our politics. Corruption is far too rampant in Hawai'i and the pay-to-play behavior of our politicians needs to end now. Money in politics holds back progress on all the issues important to local working families: from affordable housing, to cost of living, to protecting our environment, and more.

SB1543 would set up a system of fully publicly financed elections. It would provide participating candidates with competitive amounts of funding they need to run an effective campaign, and would ban them from receiving any private donations at all. This system worked very well for Hawai'i County Council races in 2010 and 2012, and currently works very well statewide in places like Connecticut and Maine. Partial public financing is not enough. As long as candidates need to rely on private donations to get elected, there will always be the risk of corruption, or the perception of it.

This is an opportunity to lessen the influence of money in politics, give political power to the people, and restore the people's trust in this body and in you all. All of these things are badly needed. Voters rank government corruption as the #3 top issue facing Hawai'i, and 74% of the Hawai'i voting public favors enacting public financed elections and ending the influence of corporate and private donations.

That's because we know that it's the single biggest thing we could do to end pay-to-play corruption in our politics and start building a Hawai'i that puts kama'āina and kānaka maoli, local people, first — not big money interests. Please, do the right thing. Mahalo

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 3:16:22 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cynthia Conrad	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please end corruption in Hawaii government and set up a system of publicly financed elections. It would lessen the influence of big corporations and give power to the people. Please put people first, not big money interests. Mahalo.

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 4:03:44 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Barbara L. George	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

STRONGLY SUPPORT!!!!

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 4:05:32 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Dear Chair and Committee Members,

I, Diane Ware, strongly support meaningful public financing and have for years due to the regrettable influence of money in decision making. Common Cause also is a strong advocate. The Democratic Party of Hawai'i Platform states "We support full public-financing of elections." I urge you to vote in support.

Respectfully submitted looking for clean elections.

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 4:23:25 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kaleopono Norris	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha kakou. So many of us hoi poloi for many years have felt that we individually and collectively have no chance at influencing Hawaii state and county legislation, policies and programs to bring about the results we fervently want to experience out in our communities at the grassroots. For so many years we have had democracy in skeletal form often lacking the "meat" of affected and deeply caring citizen input. Many have lost hope and abandoned taking the trouble to even vote. This bill shows promise of re-energizing Hawaii politics and elections and bringing more citizens into participation in democratic self-government. Please guide this nill promptly through your committee with your recommendation for favorable action by all subsequent committes it will be regerred to; and that Governor Green sign in promptly. Mahalo, Kaleopono



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Friday, March 17, 2023

Senate Bill 1543 SD2 Relating to Public Financing for Candidates to Elected Office
Testifying in Support

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Takayama and members of the Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs,

I'd like to begin by thanking this committee for hearing and advancing so many of the bills proposed by the Commission to Improve Standards of Conduct (CISC). Of all the issues discussed and proposed by the CISC, expanding publicly funded elections in Hawai'i is, in my estimation, the most significant step toward strengthening public trust in the legislature and in our elected officials.

This bill makes substantial improvements to Hawai'i's existing public funding system. Most significantly, the maximum amounts provided to candidates are considerably increased. As such, candidates utilizing the public funding system will be able to better compete with candidates who seek "private" funding of their campaigns.

The \$30,000,000 minimum proposed for the Hawaii Election Campaign Fund could prove transformative for our elections. Both for incumbents and new candidates. This figure amounts to less than 1% of the total State budget for FY23. It would certainly be money well spent.

Until there is a concerted and unified effort to close the floodgates opened by the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in *Citizens United v. FEC*, unlimited money in elections is here to stay. At least for now. The damaging influence of money in politics is real. But that doesn't mean we can't take meaningful steps to help level the playing field. That's what this bill will do.

Why It's Good for the Public

Whether you agree with the sentiment or not, there is a very real, very palpable belief among the electorate that our politicians are bought and paid for by powerful moneyed interests. Interests that are diametrically different to those of ordinary working people.

Add that to the fact that more and more money is spent on elections every cycle and the disillusionment with elections in Hawai'i (and the country) becomes more understandable.

SB1543 addresses the root of that disillusionment in a very practical way; by giving candidates the option not to solicit or accept "private" contributions. Candidates (both challengers and incumbents) want their constituents to have confidence they will have fair and balanced representation at the legislature, this will definitely help do that by reducing corporate interests in the political process. If we truly want greater participation in our election process, passage of this bill will allow the State to take a big step in the right direction.

Why It's Good for Incumbents

In the last few years, conversations have increased about sitting legislators fundraising during the legislative session. In some respects, it's understandable. Competitive campaigns have become increasingly expensive. That means more and more time and more and more energy has to be spent on fundraising.

This not only undermines the public's trust in our political institutions, but it distracts elected officials from doing the job they were sent to do: govern responsibly. In fact, a 2012 study by the Maine Policy Review (<https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1081&context=mpr>) of Maine's publicly funded elections system found "[i]n terms of actual wins and losses, challengers are only more likely to win if they participate in MCEA and the incumbent does not." While some advocates claim it will help challengers defeat incumbents, at least some evidence suggests otherwise. So, if the goal is to unseat incumbents, this bill may not do the trick.

However, if the goal is to make elections more competitive and reduce the influence of corporate money in politics, this could very well be a game-changer. By establishing a robust and well-funded publicly funded elections system, as established by this bill, we could restore real trust in our political institutions without incumbents feeling like they are sacrificing themselves.

In addition to the Maine law, this bill is also modeled after the Hawai'i County public elections pilot that was in place for two election cycles a decade ago. While I was not able to find data-sourced materials to support the sentiment, my anecdotal conversations with community members and Hawai'i Council Members who participated in the program had similar experiences to those laid out in the Maine Policy Review article.

Why It's Good for Challengers

As someone who has not only worked on several campaigns over the years, as well as one who seriously considered running himself, I can say first-hand how daunting fundraising can be for new candidates.

Easing just this one burden of having to fundraise \$30,000 to \$50,000 to run a competitive House race could have untold benefits for community members seeking to engage in the political process by running for office.

As the bill clearly spells out, these candidates won't simply be handed a huge sum of money to run their campaigns. They need to go out into their communities. They'll need to talk to voters and earn enough support among them to receive the number of \$5 contributions necessary to qualify for the program. That in itself will take work, time, patience, and some skill. But it's what we should expect of all of our candidates running for elective office.

By creating clear rules and goals for meeting the program's requirements for participation, potential challengers will gain valuable experience and confidence to run by collecting the required number of contributions. Or, they'll find they need to do more work in the district before becoming "viable".

This bill is good for all of you. It's good for potential challengers. It's good for the electorate. And it's good for Hawai'i.

I hope you will find it in yourselves to move this bill forward. We desperately need it.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Josh Frost". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping initial "J" and "F".

Josh Frost

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 7:18:52 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Patricia Blair	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

It's a good start.

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 7:49:04 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elaine Wender	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strongly support. Please pass this legislation to get money out of politics.

Elaine Wender

Wailuku

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 8:12:50 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Public financing for all candidates seeking election to state and county public offices in Hawaii would help increase voter turnout, the number and diversity of candidates (including women and people of color), candidate interaction with low- and moderate-income communities, and the number of contested races. Please support this bill.

Mahalo nui loa,

Judith Wilhoite

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 8:34:23 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tom Coffman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Fifty years ago I wrote a 14-part series on campaign finance for the Star-Bulletin, recently digitized by a diligent PH.D. student. That it remains relevant today is testimony for decisive action on your part. Thank you. Tom Coffman ...

see <https://docs.google.com/document/d/13prBNI8LUHRXL7Em3dB2e86VYjX59pQED2L3muo3hBg/edit?usp=sharing>

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 8:36:18 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mishka Sulva	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members,

It's crucially important that this body does everything in its power to remove the influence money has on our politics. Corruption is far too rampant in Hawai'i and the pay-to-play behavior of our politicians needs to end now. Money in politics holds back progress on all the issues important to local working families: from affordable housing, to cost of living, to protecting our environment, and more.

SB1543 would set up a system of fully publicly financed elections. It would provide participating candidates with competitive amounts of funding they need to run an effective campaign, and would ban them from receiving any private donations at all. This system worked very well for Hawai'i County Council races in 2010 and 2012, and currently works very well statewide in places like Connecticut and Maine. Partial public financing is not enough. As long as candidates need to rely on private donations to get elected, there will always be the risk of corruption, or the perception of it.

This is an opportunity to lessen the influence of money in politics, give political power to the people, and restore the people's trust in this body and in you all. All of these things are badly needed. Voters rank government corruption as the #3 top issue facing Hawai'i, and 74% of the Hawai'i voting public favors enacting public financed elections and ending the influence of corporate and private donations.

That's because we know that it's the single biggest thing we could do to end pay-to-play corruption in our politics and start building a Hawai'i that puts kama'āina and kānaka maoli, local people, first — not big money interests. Please, do the right thing.

Thank you for your consideration,
Mishka Sulva, Pālolo, Honolulu

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 10:03:19 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Harvey Stone	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hi,

I supprt this proposed legislation for public financing of campaigns a thousand percent!

Thank you for introducing it. If passed in HI...and subsequently in other states...what a difference it will make gainig bi-partisan support for legislation...restoring trust between the parties...restoring trust between voters and campaigns...etc etc etc.

When passed, it will make our elections fairer and more accurately reflect the will of voters rather than the influence of large donors and the people in the legislature whom they enlist in their particular causes.

VOTE YES on SB1543!!!

Harvey Stone

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2023 2:47:57 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lynn J Ishii	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members,

If you support fair and clean elections in this State, it's crucially important that this body does everything in its power to remove the influence money has on our politics. Corruption is far too rampant in Hawai'i and the pay-to-play behavior of our politicians needs to end now. Money in politics holds back progress on all the issues important to local working families: from affordable housing, to cost of living, especially to protecting our environment, and establishing local sustainable regenerative food systems and more. If you truly represent your constituents, the working people who voted for you in hopes of a safe and healthy community for all, why would you not support getting the influence of wealthy, self-serving donors out of our politics?

SB1543 would set up a system of fully publicly financed elections. It would provide participating candidates with field-leveling competitive amounts of funding they need to run an effective campaign, and would ban them from receiving any private donations at all. Imagine, candidates having to run on their merits rather than their wealthy interests' coffers? This system worked very well for Hawai'i County Council races in 2010 and 2012, and currently works very well statewide in places like Connecticut and Maine. Partial public financing is not enough. As long as candidates need to rely on private donations to get elected, there will always be the risk of corruption, or the perception of it.

This is an opportunity to shift the political paradigm and finally mitigate the influence of money in politics. Please support SB1543 and do the right thing by giving political power to the people, and restore the people's TRUST in this body and in YOU all. All of these things are badly needed. Voters rank government corruption as the #3 top issue facing Hawai'i, and 74% of the Hawai'i voting public favors enacting public financed elections and ending the influence of corporate and private donations!

That's because we know that it's the single biggest thing we could do to end pay-to-play corruption in our politics and start building a Hawai'i that puts kama'āina and kānaka maoli - local people, Hawai'i's residents first — NOT big money interests. Please, do the right thing.

Mahalo nui for your consideration,

Lynn J Ishii, Wahiawā

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2023 5:58:53 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cindy Wu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello Committee Members,

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Thank you for your consideration,
Cindy Wu, Kaimuki

SB-1543-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2023 9:47:24 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2023 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Public financing of campaigns helps avoid our politicians being bought by corporate special interests.