



OFFICE OF HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

‘Ōlelo Hō‘ike ‘Aha Kau Kānāwai

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS FOR HOUSE BILL 2050 HD1
RELATING TO PARTIAL PUBLIC FINANCING OF ELECTIONS

Ke Kōmike ‘Aha Kenekoa o ka Ho‘okolokolo
(Senate Committee on Judiciary)
Ke Kapikala o Hawai‘i
(Hawai‘i State Capitol)

Malaki 24, 2026

9:45 AM

Lumi 016

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

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS WITH AMENDMENTS HB2050 HD1**, which increases the amount of public funds available to candidates for public office who participate in the State’s Partial Public Financing program and increases participating candidates’ expenditure limits.

OHA supports public financing as a good government measure, as it makes the public financing program a more viable option for candidates by increasing available funding. Publicly financed campaigns make elections more accessible, open, and fair.

However, OHA objects to the continued disparity for OHA candidates under the Partial Public Financing law. HRS § 11-423(d) sets the campaign expenditure limits for candidates receiving public financing using a formula that multiplies the “number of voters in the last preceding general election registered to vote” in the relevant voting district by a specific dollar amount. OHA Trustees are the only candidates who run Statewide election campaigns that are not explicitly listed in this subpart, and thus default to the lowest multiplier category with “other offices,” or \$0.20 (20 cents). As a point of comparison, the Lieutenant Governor, who also runs a Statewide campaign, has a dollar multiplier of \$1.40. As a result, current expenditure limits for OHA candidates are approximately \$172,174, while expenditure limits for the Lieutenant Governor are \$1,205,215.

The statewide OHA Trustee races receive comparable votes to the Lieutenant Governor races. In the 2024 General Election, the OHA Moloka‘i-Lāna‘i race received

287,216 votes, the Kaua'i race received 284,571 votes, and the OHA At-Large race received 325,858 votes. In the 2022 Primary Election, the Democrat Lieutenant Governor's race received a total of 242,350 votes, and the Republican Lieutenant Governor's race received 66,830 votes.

The total expenditure limits in HRS § 11-423(d) in turn affect the amount of public financing available to a candidate under HRS § 11-425, which sets public funding as a percentage of the total expenditure limits. While OHA appreciates that this measure would increase the maximum amount of public financing available to OHA candidates, this is still far below what comparable office holders would receive.

As a matter of fairness and equity, OHA respectfully offers the following amendments:

On page 2, line 20:

"(3) For the office of Trustee for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs-- \$1.68;"

On page 4, line 4:

"(1) For the office of governor, lieutenant governor, Trustee for the office of Hawaiian affairs, or mayor of the city and county of Honolulu or the county of Hawaii shall not exceed 12.5 per cent of the expenditure limit established in section 11-423 (d) for each election;"

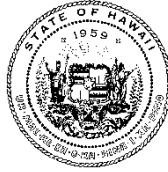
On page 4, lines 14-16:

~~"(3) The office of Hawaiian affairs shall not exceed 7.5 per cent of the expenditure limit established in section 11-423(d) for each election."~~

For the reasons stated above, OHA respectfully urges this committee to **PASS HB2050 HD1 with AMENDMENTS.**

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify on this critical issue.

KRISTIN E. IZUMI-NITAO
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



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STATE OF HAWAII
CAMPAIGN SPENDING COMMISSION

235 SOUTH BERETANIA STREET, ROOM 300
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

March 23, 2026

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 **KEI**
Campaign Spending Commission

SUBJECT: **Testimony on H.B. No. 2050, H.D.1, Relating to Partial Public Financing of Elections.**
Senate Committee on Judiciary
Tuesday, March 24, 2026, at 9:45 a.m.
Conference Room 016 & Videoconference

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

The purpose of this bill is to enhance Hawaii’s partial public financing program by increasing the maximum amount of public funds available for all offices by 50%¹ (except for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (“OHA”) which will be significantly enhanced by over 1,000%) to qualified candidates. It also makes a downward adjustment of the minimum qualifying contributions for certain offices because it appears that publicly financed candidates for those offices were having a difficult time raising the minimum qualifying contributions. Respectfully, the Commission is submitting this bill as an attempt to boost an existing program that is mandated by the State Constitution which has not changed and whose maximum dollar amounts have not changed since 1995.

This bill amends Hawaii Revised Statutes (“HRS”) sections as follows:

- 1) Increases the expenditure limits for elected offices by 20%,

¹ The percentage of the expenditure limit, which determines the maximum amount of public funding available for each office, is increased by 50% in the bill.

- 2) HRS §11-425 by increasing the maximum amount of public funds available for all offices (except for the offices of the Mayor of the County of Kauai, Mayor of the County of Maui, and OHA trustee) by 50%. The bill also increases the maximum amount available for candidates for Mayor of the counties of Kauai and Maui by 125% by moving those offices from subsection (a) to subsection (b) and increasing the maximum amount of public funds available for a candidate for trustee of OHA from \$1,500 for the election period to 7.5% of the expenditure limit for each election established in HRS §11-423(d),
- 3) HRS §11-429(a) by increasing the amount of qualifying contributions required for a candidate for trustee of OHA from more than \$1,500 in the aggregate to more than \$5,500 in the aggregate,
- 4) HRS §11-429(a) by providing a downward adjustment of the minimum amounts of qualifying contributions for the office of prosecuting attorney for the city and county of Honolulu (from \$30,000 to \$25,000), and counties of Hawaii (from \$10,000 to \$5,000) and Kauai (from \$5,000 to \$3,000), and for the office of county council for the county of Maui (from \$5,000 to \$4,000), and
- 5) HRS §11-429(b) by increasing matching fund payments from \$1 for each \$1 of qualifying contributions in excess of the minimum qualifying contribution amounts to \$2 for each \$1 of excess qualifying contributions.

For illustration, here is a comparison of the present partial public funding program in contrast to the enhanced partial public funding program set forth in this bill. For a qualified Senate candidate running opposed in District 1 in the 2026 election, the maximum amount of public funds available is \$7,269 in the primary election and another \$7,269 in the general election. In contrast, under this bill, this same candidate would receive \$10,903 in the primary election and another \$10,903 in the general election. For a qualified House candidate running opposed in District 1 in the 2026 election, the maximum amount of public funds available is \$3,562 in the primary election and another \$3,562 in the general election. In contrast, under this bill, this same candidate would receive \$5,343 in the primary election and \$5,343 in the general election.

For a qualified candidate running opposed for Kauai Mayor in the 2026 election, the maximum amount of public funds available is \$9,635 in the primary election and another \$9,635 in the general election. In contrast, under this bill, this same candidate would receive \$21,679 in the primary election and \$21,679 in the general election. For a qualified candidate running opposed for Maui Mayor in the 2026 election, the maximum amount of public funds available is \$23,002 in the primary election and another \$23,002 in the general election. In contrast, under this bill, this same candidate would receive \$51,754 in the primary election and \$51,754 in the general election. Lastly, for a qualified OHA candidate running opposed in the 2026 election, the maximum amount of public funds available is \$1,500 for the election period. In contrast,

under this bill, this same candidate would receive \$15,496 in the primary election and \$15,496 in the general election.

Under the bill, assuming one qualified candidate for each elective office² in the state, the maximum amount of public financing available would be \$2,339,652 in the 2026 primary election and another \$2,339,652 in the 2026 general election. As of June 30, 2025, the Hawaii Election Campaign Fund (“HECF”) balance was \$2,412,282.94. A general fund appropriation into the HECF is necessary if this bill is passed.

The Commission requests that this committee pass this bill.

² The Commission is aware that not all elective offices appear on the ballot in an election year.



Protect Democracy
Move Forward

www.indivisiblehawaii.org
info@indivisiblehawaii.org

LATE

To: Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard,,and Members of the Committee
Hearing Date/Time: 03-24-26 9:45 AM
Place: Hawaii State Capitol, Conference Room 016
Re: Testimony in STRONG SUPPORT of [HB2050 HD1](#)

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

On behalf of Indivisible Hawai'i, I thank you for this opportunity to testify in strong support of [HB2050 HD1](#).

By increasing the expenditure limit and the amount of partial public campaign financing available, this measure reflects the economic realities of today, where current public financing funds are far below the amounts spent by privately funded candidates who win elections. In addition, by adjusting the number of qualifying contributions required to access public funding for office, this bill will make the Partial Public Funding Program easier to access and encourage more candidates to participate in the program.

Public financing levels the playing field for candidates without establishment backing and allows campaigns to focus on reaching voters instead of donors.

[HB2050 HD1](#) is a significant step toward enabling more candidates to utilize this program and reducing the influence of big money in our elections. We thank you for your support.

Sincerely,
Marlene Thom
Indivisible Hawai'i Good Government & Secure Elections Team

The mission of the 14-chapter Indivisible Hawai'i Statewide Network (IHSN) is to protect Hawai'i and democracy by defending civil rights, communities and values, most importantly, Hawai'i's Constitutionally protected spirit of Aloha. In October 2025, IHSN with other partners turned out over 22,000 residents on all major islands to say No Dictators! and to stand up for democracy. This call-to-action was part of Indivisible national's mobilization of more than 7 million across the country as the voice of the people, committed to election integrity and to evolving as a place of equity, opportunity and peace.



MARCH 24, 2026

HOUSE BILL 2050 HD1

CURRENT REFERRAL: JDC

808-679-7454
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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 2050 HD1, relating to partial public financing of elections, which increases the expenditure limit and the amount of partial public campaign financing available for all elective offices; adjusts the minimum amount of qualifying contributions certain candidates must receive to participate in the program; and increases the matching fund payments for excess qualifying contributions.

Imua Alliance is a Hawai'i-based organization dedicated to ending all forms of exploitation, including corporate abuse of our democracy. Government should work for the public interest, not special interests.

Hawai'i has had partial public campaign financing in place for decades, rooted in the 1978 Constitutional Convention's direction to establish a campaign fund for partial public financing. Few candidates participate, however, because the current partial funding model fails to provide sufficient resources to run competitive campaigns.

Hawai'i's electoral environment is comparatively uncompetitive. An average of about 90% of incumbents were reelected over the past decade and challengers face structural disadvantages in establishing fundraising networks and building name recognition. Strengthening the match and availability of public funds, as this bill proposes, helps give participating candidates a realistic chance to keep pace with private financing.

Public financing programs are also associated with broader and more diverse participation in democracy, particularly when they amplify small contributions. For example, analysis of New York City's matching system found it increased both the number and diversity of residents who participate as donors, shifting candidate incentives toward engaging everyday constituents instead of concentrating time on large donors. Importantly for Hawai'i, this policy conversation is not abstract:

Hawai'i has confronted repeated corruption scandals in recent years, and a UHERO policy brief explicitly situates public campaign financing as one reform to reduce reliance on wealthy donors and corporate interests.

Buttressing public campaign financing also has indirect, but important benefits for Hawai'i's clean economy and climate action goals. Hawai'i has some of the most ambitious climate targets in the nation—codifying 50% greenhouse gas reductions by 2030 and a carbon-neutral economy by 2045—but achieving these goals depends on responsive, accountable governance, and public trust in policy decisions that affect energy, transportation, land use, and economic incentives.

Research on public financing systems finds that when candidates rely less on large special-interest money and more on broad public support, they are encouraged to engage more directly with voters and prioritize community-wide concerns over narrow donor agendas, including long-term challenges like climate resilience and clean energy transitions.

Reinforced public financing can help ensure that elected leaders are empowered to advance policies—such as investments in renewable energy, equitable EV infrastructure, and climate adaptation funding—that reflect broad public support rather than industry influence. By making Hawai'i's democratic process more transparent and competitive, HB 2050 supports governance that is better aligned with the state's clean economy and climate commitments.

Strengthening partial public financing is a pragmatic democracy reform: it can make elections more competitive, expand the role of small donors, and reduce candidates' dependency on narrow funding networks, while building on recent good government reforms to diminish the corrupting role of corporate money in local politics.

With aloha,

Kris Coffield

President, Imua Alliance

HB-2050-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 7:27:27 AM

Testimony for JDC on 3/24/2026 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Aria Juliet Castillo	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

My name is Aria Castillo, and I am testifying in strong support of HB2050 HD1

Hawai'i's partial public financing program is one of the most important tools we have to make our elections more accessible, ensure that everyday people can run and win, and keep elected officials accountable to the public—not a small group of wealthy donors.

HB2050 HD1 is a long-overdue update. The cost of running a campaign has increased significantly, while the structure of the program has remained largely unchanged.

The senate version increased the match to 4-1, it would be incredible if we can bring this version up to match that, it would have the potential to make small-dollar fundraising truly competitive with large-donor fundraising.

Another amendment was made to the house bill version, to improve how the program functions in practice.

Currently, candidates receive separate allocations and spending limits for the primary and general elections. In reality, many candidates face only one truly competitive race—either in the primary or the general. Amending the program to allow candidates the option to allocate up to 75% of their total authorized funds and spending limit to either election would better reflect that reality.

This change does not increase the total amount of public funding a candidate can receive, does not change the matching formula, and does not increase overall program costs. It simply provides flexibility so candidates can use their existing resources when they decide would be beneficial to them.

Public financing works. It lowers barriers, reduces reliance on large donors, and helps rebuild trust in our democracy. SB2528 SD1 is a major step forward, and with this amendment, it can be even more effective.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify, and I respectfully urge your support.

LATE

HB-2050-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/24/2026 1:37:35 AM

Testimony for JDC on 3/24/2026 9:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

I am in strong support of HB2050 HD1.

Gregory Misakian

HB-2050-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/20/2026 3:27:09 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/24/2026 9:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

Greetings Committee Members,

I am writing in strong support of HB2050. By increasing the expenditure cap and adjusting matching funds to 2:1, this measure encourages more candidates to participate in the partial public funding program. Public financing levels the playing field for candidates without establishment backing and allows campaigns to focus on reaching voters instead of donors. This bill is a significant step toward enabling more candidates to utilize this program and reduces the influence of big money in our elections. PLEASE HELP KEEP BIG MONEY OUT OF POLITICS!

Mahalo for your attention.

Marcia Kemble

Makiki

HB-2050-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/20/2026 6:29:44 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/24/2026 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mike Golojuch, Sr.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I'm in strong support of HB2050.

HB-2050-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/20/2026 8:27:06 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/24/2026 9:45:00 AM

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 **support of HB2050**, which would increase expenditure limits and partial public financing amounts for candidates participating in Hawai‘i’s campaign financing program. While a more comprehensive system of full public financing for all candidates—such as that proposed in SB2313—would be a stronger and more transformative step, HB2050 represents a meaningful improvement to the current program and deserves passage.

HB2050 strengthens Hawai‘i’s partial public financing system. By increasing expenditure limits and the amount of public funds available, this bill helps candidates run competitive races without relying exclusively on large donations from private interests. It adjusts the minimum number of qualifying contributions required to participate, ensuring the program remains accessible while maintaining a demonstration of community support. It also increases matching fund payments for excess qualifying contributions, amplifying the impact of small-dollar donors.

Public financing reduces the influence of money in politics. When candidates can rely on public funds rather than corporate PACs, wealthy donors, or special interest groups, they are free to represent their constituents—not their funders. It encourages broader participation, levels the playing field for candidates without personal wealth or established networks, and restores public confidence that elections are decided by voters, not dollars.

HB2050 is a step forward, even as we continue to push further. The bill makes needed updates to a program that has not kept pace with the rising cost of running for office. It will make participation more viable for more candidates. But we should also recognize that a truly comprehensive system—one that provides full public financing for all candidates seeking state and county office—would be even more effective at removing money from politics and ensuring that every voice has a chance to be heard. SB2313 offers that vision, and I urge this committee to keep it in mind as you consider HB2050.

In the meantime, HB2050 is a practical, achievable improvement that will benefit candidates and voters alike. I urge you to pass this bill.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

HB-2050-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/21/2026 7:36:39 AM

Testimony for JDC on 3/24/2026 9:45:00 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 former chair of the Commission to Improve Standards of Conduct (CISC), I submit this testimony in support of HB 2050, HD 1, RELATING TO PARTIAL PUBLIC FINANCING OF ELECTIONS.

The CISC found "that publicly funded elections can help counter the repercussions of Citizens Unite 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." CISC December 1, 2022 Report at 32.

Respectfully submitted,

Judge Daniel Foley (ret.)

HB-2050-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/21/2026 8:13:24 AM

Testimony for JDC on 3/24/2026 9:45:00 AM

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-2050-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/21/2026 8:16:41 AM

Testimony for JDC on 3/24/2026 9:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry, STRONGLY OPPOSE PUBLIC/PRIVATE CAMPAIGN DONATIONS TO ELECTED OFFICE.

2050 HB RELATING TO PARTIAL PUBLIC FINANCING OF ELECTIONS.

HB-2050-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/21/2026 9:32:41 AM

Testimony for JDC on 3/24/2026 9:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

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

I am in strong support of SB2528.

By increasing the expenditure cap and adjusting matching funds to 2:1, this measure reflects the economic realities of today and encourages more candidates to participate in the program.

Public financing levels the playing field for candidates without establishment backing and allows campaigns to focus on reaching voters instead of donors.

We cannot continue to do business as usual!

This bill is a significant step toward enabling more candidates to utilize this program and reducing the influence of big money in our elections.

Mahalo,

Jane Aquino, Honolulu Indivisible

HB-2050-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/21/2026 9:35:23 AM

Testimony for JDC on 3/24/2026 9:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

I support this bill. Thank you. Martha Nakajima, Honolulu, member of Indivisible

HB-2050-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/21/2026 10:02:26 AM

Testimony for JDC on 3/24/2026 9:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

help limit the power of private money on elections

HB-2050-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/21/2026 10:03:36 AM

Testimony for JDC on 3/24/2026 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kathleen Dickson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I am in strong support of SB2528.

By increasing the expenditure cap and adjusting matching funds to 2:1, this measure reflects the economic realities of today and encourages more candidates to participate in the program.

Public financing levels the playing field for candidates without establishment backing and allows campaigns to focus on reaching voters instead of donors.

The public wants more "average citizen" candidates to have access to serve their community. Wealthy individuals, business, and corporations all but completely prevent an average citizen from competing to represent the public, due to campaign costs.

This bill is a significant step toward enabling more candidates to utilize this program and reducing the influence of big money in our elections.

Mahalo,

Kathleen "kate" Dickson, Waikiki

HB-2050-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/21/2026 12:22:44 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/24/2026 9:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

I support HB2050.

HB-2050-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/21/2026 2:50:56 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/24/2026 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Brodie Lockard	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill.

HB-2050-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/21/2026 1:03:28 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/24/2026 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jessie L Gonsalves	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support partial public financing of campaigns

HB-2050-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/21/2026 8:44:07 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/24/2026 9:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

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

I am in strong support of SB2528.

By increasing the expenditure cap and adjusting matching funds to 2:1, this measure reflects the economic realities of today and encourages more candidates to participate in the program.

Public financing levels the playing field for candidates without establishment backing and allows campaigns to focus on reaching voters instead of donors.

Equalize the playing field for Candidates

Lily Troy MD

HB-2050-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 4:26:09 AM

Testimony for JDC on 3/24/2026 9:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

Thank you for this opportunity to support HB2050 HD1 which would increase the expenditure limit and the amount of partial public campaign financing available for all elective offices.

Younghee Overly, a member of Indivisible Hawaii

COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY
Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair

HEARING:

Tuesday, March 24, 2026 at 9:45 am
Conference Room 016 & Videoconference

TESTIMONY IN **SUPPORT** OF HB 2050, HD1 - RELATING TO PARTIAL PUBLIC FINANCING OF ELECTIONS.

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

My name is Christine Andrews. I am a long-term resident of Wailuku, Maui and an attorney licensed for over 25 years. I write to you today in **strong support of HB 2050, HD1**, Relating to Partial Public Financing of Elections, which increases the expenditure limit and the amount of partial public campaign financing available for all elective offices, adjusts the minimum amount of qualifying contributions certain candidates must receive to participate in the program, increases the matching fund payments for excess qualifying contributions, and appropriates funds for the program.

As a resident of Maui, it is time to get money out of our politics. Here on Maui, large global corporations and outside investors and developers have influenced our policies in a way that harms our environment, our communities, and our sense of trust in government. Methods of financing political campaigns should enable candidates to compete equitably for public office and ensure that candidates have sufficient funds to communicate their messages to the public.

Comprehensive public funding programs, such as proposed by SB2313, are the best way to meet these goals, but the enhancement to Hawaii's Partial Public Funding Program (PPFP) proposed by HB 2050, HD1 is an important step toward those goals. The money available to candidates through the PPFP has not changed in over twenty years. Over that time, increases in media prices, postage, and labor costs have made the current amounts inadequate, far below amounts spent by privately funded candidates who won election to the same office. As a result of the disparity, the number of candidates using PPFP continues to decrease. The increases proposed in HB2050, HD1 are an improvement and HB2050, HD1 also cuts the number of qualifying contributions required to access public funding for several offices, making the program easier to access.

House Bill 2050, HD 1 also provides for increased funding for Hawaii election campaign fund (HECF). This is important because under the definition of the PPFP, if the HECF runs out of money before all qualified candidates have received anticipated payments, the program will stop making payments. This erodes candidates' trust in and their willingness to use the program. It is time to help level the playing field so that the candidate best qualified to serve their constituents, not just the one most able to fundraise from wealthy donors, are able to be elected to office. I respectfully request your **vote in support of HB 2050, HD1**.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony,

Christine Andrews, JD
Wailuku, Maui

HB-2050-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 10:33:05 AM

Testimony for JDC on 3/24/2026 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gail Morrison	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I am in strong support of SB2528.

By increasing the expenditure cap and adjusting matching funds to 2:1, this measure reflects the economic realities of today and encourages more candidates to participate in the program.

Public financing levels the playing field for candidates without establishment backing and allows campaigns to focus on reaching voters instead of donors.

This bill is a significant step toward enabling more candidates to utilize this program and reducing the influence of big money in our elections.

Mahalo,

Gail Morrison. Honolulu

HB-2050-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 1:44:55 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/24/2026 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Calvin Black	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am a member of Indivisible. Thank you for supporting this bill.

HB-2050-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 4:19:40 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/24/2026 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jessica Kuzmier	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, I am writing in support of HB2050. I believe it is a vital step in leveling the playing field for candidates and strengthening a representative democracy. Mahalo for your consideration.

HB-2050-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 6:38:40 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/24/2026 9:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha, Senators,

Please vote for partial public financing of campaigns for public office. This will make it possible for people who do not have a lot of money and don't want to become beholden to PACs to run for office.

Mahalo,

Eileen Cain, Honolulu

HB-2050-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 8:17:04 AM

Testimony for JDC on 3/24/2026 9:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

Thank you

HB-2050-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 9:07:26 AM

Testimony for JDC on 3/24/2026 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Robert Justice, M.D.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair; Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair; and Members of the Committee on Judiciary,

RE:
HB2050

I am a resident of Kapolei and a member of the Indivisible Hawai`i Statwide Network. I am writing to provide testimony in strong support of HB2050. This Bill aims to increase public funds that are available to candidates, increase the amount the state matches donations from a 1:1 match to a 2:1 match, and increase the expenditure limit for campaigns.

This bill is important because funding amounts and expenditure limits have remained unchanged since 1995. In that time, Hawai`i's cost of living has grown faster than the national average, impacting the true value of campaign funds. Increasing the match and updating the limits helps campaigns keep pace with rising expenses, such as printing, venue rentals, and advertising. Public financing levels the playing field for candidates without establishment backing and allows campaigns to focus on reaching voters instead of donors.

This bill is a significant step toward enabling more candidates to utilize this program and reducing the influence of big money in our elections.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

Respectfully,

Robert L. Justice, M.D.

HB-2050-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 9:26:44 AM

Testimony for JDC on 3/24/2026 9:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

I support HB2050 as a practical step toward strengthening Hawai‘i’s partial public financing system and help restore public confidence in government.

The current framework has not kept pace with the cost of campaigning since the mid-1990s. As a result, participation in the program remains low, not because candidates lack interest in public financing, but because the incentives are no longer competitive with private fundraising.

The changes in this bill begin to realign the program with its original purpose – making it viable for motivated, serious candidates to run credible campaigns without relying primarily on large donors.

Public financing works when it changes candidate behavior. When small contributions are amplified and baseline funding is sufficient, candidates spend more time engaging voters and less time chasing a narrow pool of high-dollar donors. That shift is ultimately what improves trust in the system.

While more comprehensive reform may still be worth considering, HB2050 is a meaningful and necessary improvement to an outdated structure.

LATE

HB-2050-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 9:37:45 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/24/2026 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jesse Hutchison	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you!

LATE

HB-2050-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/24/2026 8:50:00 AM

Testimony for JDC on 3/24/2026 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Theresa Armbruster	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

OPPOSED to HB2050 HD1 because:

Increased funding for this program will increase financial burden to taxpayers, & put a greater, unnecessary strain on the State Budget

Questionable effectiveness of this program in promoting electoral competition or in improving quality of representation--does not justify the proposed increase in funding

Humbly urge a NO vote to HB2050 HD1

Mahalo