

JAN 28 2026

SENATE RESOLUTION

URGING THE SENATE TO ESTABLISH AN INVESTIGATIVE COMMITTEE PURSUANT TO CHAPTER 21, HAWAII REVISED STATUTES, TO INVESTIGATE ALLEGATIONS OF A 2022 CASH OR CHECK PAYMENT FROM AN UNKNOWN INDIVIDUAL TO AN "INFLUENTIAL LEGISLATOR" FOR THE PURPOSE OF INFLUENCING AN EXISTING POLITICAL CAMPAIGN, AND TO EXAMINE POSSIBLE VIOLATIONS OF STATE LAW, STATE ETHICS CODE, AND CAMPAIGN FINANCE PROVISIONS.

1 WHEREAS, a document filed in the United States District
2 Court for the District of Hawai'i by the United States
3 Attorney's Office reported that in 2022 former State
4 Representative Ty Cullen, acting in cooperation with federal
5 law-enforcement authorities, made an undercover recording of an
6 unknown individual providing "an influential legislator" with
7 approximately \$35,000 in cash or checks intended to influence
8 "an existing campaign"; and
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10 WHEREAS, to date, no federal criminal charges have been
11 filed against the "influential legislator," whose identity
12 remains undisclosed and who may still be serving as a member of
13 the Hawai'i State Legislature; and
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15 WHEREAS, following mounting public pressure, in January
16 2026 it was announced the state has initiated an investigation
17 for which federal authorities will be sharing evidence; and
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19 WHEREAS, due to a five-year statute of limitations, the
20 state only has until January 2027 to pursue charges; and
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22 WHEREAS, allegations suggesting that an elected legislator
23 may have accepted a substantial cash payment intended to
24 influence an election or campaign strike at the core of
25 democratic accountability and, if left unexamined, risk eroding
26 public confidence in state government; and
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28 WHEREAS, transparency, oversight, and public inquiry are
29 essential components of ethical governance and



1 are necessary to preserve public trust and ensure adherence to
2 the rule of law; and

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4 WHEREAS, Chapter 21, Hawai'i Revised Statutes, authorizes
5 either house of the Legislature to establish investigative
6 committees vested with the power to issue subpoenas, administer
7 oaths, compel the production of documents, and hold individuals
8 in contempt for failure to comply; and

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10 WHEREAS, as this matter affects a member of the legislative
11 body, it is imperative that the Legislature take responsibility
12 for the actions of one of its own and pursue its own
13 investigation concurrently; now, therefore,

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15 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-third
16 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2026,
17 that the Senate establishes an Investigative Committee pursuant
18 to Chapter 21, Hawai'i Revised Statutes, to:

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20 (1) Investigate the alleged 2022 transaction
21 involving the delivery of \$35,000 in cash or
22 checks from an unknown individual to an
23 unidentified "influential legislator";

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25 (2) Determine whether any state criminal statutes,
26 campaign finance laws, ethics rules, or other
27 legal provisions were violated by any individual
28 involved;

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30 (3) Examine the adequacy of existing laws, rules, and
31 enforcement mechanisms intended to prevent
32 corruption, bribery, improper influence, or
33 misuse of campaign funds;

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35 (4) Receive testimony, compel the attendance of
36 witnesses, require the production of records and
37 documents, and conduct public hearings in
38 accordance with Chapter 21;

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40 (5) Prepare findings and recommendations, including
41 legislative proposals to strengthen anti-
42 corruption safeguards, increase transparency, and



1 improve ethical oversight within state
2 government; and
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4 (6) Refer any evidence of potential criminal, civil,
5 or administrative violations to the Attorney
6 General, the Hawai'i State Ethics Commission, the
7 Campaign Spending Commission, or any other
8 appropriate authority; and
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10 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the President of the Senate
11 shall appoint the members of the investigative committee,
12 designate the chairperson, and authorize the committee to employ
13 staff, legal counsel, or other resources necessary to carry out
14 its duties; and
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16 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
17 Resolution be transmitted to the President of the Senate, the
18 Attorney General, the State Ethics Commission, the Campaign
19 Spending Commission, and the United States Attorney for the
20 District of Hawai'i.
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OFFERED BY: 

