



STATE OF HAWAII
CAMPAIGN SPENDING COMMISSION

235 SOUTH BERETANIA STREET, ROOM 300
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

February 3, 2025

TO: The Honorable Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary

The Honorable Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary

Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary

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

SUBJECT: **Testimony on S.B. No. 51, Relating to Public Financing for Candidates to Elected Office.**

Wednesday, February 5, 2025
9:15 a.m., Conference Room 016 & Videoconference

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill. The Campaign Spending Commission (“Commission”) supports the intent of this bill but is concerned about the funding, the need for additional personnel, and the implementation with the 2026 election.

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. This public financing program is modeled after the pilot Hawaii County Council Comprehensive Public Funding Project¹ that ran in 2010 and 2012.

The bill establishes the maximum amount of comprehensive public funds (“CPF Max”) for each office as well as the minimum qualifying \$5 contributions (“\$5 MQC”) that must be raised for each office. The following table shows the \$5 MQC and CPF Max for each office:

Office	\$5 MQC	CPF Max
Governor	6,250	\$2,500,000
Lieutenant Governor	3,000	\$1,200,000
Senator	250	\$100,000
Representative	125	\$50,000

¹ Act 244, 2008 Haw. Sess. Laws.

OHA	100	\$40,000
Honolulu Mayor	5,750	\$2,300,000
Hawaii Mayor	900	\$360,000
Maui Mayor	1,500	\$600,000
Kauai Mayor	875	\$350,000
Hon. Pros. Atty	563	\$225,000
Hawaii Pros. Atty	100	\$40,000
Kauai Pros. Atty	63	\$25,000
Hon. County Council	338	\$135,000
Hawaii County Council	50	\$20,000
Maui County Council	138	\$55,000
Kauai County Council	75	\$30,000

If one candidate for each office qualified and received the CPF Max in the 2026 election period, this program will pay out **\$15,110,000** in public financing to the qualified candidates. In contrast, if one candidate for each office qualified to receive partial public funding in the 2026 elections, the state will pay a maximum of **\$2,948,612** in public financing. Under §11-O of the proposed new subpart to Part XIII of Chapter 11, Hawaii Revised Statutes, there must be a minimum of \$30,000,000 in the Hawaii Election Campaign Fund on September 1, 2025 in order for the Commission to run the comprehensive public financing program established by the bill.

In Section 7 of the bill, there is an appropriation of \$200,000 for this fiscal year and the same amount for the next fiscal year, for the Commission to hire two full-time equivalent (2.0 FTE) temporary positions to prepare for comprehensive public financing in the 2026 elections. The Commission has not had an increase in personnel for the past 29 years despite the number of candidate committees and noncandidate committees having almost doubled in size. Currently, there are only 5 staff members who oversee 700+ committees that have anywhere from 1-3 officers who require assistance on how to comply with the various requirements of campaign finance law thereby generating hundreds of staff hours assisting committees over the phone, in-person, and by email as well as a number of enforcement actions for violations. Under HRS §11-314(7), one of the Commission's 14 duties is to investigate and hold hearings for receiving evidence of any campaign finance violations. The Commission has no investigator on staff and has had to rely on contracts for investigative services with outside agencies.² In comparison to other State and county good government groups with compliance and enforcement duties, the Commission has had a modest budget and nominal staff despite a tremendous growth in committees, an expansion in its duties and responsibilities, and enforcement mandates. The Commission respectfully seeks your support so that the Commission may ensure that the

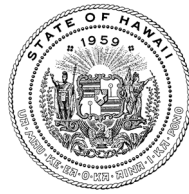
²Act 10, Special Session 1995, was the single year that a sum of \$70,000 was appropriated for one investigator for the Commission for FY 1995-1996 and was then sunset.

integrity and transparency of the campaign finance process is upheld. The Commission requests that these two positions be permanent rather than temporary.³

In summary, the balance in the Hawaii Election Campaign Fund is \$2,199,230.60 as of December 31, 2024. Obviously, this amount is insufficient to pay for the comprehensive public funding program, including the additional personnel the Commission will need, and thus, the total appropriation of \$30,200,000 in Section 6 of the bill is necessary. Further, it would be impossible for the Commission to run this program for the 2026 election. The 2026 election period started the day after the general election on November 5, 2024 for those candidates with a 2-year election period and runs until the general election on November 3, 2026. Modifications to the electronic filing system, reports, forms, and training and education are necessary components which would need to be addressed.

Respectfully, the Commission requests that this committee address these concerns because there is insufficient funds, personnel, and time to implement a program of this magnitude if it is going to pass this measure.

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



JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

LUIS P. SALAVERIA
DIRECTOR

SABRINA NASIR
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM
HAWAII EMPLOYER-UNION HEALTH BENEFITS TRUST FUND
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
Ka 'Oihana Mālama Mo'ohelu a Kālā
P.O. BOX 150
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96810-0150

ADMINISTRATIVE AND RESEARCH OFFICE
BUDGET, PROGRAM PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT DIVISION
FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION DIVISION
OFFICE OF FEDERAL AWARDS MANAGEMENT

WRITTEN ONLY
TESTIMONY BY LUIS P. SALAVERIA
DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY
ON
SENATE BILL NO. 51

February 5, 2025
9:15 a.m.
Room 016 and Videoconference

RELATING TO PUBLIC FINANCING FOR CANDIDATES TO ELECTED OFFICE

The Department of Budget and Finance (B&F) offers comments on this bill.

Senate Bill (S.B.) No. 51 amends Chapter 11, HRS, by adding a new subpart to Part XIII titled "Comprehensive Public Funding for Candidates to State and County Offices," 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. Included with the establishment of the Comprehensive Public Funding Program (CPFP) is the creation of a CPFP subaccount within the Hawai'i Election Campaign Fund (HECF) to carry out the purposes of this measure. Deposits to the CPFP subaccount include appropriations made by the Legislature, excess seed money contributions, qualifying contributions, unspent public funds distributed to any certified candidate, fines levied by the commission for violation of the CPFP, and voluntary donations.

This measure also appropriates \$30,200,000 in general revenues for FY 26 for deposit into the HECF for expenditure by the Campaign Spending Commission for the

CPFP; and appropriates \$200,000 out of the HECF for FY 26 and FY 27 to fund 2.00 temporary full-time equivalent position and to prepare for the comprehensive public funding of candidates in elections taking place in 2026.

As a matter of general policy, B&F does not support the creation of any special account that requires regular general fund appropriations to support its activities and does not demonstrate the capacity to be financially self-sustaining. Regarding S.B. No. 51, it is difficult to determine whether the proposed CPFP subaccount would be self-sustaining.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.



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LATE

TESTIMONY
TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY
ON SENATE BILL NO. 51
RELATING TO PUBLIC FINANCING FOR CANDIDATES TO ELECTED OFFICE

February 5, 2025

Chair Rhoads and Committee members:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on Senate Bill 51.

The Office of the City Clerk takes no position on the merits of financing campaigns with public monies. However, we recommend that the Committee consider the donor qualification model found in the previous iteration of the bill wherein the Campaign Spending Commission is the sole jurisdictional entity involved with administering the program.

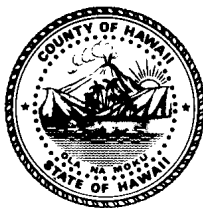
In that model, no information is transferred across offices and limited access to the State's voter registration system/data is granted to enable the Commission to conduct its verification of qualifying donor contributions. County election offices serve in a mere consultative role to clarify questions related to any voter registration record.

That approach would align a Hawaii program with other States that administer public financing of campaigns for state legislative seats, whereby verification processes (if required) are conducted by either a State campaign spending agency or secretary of state. We also provide the approach as employed in Arizona (see: <https://www.azcleaselections.gov>) that established a specific commission with the sole mission of implementing the public financing program.

Perhaps most concerning to election administrators is that as presently drafted, assigning County Clerks with verifying contributors effectively blurs distinctions and timelines of administering the elections with other activities that are more closely associated with the campaigning process. As such, we recommend that the Committee consider a different alternative to the donor verification process.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on SB51.





HAWAI'I COUNTY COUNCIL - DISTRICT 2

25 Aupuni Street • Hilo, Hawai'i 96720

LATE

DATE: February 4, 2025
TO: Senate Committee on Judiciary
FROM: Jennifer Kagiwada, Council Member
Council District 2
SUBJECT: SB 51

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

I am testifying in strong support of SB 51 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, requiring the Campaign Spending Commission to submit reports to the Legislature.

By providing full public financing for qualified candidates, SB 51 will break the link between private money and electoral success and put efforts to reduce the influence of money in our elections. This will create a fairer and more honest system where elected officials are accountable to their constituents rather than big donors.

A comprehensive system of public financing is more cost-effective. Even if Hawai'i saw higher participation rates than any other state, estimates show the cost would be less than \$10 million per year—just 0.05% of the state budget. That's under \$7 per resident or less than \$1 per tourist—a small price to pay for a more transparent, accountable government.

Passing SB 51 will ensure that everyday people, not just a wealthy few, have a voice. This bill will restore trust in our democracy, empower candidates to focus on their communities rather than fundraising, and ensure that our government truly serves the people of Hawai'i.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jenn Kagiwada".

Jenn Kagiwada

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 5:36:39 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gene Lamkin	Testifying for East Hawaii Republican Party	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Oppose. Taxpayer money used to fund campaigns.



Date: February 4th, 2025

To: Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee
From: Hawai'i Environmental Change Agents (HECA) – Solid Waste Reduction Task Force
Re: SB51 - Relating to Public Financing for Elections

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

I strongly support SB 51, which will strengthen Hawai'i's public campaign financing system and curb the outsized influence of money in our elections. Having worked on waste policy to address waste management issues for the past three years, I have seen how well-funded industry lobbyists often override community needs, making it difficult for common-sense solutions to move forward. This dynamic erodes public trust and discourages civic participation.

SB 51 provides a path toward a more accountable democracy by allowing candidates to run without reliance on private donations. Other states, including Maine and Connecticut, have shown that public financing does not radically shift political power, but it does change who holds influence—giving everyday people a stronger voice.

Public financing is both popular and cost-effective. A clean elections program is supported by three out of four voters, and even at the highest participation levels, the estimated cost is less than \$10 million per year—just 0.05% of the state budget. This is a small price to pay for a more transparent and accountable government.

For these reasons, I strongly urge you to pass SB 51 to help restore trust in our democracy and ensure that Hawai'i's government works for the people—not just those who can afford to buy access.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

~HECA Solid Waste Reduction Task Force
Jennifer Navarra

LATE

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 1:47:33 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dave Mulinux	Testifying for Greenpeace Hawaii	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha JDC Chair, Vice Chair & Committee Members,

My name Dave Mulinux, CoFounder & Hawaii State Representative of Greenpeace Hawaii and on behalf of our thousands of members and supporters statewide we Stand in STRONG SUPPORT of SB51 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 reports to the Legislature.

Passage of SB51 is essential because it will strengthen Hawaii’s public campaign financing system and help reduce the influence of money in our elections.

The heavy reliance on campaign contributions by elected officials from wealthy donors and special interests has led to a system where politicians have become more focused on the interests of their donors than the needs of their communities. As a result, good policies are blocked while harmful ones move forward. This dynamic erodes public trust and encourages corruption. SB51 is a critical step allowing candidates to run competitive campaigns without being dependent on special interest money.

By providing full public financing for qualified candidates, SB 51 will break the link between private money and electoral success. This will create a fairer and more honest system where elected officials are accountable to their constituents rather than big donors.

Public financing is both popular and cost-effective.

Please pass SB51 because it will restore trust in our democracy, empower candidates to focus on their communities rather than fundraising, and ensure that our government truly serves the people of Hawai‘i.

Mahalo for your kind attention,

Dave Mulinux, CoFounder & Hawaii State Representative,

Greenpeace Hawaii



150 Hamakua Drive #341
Kailua, HI 96734

our-hawaii.org

Testimony in Support of SB51

Submitted to the Senate Judiciary Committee
by Evan Weber, Managing Director, Our Hawai'i, 2/5/2025

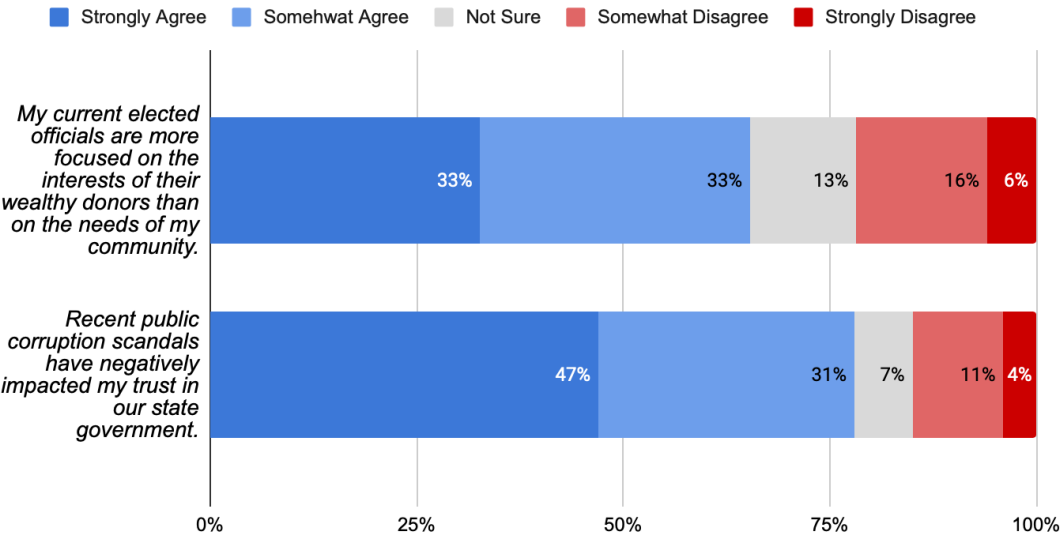
Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and all Committee members,

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify before you today. On behalf of Our Hawai'i's over 38,000 members and supporters across the pae 'āina, I write in strong support for Senate Bill SB51, 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 Kaua'i to Kohala, Kailua to Kapolei and every place in between. 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. The crisis of public trust in government 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 the 2022 election ranked government corruption as their number 3 top issue, only behind inflation and affordable housing](#), in a [survey](#) conducted on behalf of Our Hawai'i by the most accurate polling firm in US elections in 2020.

The incomplete reforms adopted by the legislature in 2023, while important, did not go far enough on a policy matter or in terms of shifting public perception. Polling conducted in 2024 by the Clean Elections Hawai'i Coalition, consisting of over 3-dozen local organizations, showed **that two out of three voters (66%) believe that “elected officials care more about wealthy donors than the needs of my community.”** Ouch. 9 out of 10 voters also believe that influence or obligate legislators to some degree, with over half of voters believing that degree is “greatly.”

Two Out of Three Voters Say Elected Officials Care More About Wealthy Donors Than Needs of Communities



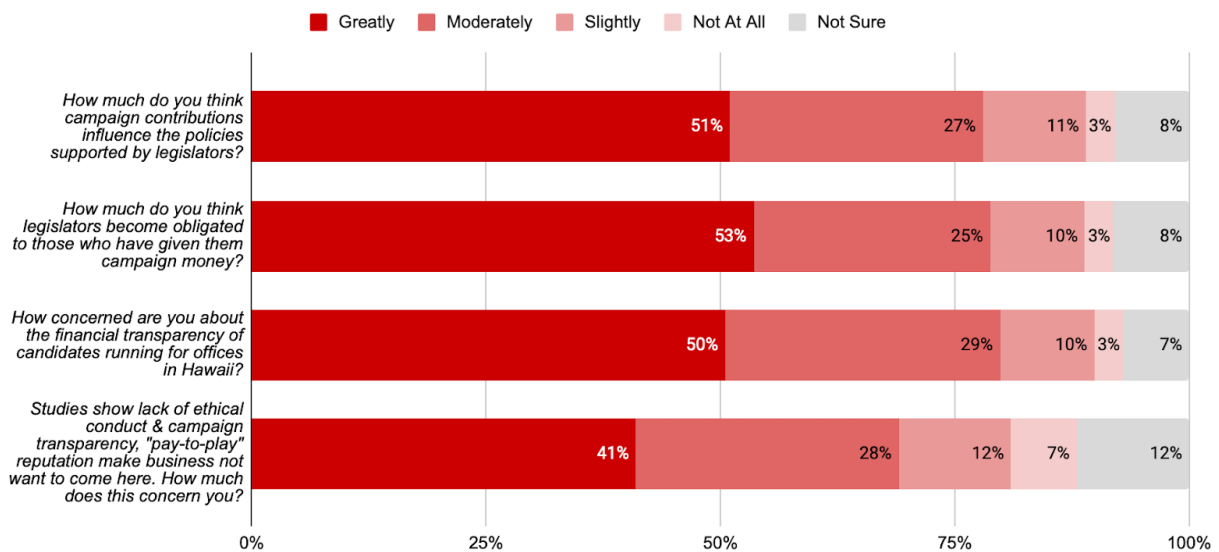


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our-hawaii.org

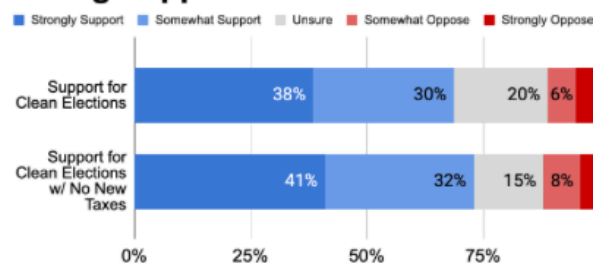
This poll was conducted in March 2024, right *before* an April 17th [bombshell exposé dropped on the front page of the New York Times](#), exposing to the world the deep culture of pay-to-play corruption that has existed at high levels of Hawai'i political leadership. The exposé specifically called out the loophole in our campaign finance laws which this legislation and other similar bills introduced this session seek to close. **With the article being released towards the end of last legislative session, reform-minded lawmakers did not have time to act, but now you do.**

"Great" Concern Over Money In Politics and Private Campaign Spending for Majorities

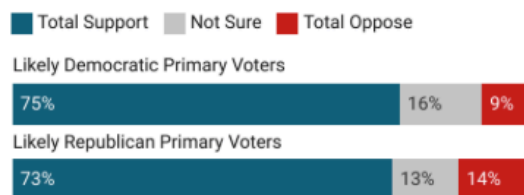


Luckily, a solution is on the table for you to solve this problem. The same voters, across race, ethnicity, income level, and political party, overwhelming support a Clean Elections program when it is described to them in plain terms, with **68% of voters saying they would support passing a law to create a Clean Elections program in Hawai'i.** And they are 4 times more likely to support than oppose a candidate for office who backs and champions such a program as well.

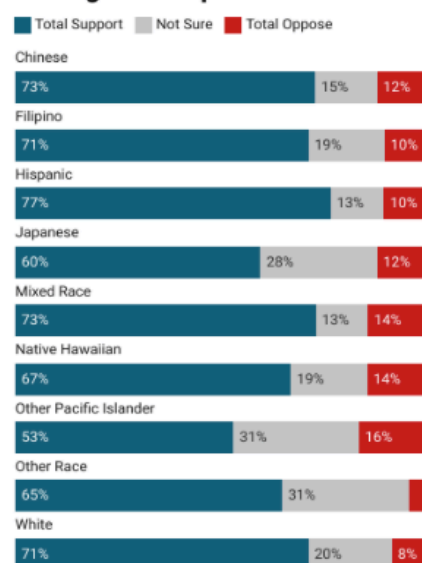
Strong Support for Clean Elections



3 in 4 Likely Primary Voters Support Clean Elections



Broad Support for Clean Elections Among all Groups





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our-hawaii.org

With public trust at an all time low, now is the time for systemic and transformative solutions. While progress has been made, it is not enough. We need to address the overriding issue of money in our politics where it begins, in our elections.

SB51 would go as far as is legally possible under the United States constitution, by providing a viable alternative to the status quo private money campaign system. It would level the playing field for candidates who are not wealthy or well-connected, and take a historic step towards getting big money out of our elections.

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. **Legislators can be fully focused on delivering for their constituents, not campaign donors.** That's how democracy is supposed to work!

We know that programs like this work, and are cost-effective: we've seen it in places like Connecticut, Maine, Hawai'i County and cities all around the US. Even if Hawai'i saw higher participation rates than any other State, **estimates show the cost would be less than \$10 million per year—just 0.05% of the state budget.** That's just over \$6 per resident or less than \$1 per tourist—a small price to pay for a more transparent, accountable government, and an [amount that a majority of those polled said they'd be willing to pay.](#)

We have the policy. We have the public desire for change. We have the resources. 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.

Mahalo nui loa for your courage and action. Laulima, we can move forward to a better future for our Hawai'i.

Attached you'll find the press release on the polling referenced from the Clean Elections Hawai'i Coalition as well as the results, cross-tabs, and analysis from the polling firm SurveyUSA who conducted the research.

POLL: Two Out of Three Voters Say Elected Officials Care More About Wealthy Donors Than Needs of Communities, Want ‘Clean Elections’ as Solution

71% of voters support a Clean Elections program to publicly fund campaigns, with only 12% opposing. 9 in 10 say campaign contributions influence and obligate legislators, and 66% say elected officials care more about wealthy donors than communities.

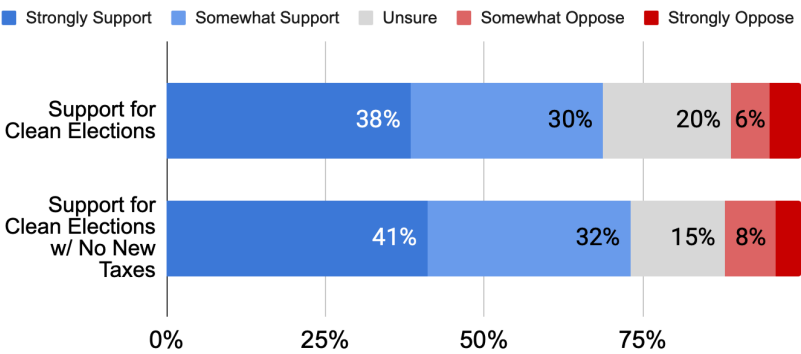
[\[Link to SurveyUSA analysis and results\]](#)

HONOLULU, Hawai‘i — More than 3 in 4 (78%) Hawai‘i voters believe legislators are influenced and obligated by campaign contributions and have had their trust in government impacted by recent corruption scandals, 2 in 3 (66%) believe elected officials care more about “wealthy donors” than the “needs of their communities,” and about the same amount (71%) support a “Clean Elections” publicly-financed elections program as a solution, according to a new poll conducted by SurveyUSA from February 27th - March 6th, 2024 and released by the Clean Elections Hawai‘i Coalition. The survey interviewed 1,008 registered and likely voters across Hawai‘i and found widespread and deep concern about money in politics and corruption in government, as well as broad and deep support for a “Clean Elections” program of public financing as a reform solution across ethnic and racial, gender, geographical, and political demographics.

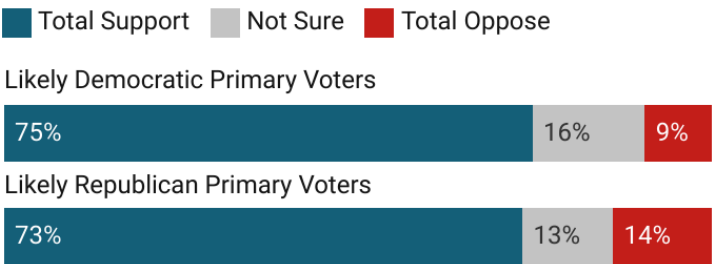
“Clearly, the idea of Clean Elections is one with strong appeal to a very broad cross-section of Hawaii voters,” said **Ken Alper, President of SurveyUSA** who conducted the poll. “Two thirds of voters say their representatives care more about their donors than they do about local communities – and not coincidentally, two thirds of voters support a Clean Elections program in Hawaii. This tackles a major issue for voters, and that’s why you see such strong numbers in support of it.”

Poll results show strong support for a “publicly-financed elections” program across all likely voters, across all major ethnic groups, and across political parties, with 3 out of 4 likely Democratic and Republican primary voters supporting the program, and voters being 4 times more likely to support (42%) than oppose (10%) a candidate for office who supports Clean Elections.

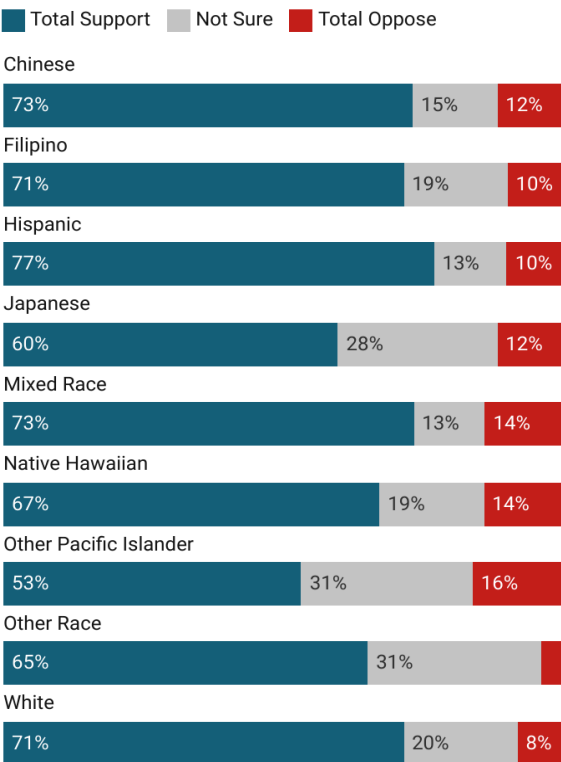
Strong Support for Clean Elections



3 in 4 Likely Primary Voters Support Clean Elections



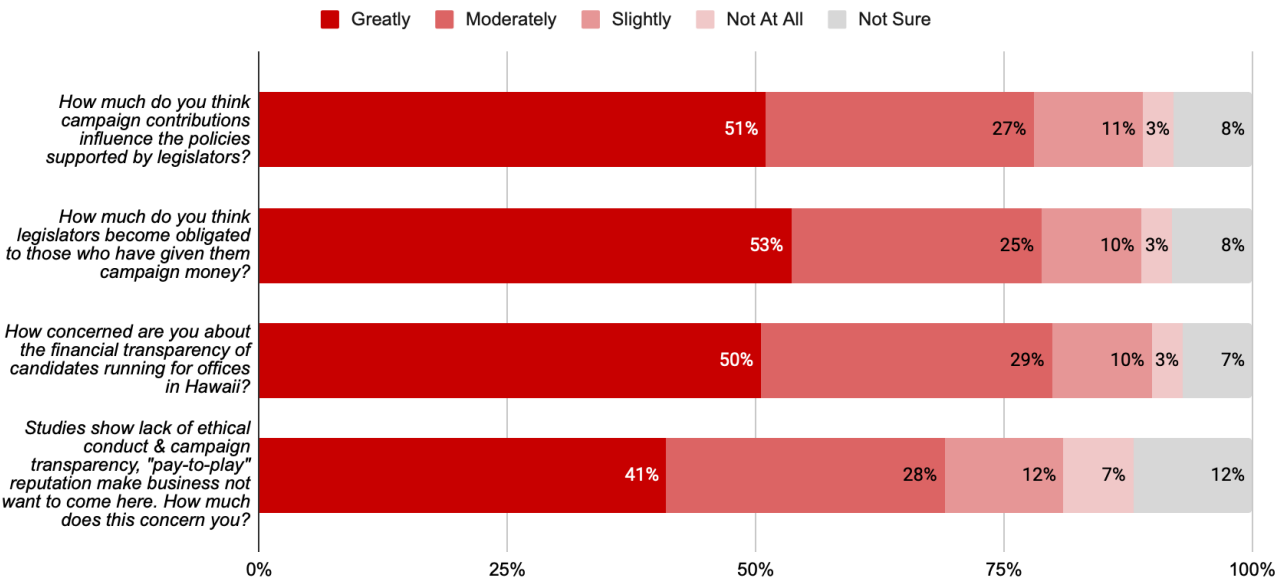
Broad Support for Clean Elections Among all Groups



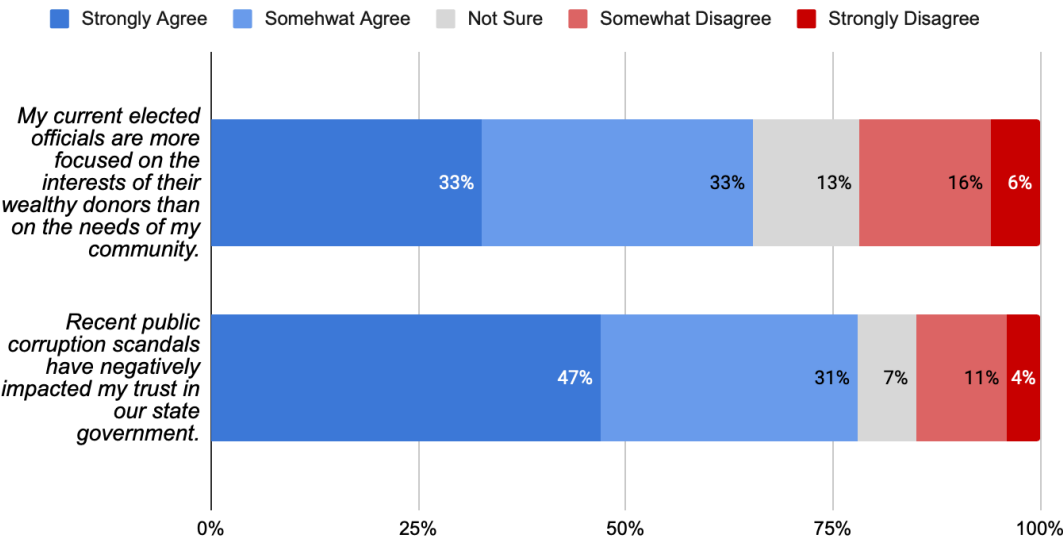
At the same time, results are alarming as it relates to current concern over money in politics, private campaign financing, and trust in elected officials and the government. **A jaw-dropping half or more of all voters think that private campaign contributions are “greatly” influencing or obligating their legislators and are concerned about the financial transparency of candidates running for office, with 9 out of 10 likely voters sharing these concerns to some degree. 2 out 3 likely voters believe elected officials are more focused on wealthy donors than the needs of their community, and 3 out of 4 have had their trust in government shaken by recent corruption scandals.**

“This survey should be a wakeup call for our elected officials — ordinary working people do not trust that you are working in our communities’ interest.” said **Sergio Alcubilla, Executive Director of the Hawai’i Workers Center and a spokesperson for the Clean Elections Hawai’i campaign.** “Last year’s marginal reforms have not moved the needle on public perception or trust in legislators. But a solution is on the table and ready for legislators to win back the public trust and make meaningful reform to a system that many feel is rigged against them. It’s time we put the best interests of the community first. The time for Clean Elections is now.”

"Great" Concern Over Money In Politics and Private Campaign Spending for Majorities

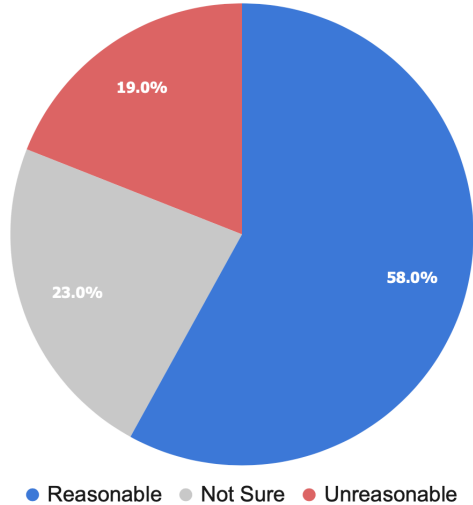


Two Out of Three Voters Say Elected Officials Care More About Wealthy Donors Than Needs of Communities



Opponents of Clean Elections in Hawai'i have tried to point to its cost as a deterrent, and suggested that voters would not be willing to shoulder the burden. However, when asked directly about the cost per taxpayer of a Clean Elections program, 58% say the cost is reasonable while less than 1 in 4 believe it is unreasonable. [Maybe: Even when opposition framing which contains falsehoods about cost is shared about Clean Elections, voters still show net support for the program by double digits — 19 percentage points. Furthermore, voters seem enthusiastic about a variety of ways to pay for the program. Early this month, legislation for publicly financed elections described as the “last shot” for legislators to make reform before the elections passed the Hawai'i Senate and was transferred to the House of Representatives, where today it was [scheduled for a hearing](#) on Thursday, March 14th in the Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs committee at 2pm in Capitol Conference Room 325. Members of the media and the public are encouraged to attend.

Majority Say \$6 Per Taxpayer Each Year for Clean Elections "Reasonable," Only 1 in 4 Oppose



If a bill to finance Clean Elections were passed, how would you like to see it paid for?

Respondents were asked to choose as many options as they want, these were the most popular choices.

	Proposed "pay-for"	% support
1	Imposing fees on wealthy super PACs.	51%
2	Closing tax loopholes for out-of-state developers.	51%
3	Closing tax loopholes for the wealthiest Hawaii residents.	50%
4	Imposing fees on lobbyists.	43%
5	Closing tax loopholes for major landowners.	43%
6	Closing tax loopholes for hotel companies.	35%
7	Closing tax loopholes for energy companies.	30%

Table: Clean Elections Hawai'i • Source: SurveyUSA • Created with Datawrapper

Question: A fully publicly financed election system that would allow candidates to run without needing contributions from private individuals and interests in Hawaii is projected to cost \$6 per resident. Would you consider that cost reasonable or unreasonable?

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About SurveyUSA and the Polling Methodology: SurveyUSA is an independent, apolitical and non-partisan research organization that conducts custom, local opinion research for universities, non-profits, local and state governments and small to medium-sized businesses, ad agencies and public relations firms. Nate Silver's fivethirtyeight.com rates 517 polling firms on an ongoing basis, and no research company of any size scores as highly as SurveyUSA on four key metrics: SurveyUSA is in the 94th percentile for absence of partisan bias, the 98th percentile for accuracy, the 98th percentile for predictive value, and the 100th percentile for most prolific.

SurveyUSA interviewed 1,265 adult respondents from the entire state of Hawaii 02/27/24 through 03/06/24. Of the adults, 1,008 were identified by SurveyUSA as being registered to vote and were asked the substantive questions which follow. This research was conducted using a blended sample, mixed mode approach. 71% of registered voters were online panelists chosen randomly who were shown the survey questions on the display of their smartphone, laptop, or tablet. 29% of registered voters were texted on their cell phones by live operators who secured the cooperation of each respondent before linking them to an online survey. The pool of adult respondents was weighted to US Census targets for gender, age, ethnicity, education, and home ownership.

About Clean Elections Hawai'i: The Clean Elections Hawai'i Coalition represents dozens of leading local organizations coordinating to advance a pro-democracy agenda in our islands and help end the corrupting influence of big money on our politics. Supporting organizations include: Common Cause Hawai'i, Sierra Club of Hawai'i, League of Women Voters of Hawai'i, Our Hawai'i Action, The Hawai'i Workers Center, Hawaii Alliance for Progressive Action, Lāhainā Strong, Free Access Coalition, Chamber of Sustainable Commerce, Global HOPE (Hawai'i Organization for Peace and the Environment), HOPE Services Hawai'i, Kaua'i Women's Caucus, Friends of Makakilo, Kauhakō 'Ōhana Association, Living Wage Hawaii, 350 Hawai'i, Democratic Party of Hawai'i Education Caucus, Imua Alliance, Pono Hawai'i Initiative, Our Revolution Hawai'i, LGF Consulting, Community Alliance Partners, Habitat for Humanity Hawaii Island, Going Home Hawaii, Young Progressives Demanding Action, HULI PAC, Holomua Collaborative, League of Women Voters of Honolulu, Malama Makua, Americans for Democratic Action Hawaii, Indivisible Hawaii, Kihei Community Association, Aloha 'Āina Women's Patriotic League, Clarity Project, Funder Hui, Saturation Point, Hawaii-Fi, Makawalu Creatives, Energy Transitions, Public Citizen, Rethink Media, and more.

For more information, contact team@cleanelectionshawaii.org

Results of SurveyUSA Mkt Research Study #27066



Geography: Hawaii
Data Collected: 02/27/2024 - 03/06/2024
Release Date: 03/12/2024
Percentages

Sponsor:
Clean Elections Hawaii ()

Strong Support in Aloha State for 'Clean Elections' Program to Publicly Fund Campaigns; Majority Says Projected Cost Would be Reasonable; 34% of Hawaii Voters Say Legislators Become Obligated to Campaign Donors; Deep Concerns About Financial Transparency of Candidates For Office:

Results of SurveyUSA research conducted exclusively for Clean Elections Hawaii show strong support across the state for a publicly funded system for political campaigns, with two-thirds of voters in favor of such a program as soon as the idea is broached.

68% of registered voters say they would support passing a law to create a Clean Elections program in Hawaii (38% strongly support, 30% somewhat support); only 11% are opposed. Support is no less than 60% among any demographic subgroup.

When asked if they would support or oppose a Clean Elections program if it did not result in new taxes, the percentage supporting increases 5 points, to 73% (41% strongly supporting, 32% somewhat supporting), with the largest increases in support seen among Japanese voters (18 points), Latinos (11 points), and Democrats (9 points).

58% of voters say the estimated \$6 per resident cost of the program is reasonable; just 1 in 4, 23%, say it is unreasonable.

42% of voters say they are more likely to vote for candidate who supports Clean Elections; 31% say it makes no difference in their vote. Only 1 in 10 voters say they would be less likely to vote for such a candidate; White voters and those with 4-year college degrees are the most likely to say they'd be more likely to vote for a candidate who supports Clean Elections; the youngest voters are the most likely to say they'd be less likely to support such a candidate.

23% of voters, 66%, agree with this statement: "My current elected officials are more focused on the interests of their wealthy donors than on the needs of my community." 33% strongly agree; 33% somewhat agree. 22% disagree (16% somewhat, 6% strongly). 84% of Republicans agree, compared to 57% of Democrats.

34% of registered voters, 78%, agree with this statement: "Recent public corruption scandals have negatively impacted my trust in our state government." 47% strongly agree, 31% somewhat agree; only 15% disagree. Agreement is at or above 72% among every demographic subgroup.

A 51% majority say campaign contributions greatly influence the policies supported by legislators; another 27% say contributions have a moderate impact – 78% in all. 11% say they have a slight influence, 3% no influence at all. Voters age 50 to 64 are the most likely to say contributions have at least a moderate influence; those aged 18 to 34 are the least likely.

78% also say legislators become obligated to those who donate money to their campaigns, with 53% saying they become greatly obligated, 25% moderately obligated. 10% say they are only slightly obligated, 3% not at all. No fewer than 70% of voters in any demographic subgroup say legislators become obligated.

By more than 2:1, voters say limiting the size and number of campaign contributions helps to prevent corruption in politics, with 54% feeling that way; 23% say these limits have no impact on corruption. Democrats are more likely to say limits help prevent corruption; Republicans and independents are less likely to say so.

69% are moderately (28%) or greatly (41%) concerned that businesses may not wish to expand in Hawaii if it has a reputation for a lack of ethical conduct, a lack of campaign transparency, or a "pay-to-play" reputation. 12% are just slightly concerned; 7% are not concerned at all. Concern increases with age, from 60% of 18 to 34-year-olds being moderately or greatly concerned, to 69% of 35 to 49-year-olds, to 73% of those age 50+.

79% are concerned (29% moderately, 50% greatly) about the financial transparency of candidates for office; 10% are slightly concerned, 3% not concerned at all. No fewer than 70% of voters in any demographic subgroup are concerned.

Last, voters were asked how they would like to see Clean Elections paid for, should a bill to finance them pass. Respondents could select as many items as they wished, ranked here from most to least: 51%: Imposing fees on wealthy super PACs. 51%: Closing tax loopholes for out-of-state developers. 50%: Closing tax loopholes for the wealthiest Hawaii residents. 40%: Imposing fees on lobbyists. 42%: Closing tax loopholes for major landowners. 35%: Closing tax loopholes for hotel companies. 30%: Closing tax loopholes for energy companies. Fully crunched results

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 12:24:56 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Rhodes, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of Committee,

My name is Susan RobertsEmery and I am the Co-Chair of the Green Party of Hawai'i. I am humbly asking for your support for SB51, Public Financing for Candidates. 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.

Green Party Members would greatly appreciate a Yes vote on SB51, time to level the playing field.

Most humbly,

Susan RobertsEmery

Co Chair GPH

Green Parrrty of Hawai'i

Paauilo



Committee on Judiciary
Chair Karl Rhoads, Vice Chair Mike Gabbard

Wednesday February 5, 2025 9:15 am Room 016
SB51 — RELATING TO PUBLIC FINANCING FOR CANDIDATES TO ELECTED
OFFICE.

TESTIMONY

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

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Committee Members: The League of Women Voters of Hawaii thanks the Committee Chairs and members for hearing this valuable and popular bill.

The League of Women Voters of Hawaii strongly supports SB51 which: Establishes a comprehensive system of public financing for all candidates seeking election to state and county public offices in the State, 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. 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: ". . . 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 \$6,000. (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; 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.

The costs to implement Full Public Funding of Elections are reasonable and affordable. Connecticut's program spent less than \$14 million during the last election cycle. Even with high participation rates amongst candidates, estimated expenses for Hawai'i are less than \$10 million per year, representing less than 0.1% of the state budget.

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 reclaim millions of dollars' worth of unclaimed bottle deposits, ... approximately \$25 million a year out of the pockets of the beverage industry and into the general fund. 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

SB51 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 as in SB51.

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

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Citations

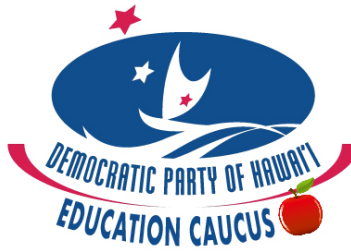
¹ Analysis of CSC database on contributions to 2022 elections

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

⁵ Why don't we cite the costs in AZ? Because the legislation establishing full public financing for AZ elections failed to provide automatic increases in dollar amounts to account for inflation; therefore the number of participating candidates dropped gradually and continually over years of implementation. SB51D1 wisely includes indexing dollar amounts to inflation.



SENATE BILL 51, RELATING TO PUBLIC FINANCING FOR CANDIDATES TO ELECTED OFFICE

FEBRUARY 5, 2025 · JDC HEARING

POSITION: Support.

RATIONALE: The Democratic Party of Hawai'i Education Caucus **supports** SB 51, relating to public financing for candidates for 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 reports to the Legislature

Government should work for the public interest, not special 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 because donors fund their campaigns. Money is crucial to winning. Roughly 91 percent of candidates who outspend their opponents win their elections.

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

This bill will eventually create an election system that is fair for our island home. Once a clean elections program is fully effectuated in 2028—more than enough time to fund the system for the next non-gubernatorial election season—candidates will no longer need to rely on contributions from wealthy donors. Instead, they can seek support from their constituents in the form of small donations that verify their credibility and subsequently obtain public funding in an amount sufficient to run effective campaigns. Legislators will, in turn, be empowered to focus on engaging with their communities, rather than wheedling the donor class. Ultimately, this will help our government reflect the will of the people, not the wallets of the privileged.

Contact: educationcaucusdph@gmail.com



LATE

**Senate Committee on Judiciary
Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action (HAPA) Strongly Supports: SB51
Wednesday, February 5, 202,5 at 9:15am; Conference Room 016**

Dear Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Committee,

HAPA is submitting testimony in STRONG Support of SB51, which establishes a comprehensive system of public financing for all candidates seeking election to state and county public offices in the State.

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.

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 overwhelmingly supported by Hawai'i voters.

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.

SB 51 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.

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.

Thank you for your support and consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anne Frederick', is positioned above the printed name.

Anne Frederick
Executive Director

**Hawaii Legislative
Council Members**

Joell Edwards
Wainiha Country Market
Hanalei

Russell Ruderman
Island Naturals
Hilo/Kona

Dr. Andrew Johnson
Niko Niko
Family Dentistry
Honolulu

Robert H. Pahia
Hawaii Taro Farm
Wailuku

Maile Meyer
Na Mea Hawaii
Honolulu

Tina Wildberger
Kihei Ice
Kihei

L. Malu Shizue Miki
Abundant Life
Natural Foods
Hilo

Tanya Aynessazian
Principal Contractor

Chamber of
Sustainable Commerce
808.445.7606
P.O. Box 22394
Honolulu, HI 96823



Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair
Committee on Water and Land

Wednesday, February 5, 2025
9:15 AM Conference Room 016

LATE

RE: **SB 51** Public Campaign Financing - **Strongly Support**

Dear Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Committee,

The Chamber of Sustainable Commerce represents over 450 small businesses and entrepreneurs across the state that strive for a triple bottom line: people, planet and prosperity.

As small business owners who believe we can strengthen Hawaii's economy without hurting workers, consumers, communities or the environment, we urge this committee to vote in favor of passing SB51, which would strengthen Hawaii's public campaign financing system and help reduce the influence of money on our elections.

Voter turnout and public trust in government are at an all time low. Corruption is perceived to be a part of the democratic process. Two in three people believe elected officials are more focused on the interests of their donors than the needs of their communities. In order to regain the public's trust, we need to break the link between corporate dollars and winning our local elections. SB51 would allow candidates to run competitive campaigns without being dependent on big money and special interest groups, creating a fairer and more honest system that makes elected officials accountable to constituents.

3 out of 4 voters support a clean elections program. Public financing is both popular and cost-effective. Estimates show the cost would be less than \$10M per year-just 0.05% of the state's budget. That's under \$7/resident - a small price to pay for public trust in a more transparent, accountable government. Drastic shifts in political makeup and high incumbent turnover are not a result of similar public financing programs in other states. But who holds influence over elected representatives does change, which ensures that our government serves the people of Hawaii, not the wealthy few.

SB51 has the opportunity to restore democracy in our electoral process and empower candidates to focus on constituents in their community rather than fundraise. Please pass SB51. Thank you.



To: The Senate Committee on Judiciary (JDC)
From: Sherry Pollack, Co-Founder, 350Hawaii.org
Date: Wednesday, February 5, 2025, 9:15 am

In strong support of SB51

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and members of the JDC Committee,

I am Co-Founder of the Hawaii chapter of 350.org, the largest international organization dedicated to fighting climate change. 350Hawaii.org is in **strong support of SB51** that 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.

SB51 will help restore the people's trust in government. Considering the 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 out of four voters support a clean elections program.

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.

SB51 would provide participating candidates with competitive amounts of funding they need to run an effective campaign. 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 SB51.

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

Sherry Pollack
Co-Founder, 350Hawaii.org

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 7:37:33 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alika Valdez	Testifying for The Democratic Party of Hawai'i	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill.

SB-51

Submitted on: 1/30/2025 1:35:43 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Judge Daniel Foley (ret.)	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Mr. Chairman and members of the Judiciary Committee,

As the former chair of the Commission to Improve Standards of Conduct (Commission), I submit this testimony in support of SB 52 RELATING TO PUBLIC FINANCING FOR CANDIDATES TO ELECTIVE OFFICE.

The Commission found "that publically funded elections can help counteer the repercussions of Citizens United 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." Commission December 1, 2022 Report at page 32.

Mahalo, Judge Daniel Foley (ret.)

SB-51

Submitted on: 1/30/2025 6:36:30 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

I STRONGLY OPPOSE this bill which would cost taxpayers **over \$30M** to publicly finance all political campaigns throughout the State. This is a horrible use of taxpayer dollars. I urge all members of the Committee to **VOTE NO** on this Bill.

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/1/2025 9:51:27 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

Public financing for all candidates will help restore the people's trust in government. Considering the 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.

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/1/2025 10:46:42 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tamra Hayden	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

- I support SB51. The people of this state are feeling a lot of distrust about election integrity in Hawai'i and in the United States of as a whole. Hawai'i questions the election process and out comes. With all the rumors about pay to play, and actual state corruption cases, you cannot blame them. Recently I was talking to some folks about running myself. I was shocked to hear that I need to raise \$3 million to start. When did elections start depending on how good of a fundraiser a person is? It should not be the job of a candidate to raise money, verses running to legislate for the people they represent.

This measure will help restore the people's trust in government. It is apparent to me 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. I know this is an idea that many voters in the United States as well as Hawai'i promote. I certainly do. It would be impressive if Hawai'i could be one of the first states to accomplish this popular goal.

Public financing will make campaigning easier. Who wants to ask family, friends and business associates for large sums of money? What does a large donor expect in return? The pro quid quo has hung around Trump's campaign for years. He was even blatant about accepting foreign monies and in this last election his comments to Big Oil. And frankly, it appears that his comments have given him an edge in both becoming President and his "drill baby drill" plans. Alaska's indigenous peoples may now pay the ultimate price.

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 important wishes of their community,. Issues like the impacts from the growing climate crisis. It also promotes public trust in officials and in government. We also saw how Kai Kahele's candidacy for Governor was hurt because he missed a campaign donations date. He was not able to compete with Governor Green's ads during the campaign.

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. I have heard Kanaka Maoli, who don't care for the United States

Government or the election process, remark that they would be more likely to vote if there was Public Financing for state elections. I would love to see a higher turn out among the indigenous people of Hawai'i. In my opinion, there would be a larger turn out for the state as a whole, based on conversations I have had with potential voters.

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/1/2025 11:09:32 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

support

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 7:35:42 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

Dear Chair Rhoads, Vice-Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Committee,

I urge you to advance this necessary bill for restoring trust in Hawai'i's government. Public financing will be a huge step toward reducing the impacts that special interests and pay-to-play politics have in state government. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely yours,

David Ball, Waialae-Kahala

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 10:34:56 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

Honorable Committee Members,

I am writing to respectfully ask that you support SB51 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.

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.

Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Melissa Barker

Kapaa, HI

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 11:52:11 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

SB51 STRONG SUPPORT

Aloha Senators,

I strongly support SB51. This measure will help restore the people's trust in government. Considering the 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.

-- There is overwhelming public support in Hawaii 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.

Mahalo for your consideration!

Georgia Hoopes, Kalaheo

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 12:20:58 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Daniela Escontrela	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support SB51. This measure will help restore the people's trust in government. Considering the 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 Hawai'i voters support a system of fully publicly financed elections.

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 12:40:03 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

-- I strongly support SB51. This measure will help restore the people's trust in government. Considering the 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.

-- There is overwhelming public support in Hawaii 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.

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 3:54:24 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alana Hart	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in strong support of this bill SB51. This measure will help restore the people's trust in government. The legislature must do everything in its power to remove the influence that money has on our politics.

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. -- There is overwhelming public support in Hawaii 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.

A resilient and democratic Hawaii must resist the creep of big money in politics so that our leaders can better hear the people and the 'aina.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Alana Kaunaloa Hart

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 5:02:25 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Taurie Kinoshita	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To the Honorable Committee,

I am writing in very strong support of SB51.

Public financing for all candidates will help restore the people's trust in government!

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.

Please pass this incredibly important bill!

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Taurie Kinoshita

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 5:14:06 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alana Wesly	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill to help prevent corruption in the Hawaii government and restore trust between the people and our government.

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 7:00:27 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

Public financing for all candidates will help transparency and establish people's trust in government

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 7:43:41 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Patrice Choy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support SB51. Public campaign financing for all candidates running for state and county public offices in Hawaii will help people like myself to start believing in our government and that elected officials are worthy of our attention.

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 8:05:05 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Noreen Dougherty	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support SB51 and think it is one of the most important bills needed to pass during this current legislative session. Public financing for all candidates will help restore the people's trust in government. Considering the 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.

Noreen
Dougherty
Hawaii

Kapaa,

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 8:20:41 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

Hello Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Nanea Lo, and I am testifying in **strong support of SB51**, which establishes a comprehensive system of public financing for all candidates seeking election to state and county public offices in Hawai‘i, beginning with the 2026 general election. I submit this testimony as a resident of Mō‘ili‘ili, a Kanaka Maoli and lineal descendant of the Hawaiian Kingdom, a board member of the Hawai‘i Workers Center, and an Executive Committee Member of the Sierra Club of Hawai‘i.

Public financing is essential to restoring trust in government and ensuring that political power remains in the hands of the people, not wealthy donors and corporate interests. The recent corruption scandals involving Senator J. Kalani English and Representative Ty Cullen, who were convicted of accepting cash bribes, underscore the urgent need for reform. The legislature must take every possible step to remove the influence of money from politics, and SB51 is a critical step in that direction.

Public financing of elections strengthens democracy by leveling the playing field for candidates who may not have access to large financial networks. It ensures that individuals who are dedicated to public service, rather than those with the deepest pockets, have a fair opportunity to run for office and represent their communities.

This measure will also make campaigning more accessible and equitable. Fundraising often requires candidates to spend significant time courting large donors, time that could otherwise be spent engaging directly with constituents and addressing urgent community issues like the climate crisis, housing insecurity, and economic justice. Public financing allows candidates to focus on what truly matters—serving the people—without the burden of constant fundraising pressures.

There is overwhelming public support for a "Clean Elections" system in Hawai‘i. A recent poll found that 74% of voters would be more likely to support a candidate who backs public financing of elections. This demonstrates a clear demand from the people of Hawai‘i for a political system free from the undue influence of private interests.

I strongly urge the committee to pass SB51 to help build a government that is more accountable, transparent, and reflective of the will of the people.

Me ke aloha ‘āina,

Nanea Lo

Mō‘ili‘ili, HI 96826

Sierra Club of Hawai‘i, Executive Committee Member

Board Member, Hawai‘i Workers Center

Kanaka Maoli / Lineal Descendant of the Hawaiian Kingdom

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 9:05:29 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

If you have ignored all of previous testimony on myriad subjects, please pay attention to this one. This can be a game changer and help to fix our badly broken political election system. Please pass this bill.

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 9:34:11 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marion McHenry	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support SB51. This measure will help restore the people's trust in government.

Our great president Jimmy Carter ran his campaign using only public funds.

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. It also promotes public trust in officials and in government.

There is overwhelming public support in Hawaii 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.

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 12:14:09 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Katherine Fryer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support SB51. This measure will help restore the people's trust in government. 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. It will also make campaigning easier by freeing candidates from fundraisers and countless phone calls. Reducing or even eliminating candidates' reliance on wealthy donors and the need to perpetually fundraise allows politicians to spend more time with their constituents and to focus on the most pressing issues of their community. 74% of Hawaii voters support a system of fully publicly financed elections.

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 5:50:37 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

Public financing to help get money out of politics is practical and ethical.If really popular too, it seems like a no-brainer.

Mahalo

Bobbie Best, Wailuku

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 7:22:56 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
J S	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

OPPOSED

Why do these bills seem to share a common theme? Political campaigns should be ratified by the citizens, not collective tax dollars.

Hawaii's government stopped serving the people a long time ago. We are approaching a tipping point. Bills such as these will accelerate the awakening.

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 7:41:22 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Janice Johnson	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly OPPOSE this Bill.

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 7:56:29 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer Cabjuan	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Oppose this bill

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 8:05:32 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Deven English	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In strong opposition of this bill, no taxes should be used to finance any one party political campaign

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 8:31:44 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jeanine Acopan	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Stop spending my money to fuel candidates election endeavors! They wanna run for office, raise their own campaign funds! I don't pay you to sit around to think of ways to waste my tax payer dollars!!

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 9:08:09 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sally Lee	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments: I oppose this bill. It is not in the best interest of the people of Hawaii. candidate seeking election in 2026 or in any election should finance themselves and be responsible for finding their own financing. None of our taxpayer money should be going towards this. This bill as it is set up has it that about \$30 million of taxpayer money will be used to finance all political campaigns. Get out of here with this crap. Use your own money. Find your own funding stop using the hard earned tax money of the people of Hawaii. We all oppose this bill.

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 9:10:55 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Emerson	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Not my tax dollars. If you want to make a career out of politics, it has to come out of your own pocket. The politician role has changed and was never meant to be a career. This is unnecessary spending that will cause the state to end up in more debt.

Susan Gorman-Chang
Ewa Beach, HI
February 3, 2025
SB 51: Support

Aloha Chair and Committee Members,

Mahalo for taking my testimony. I am in strong support of SB 51. In light of the fact that the representative that previously served my district, Ty Cullen, was convicted of receiving cash bribes, it is clear to me that the legislature must work to remove money influence on our elected officials.

SB 51 acts to create a system of public financing for all candidates seeking election to state and county public offices in the State of Hawaii. This would even the playing field of elections.

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 9:14:54 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
kamakani de dely	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 9:16:33 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mallory De Dely	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 9:18:02 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Susan Dedely	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 9:20:56 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

I strongly support SB51. This measure will help restore the people's trust in government. Considering the 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.

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 9:33:04 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Karen M Kimbrell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The risk of private funding for candidates is that the candidate is then beholden to the person or entity that provided those funds. Hawaii has a huge problem with special interest groups having this kind of power over the legislators.

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 9:39:59 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Karin Hoida	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support SB51.

Let's take away the need for politicians to fundraise so they can have the most positive impact serving the people who voted them into office by placing all their efforts into making positive change for their communities and beyond.

This measure will help restore the people's trust in government. Considering the 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.

There is overwhelming public support in Hawaii 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.

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 9:48:54 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha all,

I strongly support SB51.

Mahalo for all you do and your consideration,

Ann V Saffery

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 10:04:14 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

support

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 10:04:42 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jeffrey F Mizuno	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Text

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 10:19:56 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Corinne Solomon	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I OPPOSE SB51.

I do not want my tax dollars going to candidates. This is not a wise use of our money; I would rather see our taxes go towards keiki lunches or kupuna care programs.

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 10:35:08 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bronson Teixeira	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, I strongly oppose this bill, mahalo.

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 11:11:13 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Robin D. Ganitano	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose SB51 because \$30M+ of our tax dollars will be used to finance all political campaigns.

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 11:13:53 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ihilani Buffett	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am opposed to SB51. Law makers really want \$30 million to help finance political campaigns? That is blasphemus! I am tired of career politicians misusing our taxes for nonsense. The tax payers are tired of the abuse. I AM OPPOSED TO SB51

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 11:46:55 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Larry Duclayan	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments: Testimony in Opposition to Hawaii Senate Bill 51 (SB51) I oppose Senate Bill 51 (SB51), which proposes public financing for all state and county political campaigns. While the goal of fair elections is good, SB51 has several problems that are not in the best interest of Hawaii taxpayers. Key Points of Opposition: Higher Taxes: SB51 requires a significant amount of taxpayer money, which could be better used for public services and infrastructure projects. Risk of Misuse: Public financing can lead to wasteful spending if not properly managed and overseen. Limited Benefits: There is little evidence that public financing improves election competitiveness or governance. Missed Opportunities: Funds for public financing could be better spent on pressing needs like education, healthcare, and affordable housing. Focus on Fundraising: Public financing may encourage candidates to prioritize fundraising over policy and community engagement. In conclusion, while fair elections are important, SB51 does not serve the best interest of Hawaii taxpayers. I urge the legislature to consider alternative measures that support candidates without imposing a financial burden on taxpayers or risking misuse of funds. Thank you for considering my testimony. Sincerely, Larry Duclayan

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 12:43:06 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Glenn Metzler	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support SB51

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 12:48:25 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
David Ruiz	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

No

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 1:03:20 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bradle Lindsey	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing to express my strong opposition to Senate Bill 51, which proposes the use of taxpayer dollars to fund political campaigns. This bill represents an inappropriate allocation of public funds and undermines the principles of fiscal responsibility and democratic fairness.

Taxpayer dollars are meant to be used for essential public services and infrastructure that benefit all citizens, such as education, healthcare, and public safety. Using these funds to support political campaigns diverts resources away from critical needs and places an unfair burden on taxpayers who may not endorse the candidates or their political platforms.

Furthermore, public funding of political campaigns can lead to increased government control and influence over the electoral process. It compromises the autonomy of political candidates and can create a system where political success is tied to government approval, rather than to genuine public support and grassroots efforts.

In conclusion, SB51 is a misguided piece of legislation that misuses taxpayer dollars and threatens the integrity of our democratic system. I urge you to reject this bill and uphold the principles of fiscal responsibility and democratic fairness.

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 1:11:00 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Laurie Langton	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly OPPOSE this Bill!

Do we not have enough problems in Hawai'i that require funding?

What about housing the Lahaina victims?

What about medical and mental health care for our veterans?

What about fixing roads so our cars aren't falling apart?

We DO NOT need to provide public financing for campaigns. Who doles out the money? Where is the accountability? This is a nightmare proposal.

If the public wants to donate to a campaign, they have numerous venues to do so. We do not need to be forced into contributing with our taxes.

DO NOT pass this Bill.

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 1:11:44 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lora Santiago	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly OPPOSE SB51. \$30m+ tax dollars will be used to finance all political capmaigns and I refuse to let this be a thought, in my opinion.

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 1:26:56 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mary Smart	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose SB51.

Do not allocate funds to candidates. Money will come to those who do outreach and convince their constituency that they are a viable candidate for the office they are running. There are too many people who "run" for office and do nothing. Government funding of candidates is a very bad concept.

Do not pass SB51.

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 1:27:17 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
David Williams	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Oppose

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 1:39:43 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sharan Sadowski	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Re SB51: I do not want my tax payer dollars to be financing candidates seeking election.

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 1:50:26 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jordan Hall	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill.

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 1:51:26 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joelle Seashell	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I don't want 1 dollar of my money being given to fiance political campaigns. Do some grass roots door knocking.

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 1:51:49 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
James K. Rzonca	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 2:33:46 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Paul Giles	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose SB51.

Paul Giles

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 2:34:22 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lesha Mathes	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill. If someone wants to run a campaign, they can fundraise and people who like what they have to say. This is forcing people to support candidates whether they want to or not. A ridiculous idea. Not how our country works. We as individuals will choose who we want to support. Government once again trying to overstep their bounds.

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 4:03:28 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tim Huycke	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support SB51.

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 4:33:44 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Richard Janik, MD, and I am writing in STRONG support of SB118, which establishes an investigator position at the Campaign Spending Commission.

By increasing the staffing available for the Campaign Spending Commission, the public can be assured that all violations are being found, investigated, and addressed. A full-time investigator can move cases forward faster, which benefits candidates, voters, and election officials.

Mahalo for your consideration!

Richard Janik, Lihue, Kauai

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 4:43:41 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Keoni Shizuma	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and members of the Committee,

I am writing in support of SB51, Fully Funded Public Elections.

Elections shouldn't be bought, and it shouldn't go to those who have the biggest purse who can buy the most advertisements and have the most signs and handouts that are available for the constituents. The ability for elections to be heavily influenced by the one who has the most money has led to the public not trusting those we are voting in. Conversely, candidates who come from the community and who would garner mass community support shouldn't be held back by the fact that they don't have as much money as their opponent. This is how many good candidates lose elections, not being able to financially compete with their opponent.

Implementing fully publicly funded elections can help restore trust and integrity in Hawaii's elections. The success of Hawai'i's partial public funding program and past pilot programs demonstrates that this approach can work, reducing undue influence and increasing voter trust in the electoral process.

Public financing elections fosters a government that truly reflects the will of the people, rather than those with the biggest bankroll.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Keoni Shizuma, from Kaneohe, Oahu.

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 4:49:22 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Committee,

My name is kimdonghyeon, and I am writing in STRONG support of SB51, Fully Funded Public Elections.

Implementing fully publicly funded elections can help restore trust and integrity in Hawaii's elections, which have historically depended on wealthy donors. The success of Hawai'i's partial public funding program and past pilot programs demonstrates that this approach can work, reducing undue influence and increasing voter trust in the electoral process.

Public financing levels the playing field, allowing more diverse and community-driven candidates to run for office without the barrier of big-money fundraising. It fosters a government that truly reflects the will of the people, rather than those with the deepest pockets and connections to influence.

Mahalo for your consideration!

kimdonghyeon

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 4:52:15 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
B.A. McClintock	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in STRONG support of SB51, Fully Funded Public Elections.

Implementing fully publicly funded elections can help restore trust and integrity in Hawaii's elections, which have historically depended on wealthy donors. The success of Hawai'i's partial public funding program and past pilot programs demonstrates that this approach can work, reducing undue influence and increasing voter trust in the electoral process.

Public financing levels the playing field, allowing more diverse and community-driven candidates to run for office without the barrier of big-money fundraising. It fosters a government that truly reflects the will of the people, rather than those with the deepest pockets and connections to influence. Mahalo.

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 5:05:27 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lindsey Fritz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, This is very exciting to see this Bill being discussed. As you can see with what is happening in our Federal Government right now, the current system that allows corporate money and wealthy donors to influence Politicians is corrupt.

I am writing in support of public funded elections. There is no reason why someone who is running for office, a public servant in a position with a salary that is publicly funded, should have to come up with their own funds to essentially apply for a position (aka run a campaign). We should be able to get good, qualified people in our government offices regardless of how much money they have behind them and no one should have to lose an election simply because they didn't have enough money to compete with another person who is backed by wealth.

Hawaii is a place that is all about it's people and to have a Government that really represents the people of Hawaii is necessary to keep it the special place that it is.

Another benefit of publicly funded elections is that you will no longer have politicians who are running for re-election spending so much of their time trying to gather funds to run for office again and instead can use that time to actually do their job. Removing the fundraising aspect from elections would make for a much more productive society.

When people object with the excuse that we do not have the money, keep in mind the amount of waste and that once you get people elected who actually care about what the population wants, you'll get more efficient use of funds which will free up money to support these publicly funded elections. Regardless, the necessity is there and needs to be supported financially. It is that important.

Mahalo for taking the time to work on this important matter. Hawaii will become a better place with more engagement and public trust if this goes through.

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 5:53:27 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

This is vitally needed legislation! Take the big money out of election campaign funding! Pass this measure!

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 6:08:56 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

My family and I strongly support SB51

Doris Segal Matsunaga, Waimea, Hawai'i Island

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 6:11:03 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

My family in Waimea, on Hawaii Island strongly support this much needed clean government bill, SB51

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 6:11:40 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Patti Cook	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Mahalo for scheduling this hearing and working to authorize public financing for elections - it's complicated to implement but overdue.

A hui hou - Patti Cook - Waimea, Island of Hawai'i

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 6:18:22 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Eliel Starbright	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 51, which would strengthen Hawaii's public campaign financing system and help reduce the influence of money in our elections.

For these reasons, I urge you to pass SB 51. This bill will restore trust in our democracy, empower candidates to focus on their communities rather than fundraising, and ensure that our government truly serves the people of Hawai'i.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Timothy, Kapaa

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 6:37:06 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kayla Marie	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this measure.

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 6:54:58 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ronda Hoxsie	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

*Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,**I am writing in **strong support of Senate Bill 51**, which would strengthen Hawaii's public campaign financing system and help reduce the influence of money in our elections.**Hawai'i's political system is broken. The heavy reliance on campaign contributions from wealthy donors and special interests has led to a system where 2 in 3 people believe elected officials are more focused on the interests of their donors than the needs of their communities. As a result, good policies are often blocked while harmful ones move forward. This dynamic erodes public trust and encourages corruption. **SB 51 is a critical step toward fixing this broken system by allowing candidates to run competitive campaigns without being dependent on special interest money.****By providing full public financing for qualified candidates, SB 51 will break the link between private money and electoral success. This will create a fairer and more honest system where elected officials are accountable to their constituents rather than big donors. Importantly, similar programs in other states show that public financing does not lead to higher incumbent turnover or drastic shifts in political makeup, but it does change who holds influence in government—ensuring that everyday people, not just the wealthy few, have a voice.**Public financing is both popular and cost-effective. Three out of four voters support a clean elections program. States like Connecticut and Maine have successfully run similar programs for decades, and Hawai'i County piloted a version in 2010 and 2012. Even if Hawai'i saw higher participation rates than any other state, estimates show the cost would be less than \$10 million per year—just 0.05% of the state budget. That's under \$7 per resident or less than \$1 per tourist—a small price to pay for a more transparent, accountable government.****For these reasons, I urge you to pass SB 51. This bill will restore trust in our democracy, empower candidates to focus on their communities rather than fundraising, and ensure that our government truly serves the people of Hawai'i.******Our Federal system is broken too. Let's set a good example by starting at the state level and fix it!****Thank you for the opportunity to testify.*

Ronda Hoxsie

Kailua-Kona, HI 96740

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 7:02:19 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

We all know there is a lot of "pay to play" in Hawaii politics. This bill will be good for Hawaii and encourage new leaders to run for office as well as to level the playing field. Please pass this bill.

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 7:07:52 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

*Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,**I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 51, which would strengthen Hawaii's public campaign financing system and help reduce the influence of money in our elections.**Hawai'i's political system is broken. The heavy reliance on campaign contributions from wealthy donors and special interests has led to a system where 2 in 3 people believe elected officials are more focused on the interests of their donors than the needs of their communities. As a result, good policies are often blocked while harmful ones move forward. This dynamic erodes public trust and encourages corruption. SB 51 is a critical step toward fixing this broken system by allowing candidates to run competitive campaigns without being dependent on special interest money.**By providing full public financing for qualified candidates, SB 51 will break the link between private money and electoral success. This will create a fairer and more honest system where elected officials are accountable to their constituents rather than big donors. Importantly, similar programs in other states show that public financing does not lead to higher incumbent turnover or drastic shifts in political makeup, but it does change who holds influence in government—ensuring that everyday people, not just the wealthy few, have a voice.**Public financing is both popular and cost-effective. Three out of four voters support a clean elections program. States like Connecticut and Maine have successfully run similar programs for decades, and Hawai'i County piloted a version in 2010 and 2012. Even if Hawai'i saw higher participation rates than any other state, estimates show the cost would be less than \$10 million per year—just 0.05% of the state budget. That's under \$7 per resident or less than \$1 per tourist—a small price to pay for a more transparent, accountable government.**For these reasons, I urge you to pass SB 51. This bill will restore trust in our democracy, empower candidates to focus on their communities rather than fundraising, and ensure that our government truly serves the people of Hawai'i.**Thank you for the opportunity to testify.*

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 7:09:49 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

Please support

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 7:16:43 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jennifer Lum, and I am writing in STRONG support of SB51, Fully Funded Public Elections.

Implementing fully publicly funded elections can help restore trust and integrity in Hawaii's elections, which have historically depended on wealthy donors. The success of Hawai'i's partial public funding program and past pilot programs demonstrates that this approach can reduce undue influence and increase voter trust in the electoral process.

Public financing levels the playing field, allowing more diverse and community-driven candidates to run for office without the barrier of big-money fundraising. It fosters a government that truly reflects the will of the people, rather than those with the deepest pockets and connections to influence.

I have been working for many years to get money out of politics. Ever since the Citizens United Supreme Court decision, more and more of our politicians have been bought and paid for by very wealthy individuals and corporate interest groups. This makes it so that the average person who wants to do the work of the people and not the corporate lobbyists has a huge barrier to even entering the race. This would help level the playing field, even if just slightly.

Mahalo for your consideration!

Jennifer Lum, 'Ewa Beach

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 7:19:02 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tamara Luthy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Dr. Tamara Luthy and I am writing in STRONG support of SB51, Fully Funded Public Elections.

Implementing fully publicly funded elections can help restore trust and integrity in Hawaii's elections, which have historically depended on wealthy donors. The success of Hawai'i's partial public funding program and past pilot programs demonstrates that this approach can work, reducing undue influence and increasing voter trust in the electoral process.

Public financing levels the playing field, allowing more diverse and community-driven candidates to run for office without the barrier of big-money fundraising. It fosters a government that truly reflects the will of the people, rather than those with the deepest pockets and connections to influence.

Mahalo for your consideration!

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 7:22:04 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 51, which would strengthen Hawaii's public campaign financing system and help reduce the influence of money in our elections.

Hawai'i's political system is broken. The heavy reliance on campaign contributions from wealthy donors and special interests has led to a system where 2 in 3 people believe elected officials are more focused on the interests of their donors than the needs of their communities. As a result, good policies are often blocked while harmful ones move forward. This dynamic erodes public trust and encourages corruption. SB 51 is a critical step toward fixing this broken system by allowing candidates to run competitive campaigns without being dependent on special interest money.

By providing full public financing for qualified candidates, SB 51 will break the link between private money and electoral success. This will create a fairer and more honest system where elected officials are accountable to their constituents rather than big donors. Importantly, similar programs in other states show that public financing does not lead to higher incumbent turnover or drastic shifts in political makeup, but it does change who holds influence in government—ensuring that everyday people, not just the wealthy few, have a voice.

Public financing is both popular and cost-effective. Three out of four voters support a clean elections program. States like Connecticut and Maine have successfully run similar programs for decades, and Hawai'i County piloted a version in 2010 and 2012. Even if Hawai'i saw higher participation rates than any other state, estimates show the cost would be less than \$10 million per year—just 0.05% of the state budget. That's under \$7 per resident or less than \$1 per tourist—a small price to pay for a more transparent, accountable government.

For these reasons, I urge you to pass SB 51. This bill will restore trust in our democracy, empower candidates to focus on their communities rather than fundraising, and ensure that our government truly serves the people of Hawai'i.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 7:28:31 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

I support SB51 . Let's even the playing field and remove the influence of money and special interest

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 7:36:37 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mavis Oliveira-Medeiros	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Mavis I. Oliveira-Medeiros and I am writing in **STRONG** support of SB51, Fully Funded Public Elections.

Implementing fully publicly funded elections can help restore trust and integrity in Hawaii's elections, which have historically depended on wealthy donors. The success of Hawai'i's partial public funding program and past pilot programs demonstrates that this approach can work, reducing undue influence and increasing voter trust in the electoral process.

Public financing levels the playing field, allowing more diverse and community-driven candidates to run for office without the barrier of big-money fundraising. It fosters a government that truly reflects the will of the people, rather than those with the deepest pockets and connections to influence.

Mahalo for your consideration!

Mavis Oliveira-Medeiros

Hana, Maui, Hawaii 96713

(808)866-7409

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 7:37:48 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nancy D Moser	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In Strong Support of SB 51

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee.

This measure builds confidence that our elections will reflect the interests of the electorate and not skew toward the interests of wealth. Plus it would make life easier for political candidates to focus on meeting with constituents about issues and policies rather than fundraising.

Please pass this measure.

Sincerely,

Nancy Moser

in Waikoloa 96738

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 7:38:34 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
fred hofer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This will help get people elected that don't start out owing favors 🗳️👉🌈🔱💪👊🌍

I strongly support

Fred Hofer

Hilo

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 7:54:29 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

*Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,**I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 51, which would strengthen Hawaii's public campaign financing system and help reduce the influence of money in our elections.**Hawai'i's political system is broken. The heavy reliance on campaign contributions from wealthy donors and special interests has led to a system where 2 in 3 people believe elected officials are more focused on the interests of their donors than the needs of their communities. As a result, good policies are often blocked while harmful ones move forward. This dynamic erodes public trust and encourages corruption. SB 51 is a critical step toward fixing this broken system by allowing candidates to run competitive campaigns without being dependent on special interest money.**By providing full public financing for qualified candidates, SB 51 will break the link between private money and electoral success. This will create a fairer and more honest system where elected officials are accountable to their constituents rather than big donors. Importantly, similar programs in other states show that public financing does not lead to higher incumbent turnover or drastic shifts in political makeup, but it does change who holds influence in government—ensuring that everyday people, not just the wealthy few, have a voice.**Public financing is both popular and cost-effective. Three out of four voters support a clean elections program. States like Connecticut and Maine have successfully run similar programs for decades, and Hawai'i County piloted a version in 2010 and 2012. Even if Hawai'i saw higher participation rates than any other state, estimates show the cost would be less than \$10 million per year—just 0.05% of the state budget. That's under \$7 per resident or less than \$1 per tourist—a small price to pay for a more transparent, accountable government.**For these reasons, I urge you to pass SB 51. This bill will restore trust in our democracy, empower candidates to focus on their communities rather than fundraising, and ensure that our government truly serves the people of Hawai'i.**Thank you for the opportunity to testify.*

Elizabeth Winternitz, Kula

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 7:55:40 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

I think our democracy is being badly damaged by the distortions caused by the influence of money that corrupts both who gets elected and what issues our elected representatives address. We need to eliminate the power of monied special interests in our election in order to make government more responsive to the public at large. I believe that passing SB 51 will be a major step forward toward meeting this vital objective.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 8:02:25 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

*Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,**I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 51, which would strengthen Hawaii's public campaign financing system and help reduce the influence of money in our elections.**Hawai'i's political system is broken. The heavy reliance on campaign contributions from wealthy donors and special interests has led to a system where 2 in 3 people believe elected officials are more focused on the interests of their donors than the needs of their communities. As a result, good policies are often blocked while harmful ones move forward. This dynamic erodes public trust and encourages corruption. SB 51 is a critical step toward fixing this broken system by allowing candidates to run competitive campaigns without being dependent on special interest money.**By providing full public financing for qualified candidates, SB 51 will break the link between private money and electoral success. This will create a fairer and more honest system where elected officials are accountable to their constituents rather than big donors. Importantly, similar programs in other states show that public financing does not lead to higher incumbent turnover or drastic shifts in political makeup, but it does change who holds influence in government—ensuring that everyday people, not just the wealthy few, have a voice.**Public financing is both popular and cost-effective. Three out of four voters support a clean elections program. States like Connecticut and Maine have successfully run similar programs for decades, and Hawai'i County piloted a version in 2010 and 2012. Even if Hawai'i saw higher participation rates than any other state, estimates show the cost would be less than \$10 million per year—just 0.05% of the state budget. That's under \$7 per resident or less than \$1 per tourist—a small price to pay for a more transparent, accountable government.**For these reasons, I urge you to pass SB 51. This bill will restore trust in our democracy, empower candidates to focus on their communities rather than fundraising, and ensure that our government truly serves the people of Hawai'i.**Thank you for the opportunity to testify.*

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 8:13:23 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
L.C	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose SB51. Anyone running for office should fund their own campaign with their own money or the financial assistance of individuals who support them. It should be their responsibility to drum up support for their campaign. If I don't know who the candidate is or they will not represent me or they have an agenda that I don't agree with, I don't want my tax dollars funding their campaign.

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 8:23:43 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha e,

Follow the money. For far too many political campaigns it ends up coming from wealthy individuals and organizations. It looks bad and it smells bad. And it tarnishes you, our elected officials. Time to break the cycle and move to public financing.

- Dan Freund, Kapaa

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 8:29:37 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

I am a Hawaii resident and believe that private funds should not be used to influence our elections.

Public funding will ensure that election results are not dictated by the rich.

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 8:34:39 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair Rhoads and members of the JDC committee:

I'm testifying in strong support of SB51. One need look no further than our Federal government to see the damages done from allowing too much money into elections. Therefore, I encourage your committee to pass SB51 out of your committee to get money out of politics.

Mahalo,

Paul Bernstein

Aina Haina

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 8:39:11 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Anne Kamau	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose SB51. Taxpayer dollars should not be used to finance any political campaign. Candidates should find their own non- taxpayer funding. Mahalo.

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 8:41:34 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Janice Palma-Glennie	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

there is NOTHING more important to protecting our democracy than campaign finance reform. The time isn't now. it was a decade ago. But NOW is all we have -- and YOU are the ones who have to do it.

This bill is a big step toward creating a more fair, believable, democratic republic. without this kind of reform, we are lost and not just because corporations and special interests are stealing our world but because Hawaii's Democratic party's myopia will help our nation continue to go down a destructive MAGA path. Mark my words. Last session was an unholy debacle with Rep Tarnas killing legislation that would've started the process of critically needed reform. Please don't let it happen again or God help our country, our citizens and all that we may not hold dear but need to be truly free and prosperous as a people.

it's up to YOU. Hawai'i can't wait, the nation can't wait, nor can the world as it watches democracy crumble from the weakness of U.S. elected officials from top to bottom. Use your integrity to vote "yes" on SB51.

mahalo, sincerely, and with a glimmer of hope,

janice palma-glennie

kailua-kona

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 8:44:10 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
TERI SAVAIINAEA	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chairperson Rhoads and Committee Members,

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in opposition to SB51. My name is Teri Kia Savaiinaea, and I am a longtime resident of Wai‘anae, dedicated to uplifting our community through education, public safety, infrastructure, and environmental sustainability. While I strongly support efforts to improve voter participation and representation, I oppose SB51 for the following reasons:

1. Confusion and Accessibility Issues for Voters

- Ranked-choice voting (RCV) introduces a more complex system that could confuse many voters, particularly our kūpuna and those with limited access to voter education resources.
- The current voting system is straightforward—one person, one vote—ensuring clarity and accessibility for all communities.

2. Impact on Native Hawaiian and Underserved Communities

- Many voters in Wai‘anae and other underserved areas already face barriers to voting, such as limited polling places and lack of civic engagement outreach. Implementing RCV could create additional obstacles.
- Studies in other jurisdictions show that RCV can lead to higher rates of ballot exhaustion, where votes are discarded because voters do not fully rank candidates or misunderstand the process.

3. Potential for Unintended Consequences

- In places where RCV has been implemented, results can be delayed, leading to decreased trust in the electoral system.
- Instead of RCV, efforts should focus on increasing voter turnout through community engagement, education, and improved access to polling locations.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to vote NO on SB51. Instead, we should work together to find alternative ways to improve voter participation while ensuring our electoral process remains accessible and trusted by all residents.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Teri Kia Savaiinaea

District 45, Wai'anae Resident

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 8:52:56 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Josh Stanbro	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hawai'i must set an example and chart a path to protect the integrity of democracy. Please pass SB51.

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 8:55:05 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 51, which would strengthen Hawaii's public campaign financing system and help reduce the influence of money in our elections.

Hawai'i's political system is broken. The heavy reliance on campaign contributions from wealthy donors and special interests has led to a system where 2 in 3 people believe elected officials are more focused on the interests of their donors than the needs of their communities. As a result, good policies are often blocked while harmful ones move forward. This dynamic erodes public trust and encourages corruption. SB 51 is a critical step toward fixing this broken system by allowing candidates to run competitive campaigns without being dependent on special interest money.

By providing full public financing for qualified candidates, SB 51 will break the link between private money and electoral success. This will create a fairer and more honest system where elected officials are accountable to their constituents rather than big donors. Importantly, similar programs in other states show that public financing does not lead to higher incumbent turnover or drastic shifts in political makeup, but it does change who holds influence in government—ensuring that everyday people, not just the wealthy few, have a voice.

Public financing is both popular and cost-effective. Three out of four voters support a clean elections program. States like Connecticut and Maine have successfully run similar programs for decades, and Hawai'i County piloted a version in 2010 and 2012. Even if Hawai'i saw higher participation rates than any other state, estimates show the cost would be less than \$10 million per year—just 0.05% of the state budget. That's under \$7 per resident or less than \$1 per tourist—a small price to pay for a more transparent, accountable government.

For these reasons, I urge you to pass SB 51. This bill will restore trust in our democracy, empower candidates to focus on their communities rather than fundraising, and ensure that our government truly serves the people of Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Marcia Kemble
Makiki

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 8:59:08 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

I support Bill SB51.

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 9:01:19 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

I support this bill to keep money out of local politics.

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 9:03:18 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kencho Gurung	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Kencho, and I am writing in STRONG support of SB51, Fully Funded Public Elections.

Implementing fully publicly funded elections can help restore trust and integrity in Hawaii's elections, which have historically depended on wealthy donors. The success of Hawai'i's partial public funding program and past pilot programs demonstrates that this approach can work, reducing undue influence and increasing voter trust in the electoral process.

Public financing levels the playing field, allowing more diverse and community-driven candidates to run for office without the barrier of big-money fundraising. It fosters a government that truly reflects the will of the people, rather than those with the deepest pockets and connections to influence.

Mahalo for your consideration!

Kencho Gurung, Hilo

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 9:08:55 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

Honorable Representatives, Please support this important legislative bill for clean public funded elections. Take the private interest funds out of the election campaign that will allow an even candidate playing field and transparent sourcing of campaign funds.

Thank You.

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 9:18:12 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Reina Loughlin	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill and use of taxpayer \$.

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 9:30:16 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carolyn Eaton	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Carolyn Eaton. I am a resident of Makiki, and I strongly support this measure.

Mahalo for your hard work to improve fairness of elections in Hawai'i. If enacted, the State should see more diversity among candidates for election to public office, and more new ideas brought before us during campaigns. I appreciate this opportunity to place my views before you.

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 9:31:42 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
JarraeTehani Manasas	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in STRONG support of SB51, Fully Funded Public Elections.

Implementing fully publicly funded elections will help to restore trust and integrity in Hawaii's elections, which have historically been depended on wealthy donors. The success of Hawai'i's partial public funding program and past pilot programs demonstrates that this approach can work, reducing undue influence and increasing voter trust in the electoral process.

Public financing levels the playing field, allowing more diverse and community-driven candidates to run for office without the barrier of big-money fundraising. It fosters a government that truly reflects the will of the people, rather than those with the deepest pockets and connections to influence.

Mahalo for your consideration!

JarraeTehani Manasas, Kailua Kona Hawai'i

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 9:35:49 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Martin Dixon	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill.

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 9:46:46 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dorinda Ohelo	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill.

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 9:55:08 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Brian Loughlin	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose!

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 10:10:18 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strongest support of Senate Bill 51, which would strengthen Hawaii's public campaign financing system and help reduce the influence of money in our elections.

Hawai'i's political system is broken. The heavy reliance on campaign contributions from wealthy donors and special interests has led to a system where 2 in 3 people believe elected officials are more focused on the interests of their donors than the needs of their communities. As a result, good policies are often blocked while harmful ones move forward. This dynamic erodes public trust and encourages corruption. SB 51 is a critical step toward fixing this broken system by allowing candidates to run competitive campaigns without being dependent on special interest money.

By providing full public financing for qualified candidates, SB 51 will break the link between private money and electoral success. This will create a fairer and more honest system where elected officials are accountable to their constituents rather than big donors. Importantly, similar programs in other states show that public financing does not lead to higher incumbent turnover or drastic shifts in political makeup, but it does change who holds influence in government—ensuring that everyday people, not just the wealthy few, have a voice.

Public financing is both popular and cost-effective. Three out of four voters support a clean elections program. States like Connecticut and Maine have successfully run similar programs for decades, and Hawai'i County piloted a version in 2010 and 2012. Even if Hawai'i saw higher participation rates than any other state, estimates show the cost would be less than \$10 million per year—just 0.05% of the state budget. That's under \$7 per resident or less than \$1 per tourist—a small price to pay for a more transparent, accountable government.

For these reasons, I urge you to pass SB 51. This bill will restore trust in our democracy, empower candidates to focus on their communities rather than fundraising, and ensure that our government truly serves the people of Hawai'i.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 10:16:00 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Erin Hagan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

*Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,**I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 51, which would strengthen Hawaii's public campaign financing system and help reduce the influence of money in our elections.**Hawai'i's political system is broken. The heavy reliance on campaign contributions from wealthy donors and special interests has led to a system where 2 in 3 people believe elected officials are more focused on the interests of their donors than the needs of their communities. As a result, good policies are often blocked while harmful ones move forward. This dynamic erodes public trust and encourages corruption. SB 51 is a critical step toward fixing this broken system by allowing candidates to run competitive campaigns without being dependent on special interest money.**By providing full public financing for qualified candidates, SB 51 will break the link between private money and electoral success. This will create a fairer and more honest system where elected officials are accountable to their constituents rather than big donors. Importantly, similar programs in other states show that public financing does not lead to higher incumbent turnover or drastic shifts in political makeup, but it does change who holds influence in government—ensuring that everyday people, not just the wealthy few, have a voice.**Public financing is both popular and cost-effective. Three out of four voters support a clean elections program. States like Connecticut and Maine have successfully run similar programs for decades, and Hawai'i County piloted a version in 2010 and 2012. Even if Hawai'i saw higher participation rates than any other state, estimates show the cost would be less than \$10 million per year—just 0.05% of the state budget. That's under \$7 per resident or less than \$1 per tourist—a small price to pay for a more transparent, accountable government.**For these reasons, I urge you to pass SB 51. This bill will restore trust in our democracy, empower candidates to focus on their communities rather than fundraising, and ensure that our government truly serves the people of Hawai'i.**Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.*

Erin Hagan

To: Judicial Chair Rhoads and Committee Members
From: Brodie Lockard, Common Cause Hawaii Board Member
Date: Wednesday, February 5, 2025, 9:15 am

In strong support of SB51

Dear Chair Rhoads and Committee Members—

I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 51, which would strengthen Hawaii's public campaign financing system and help reduce the influence of money in our elections.

Hawai'i's political system is broken. The heavy reliance on campaign contributions from wealthy donors and special interests has led to a system where 2 in 3 people believe elected officials are more focused on the interests of their donors than the needs of their communities. As a result, good policies are often blocked while harmful ones move forward. This dynamic erodes public trust and encourages corruption. SB 51 is a critical step toward fixing this broken system by allowing candidates to run competitive campaigns without being dependent on special interest money.

By providing full public financing for qualified candidates, SB 51 will break the link between private money and electoral success. This will create a fairer and more honest system where elected officials are accountable to their constituents rather than big donors. Importantly, similar programs in other states show that public financing does not lead to higher incumbent turnover or drastic shifts in political makeup, but it does change who holds influence in government—ensuring that everyday people, not just the wealthy few, have a voice.

Public financing is both popular and cost-effective. Three out of four voters support a clean elections program. States like Connecticut and Maine have successfully run similar programs for decades, and Hawai'i County piloted a version in 2010 and 2012. Even if Hawai'i saw higher participation rates than any other state, estimates show the cost would be less than \$10 million per year—just 0.05% of the state budget. That's under \$7 per resident or less than \$1 per tourist—a small price to pay for a more transparent, accountable government.

For these reasons, I urge you to pass SB 51. This bill will restore trust in our democracy, empower candidates to focus on their communities rather than fundraising, and ensure that our government truly serves the people of Hawai'i.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Brodie Lockard
Common Cause Hawaii Board Member

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 10:49:28 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

Dear Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary,

I am a voter who lives in Hilo. I am testifying in support of SB 51 RELATING TO PUBLIC FINANCING FOR CANDIDATES TO ELECTED OFFICE

This bill is one of many that is related to the House Commission to Improve Standards of Conduct. The overarching goal of that commission is to restore the public's faith in our state government by discouraging the "pay to play" political culture that led to criminal convictions of corrupt legislators. This bill moves us toward that goal by providing the option of increased public financing to qualified candidates.

SB 51 establishes a comprehensive system of public financing for all candidates seeking election to state and county public offices in the State of Hawaii, beginning with the 2026 general election year. It requires the Campaign Spending Commission to submit reports to the Legislature. It appropriates funds to implement the bill.

According to its website, the Brennan Center for Justice believes that "the most effective and promising solution to the problem of big money in politics [is] small donor public financing, a system in which public funds match and multiply small donations...Designed right, small donor public financing also permits candidates to raise and spend what they need to compete in the super PAC era, should they choose to opt in."

I urge you to pass SB 51 RELATING TO PUBLIC FINANCING FOR CANDIDATES TO ELECTED OFFICE and help to reduce the effect of big money in politics.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony. Thank you for your service to the people of Hawai'i.

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 11:01:25 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Barbara J. Service	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Rhoads and Vice Chair Gabbard,

Please support SB51 regarding public financing of elections so that we can have "clean elections," free of the influence of big money.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

Barbara J. Service MSW

Child Welfare Services Supervisor (ret.)

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 11:09:39 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Richard Domingo	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I OPPOSE SB51

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 11:12:57 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

SUPPORT!

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 11:35:42 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
William Lono	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I ***OPPOSE*** bill ***SB51***.

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 12:11:52 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Liam Wright	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 51, which would strengthen Hawaii's public campaign financing system and help reduce the influence of money in our elections.

Hawai'i's political system is broken. The heavy reliance on campaign contributions from wealthy donors and special interests has led to a system where 2 in 3 people believe elected officials are more focused on the interests of their donors than the needs of their communities. As a result, good policies are often blocked while harmful ones move forward. This dynamic erodes public trust and encourages corruption. SB 51 is a critical step toward fixing this broken system by allowing candidates to run competitive campaigns without being dependent on special interest money.

By providing full public financing for qualified candidates, SB 51 will break the link between private money and electoral success. This will create a fairer and more honest system where elected officials are accountable to their constituents rather than big donors. Importantly, similar programs in other states show that public financing does not lead to higher incumbent turnover or drastic shifts in political makeup, but it does change who holds influence in government—ensuring that everyday people, not just the wealthy few, have a voice.

Public financing is both popular and cost-effective. Three out of four voters support a clean elections program. States like Connecticut and Maine have successfully run similar programs for decades, and Hawai'i County piloted a version in 2010 and 2012. Even if Hawai'i saw higher participation rates than any other state, estimates show the cost would be less than \$10 million per year—just 0.05% of the state budget. That's under \$7 per resident or less than \$1 per tourist—a small price to pay for a more transparent, accountable government.

For these reasons, I urge you to pass SB 51. This bill will restore trust in our democracy, empower candidates to focus on their communities rather than fundraising, and ensure that our government truly serves the people of Hawai'i.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 12:26:54 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dawn Morais Webster Ph.D.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I urge you to please waste no time passing SB 51. After two weeks of seeing Big Money drive the chaos and illegal actions coming out of the White House, we should waste no time doing all we can to clean up politics here in Hawaii. Voters believe the system is broken and corrupt. This bill will help restore trust in our democracy. It will empower candidates to focus on their communities rather than fundraising, and ensure that our government truly serves the people of Hawai'i. Please take a stand for clean government. Show voters here--and your colleagues in DC-- that you will do what too many of them seem to lack the courage to do: stand up for our democracy that is severely threatened and resist the destructive power of Big Money.

We are in perilous times. Public financing has worked elsewhere. It can work here too--and it is doable for very little money. We need good people in government with the guts and character to speak for "we the people." People like you can beat back the pernicious effect of Big Money that keeps too many good people from even trying to run for office. The need to pass a bill like SB51 when we desperately need more courageous voices in government has never been more urgent. Mahalo for your leadership on this.

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 12:54:08 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Keala Fung, and I am writing in STRONG support of SB51, Fully Funded Public Elections.

Implementing fully publicly funded elections can help restore trust and integrity in Hawaii's elections, which have historically depended on wealthy donors. The success of Hawai'i's partial public funding program and past pilot programs demonstrates that this approach can work, reducing undue influence and increasing voter trust in the electoral process.

Public financing levels the playing field, allowing more diverse and community-driven candidates to run for office without the barrier of big-money fundraising. It fosters a government that truly reflects the will of the people, rather than those with the deepest pockets and connections to influence.

Mahalo for your consideration!

Keala Fung, Honolulu HI

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 1:01:25 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary,

I am testifying in strong support of SB 51, which would strengthen Hawaii's public campaign financing system and help reduce the influence of money in our elections.

SB 51 establishes a comprehensive system of public financing for all candidates seeking election to state and county public offices in the State of Hawaii, beginning with the 2026 general election year. It requires the Campaign Spending Commission to submit reports to the Legislature, and appropriates funds to implement the bill.

Implementing this system will not only counter the undue influence of wealthy donors and special interests. It will also free up candidates and legislators to spend more time engaging constituents and working to resolve problems. A recent analysis by Issue One of Federal Election Commission data found that a typical senator running for reelection in 2024 raised \$11,400 per day on average between January and March 2023. The money invested in this system will be more than recouped in time diverted away from fundraising and back to legislative and oversight responsibilities.

I urge you to pass SB51 to reduce the influence of big money in politics and to strengthen confidence in our democracy.

Thank you for the opportunity submit testimony,

Michele Mitsumori
Hilo

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 1:57:20 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Luis Ma	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Using taxpayer money to fund all political campaigns is a contentious issue, and there are strong arguments against it. Here are some key reasons why many believe tax dollars ****should not**** be used to fund political campaigns:

1. ****Forced Participation****:

Using tax money to fund campaigns forces all taxpayers—regardless of their political beliefs—to support candidates and parties they may fundamentally disagree with. This violates the principle of individual freedom and could feel like a form of ****compelled speech****, as taxpayers are effectively funding messages they don't endorse.

2. ****Misuse of Public Funds****:

Taxpayer money is meant to fund essential services like education, healthcare, infrastructure, and public safety. Diverting these funds to political campaigns could be seen as a ****misallocation of resources****, especially when many communities face pressing needs that require urgent financial attention.

3. ****Lack of Accountability****:

Taxpayer-funded campaigns might reduce the incentive for candidates to connect with voters and grassroots donors. If campaigns are fully funded by the government, politicians might feel less accountable to the people they represent and more beholden to the system that funds them.

4. ****Inefficiency and Waste****:

Political campaigns can be expensive and often involve significant spending on advertising, consultants, and events. Taxpayer-funded campaigns could lead to ****wasteful spending****, with little oversight on how the money is used. Critics argue that this could result in frivolous or ineffective campaigns at the public's expense.

5. ****Unfair Advantage for Established Parties****:

Taxpayer-funded campaigns might disproportionately benefit established parties and incumbents, who already have name recognition and resources. Smaller parties or independent candidates could struggle to meet eligibility requirements for funding, perpetuating the dominance of major parties and stifling political diversity.

6. ****Public Opposition****:

Many taxpayers are already frustrated with how their money is spent and may strongly oppose using public funds for political campaigns. This could lead to ****public backlash****, eroding trust in government and further polarizing the political landscape.

7. ****Potential for Abuse****:

A system of taxpayer-funded campaigns could be exploited by bad actors. For example, fringe candidates or those running for office as a publicity stunt might qualify for funding, wasting public resources and undermining the seriousness of the electoral process.

8. ****Better Alternatives Exist****:

Instead of using taxpayer money, reforms like ****small-donor matching programs**** or stricter campaign finance laws could reduce the influence of big money in politics without forcing taxpayers to foot the bill. These alternatives allow individuals to voluntarily support candidates they believe in, rather than mandating public funding.

****Conclusion****:

While the goal of reducing the influence of money in politics is laudable, using taxpayer money to fund all political campaigns raises significant ethical, practical, and financial concerns. It risks alienating taxpayers, misallocating public funds, and creating unintended consequences that

could harm the democratic process. Instead, policymakers should explore alternative solutions that promote fairness and transparency without imposing on taxpayers.

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 2:01:13 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joell Edwards	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Joell Edwards and I am writing in STRONG support of SB51, Fully Funded Public Elections.

Implementing fully publicly funded elections can help restore trust and integrity in Hawaii's elections, which have historically depended on wealthy donors. The success of Hawai'i's partial public funding program and past pilot programs demonstrates that this approach can work, reducing undue influence and increasing voter trust in the electoral process.

Public financing levels the playing field, allowing more diverse and community-driven candidates to run for office without the barrier of big-money fundraising. It fosters a government that truly reflects the will of the people, rather than those with the deepest pockets and connections to influence.

Mahalo for your consideration!

Joell Edwards, Wainiha

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 2:07:24 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

I support this bill. We need clean elections

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 6:38:31 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

*Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,**I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 51, which would strengthen Hawaii's public campaign financing system and help reduce the influence of money in our elections.**Hawai'i's political system is broken. The heavy reliance on campaign contributions from wealthy donors and special interests has led to a system where 2 in 3 people believe elected officials are more focused on the interests of their donors than the needs of their communities. As a result, good policies are often blocked while harmful ones move forward. This dynamic erodes public trust and encourages corruption. SB 51 is a critical step toward fixing this broken system by allowing candidates to run competitive campaigns without being dependent on special interest money.**By providing full public financing for qualified candidates, SB 51 will break the link between private money and electoral success. This will create a fairer and more honest system where elected officials are accountable to their constituents rather than big donors. Importantly, similar programs in other states show that public financing does not lead to higher incumbent turnover or drastic shifts in political makeup, but it does change who holds influence in government—ensuring that everyday people, not just the wealthy few, have a voice.**Public financing is both popular and cost-effective. Three out of four voters support a clean elections program. States like Connecticut and Maine have successfully run similar programs for decades, and Hawai'i County piloted a version in 2010 and 2012. Even if Hawai'i saw higher participation rates than any other state, estimates show the cost would be less than \$10 million per year—just 0.05% of the state budget. That's under \$7 per resident or less than \$1 per tourist—a small price to pay for a more transparent, accountable government.**For these reasons, I urge you to pass SB 51. This bill will restore trust in our democracy, empower candidates to focus on their communities rather than fundraising, and ensure that our government truly serves the people of Hawai'i.**Thank you for the opportunity to testify.*

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 6:40:57 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Faith Mishina	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To protect our government by the people, it is time to democratize our elections. Money cannot and should not control our elections. The minority class of billionaires should not control political outcomes for the majority. We should not put political offices up for sale!

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 6:50:58 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Isis Usborne, and I am writing in STRONG support of SB51, Fully Funded Public Elections.

Implementing fully publicly funded elections can help restore trust and integrity in Hawaii's elections, which have historically depended on wealthy donors. The success of Hawai'i's partial public funding program and past pilot programs demonstrates that this approach can work, reducing undue influence and increasing voter trust in the electoral process.

Public financing levels the playing field, allowing more diverse and community-driven candidates to run for office without the barrier of big-money fundraising. It fosters a government that truly reflects the will of the people, rather than those with the deepest pockets and connections to influence.

Mahalo for your consideration!

Isis Usborne, 96815

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 7:12:53 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

We strongly support SB 51 for many reasons, notably honesty, integrity, fairness, openness and transparency. Please act by supporting this critically needed legislation. Mahalo from our family

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 7:28:12 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cheryl Rzonca	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose SB51. I do not want my tax money funding political campaigns.

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 7:43:51 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

*Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,**I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 51, which would strengthen Hawaii's public campaign financing system and help reduce the influence of money in our elections.**Hawai'i's political system is broken. The heavy reliance on campaign contributions from wealthy donors and special interests has led to a system where 2 in 3 people believe elected officials are more focused on the interests of their donors than the needs of their communities. As a result, good policies are often blocked while harmful ones move forward. This dynamic erodes public trust and encourages corruption. SB 51 is a critical step toward fixing this broken system by allowing candidates to run competitive campaigns without being dependent on special interest money.**By providing full public financing for qualified candidates, SB 51 will break the link between private money and electoral success. This will create a fairer and more honest system where elected officials are accountable to their constituents rather than big donors. Importantly, similar programs in other states show that public financing does not lead to higher incumbent turnover or drastic shifts in political makeup, but it does change who holds influence in government—ensuring that everyday people, not just the wealthy few, have a voice.**Public financing is both popular and cost-effective. Three out of four voters support a clean elections program. States like Connecticut and Maine have successfully run similar programs for decades, and Hawai'i County piloted a version in 2010 and 2012. Even if Hawai'i saw higher participation rates than any other state, estimates show the cost would be less than \$10 million per year—just 0.05% of the state budget. That's under \$7 per resident or less than \$1 per tourist—a small price to pay for a more transparent, accountable government.**For these reasons, I urge you to pass SB 51. This bill will restore trust in our democracy, empower candidates to focus on their communities rather than fundraising, and ensure that our government truly serves the people of Hawai'i.**Thank you for the opportunity to testify.*

Diane Ware, 99-7815 Kapoha Pl. Volcano 96785

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 7:45:00 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shani Hough	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose Bill SB51 which means that \$30 million plus tax dollars will be used to finance all political campaigns!

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 7:50:45 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ramona Hussey	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support SB51

Senators, I urge your strong support of this bill which would enable real choice in our elections. Currently, money is the biggest barrier for young, intelligent, caring persons to run for office. This would help level the playing field.

Thank you for your consideration of this step towards better elections and better government.

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 8:16:30 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in **strong support** of **Senate Bill 51**, which would strengthen Hawaii’s public campaign financing system and help reduce the influence of money in our elections.

Hawai‘i’s political system is at a breaking point. The overwhelming reliance on **campaign contributions from wealthy donors and special interests** has created a system where **two-thirds of voters** believe elected officials prioritize donors over their communities. As a result, **good policies are blocked while harmful ones move forward**, eroding public trust and encouraging corruption. **SB 51 offers a critical solution** by enabling candidates to run competitive campaigns without depending on special interest money.

By providing **full public financing** for qualified candidates, SB 51 will **sever the link between private money and electoral success**. This will create a **fairer, more accountable system** where elected officials answer to their constituents rather than big donors. Notably, similar programs in other states have shown that **public financing does not cause major shifts in political makeup or higher incumbent turnover**—but it **does change who holds influence**, ensuring that **everyday people—not just the wealthy few—have a voice in government**.

Public financing is both **popular and cost-effective**. **Three out of four voters** support a clean elections program. States like **Connecticut and Maine** have successfully implemented similar systems for decades, and Hawai‘i County piloted one in **2010 and 2012**. Even under **higher-than-average participation**, estimates show the cost would be **under \$10 million per year—just 0.05% of the state budget**. That’s less than **\$7 per resident** or **under \$1 per tourist**—a small price to pay for a **more transparent and accountable government**.

For these reasons, I urge you to **pass SB 51**. This bill will **restore trust in our democracy, empower candidates to focus on their communities instead of fundraising, and ensure that our government truly serves the people of Hawai‘i**.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 8:19:49 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

I SUPPORT SB 51 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 reports to the Legislature. Appropriates funds.

I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 51, which would strengthen Hawaii’s public campaign financing system and help reduce the influence of money in our elections. As we can see in the results of the recent US elections and the part money donations played, it is time for Hawaii to do the right/pono thing. We see now that the current system erodes public trust and it is important for candidates to run competitive campaigns without being dependent of special interest money.

It is my understanding that by providing full public financing for qualified candidates, SB 51 will break the link between private money and electoral success. This will create a fairer and more honest system where elected officials are accountable to their constituents rather than big donors. Importantly, similar programs in other states show that public financing does not lead to higher incumbent turnover or drastic shifts in political makeup, but it does change who holds influence in government—ensuring that everyday people, not just the wealthy few, have a voice.

Public financing is both popular and cost-effective. Three out of four voters support a clean elections program. States like Connecticut and Maine have successfully run similar programs for decades, and Hawai‘i County piloted a version in 2010 and 2012. Even if Hawai‘i saw higher participation rates than any other state, estimates show the cost would be less than \$10 million per year—just 0.05% of the state budget. That’s under \$7 per resident or less than \$1 per tourist—a small price to pay for a more transparent, accountable government.

For these reasons, I urge you to pass SB 51. This bill will restore trust in our democracy, empower candidates to focus on their communities rather than fundraising, and ensure that our government truly serves the people of Hawai‘i.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

C. Burghardt

Kou, Oahu

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 8:29:42 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

please pass this bill - there are a LOT of good people who would be willing to run for political office - local, state and federal. the cost of running has skyrocketed, and is largely funded now by SuperPACS; sometimes without the approval of the candidate - which is really shady !!

Mahalo

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 8:29:59 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
David Nichols	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I stand in opposition to Senate Bill 51 (SB51) due to several critical concerns regarding its implementation and potential impacts. Firstly, I am troubled by the high initial cost of \$30,200,000 to establish the public funding system, especially when there are numerous pressing budgetary needs in education, healthcare, and infrastructure that demand our attention. This significant financial commitment could be seen as an unnecessary burden on the state's finances.

Moreover, I worry about the potential scarcity of funds within this program. If the public funding runs dry, it could lead to an uneven distribution among candidates or even the suspension of the program during critical election periods, which would disadvantage candidates relying on this system and potentially skew election outcomes.

The complexity of administering such a new system is another concern for me. Managing this program will require substantial administrative oversight, which might result in inefficiencies, errors in fund distribution, or even unintentional biases in how funds are allocated. There's also the risk that candidates might adapt poorly to this new funding model, potentially affecting their campaign strategies or deterring competent individuals from running for office due to unfamiliarity with the system.

I also fear that this bill could diminish the role of private donations, reducing the incentive for grassroots fundraising. This could lead to less voter engagement and a decline in small, individual contributions, which are vital for fostering a connection between candidates and their constituencies.

Furthermore, there's a risk that voter apathy could increase if the public perceives this as an overreach of government involvement in elections or if they believe their tax dollars are being misused. The chance of misuse or circumvention of the new rules by candidates is another significant worry; any scandal or legal challenge could undermine public trust in the electoral system.

Lastly, I see a potential for political bias or dependency on public funds, which could be manipulated by future legislatures to favor certain political agendas or candidates. For these reasons, I strongly oppose Senate Bill 51, advocating instead for a more cautious approach to campaign finance reform that does not risk the fiscal health or integrity of our electoral process.

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 8:42:07 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair and Committee Members,

As a candidate who ran for State House twice on partial public funding, I am in strong support of this bill. We need to make it easier for candidates to run on public funding and get large, private donations OUT OF OUR ELECTIONS for good. Please pass this bill and work to make full public funding a reality.

I would ask the members of this committee to please review the amounts listed, especially in regards to Hawai'i Island County Council, as they seem pretty low if you are actually facing a challenger. Please consider amending them to make them more competitive in future drafts of this legislation.

Finally, I am still hoping for a bill that will hold ALL candidates to strict campaign spending limits, whether they run on public funds or not, so that we can actually have more equitable and value based community run and supported elections.

Mahalo,

Shannon M.

Hawai'i Island Resident

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 8:42:40 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

I strongly support publicly funded elections in Hawai‘i to reduce money’s influence in politics and create a more representative democracy. Public financing allows more diverse candidates to run, ensures elected officials remain accountable to voters—not special interests—and levels the playing field.

Hawai‘i’s existing system is underutilized due to low funding and complex rules. Strengthening it will improve participation and trust in government. I urge the committee to support this initiative for a more equitable electoral process.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Alex White

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 8:46:56 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Andrea Makuanani	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard and members of the committee,

I am an O‘ahu citizen providing **strong support of SB51**. There is a long tragic history in Hawai‘i with the way money and capital interests affect and influence our government and decision-making. The overthrow of the Kingdom being the foremost example, when plantation and business owners conspired a coup to create policies that served their business interests. Unfortunately the strong hold of money over Hawai‘i politics never truly ended, and we as a people have the chance to put policies in place that will mitigate those opportunities in the future.

With everything that is happening in national politics right now and the oligarchy taking control, Hawai‘i citizens need a boost of confidence in our own local governance and I believe offering opportunities for complete public funded campaigns helps restore community trust. It is something that Hawai‘i deeply needs. I urge you to pass SB51 to ensure more open, fair, and clean elections, free from even the appearance of corruption.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this very important measure.

Andrea Mākuanani

Makakilo, Hawai‘i

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 8:57:15 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Noela von Wiegandt	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I oppose SB51. Do not use my tax dollars to facilitate candidates campaigns I may not agree with. Thank you.

Noela von Wiegandt

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 9:02:04 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Terry Murakami	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Oppose

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 9:08:21 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tiana Keopuhiwa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 51, which would strengthen Hawai'i's public campaign financing system and help reduce the influence of money in our elections.

I always believed that if we vote our voices will be heard, but here in Hawai'i I feel that is not the case. I believe this is due to the fact that our government is more focused on the interests of thier donors and not their people. When will our voices be heard? If we take the money and promises that uphold foreign interest, where does that leave the people who actually live here?

I hope to see change and if this bill does not pass then we will all know why, because our government is still taking their financial interest over the people that they supposed to serve.

Mahalo,

Tiana Keopuhiwa

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 9:13:52 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lolita Keni	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill...no more of our taxpayers money, to be funding political campaigns. Do better at allocating money elsewhere, because this is definitely not one of them.

LATE

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 9:20:59 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

Please support SB51..

I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 51, which would strengthen Hawaii's public campaign financing system and help reduce the influence of money in our elections.

Jane Arnold

1763 Iwi Way, Apt D

Honolulu HI. 96816

LATE

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 9:58:52 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha, I'm writing in favor of this bill. I believe that public financing will help reflect what the people want instead of corporate interests. I've heard counterarguments which suggest that having the government finance elections will be tyrannical, but what we have right now is a lot of dark money from megacorporations from who knows where involved which to me is not a reflection of the people, where an elected government is. I believe public financing will break the reliance on candidates being beholden to big donors instead of the populace. Mahalo for your time to this important bill.

LATE

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 10:07:30 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Younghee Overly	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you for hearing SB51. I support in strong support of this measure which would provide full public financing of qualified candidates running for office. This would help reduce the influence of money in our elections.

LATE

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 10:15:16 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nate Hix	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Removing the influence of money on our elections must be a top priority. This has been done successfully in other states and had been done in Hawai'i County. Please pass this bill.

LATE

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 10:21:52 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
David E Shormann	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The righteous thing to do for Hawaiians right now is REDUCE taxes. This bill uses tax dollars to finance political campaigns. That is weird and unrighteous! The life of the land is perpetuated in righteousness, please stop submitting unrighteous bills and help the people of Hawaii instead!

LATE

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 10:31:30 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Noelle Lindenmann	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Noelle Lindenmann, and I am writing in **STRONG** support of SB51, Fully Funded Public Elections.

Implementing fully publicly funded elections can help restore trust and integrity in Hawaii's elections, which have historically depended on wealthy donors. The success of Hawai'i's partial public funding program and past pilot programs demonstrates that this approach can work, reducing undue influence and increasing voter trust in the electoral process.

Public financing levels the playing field, allowing more diverse and community-driven candidates to run for office without the barrier of big-money fundraising. It fosters a government that truly reflects the will of the people, rather than those with the deepest pockets and connections to influence.

Mahalo for your consideration!

Noelle Lindenmann, Kailua-Kona

LATE

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 11:18:30 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha mai kākou, I have supported Clean Elections in Hawai‘i since 2005 and give my strong support for SB51. 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. If we are serious about ending corruption and creating a system that works for all residents and not just the wealthy few, we need to pass SB51 now. Mahalo!

LATE

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 11:20:56 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 51, which would strengthen Hawaii's public campaign financing system and help reduce the influence of money in our elections.

Hawai'i's political system is broken. The heavy reliance on campaign contributions from wealthy donors and special interests has led to a system where 2 in 3 people believe elected officials are more focused on the interests of their donors than the needs of their communities. As a result, good policies are often blocked while harmful ones move forward. This dynamic erodes public trust and encourages corruption. SB 51 is a critical step toward fixing this broken system by allowing candidates to run competitive campaigns without being dependent on special interest money.

By providing full public financing for qualified candidates, SB 51 will break the link between private money and electoral success. This will create a fairer and more honest system where elected officials are accountable to their constituents rather than big donors. Importantly, similar programs in other states show that public financing does not lead to higher incumbent turnover or drastic shifts in political makeup, but it does change who holds influence in government—ensuring that everyday people, not just the wealthy few, have a voice.

Public financing is both popular and cost-effective. Three out of four voters support a clean elections program. States like Connecticut and Maine have successfully run similar programs for decades, and Hawai'i County piloted a version in 2010 and 2012. Even if Hawai'i saw higher participation rates than any other state, estimates show the cost would be less than \$10 million per year—just 0.05% of the state budget. That's under \$7 per resident or less than \$1 per tourist—a small price to pay for a more transparent, accountable government.

For these reasons, I urge you to pass SB 51. This bill will restore trust in our democracy, empower candidates to focus on their communities rather than fundraising, and ensure that our government truly serves the people of Hawai'i.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

LATE

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 12:01:52 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 51, which would strengthen Hawaii's public campaign financing system and help reduce the influence of money in our elections.

Hawai'i's political system is broken. The heavy reliance on campaign contributions from wealthy donors and special interests has led to a system where 2 in 3 people believe elected officials are more focused on the interests of their donors than the needs of their communities. As a result, good policies are often blocked while harmful ones move forward. This dynamic erodes public trust and encourages corruption. SB 51 is a critical step toward fixing this broken system by allowing candidates to run competitive campaigns without being dependent on special interest money.

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Public financing is both popular and cost-effective. Three out of four voters support a clean elections program. States like Connecticut and Maine have successfully run similar programs for decades, and Hawai'i County piloted a version in 2010 and 2012. Even if Hawai'i saw higher participation rates than any other state, estimates show the cost would be less than \$10 million per year—just 0.05% of the state budget. That's under \$7 per resident or less than \$1 per tourist—a small price to pay for a more transparent, accountable government.

For these reasons, I urge you to pass SB 51. This bill will restore trust in our democracy, empower candidates to focus on their communities rather than fundraising, and ensure that our government truly serves the people of Hawai'i.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

LATE

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 1:03:52 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jason Kimura	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Mr. Rhoads,

I submit this written testimony to OPPOSE SB51. All candiates should finance their own candidacy. I ask you to reconsider your introduction of this bill.

Thank you,

Jason Kimura

LATE

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 1:40:36 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

I support SB51.

LATE

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 3:16:09 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

I strongly support SB51 for Comprehensive Public Financing of Elections. Hawaii needs this Clean Election reform.

LATE

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 3:23:24 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Terri Yoshinaga	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this bill! Praying it will pass for the betterment of our government and the people!

LATE

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 5:03:35 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 51, to strengthen Hawaii's public campaign financing system and help reduce the influence of money in our elections.

SB 51 is a critical step toward fixing our broken system by allowing candidates to run competitive campaigns without being dependent on special interest money.

Public financing is both popular and cost-effective. Three out of four voters support a clean elections program. States like Connecticut and Maine have successfully run similar programs for decades, and Hawai'i County piloted a version in 2010 and 2012.

Estimates show the cost would be less than \$10 million per year—just 0.05% of the state budget. That's under \$7 per resident or less than \$1 per tourist—a small price to pay for a more transparent, accountable government.

For these reasons, I urge you to pass SB 51. This bill will restore trust in our democracy, empower candidates to focus on their communities rather than fundraising, and ensure that our government truly serves the people of Hawai'i.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

LATE

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 5:39:16 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Safia Gravel	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 51, which would strengthen Hawaii's public campaign financing system and help reduce the influence of money in our elections.

Hawai'i's political system is broken. The heavy reliance on campaign contributions from wealthy donors and special interests has led to a system where 2 in 3 people believe elected officials are more focused on the interests of their donors than the needs of their communities. As a result, good policies are often blocked while harmful ones move forward. This dynamic erodes public trust and encourages corruption. SB 51 is a critical step toward fixing this broken system by allowing candidates to run competitive campaigns without being dependent on special interest money.

By providing full public financing for qualified candidates, SB 51 will break the link between private money and electoral success. This will create a fairer and more honest system where elected officials are accountable to their constituents rather than big donors. Importantly, similar programs in other states show that public financing does not lead to higher incumbent turnover or drastic shifts in political makeup, but it does change who holds influence in government—ensuring that everyday people, not just the wealthy few, have a voice.

Public financing is both popular and cost-effective. Three out of four voters support a clean elections program. States like Connecticut and Maine have successfully run similar programs for decades, and Hawai'i County piloted a version in 2010 and 2012. Even if Hawai'i saw higher participation rates than any other state, estimates show the cost would be less than \$10 million per year—just 0.05% of the state budget. That's under \$7 per resident or less than \$1 per tourist—a small price to pay for a more transparent, accountable government.

For these reasons, I urge you to pass SB 51. This bill will restore trust in our democracy, empower candidates to focus on their communities rather than fundraising, and ensure that our government truly serves the people of Hawai'i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Safia Gravel

Hilo

LATE

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 7:19:52 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Committee,

I vehemently support this Bill.

We need to separate pull out the power from lobbyists who seek to buy votes and candidates, with the focus on benefiting their own agendas, and not the will or welfare of our citizens.

Implementing fully publicly funded elections can help restore trust and integrity in Hawaii's elections, which have historically depended on wealthy donors.

It is a dangerous road we travel, when we permit wealthy donors to sway the decisions of government offices.

Public financing levels the playing field, allowing more diverse and community-driven candidates to run for office without the barrier of big-money fundraising. It fosters a government that truly reflects the will of the people, rather than those with the deepest pockets and connections to influence.

Be part of the right side of history, and change this corrupt system for us, and for our future generations.

With respect,

D. Austin

Kihei, Maui

LATE

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Kiana Otsuka, and I am writing in **STRONG support of SB51**, 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.

Implementing fully publicly funded elections can help restore trust and integrity in Hawaii's elections, which have historically depended on wealthy donors. The success of Hawai'i's partial public funding program and past pilot programs demonstrates that this approach can work, reducing undue influence and increasing voter trust in the electoral process.

Public financing levels the playing field, allowing more diverse and community-driven candidates to run for office without the barrier of big-money fundraising. It fosters a government that truly reflects the will of the people, rather than those with the deepest pockets and connections to influence.

Mahalo for your consideration!

Kiana Otsuka, Moanalua

LATE

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 8:27:17 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Emelia Briscoe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Emelia, and I am writing in STRONG support of SB51, Fully Funded Public Elections.

Implementing fully publicly funded elections can help restore trust and integrity in Hawaii's elections, which have historically depended on wealthy donors. The success of Hawai'i's partial public funding program and past pilot programs demonstrates that this approach can work, reducing undue influence and increasing voter trust in the electoral process.

Public financing levels the playing field, allowing more diverse and community-driven candidates to run for office without the barrier of big-money fundraising. It fosters a government that truly reflects the will of the people, rather than those with the deepest pockets and connections to influence.

Mahalo for your consideration!

Emelia Briscoe, Honolulu

LATE

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 9:58:59 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gabriela Schneider	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 51, which would strengthen Hawaii's public campaign financing system and help reduce the influence of money in our elections.

Hawai'i's political system is broken. The heavy reliance on campaign contributions from wealthy donors and special interests has led to a system where 2 in 3 people believe elected officials are more focused on the interests of their donors than the needs of their communities. As a result, good policies are often blocked while harmful ones move forward. This dynamic erodes public trust and encourages corruption. SB 51 is a critical step toward fixing this broken system by allowing candidates to run competitive campaigns without being dependent on special interest money.

By providing full public financing for qualified candidates, SB 51 will break the link between private money and electoral success. This will create a fairer and more honest system where elected officials are accountable to their constituents rather than big donors. Importantly, similar programs in other states show that public financing does not lead to higher incumbent turnover or drastic shifts in political makeup, but it does change who holds influence in government—ensuring that everyday people, not just the wealthy few, have a voice.

Public financing is both popular and cost-effective. Three out of four voters support a clean elections program. States like Connecticut and Maine have successfully run similar programs for decades, and Hawai'i County piloted a version in 2010 and 2012. Even if Hawai'i saw higher participation rates than any other state, estimates show the cost would be less than \$10 million per year—just 0.05% of the state budget. That's under \$7 per resident or less than \$1 per tourist—a small price to pay for a more transparent, accountable government.

For these reasons, I urge you to pass SB 51. This bill will restore trust in our democracy, empower candidates to focus on their communities rather than fundraising, and ensure that our government truly serves the people of Hawai'i.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

LATE

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 12:34:27 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

I support this bill because special interests in Hawaii override the public interest and diminish democracy. These special interests are well-funded and willing to make large contributions to the campaigns of politicians. Politicians typically require large amounts of money to get elected and to stay in office. This bill adequately funds campaigns, thereby reducing the influence of special interests. It advances the public interest and it strengthens our democracy.

I urge the committee to pass the bill.

LATE

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 1:58:16 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nikos Leverenz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Committee Members:

I write in strong support of this measure.

The concerns raised about the prospective financial benefits to a particular political party's statewide candidates have merit. As such, the state should also consider moving toward an open "top two" primary.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

LATE

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 6:05:46 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 51, which would strengthen Hawaii's public campaign financing system and help reduce the influence of money in our elections.

Hawai'i's political system is broken. The heavy reliance on campaign contributions from wealthy donors and special interests has led to a system where 2 in 3 people believe elected officials are more focused on the interests of their donors than the needs of their communities. As a result, good policies are often blocked while harmful ones move forward. This dynamic erodes public trust and encourages corruption. SB 51 is a critical step toward fixing this broken system by allowing candidates to run competitive campaigns without being dependent on special interest money.

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For these reasons, I urge you to pass SB 51. This bill will restore trust in our democracy, empower candidates to focus on their communities rather than fundraising, and ensure that our government truly serves the people of Hawai'i.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

LATE

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 6:32:22 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stacey Alapai	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 51, which would strengthen Hawaii's public campaign financing system and help reduce the influence of money in our elections.

Hawai'i's political system is broken. The heavy reliance on campaign contributions from wealthy donors and special interests has led to a system where 2 in 3 people believe elected officials are more focused on the interests of their donors than the needs of their communities. As a result, good policies are often blocked while harmful ones move forward. This dynamic erodes public trust and encourages corruption. SB 51 is a critical step toward fixing this broken system by allowing candidates to run competitive campaigns without being dependent on special interest money.

By providing full public financing for qualified candidates, SB 51 will break the link between private money and electoral success. This will create a fairer and more honest system where elected officials are accountable to their constituents rather than big donors. Importantly, similar programs in other states show that public financing does not lead to higher incumbent turnover or drastic shifts in political makeup, but it does change who holds influence in government—ensuring that everyday people, not just the wealthy few, have a voice.

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For these reasons, I urge you to pass SB 51. This bill will restore trust in our democracy, empower candidates to focus on their communities rather than fundraising, and ensure that our government truly serves the people of Hawai'i.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

LATE

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 6:49:28 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

Please pass this bill as a step towards more democratic elections.

LATE

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 8:05:25 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Michele Nihiipali, and I am writing in STRONG support of SB51, Fully Funded Public Elections.

Implementing fully publicly funded elections can help restore trust and integrity in Hawaii's elections, which have historically depended on wealthy donors. The success of Hawai'i's partial public funding program and past pilot programs demonstrates that this approach can work, reducing undue influence and increasing voter trust in the electoral process.

Public financing levels the playing field, allowing more diverse and community-driven candidates to run for office without the barrier of big-money fundraising. It fosters a government that truly reflects the will of the people, rather than those with the deepest pockets and connections to influence.

Mahalo for your consideration!

Michele Nihipali

54-074 A Kam Hwy.

Hauula, HI 96717

LATE

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 8:23:43 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lawrence Ford	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am firmly in support of public funding for candidates.

LATE

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 10:47:20 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jayven Okuda	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Committee,

‘O au o Jayven, and I am **STRONGLY** supporting of SB51, Fully Funded Public Elections.

Implementing fully publicly funded elections can help restore trust and integrity in Hawaii’s elections, which have historically depended on wealthy donors. The success of Hawai‘i’s partial public funding program and past pilot programs demonstrates that this approach can work, reducing undue influence and increasing voter trust in the electoral process.

Public financing levels the playing field, allowing more diverse and community-driven candidates to run for office without the barrier of big-money fundraising. It fosters a government that truly reflects the will of the people, rather than those with the deepest pockets and connections to influence.

Mahalo for your consideration!

Jayven, Makakilo

LATE

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 1:01:31 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Glenn Choy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this bill

LATE

SB-51

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 2:03:34 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sierra Mcveigh	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 51, which would strengthen Hawaii's public campaign financing system and help reduce the influence of money in our elections.

Hawai'i's political system is broken. The heavy reliance on campaign contributions from wealthy donors and special interests has led to a system where 2 in 3 people believe elected officials are more focused on the interests of their donors than the needs of their communities. As a result, good policies are often blocked while harmful ones move forward. This dynamic erodes public trust and encourages corruption. SB 51 is a critical step toward fixing this broken system by allowing candidates to run competitive campaigns without being dependent on special interest money.

By providing full public financing for qualified candidates, SB 51 will break the link between private money and electoral success. This will create a fairer and more honest system where elected officials are accountable to their constituents rather than big donors. Importantly, similar programs in other states show that public financing does not lead to higher incumbent turnover or drastic shifts in political makeup, but it does change who holds influence in government—ensuring that everyday people, not just the wealthy few, have a voice.

Public financing is both popular and cost-effective. Three out of four voters support a clean elections program. States like Connecticut and Maine have successfully run similar programs for decades, and Hawai'i County piloted a version in 2010 and 2012. Even if Hawai'i saw higher participation rates than any other state, estimates show the cost would be less than \$10 million per year—just 0.05% of the state budget. That's under \$7 per resident or less than \$1 per tourist—a small price to pay for a more transparent, accountable government.

For these reasons, I urge you to pass SB 51. This bill will restore trust in our democracy, empower candidates to focus on their communities rather than fundraising, and ensure that our government truly serves the people of Hawai'i.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.