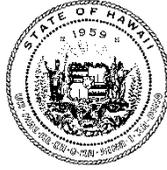


JOSH B. GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



BONNIE KAHAKUI
ADMINISTRATOR

DAYNA OMIYA
ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR

STATE OF HAWAI'I | KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I
STATE PROCUREMENT OFFICE

P.O. Box 119
Honolulu, Hawaii 96810-0119
Tel: (808) 586-0554
email: state_procurement_office@hawaii.gov
<http://spo.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY
OF
BONNIE KAHAKUI, ADMINISTRATOR
STATE PROCUREMENT OFFICE

TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE
ON
FINANCE
FEBRUARY 26, 2026, 2:00 PM

HOUSE BILL 1519, HD1
RELATING TO CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS

Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on House Bill 1519, HD1. The State Procurement Office (SPO) appreciates that the House Draft 1 of this bill incorporates the recommendations to clarify the timing of contractor disclosures following contract execution, establish the use of a standardized and certified disclosure form, require updates upon changes during the contract term, and expressly confirm that purchasing agencies act solely as a conduit for transmitting information without responsibility to verify its accuracy. SPO also appreciates the inclusion of clarifying language regarding definitions and implementation parameters to support consistent administration under Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) Chapters 103D and 103F.

However, the SPO points out that state grants issued under Section 42F-103(b) may be made directly to an organization under certain conditions, and therefore the Campaign Spending Commission will need to address how to obtain the required information.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this measure.

KRISTIN E. IZUMI-NITAO
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



PHONE: (808) 586-0285
FAX: (808) 586-0288
WWW.HAWAII.GOV/CAMPAIGN

STATE OF HAWAII
CAMPAIGN SPENDING COMMISSION

235 SOUTH BERETANIA STREET, ROOM 300
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

February 25, 2026

TO: The Honorable Chris Todd, Chair
House Committee on Finance

The Honorable Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair
House Committee on Finance

Members of the House Committee on Finance

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

SUBJECT: **Testimony on H.B. No. 1519, H.D. 1, Relating to Campaign Contributions.**
House Committee on Finance
Thursday, February 26, 2026, at 2:00 p.m.
Conference Room 308 & Videoconference

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill. The Campaign Spending Commission (“Commission”) supports this bill with comments which we believe will prevent the corruption, or at least the appearance of corruption, of elected officials as well as represents a crucial step towards transparency and accountability in government spending. In this respect, this bill will help improve public confidence in government and the electoral process.

This bill amends Hawaii Revised Statutes (“HRS”) §11-355 by extending the ban on contributions from state and county contractors to the compensated officers of the state contractors and their immediate family members during the duration of the contract exceeding the small purchase threshold under the Hawaii Public Procurement Code. Additionally, the ban is limited to the branch of government awarding or administering the contract. The Commission believes that it is common for contractors to get around the ban by having those persons connected to the contractor make political contributions. A few of these situations also involved false name contributions where the contributors were reimbursed for their contributions. The Commission is concerned that removing officers and immediate family members of county contractors and limiting the ban to the same branch of government undermines the intent of this bill and will not capture all possibilities of corruption. The Commission recommends removing the same branch of government restriction and including officers and the immediate family members of county contractors to the ban.

The bill also extends the ban to HRS Chapter 42F grantees of the state and the compensated officers of the grantee and their immediate family members during the duration of the grant exceeding \$250,000. Grantees, similar to contractors, receive state and local funds and thus should be treated similarly in the context of political contributions. The Commission notes a review of the Hawaii 2026 Final Operating and Capital Grant-In-Aid indicates many grants that would not be captured by this higher threshold limit including more than 10 capital improvement projects that have a greater potential for corruption. The Commission recommends lowering the threshold for grants to \$100,000 or more.

The Commission notes that this bill limits the scope of individuals prohibited from making contributions for the duration of the contract or grant to “compensated” officers. While the Commission supports narrowing the scope of individuals prohibited from making contributions, it is concerned that uncompensated officers have the ability to influence legislation to benefit the company and/or organization and recommends removing “compensated” from the bill.

The bill requires state contractors or grantees to provide to the contracting, expending, or purchasing agency a list of the names of any officers and immediate family members of the state contractor or grantee within thirty calendar days of executing a state contract or grant and within thirty calendar days of changes to officers and immediate family members. The bill also defines “officer” to mean an individual who is listed as an officer on the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs Business Registration database. However, the Commission prefers the definition in H.B. 2052 because we believe this definition more accurately describes these individuals for purposes of campaign finance violations and request the definition be amended accordingly.

The Commission notes the addition of penalties for failing to comply with the disclosure requirements of this bill and believes it will encourage compliance. Further, the bill provides that the state or county office shall make the reported information available electronically to the Commission which shall then make the information available to candidate and noncandidate committees on a password-protected section on the Commission’s website. The Commission requests an appropriation to build a password-protected section in its electronic filing system as well as to account for training, and administrative support for the Commission to implement this part.

With respect to any constitutional concerns regarding the scope of this bill, the Commission defers to the Department of the Attorney General but believes that there are other jurisdictions including Connecticut that have extended the campaign contributions ban to state contractors’ principals and family members and withstood challenge on First Amendment grounds.

Testimony of the Campaign Spending Commission
Thirty-Third Legislature, 2026
February 25, 2026
Page 3

The Commission requests that this Committee pass this bill with amendments.



**House Committee on Finance
Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action (HAPA) Strongly Supports HB1519 HD1
Thursday February 26th, at 2pm; Conference Room 309**

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and members of the Committee,

HAPA supports HB1519 HD1, which aims to close the “pay-to-play” loophole. When large public contracts and grants are awarded, the public deserves clear visibility into who benefits and who may have access to political decision-makers.

This bill strengthens existing prohibitions by expanding contribution bans to cover state or county grantees, including compensated officers and their immediate family members, during the life of a contract or grant.

When large sums of public money are involved, the public deserves to know who is benefiting. HB1519 HD1 advances this core democratic value by requiring disclosure of the names of compensated officers and their immediate family members for state or county contractors and grantees receiving contracts or grants exceeding \$100,000, or \$250,000 for construction. Transparency at this level helps prevent hidden conflicts of interest and reassures the public that government decisions are being made in the open.

HB 1519 HD1 affirms that public dollars must be accountable to the public, not shielded from scrutiny. By strengthening transparency and ethical standards, this bill helps restore confidence in Hawai'i's electoral and procurement systems.

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

Anne Frederick, Executive Director
Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action



Committee on Finance
Chair Chris Todd, Vice Chair Jenna Takenouchi
Thursday, February 26, 2pm
Room 308 and videoconference
HB1519 HD1 – RELATING TO CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS

TESTIMONY

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

Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Committee Members:

The League of Women Voters of Hawaii strongly supports HB1519 HD1, which prohibits compensated officers of state contractors or grantees with contracts or grants exceeding the small purchase thresholds established under the Hawaii Public Procurement Code, and their immediate family members, as defined in this bill, from making or soliciting certain campaign contributions for the duration of the contract; requires disclosure of the names of compensated officers and their immediate family members of state contractors and grantees within 30 days of contract/grant execution; requires the Campaign Spending Commission (CSC) to prescribe a standard disclosure form and requires the contractor or grantee to certify the accuracy of the form; requires contractors and grantees to update disclosures within thirty calendar days of any change in the officers or immediate family members; requires the contracting or expending state agency to provide the disclosures to the CSC within thirty calendar days of contract execution, while clarifying that the agency's role is limited to receiving and transmitting the information; establishes penalties for failure of a contractor or grantee to submit the information required; makes an appropriation to the State Procurement Office for adaptations required by this bill; and requires unlawful contributions to be returned to the contributor or escheat to the Hawaii Election Campaign Fund.

To save time for readers already familiar with the analysis of Hawaii Campaign Spending Commission (CSC) data published in the New York Times (NYT) in 2024*, I refer readers to the NYT article (link on p.2 below) for more detailed data. The article's sobering conclusion cries out for the changes described in HB1519. Our support is based on the following.

1)The same considerations of pay-to-play apply to grantees as to contractors.

2) Between 2006 - the year the pay-to-play law (HRS 11-355) was implemented – and 2024, people tied to government contractors gave state and local Hawaii politicians more than \$24 million: **about one-fifth of all donations** made. Most often, these donations were given to politicians with the most power to determine contract awards. HRS 11-355 is undermined by contributions from officers, employees, and their families. HB1519 HD1 would restore the intent of HRS 11-355.

4) Returning illegal contributions to the contributor within 30 days, or, failing that, escheating the money to the appropriate state agency, is standard practice across campaign finance regulations. The money added to HECF funds will help offset CSC expenses of monitoring contributions by contractor officers and their immediate families.

4) One weakness in implementation of HRS 11-355 is that CSC staff often don't know the identities of a contractor's officers and their immediate families. HB1519 HD1 cures this problem.

We fully support the changes made in HD1.

LWVHI is grateful to those who drafted, introduced and amended this important bill, and to those who will carry it forward.

*Blaze Lovell, Eric Sagara & Irene Casado Sanchez. *Inside the Late-Night Parties Where Hawaii Politicians Raked In Money*. New York Times; January 17, 2024.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/17/us/hawaii-contractors-campaign-donations.html?searchResultPosition=7>

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.



FEBRUARY 26, 2026

HOUSE BILL 1519 HD1

CURRENT REFERRAL: FIN

808-679-7454
kris@imuaalliance.org
www.imuaalliance.org
@imuaalliance

Kris Coffield,
President

David Negaard,
Director

Mireille Ellsworth,
Director

Justin Salisbury,
Director

Eileen Roco,
Director

Beatrice DeRego,
Director

Corey Rosenlee,
Director

Amy Zhao,
*Policy and Partnerships
Strategist*

POSITION: SUPPORT

Imua Alliance supports HB 1519 HD1, relating to campaign contributions, which requires disclosure of the names of compensated officers, and their immediate family members, of state contractors with contracts exceeding the small purchase threshold established under the Hawai'i Public Procurement Code and grantees with grants exceeding \$250,000; prohibits the compensated officers of state contractors, and their immediate family members, from making, promising, or soliciting certain campaign contributions for the duration of the contract exceeding the small purchase threshold; prohibits state grantees, including compensated officers and their immediate family members, from making, promising, or soliciting certain contributions for the duration of the grant exceeding \$250,000; and requires unlawful contributions to be returned to the contributor or escheat to the Hawai'i Election Campaign Fund.

Imua Alliance is a Hawai'i-based organization dedicated to ending all forms of exploitation, including corporate interference in our democracy.

Our democracy belongs to we, the people.

At a time when our nation is experiencing extreme political turmoil and basic civil liberties are under assault, we must take steps in Hawai'i to safeguard democratic participation. In the 2024 primary election, for example, our state experienced its lowest turnout in 65 years, with only 32.1 percent of registered voters filling out a ballot. This is, in part, a reflection of the public's deep cynicism with our electoral processes.

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. Legal clouds surrounding a \$35,000 alleged bribery scandal are swirling around the legislature, to the detriment of public confidence, with the Hawai'i

Attorney General opening an investigation into the potential offenses and the State House adopting a measure to begin this session calling for a thorough and hasty enquiry into the matter.

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.

In 2024, a Civil Beat/New York Times investigation unveiled just how deeply pay-to-play culture is ingrained in local politics. After reviewing hundreds of thousands of campaign contributions and more than 70,000 government contracts, reporters found that nearly \$1 out of every \$5 donated to politicians came from people tied to companies doing business with state and local governments.

As Civil Beat reported at the time, when some companies were on the cusp of winning major government contracts, people connected to them donated large amounts of campaign funds to influential public officials who were in positions to sway the awards.

Perhaps the most telling part of the report is encapsulated in the following excerpt from the special investigation: *Even though those contributors generally didn't acknowledge their connections to the companies, they were not violating Hawai'i law, which only prohibits donations directly from the firms. "Everyone gets very upset with pay-to-play, but it's legal," said Kristin Izumi-Nitao, Executive Director of the Hawai'i Campaign Spending Commission.*

It might be legal today, but it shouldn't be any longer if we care about our future. Government should work for the public interest, not special interests. It is in that spirit that we support this and other reforms to restore integrity to our state's electoral and governmental processes.

With aloha,

Kris Coffield

President, Imua Alliance

HB-1519-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 10:29:57 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
lynne matusow	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please accept this testimony as strong support of this measure. It is good, clean government. Pure and simple. Those benefitting from a contract should not be able to make campaign contributions. It appears dirty, just like the \$35,000 a legislator purportedly made in a brown paper bag several years ago.

Please move this bill forward.

Lynne Matusow

HB-1519-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 5:21:44 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Greetings Committee Members,

I am in strong support of HB1519, which would prevent state and county contractors, grantees, and their families from making political contributions while their contracts or grants are active. It will close a serious loophole and ensure that public funds are used for their intended purposes, not to sway political campaigns or decisions. This is one of the most important bills to me in this legislative session. It is SO IMPORTANT to make our elections more honest and more transparent! Many people are now so cynical and distrusting of politics, and the influence of big money is a major reason for that. This bill builds trust by making sure contractors and grantees stay focused on their work without causing any perception of political strings attached.

Mahalo for your attention.

Marcia Kemble

Makiki

HB-1519-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 7:59:47 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Please support!

HB-1519-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 8:06:51 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

In support

HB-1519-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 9:07:59 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I support HB1519.

Eileen Cain
720 Mahi'ai St., Apt. E
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96826-5635
eileencaïn808@gmail.com
February 24, 2026

Representative Chris Todd, Chair, Committee on **Finance**
Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair,
and Members of the Committee on **Finance**

I am submitting this testimony in Favor of

My love of fairness in government makes it necessary for me to ask you to vote in favor of HB1519 HD1, "Relating to Campaign Contributions."

1. This bill would eliminate undue financial influence over or even intimidation of elected officials. Perhaps some elected officials feel that it is difficult for them to vote for what is in the public's best interest because of contractors acting out of selfishness, trying to sway officials or even intimidate them. Publicly financed elections would allow officials to breathe easy, to be free from such tactics by monied interests.
2. This bill would safeguard the public interest. Citizens like me need to trust that decisions made by elected officials are not dominated by powerful lobbies paid for by contractors or large corporations.
3. We citizens need to know that our voices are actually heard when we give testimony, that our needs and views are given serious consideration, even if we don't have a lot of money.

Please vote yes on HB1519 HD1.

Mahalo,

Eileen Cain
Mō'ili'ili, Honolulu, Hawai'i

HB-1519-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 11:37:07 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Johnnie-Mae L. Perry	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry, OPPOSE

1519 HB RELATING TO CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS

BANNED CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS FOR ELECTED OFFICE

HB-1519-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 1:11:09 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Roger Hamada	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In support of HB1519 HD1.

Please continue efforts to combat the perception of big money influence in the legislature and voters' disillusionment due to the appearance of "pay to play."

Thank you.

HB-1519-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 5:49:58 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kehaulani Coleman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you

HB-1519-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 6:59:36 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
James E Raymond	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you -- I am a member of Indivisible Windward.

HB-1519-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 7:04:09 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I am in strong support of HB1519

Preventing state and county contractors, grantees, and their families from making political contributions while their contracts or grants are active closing a loophole and ensuring public funds are used for their intended purposes, not to sway political campaigns or decisions.

This bill makes our elections fairer and more transparent. It also builds trust by making sure contractors and grantees stay focused on their work without any perception of political strings attached.

Corruption is a big issue right NOW! Mahalo, Jane Aquino, Honolulu

HB-1519-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 9:15:32 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mala Wingerd	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

I am in strong support of HB1519!

Preventing state and county contractors, grantees, and their families from making political contributions while their contracts or grants are active closing a loophole and ensuring public funds are used for their intended purposes, not to sway political campaigns or decisions.

Basically, allowing "contractors" to openly donate to campaigns is a bribe and conflict of interest. Of course this should not be allowed!

This bill would make our elections more fair and transparent. It also builds greater trust by making sure contractors and grantees stay focused on their work without any perception (or reality) of political strings attached.

HB-1519-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 9:30:42 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Younghee Overly	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you for this opportunity to support HB1519.

I'm a member of Indivisible Hawaii.

HB-1519-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 11:06:03 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

As a grandmother living in Waimea on Hawaii Island, I support HB 1519 HD1

HB-1519-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 11:24:35 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and members of the committee,

I am writing in **strong support of HB1519**, which would restrict campaign contributions from state and county contractors and grantees and require disclosure of compensated officers and their immediate family members. This bill is a straightforward, essential measure to reduce pay-to-play politics and restore public trust in how government does business.

HB1519 prevents contractors and grantees from donating to politicians. By prohibiting contributions from those seeking or holding large government contracts—\$100,000 or more for goods and services, \$250,000 or more for construction—this bill reduces the risk of undue influence or favoritism in government decisions. It ensures that contracts and grants are awarded based on merit, not access. It draws a clear line between doing business with the state and buying influence over it.

The bill extends this prohibition to all officers and their immediate family members. This is not about punishing individuals; it is about closing a known loophole. Without this provision, the ban could be easily circumvented by routing contributions through family members or company principals. HB1519 closes that door and ensures the law cannot be gamed.

The disclosure requirement adds an essential layer of transparency. By requiring contractors and grantees to identify compensated officers and their immediate family members, the bill gives the public—and enforcement agencies—the ability to see exactly who is connected to entities receiving public dollars. Transparency is the foundation of accountability, and this provision ensures that connections cannot be hidden.

Stronger ethics laws build stronger democracy. When the public sees that government contracts and grants are free from political influence, their trust in elected officials and institutions grows. That trust is the foundation of a functioning democracy. HB1519 sends a clear message: in Hawai‘i, public dollars are for public good, not political favors.

I urge you to pass this bill. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

HB-1519-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 11:48:58 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

This is long overdue. I am in support.

HB-1519-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 12:04:08 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Philip Morgan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass this bill. We need transparency in our government especially in the funding of government projects.

HB-1519-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 12:04:59 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jackie Keefe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jackie Keefe and I am **in strong support of HB1519 HD1**, which aims to restrict campaign contributions from state or county contractors and grantees to reduce pay-to-play politics.

Preventing state and county contractors, grantees, and their families from making political contributions while their contracts or grants are active will close a serious loophole and ensure that public funds are used for their intended purposes, not to sway political campaigns or decisions.

This bill makes our elections more honest and more transparent. It also builds trust by making sure contractors and grantees stay focused on their work without causing any perception of political strings attached.
Please support HB1519 HD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Jackie Keefe, Lahaina

HB-1519-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 12:11:00 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nani Brown	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am in strong support of HB1519

We must stop pay to play in Hawaii. Closing the loophole to ensure donations especially large ones do not sway political decisions.

Mahalo,

Nani Brown

HB-1519-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 12:20:27 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

SUPPORT

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
Rep. Chris Todd, Chair
Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair

HEARING:

Wednesday, February 25, 2026 at 2:00 pm
Conference Room 308 and Via Videoconference
State Capitol

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT : HB 1519, HD1, RELATING TO CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS.

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, my Rep. Miyake for Wailuku, Rep. Yamashita of Maui, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Christine Andrews and I am a long-time resident of Wailuku, Maui. I write to you today in **strong support of HB 1519, HD1**, relating to campaign contributions. HB 1519, HD1, applies to large contracts and grants exceeding \$250,000. It covers compensated officers and their immediate family members, prohibits donations to campaigns and political committees, and includes a disclosure requirement identifying compensated officers and their immediate family members.

Between 2006 - the year the pay-to-play law (HRS 11-355) was implemented – and 2024, people tied to government contractors gave state and local Hawaii politicians more than \$24 million: about one-fifth of all donations made. Most often, these donations were given to politicians with the most power to determine contract awards. HRS 11-355 is undermined by contributions from officers, employees, and their families. Preventing contractors and grantees from donating to political campaigns reduces the risk of undue influence or favoritism in government decisions and in the awarding of contracts and grants.

I am sure the members of the Committee are aware of the New York Times article, “Inside the Late-Night Parties Where Hawaii Politicians Raked In Money,” published in January, 2024, with the tagline, “[a]fter the state passed a law barring government contractors from donating to politicians, fund-raising parties showed just how completely the reform effort failed”¹. As a resident of Maui, at a time when my Lahaina neighbors were depending on the kindness of donations pouring in from around the world to help with recovery from the wildfire, an article highlighting apparent corruption in Hawaii to a national audience is something that needs remedy.

I appreciate the efforts of HB1519, HD1 to address this concern and to rebuild trust in our elected officials. When the public sees that government contracts and grants are free from political influence, their trust in elected officials and government increases. This bill builds on feedback from similar legislation that made it all the way to Conference Committee last year by focusing on paid officers of organizations and implementing disclosure requirements. Preventing state and county contractors, grantees, and their families from making political contributions while their contracts or grants are active closes a loophole and will help ensure that public funds are used for their intended purposes, rather than to sway political campaigns or decisions. Based upon the foregoing, I request **your strong support of HB1519, HD1**.

Mahalo nui for all you are doing to restore faith in government,

Christine L. Andrews, J.D.
Wailuku, Maui

¹ Blaze Lovell, Eric Sagara & Irene Casado Sanchez. Inside the Late-Night Parties Where Hawaii Politicians Raked In Money. New York Times; January 17, 2024.

HB-1519-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 12:35:16 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Joell Edwards. I am a resident of Wainiha and have served as a campaign manager and treasurer for several grassroots campaigns here on Kaua‘i. I am testifying in strong support of HB1519.

Preventing state and county contractors, grantees, and their families from making political contributions while their contracts or grants are active will close a serious loophole and ensure that public funds are used for their intended purposes—not to sway political campaigns or decisions.

From my experience working on grassroots campaigns, I have seen how even the perception of pay-to-play politics can erode public trust. Most candidates and contractors act in good faith, but without clear guardrails, the public is left questioning whether contributions are tied to government contracts or future opportunities. That perception alone is damaging.

HB1519 strengthens ethical standards by creating a bright-line rule that protects both public servants and contractors. It removes ambiguity, reduces conflicts of interest, and helps ensure that procurement and grant decisions are made based on merit—not political influence.

This bill makes our elections more honest and more transparent. It builds trust by making sure contractors and grantees stay focused on their work without any perception of political strings attached.

Please support HB1519.

HB-1519-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 12:48:06 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Dear Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

I am in strong support of HB1519

Preventing state and county contractors, grantees, and their families from making political contributions while their contracts or grants are active will close a serious loophole and ensure that public funds are used for their intended purposes, not to sway political campaigns or decisions.

{Insert additional comments here}

This bill makes our elections more honest and more transparent. It also builds trust by making sure contractors and grantees stay focused on their work without causing any perception of political strings attached. Please support.

Mahalo,

Georgia Hoopes, Kalaheo

HB-1519-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 12:56:58 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

TY!

HB-1519-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 1:08:03 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gregory Misakian	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the FIN Committee,

I currently serve as the President of the Kokua Council, Vice President of the Hawaii Alliance for Retired Americans (HARA), Director, Keoni Ana AOA, and was formerly a Waikiki Neighborhood Board Member from Jan. 2023 until June 2025. I'm also a member of the Good Government Caucus.

I am in strong support of HB1519 HD1 and thank all legislators who work to provide more transparency and better laws regarding campaign contributions.

Respectfully,

Gregory Misakian (as an individual)

HB-1519-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 1:10:45 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ross Isokane	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill. Please at least allow this to get to a final vote this session.

Based on all these negative stories in the media about local politicians and contributions from government contractors, public confidence in governance is extremely vulnerable right now.

Further, any counterarguments advocating for free speech or privacy rights for the individuals connected with these government contractors lack validity in my eyes. Profiting off of lucrative, taxpayer funded government projects is a privilege and the entry cost should be refraining from making contributions and also transparent disclosures.

I strongly believe that the disclosure list of officers and immediate family members should be a publicly available database. That way we don't need the CSC staff expending resources to try to monitor compliance. We can crowdsource compliance (i.e., investigative journalists will be all over it). To me, the public disclosure of these individuals connected to government contract grantees is just as important as the prohibition. I'd like to see my elected officials prioritize the needs of the people/taxpayers over the needs of individuals connected to lucrative (and sometimes wasteful) government contractors.