



Hawai'i State Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer Plus Commission



Advocating for the Hawai'i LGBTQIA+ Community

Mailing Address: LGBTQ+ Commission, c/o The Department of Human Services,
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March 15, 2026

House's Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs
Hawai'i State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Hearing: Tuesday, February 17, 2026 at 9:05 AM

RE: **STRONG SUPPORT for Senate Bill 2143 SD 1**

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice-Chair Poepoe and fellow committee members,

I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 2143 on behalf of the Hawai'i State Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer Plus (LGBTQ+) Commission, which was established by the 2022 Hawai'i State Legislature to

“improve the State's interface with members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, plus community; identify the short- and long-range needs of its members; and ensure that there is an effective means of researching, planning, and advocating for the equity of this population in all aspects of state government.”

The Hawai'i State LGBTQ+ Commission submits this testimony in **strong support** of Senate Bill 2143, which provides that, in the event of a vacancy in the position of Chief Election Officer it establishes an order of succession of who shall serve as the Interim Chief Election Officer until the Hawai'i Elections Commission appoints a new Chief Election Officer.

Free, fair, and certified elections are the cornerstone of our democracy. For marginalized communities, including māhū and LGBTQIA+ people, access to a transparent and functioning electoral process is not theoretical; it is foundational to our safety, representation, and civil rights. Without a designated back-up to the Chief Election Officer, Hawai'i risks facing a dangerous and unnecessary gap in authority at a critical moment in our electoral process.

If a vacancy were to occur without a clear interim successor, there would be no one authorized to certify our elections. Such a scenario would undermine public trust, create legal uncertainty, and potentially disenfranchise voters across our state. At a time when election integrity is being challenged nationwide, Hawai'i must ensure continuity, clarity, and stability in its election administration.

Proudly established pursuant to Hawai'i Revised Statutes Chapter 369, as enacted through Act 41, Session Laws of Hawai'i 2022

HI State LGBTQ+ Commission Testimony in Support of SB 2143

This bill establishes a clear and lawful chain of authority to ensure that, should the unexpected occur, our democratic processes continue without disruption. Those positions in this order of succession have the institutional capacity to temporarily fulfill this role until the Elections Commission appoints a permanent Chief Election Officer.

The LGBTQIA+ community has long understood that our rights are only as secure as the democratic systems that protect them. Ensuring that our elections can be certified under any circumstance is essential to maintaining the rule of law and protecting every resident's voice.

For these reasons, the Hawai'i State LGBTQ+ Commission respectfully urges the Committee to pass Senate Bill 2143.

If you or any member of your staff has any questions regarding my testimony you can reach me at hawaiistatelgbtqpluscommission@gmail.com.

Mahalo nui loa for your time and consideration,

Sandy Harjo Livingston (he/him/they/them)
Chair
[Hawai'i State LGBTQ+ Commission](#)

[Inclusive LGBTQIA+ Glossary](#)

The [Hawai'i State LGBTQ+ Commission](#) has this webpage and that is dedicated to understanding and being able to use the correct terms when talking about the rainbow community from mähū to LGBTQIA+ to QTPI+ to MVPFAFF+ and beyond. The list found on this page is not an exhaustive list and will be updated as appropriate.



March 15, 2026

House's Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs
Hawai'i State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Hearing: Wednesday, February 18, 2026 at 9:05 AM

RE: **STRONG SUPPORT for Senate Bill 2143 SD 1**

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice-Chair Poepoe and fellow committee members,

Pride at Work – Hawai'i is an official chapter of [Pride at Work](#) which is a national nonprofit organization that represents LGBTQIA+ union members and their allies. We are an officially recognized constituency group of the AFL-CIO that organizes mutual support between the organized Labor Movement and the LGBTQIA+ Community to further social and economic justice. We write in **strong support of Seante Bill 2143**.

Pride at Work – Hawai'i submits this testimony in **strong support** of Senate Bill 2143, which provides that, in the event of a vacancy in the position of Chief Election Officer, the Establishes an order of succession on who shall serve as Interim Chief Election Officer until the Hawaii Elections Commission appoints a new Chief Election Officer.

For working people, voting is a labor issue. The right to vote is the mechanism by which workers shape the laws that govern wages, workplace safety, collective bargaining rights, public benefits, and economic justice. When elections are secure, transparent, and properly certified, workers have confidence that their voices matter. When there is uncertainty or instability in election administration, working families bear the consequences.

Senate Bill 2143 is a practical, commonsense measure to ensure continuity in Hawai'i's election system. Without a designated back-up to the Chief Election Officer, there is a real risk that, in the event of a vacancy, no one would have the authority to certify election results. That gap would create unnecessary chaos and undermine trust in outcomes that directly affect working people across our state.

This bill does not expand power, it clarifies responsibility. By designating an order of succession and establishing who has interim authority, only until a permanent appointment is made, the Legislature ensures there is no lapse in the chain of command during a critical moment in our democratic process. Protecting the integrity and continuity of election certification is a key piece of safeguarding workers' rights.

Pride at Work – Hawai'i believes that democracy and labor rights are inseparable. When working people can vote and trust that their votes will be properly counted and certified, we strengthen our unions, our communities, and our economy.

Pride at Work – Hawai'i's Testimony in STRONG SUPPORT of Re: SB 2143 SD 1

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the Committee to pass Senate Bill 2143 SD 1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in strong support.

In Solidarity,

Michael Golojuch, Jr. (he/him)

President

[Pride at Work – Hawai'i](#)

SB-2143-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/15/2026 10:15:52 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shelby Pikachu Billionaire	Kingdom Of The Islands & Ohana Unity Party	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Strong Support for SB2143 SD1 – Relating to the Chief Election Officer

Aloha Chair(s) and Members of the Committee,

My name is Master Shelby "Pikachu" Billionaire, HRM, Chairman of the Ohana Unity Party, representing the Kingdom of The Hawaiian Islands.

I am writing to express ****strong support**** for SB2143 SD1, Relating to the Chief Election Officer. This bill makes targeted, practical improvements to the governance and continuity of Hawai'i's election administration under HRS §11-1.6: - It clarifies that the Chief Election Officer is appointed by the Elections Commission ****without the need for Senate advice and consent****, streamlining the process and reducing potential political gridlock in filling this critical nonpartisan role. - It establishes a clear, hierarchical order of succession for an interim Chief Election Officer in the event of a vacancy:

1. Supervisor of Election Support Services (if available),
2. General Counsel,
3. Supervisor of Counting Center Operations,
4. Supervisor of Ballot Operations,
5. Supervisor of Voter Services.
6. Office of Elections Commissioners Vote

These provisions ensure uninterrupted leadership and operational stability during transitions—vital for maintaining public trust in our elections, especially amid ongoing national debates over election integrity and security. In a time when fair, efficient, and transparent elections are essential to democracy and self-governance, SB2143 SD1 strengthens the independence of the Office of Elections while providing safeguards against prolonged vacancies.

It aligns with pono principles by prioritizing competence, continuity, and administrative efficiency over unnecessary procedural hurdles. I urge you to support and advance SB2143 SD1

without delay. Passing this measure will help protect the integrity of Hawai'i's electoral process and ensure our people can participate confidently in shaping our future.

Mahalo nui loa for your kuleana in upholding fair elections and democratic processes in our islands.

Sincerely, Master Shelby "Pikachu" Billionaire, HRM Chairman, Ohana Unity Party Kingdom of The Hawaiian Islands, H.I. www.Ohanaunityparty.com Presidentbillionaire@gmail.com



HA‘AHEO, ‘OHANA, KAULIKE, UI
Pride Family Justice Activate
WHERE PRIDE BECOMES POLITICAL POWER

Website: www.hokupac.org ♦ Email: info@hokupac.org

March 15, 2026

House’s Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs
Hawai‘i State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Hearing: Tuesday, March 17, 2026 at 2:00 PM

RE: STRONG SUPPORT for Senate Bill 2143 – Relating to THE CHIEF ELECTION OFFICER.

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice-Chair Poepe and fellow committee members,

This testimony on behalf of **HOKU PAC**, Hawai‘i’s LGBTQ+ political action committee dedicated to building queer political power and advancing policies that protect our communities. We write in **strong support of Senate Bill 2143 SD 1**.

HOKU PAC submits this testimony in **strong support** of Senate Bill 2143, which ensures that in the event of a vacancy in the position of Chief Election Officer there is an order of succession to serve as Interim Chief Election Officer until the Hawai‘i Elections Commission appoints a new Chief Election Officer.

HOKU PAC was founded to protect and advance LGBTQIA+ political power in Hawai‘i. Central to that mission is one simple principle: every eligible voter must be able to cast a ballot knowing it will be counted and properly certified. We work year-round to register voters, educate communities, and turn people out to the polls. That work only has meaning if there is a clear, lawful plan in place to ensure election results are certified without interruption.

Without a designated back-up to the Chief Election Officer, Hawai‘i risks a scenario where no one has the authority to certify election results. That is not a hypothetical concern—it is a structural vulnerability. Senate Bill 2143 closes that gap by establishing continuity and clarity in election administration.

Let us be clear: opposing a measure that guarantees continuity in election certification is opposition to free and fair elections. This bill does not advantage any party or ideology. It does not alter how votes are cast or counted. It simply ensures that, should a vacancy occur, there is no lapse in authority that could jeopardize the certification of results. Those who resist this safeguard are choosing uncertainty over stability in our democratic process.

Our communities, especially māhū, LGBTQIA+, and QTPI+ voters and other historically marginalized groups, have fought too hard for access to the ballot to allow avoidable administrative gaps to threaten public confidence. When we ask people to participate in democracy, we owe them assurance that the system is prepared for any contingency.

Senate Bill 2143 provides that assurance. It is responsible governance. It is election integrity. And it is a necessary step to protect free and fair elections in Hawai‘i.

HOKU PAC respectfully urges the Committee to pass Senate Bill 2143 SD 1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in strong support.

Paid for by HOKU PAC – Not Authorized by any Candidate or Candidate Committee



HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY
SB 2143 SD1 Relating to the Chief Elections Officer
March 17, 2026, at 2:00 PM, State Capitol CR 325 and Videoconference

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in OPPOSITION to SB 2143 SD1.

The current procedure to select a Chief Elections Officer in the event of a vacancy is threatened by SB 2143 SD1 with partisan bias and government control.

The current law provides for a fair, bi-partisan balanced process for appointing a Chief Elections Officer.

If SB 2143 SD1 is enacted as written, it would grant bureaucratic control and government authority to partisan stakeholders such as the General Counsel (GC) who is listed as one of the proposed temporary Acting Chief Elections Officer.

I would like to recommend the following amendments:

1. Include a specific time limit of 30 days for the Elections Commission to fill the CEO vacancy.
2. Remove the General Counsel as a temporary CEO successor option due to a conflict of interest as the GC represents the CEO in legal proceedings.

*Reference SECTION 1. (a) (2) (B) The general counsel

Hawaii Revised Statutes §11-1.6 Appointment of the chief election officer; requirements; term; restrictions; salary; reappointment; removal. (a) The chief election officer shall be appointed by the elections commission, without regard to chapter 76. The appointment shall not be subject to the advice and consent of the senate. In the event of a vacancy, the elections commission shall meet expeditiously to select and appoint a new chief election officer to serve the remainder of the unexpired term.

In conclusion, please consider supporting legislation for citizens to elect a Chief Elections Officer.

May I respectfully remind this committee that Article 1 of the Hawaii State Constitution states that all political power of this State is inherent in the people and the responsibility for the exercise thereof rests with the people. All government is founded on this authority.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and for your consideration of the recommended amendments.

Respectfully submitted,
Jamie Detwiler, President, Hawaiian Islands Republican Women



**Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs
Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action (HAPA) Supports SB2143 SD1
Tuesday, March 17, 2026, at 2:00 PM | Conference Room 325 & Videoconference**

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and members of the Committee,

HAPA supports SB2143 SD1, which establishes a clear order of succession for an interim Chief Election Officer in the event of a vacancy.

Elections are not episodic events. They are ongoing processes with strict timelines and statutory obligations. The Chief Election Officer carries significant administrative responsibility, and a sudden vacancy, without any succession plan in place, creates real risk of disruption at exactly the moment when continuity matters most. That kind of uncertainty can also be exploited to undermine public confidence in election outcomes.

SB2143 SD1 solves this with a simple, practical fix. If a vacancy occurs, internal Office of Elections leadership steps in on an interim basis in a clearly defined order: first the Supervisor of Election Support Services, then General Counsel, then the Supervisor of Counting Center Operations, then the Supervisor of Ballot Operations, and finally the Supervisor of Voter Services. Each serves only to the extent they are available. Meanwhile, the Elections Commission moves expeditiously to appoint a permanent replacement.

This approach makes good sense. It keeps interim authority within the people who already know election operations from the inside, rather than importing leadership from outside the agency during a sensitive transition. It does not alter the Elections Commission's appointment authority in any way. It simply ensures there is no gap.

Continuity of governance is a core component of public trust. SB2143 SD1 strengthens that continuity in a targeted, sensible way.

HAPA respectfully urges this committee to pass SB2143 SD1.

Thank you for your consideration,

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 Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs
Chair David Tarnas, Vice Chair Mahina Poepoe
March 17, 2026, 2:00 p.m., Room 325

BILL SB2143 – RELATING TO THE CHIEF ELECTION OFFICER

TESTIMONY BY

Amy Monk, Legislative Committee, League of Women Voters of Hawaii

Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and JHA Committee members:

The League of Women Voters of Hawaii SUPPORTS SB2143

The League of Women Voters of Hawaii strongly supports Bill SB2143. Current law states that the Chief Election Officer (CEO) must certify the results of Hawaii's election, but the law does not provide for an alternate in case the CEO position is vacant. This bill would identify an interim CEO until a new CEO is hired.

Compiling and certifying the election results is a simple and nearly automatic occurrence that takes place after the counties report their ballot counts. However, in these chaotic times, the League of Women Voters in Hawaii believes it prudent to strengthen our electoral process against all possible disruptions and to name an alternate in case the chief election officer be unable to certify the election results.

This is particularly important in the US Presidential race where timely certification of results is used to determine which presidential electors vote in the Electoral College. We have already seen where false alternate slates of electors were created and submitted in the 2020 Presidential election.

The League notes the Senate amendment provides for logical chain of succession of civil servants in the Office of Elections who could certify the election should the CEO position be vacant on election day. We acknowledge the AG's testimony that there could be a conflict of interest should the AG be named as an alternate.

The League requests that the measure take effect upon passage.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF HAWAII
P.O. Box 235026 ♦ Honolulu, HI 96823
Voicemail 808.377.6727 ♦ my.lwv.org/hawaii ♦ voters@lwvhi.org



HAWAII STATE AFL-CIO

888 Mililani Street, Suite 501 • Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Telephone: (808) 597-1441 • Fax: (808) 593-2149

March 17, 2026

The Thirty-Third Legislature
House of Representatives
Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs

SUBJECT: TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB2143 SD1 – RELATING TO THE CHIEF ELECTION OFFICER

Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and members of the committee:

The Hawaii State AFL-CIO supports SB2143 SD1 because our election system must remain steady and governed by law, not by shifting political pressures. Recent public efforts to remove the current Chief Election Officer reflect the broader climate of scrutiny and organized campaigns directed at election officials. Regardless of the outcome of those efforts, state law must provide certainty if a vacancy is created. The responsibilities involved in overseeing our elections continue year-round. Deadlines must be met, systems must be maintained, and coordination across agencies must proceed without interruption.

Working families rely on the ballot to protect wages, workplace safety standards, public services, and collective bargaining rights. When election officials become the focus of sustained political campaigns, it increases the risk of disruption and confusion. A clearly defined interim structure protects the office itself and ensures continuity under established law rather than allowing uncertainty or political maneuvering to interfere with the conduct of elections.

We respectfully urge the committee to advance this measure.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Randy Perreira".

Randy Perreira
President
Hawaii State AFL-CIO



Protect Democracy

Move Forward

www.indivisiblehawaii.org

info@indivisiblehawaii.org

To: Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee

Hearing Date/Time: 03-17-26 2:00 PM

Place: Hawaii State Capitol, Conference Room 325

Re: Testimony in STRONG SUPPORT of SB2143 SD1

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

On behalf of Indivisible Hawai'i, I thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of SB2143 SD1.

This bill establishes an order of succession for an interim Chief Election Officer should that position become vacant. Such an opening creates real administrative risk, especially given how critical uninterrupted election operations are in our current environment of misinformation and disinformation about election integrity. SB2143 SD1 addresses such a potential gap by keeping interim authority with experienced, knowledgeable staff who already work inside the agency, while the Elections Commission finds a permanent appointment.

SB2143 SD1 provides an excellent solution to an eventuality the state might face and it would reassure the public that our elections are secure and every vote will be counted.

I urge the committee to pass SB2143 SD1.

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.

SB-2143-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/12/2026 5:12:06 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

This bill will close a loophole which may be used by election deniers to contest the results of an otherwise valid election. It may save the cost of legal challenges to results of a valid election mounted because the election officer position is vacant at the time the election was held.

Thank you for accepting my testimony.

SB-2143-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/12/2026 7:17:43 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joie Yonamine	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of SB2143 both personally and as a member of the Indivisible Hawaii State Network (IHSN). This bill would provide that if the position of Chief Election Officer is vacant right before the election, the Attorney General would act as Interim Chief Election Officer until the Elections Commission appoints a new Chief Election Officer.

This would ensure that in the event of unforeseen vacancy, Hawaii will have procedures in place to ensure election certification can proceed, strengthening safeguards for the election process.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to pass this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

Joie Yonamine

SB-2143-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/12/2026 7:17:44 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I strongly support SB2143.

SB-2143-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/12/2026 7:36:32 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I support SB2143 SD1

SB-2143-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/12/2026 9:35:24 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

In support

SB-2143-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/13/2026 10:06:43 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2026 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.

SB-2143-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/13/2026 1:57:37 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Thank you

SB-2143-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/13/2026 2:01:31 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Vivian S. Toellner	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This measure will establish a clear chain of authority to ensure that the State's democratic processes will continue without disruption in the event of an unexpected vacancy in the Chief Election Officer position. I support Bill 2143 SD 1.

SB-2143-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/13/2026 3:16:36 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cristina Holt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and members of the committee.

My name is Cristina Holt. I am a resident of Hilo, Hawaii Island, and I support SB 2143 SD1.

Elections run on strict timelines and legal obligations that do not pause for leadership transitions. Right now, if the Chief Election Officer position suddenly becomes vacant, there is no clear plan for who steps in. That gap is a real problem, and in the current political climate it is also an invitation for bad faith actors to sow doubt about election administration during exactly the kind of moment when public confidence matters most.

SB 2143 SD1 fixes this with a straightforward succession order. Internal Office of Elections staff step in temporarily in a defined sequence, people who already know election operations from the inside, while the Elections Commission moves to appoint a permanent replacement. The Commission's appointment authority is untouched. This bill simply ensures there is no gap.

That is just good governance. Please pass SB 2143 SD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Cristina Holt Hilo, Hawaii Island

SB-2143-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/14/2026 7:43:26 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

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

With certain persons in the federal government threatening to take over federal elections, it is important to have a Chief Election Officer designated at all times. We MUST protect state rights in every way but most particularly as regards elections.

[SB2143](#) protects the stability of Hawai‘i’s election system by ensuring there is no gap in leadership if the Chief Election Officer position becomes vacant.

Elections require constant oversight and strict compliance with legal deadlines. This bill provides a clear interim structure so that election administration continues without disruption while the Elections Commission appoints a permanent replacement.

Mahalo,

Kathleen "kate" Dickson

SB-2143-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/14/2026 9:16:50 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michelle Bonk	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This bill protects the stability of Hawai‘i’s election system by ensuring there is no gap in leadership if the Chief Election Officer position becomes vacant.

Elections require constant oversight and strict compliance with legal deadlines. This bill provides a clear interim structure so that election administration continues without disruption while the Elections Commission appoints a permanent replacement.

Thank you for your commitment to election integrity.

Eileen Cain
720 Mahi'ai St., Apt. E
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96826
March 14, 2026

Aloha, Representative David Tarnas, Chair, House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs
Vice-Chair Representative Mahina Poepoe,
Members of the House Committee on Public Safety

I urge you to support SB2143 SD1 "Relating to the Chief Election Officer."

We voters need to know that someone will be available to certify the results of elections in Hawai'i. If the Chief Election Officer position becomes vacant, the State Attorney General should be designated to serve as the Interim Chief Election Officer until another Chief Election Officer can be appointed.

We want people of these islands to vote! And we citizens need to know that our votes count by having election results certified.

Please vote yes for SB2143 SD1.

Mahalo and Aloha,

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

SB-2143-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/14/2026 6:30:36 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tammy M DeBernardi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SB2143 protects the stability of Hawai‘i’s election system by ensuring there is no gap in leadership if the Chief Election Officer position becomes vacant.

Elections require constant oversight and strict compliance with legal deadlines. This bill provides a clear interim structure so that election administration continues without disruption while the Elections Commission appoints a permanent replacement.

SB-2143-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/14/2026 9:05:01 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

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

I am a resident of Kapolei and a member of Indivisible Hawai'i. I am writing to provide testimony in strong support of SB2143. This bill ensures continuity in election administration by designating the Attorney General to serve as Interim Chief Election Officer if the position becomes vacant, until the Elections Commission appoints a replacement.

As you know, elections operate on strict timelines. Ballots must be prepared, voter rolls must be maintained, and statutory deadlines must be met. Even a short leadership gap can create uncertainty, delay, or legal risk. SB2143 provides a clear and temporary solution to maintain stability if a vacancy occurs. Continuity in election administration strengthens public confidence and protects the integrity of our democratic processes.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Robert L. Justice, M.D.

SB-2143-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/14/2026 11:42:07 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Election offices and officers have sadly become targets of election deniers, making unfounded claims. Even more sadly, our own Elections Commission has attempted this. This bill can help constrain the Elections Commission/s authority to fire Chief Election Officers.

SB-2143-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/15/2026 11:44:21 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I support SB2143.

SB-2143-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/15/2026 2:56:26 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2026 2:00:00 PM

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.

SB-2143-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/15/2026 3:13:35 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and members of the Committee,

I'm submitting testimony in support of SB2143 SD1.

Elections run on strict timelines and legal obligations. If the Chief Election Officer position suddenly becomes vacant, there needs to be a clear plan for who is in charge while a permanent replacement is found. Right now, that plan doesn't exist.

SB2143 SD1 fixes that by establishing a practical succession order within the Office of Elections, people who already know the work, without changing how the Elections Commission makes its permanent appointment. That's just good governance.

Please pass SB2143 SD1.

Mahalo,

Georgia Hoopes, Kalaheo

SB-2143-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/15/2026 3:45:51 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Brett Kulbis	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Tarnas and Committee Members,

My name is Brett Kulbis, I'm a 26yr retired Navy Veteran, who took a solemn oath to defend the Constitution from all enemies foreign and domestic, and that oath didn't expire when I retired. I live in Ewa Beach.

I STRONGLY OPPOSE BILL SB-2143 SD1.

SB-2143 SD1 would allow the attorney general to assume direct control over election administration whenever there is a vacancy in the chief election officer position. While the intent to ensure continuity is understandable, placing the attorney general in this role is fundamentally problematic.

This bill creates a dangerous concentration of power. The attorney general already holds broad authority over law enforcement, civil litigation, and legal advice to state agencies. Allowing that same office to temporarily run elections means one official could both enforce the law and control the machinery of elections at the same time. In an era of deep public skepticism, this dual role undermines confidence that our elections are being administered fairly and without political influence.

It creates an inherent conflict of interest. The attorney general frequently represents the State in election-related lawsuits and responds to complaints about election practices. If the attorney general is also the interim chief election officer, that office could be in the position of defending its own election decisions in court or reviewing complaints about its own conduct. Even if handled in good faith, the perception of "judging one's own case" is unavoidable and corrosive to public trust.

It creates the appearance of partisanship is unavoidable. The attorney general is a highly political office, appointed by a partisan governor. Giving that office operational control over elections—even temporarily—invites suspicion that decisions about ballots, procedures, and disputes could be influenced by partisan interests. Public trust in elections depends not just on the law being followed, but on the process clearly being run by neutral, professional administrators.

A better approach is to keep the attorney general in the proper role: legal counsel and enforcement, not election operator. If the Legislature wishes to address vacancies, it should

designate a nonpartisan, elections-focused professional (such as the deputy chief election officer or another senior staff member within the Office of Elections) as the default interim chief election officer, subject to Elections Commission approval.

In a time when trust in elections is fragile, Hawai'i should avoid any change that blurs the line between neutral election administration and partisan or prosecutorial power. SB-2143 SD1 does exactly that by elevating the attorney general into the role of interim chief election officer.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to defer or substantially amend SB-2143 SD1 to remove the provision allowing the attorney general to assume the duties of the chief election officer.

Brett Kulbis
U.S. Navy Retired

SB-2143-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/15/2026 4:04:09 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Larry Smith	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

Please approve.

Larry Smith

HD 27

Larry Smith

808 286 2958

SB-2143-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/15/2026 5:06:12 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

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

[SB2143](#) protects the stability of Hawai‘i’s election system by ensuring there is no gap in leadership if the Chief Election Officer position becomes vacant.

Elections require constant oversight and strict compliance with legal deadlines. This bill provides a clear interim structure so that election administration continues without disruption while the Elections Commission appoints a permanent replacement.

Mahalo,

Gail Morrison, Honolulu

SB-2143-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/15/2026 5:40:38 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

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

I am writing to ask that you support of SB2143 SD1 which would keep an interim authority with experienced, knowledgeable staff who already work inside the agency, while the Commission finds a permanent appointment.

Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Melissa Barker

Kapaa, HI

SB-2143-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/15/2026 6:35:05 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

STRONGLY SUPPORT SB2143 SD1

SB-2143-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/15/2026 8:20:24 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and members of the Committee,

I'm submitting testimony in support of SB2143 SD1.

If the Chief Election Officer position suddenly becomes vacant, there needs to be a clear plan for who is in charge while a permanent replacement is found.

SB2143 SD1 fixes that by establishing a practical succession order within the Office of Elections, people who already know the work, without changing how the Elections Commission makes its permanent appointment. That's just good governance.

Please pass SB2143 SD1.

Mahalo,

Elizabeth Winternitz, Kula, Maui

SB-2143-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/15/2026 9:27:20 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I strongly support this bill.

Thank you!

SB-2143-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/15/2026 11:42:43 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I am writing as an individual and member of Indivisible in strong support of SB2143. We must fortify all aspects of our elections processes, given the current threats to our election integrity. Designating that the Attorney General will serve as Interim Chief Election Officer if the position becomes vacant is one of the many necessary steps to keep our elections safe in Hawaii. Mahalo for your support.

SB-2143-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 7:35:44 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kiana Lee	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, I am in strong support of SB2143. Laying out a clear line of duty in the absence of a Chief Elections Officer will help keep our elections running smoothly and without disruption.

Mahalo.

SB-2143-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 8:53:37 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Hello Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and members of the Committee,

I'm submitting testimony in support of SB2143 SD1.

Elections run on strict timelines and legal obligations. If the Chief Election Officer position suddenly becomes vacant, there needs to be a clear plan for who is in charge while a permanent replacement is found. Right now, that plan doesn't exist.

SB2143 SD1 fixes that by establishing a practical succession order within the Office of Elections, people who already know the work, without changing how the Elections Commission makes its permanent appointment. That's just good governance.

Please pass SB2143 SD1.

Me ke aloha 'āina,

Nanea Lo, 96826

Sierra Club of Hawai'i Member

Hawai'i Workers Center Board Member

Clean Elections Hawai'i Member

Honolulu Tenants Union Member

350 Hawai'i Member

Carbon Cashback Hawai'i Member

Hawai'i Tax Fairness Coalition Member

SB-2143-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 9:37:00 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha, I am writing in favor of SB2143. I believe it codifies a sense of stability in case of unforeseen circumstances. Mahalo for your consideration.

SB-2143-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 11:15:47 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Janet Teare	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this bill to protect election integrity. I'm a member of East Hawaii indivisible.
Thank you.

SB-2143-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 11:27:30 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and members of the Committee,

I'm submitting testimony in support of SB2143 SD1.

Elections run on strict timelines and legal obligations. If the Chief Election Officer position suddenly becomes vacant, there needs to be a clear plan for who is in charge while a permanent replacement is found. Right now, that plan doesn't exist.

SB2143 SD1 fixes that by establishing a practical succession order within the Office of Elections, people who already know the work, without changing how the Elections Commission makes its permanent appointment. That's just good governance.

Please pass SB2143 SD1.

Mahalo,

ANN V SAFFERY

HONOLULU, HI



HAWAII STATE AFL-CIO

888 Mililani Street, Suite 501 • Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Telephone: (808) 597-1441 • Fax: (808) 593-2149

March 17, 2026

The Thirty-Third Legislature
House of Representatives
Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs

SUBJECT: TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB2143 SD1 – RELATING TO THE CHIEF ELECTION OFFICER

Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and members of the committee:

The Hawaii State AFL-CIO supports SB2143 SD1 because our election system must remain steady and governed by law, not by shifting political pressures. Recent public efforts to remove the current Chief Election Officer reflect the broader climate of scrutiny and organized campaigns directed at election officials. Regardless of the outcome of those efforts, state law must provide certainty if a vacancy is created. The responsibilities involved in overseeing our elections continue year-round. Deadlines must be met, systems must be maintained, and coordination across agencies must proceed without interruption.

Working families rely on the ballot to protect wages, workplace safety standards, public services, and collective bargaining rights. When election officials become the focus of sustained political campaigns, it increases the risk of disruption and confusion. A clearly defined interim structure protects the office itself and ensures continuity under established law rather than allowing uncertainty or political maneuvering to interfere with the conduct of elections.

We respectfully urge the committee to advance this measure.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Randy Perreira". The signature is stylized and fluid.

Randy Perreira
President
Hawaii State AFL-CIO

COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

Rep. David A. Tarnas, Chair

Rep. Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair

HEARING:

Tuesday, March 17, 2026 at 2:00 pm

Conference Room 325 and Via Videoconference

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 2143, SD1 - RELATING TO THE CHIEF ELECTION OFFICER.

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, Rep. Cochran of Maui, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Christine Andrews and I am a long-time resident of Wailuku, Maui and an attorney licensed in Hawai'i for over 25 years. I write to you today in **support of SB 2143, SD1**, Relating to the Chief Election Officer, which establishes an order of succession for an Interim Chief Election Officer in the event of a vacancy in the position of Chief Election Officer until the Elections Commission appoints a new Chief Election Officer.

As Marc Elias, noted elections and voting rights attorney has noted in Democracy Docket, anti-democratic forces are engaged in efforts to suppress the vote and interfere in our elections. This is something we witnessed here in Hawai'i when the Elections Commission voted to ask the Legislature to consider returning Hawai'i to one-day, in-person voting, getting rid of mail-in voting altogether, and narrowly rejected a proposal to fire the chief election officer, Scott Nago.¹ It is frankly terrifying to think that extreme members of the Election Commission are making deliberate efforts to restrict voting options and fabricating doubt in our elections. I, myself, relied on mail-in voting in the 2024 election because I was on the mainland dealing with family matters at the time of the election. I do not want my vote suppressed over completely unfounded fears related to the security of mail-in voting and misinformation about election fraud.

SB 2143, SD1 is intended to constrain the Elections Commission's authority to fire Scott Nago, the current Chief Election Officer, as was recommended by a three-member panel last August. The goal of anti-democratic forces is to subvert faith in our elections as a means of suppressing the vote and allowing election outcomes to be contested. For excellent resources on the overall subject of subverting elections as a tenant of the authoritarian playbook, I direct you to Democracy Docket and to Protect Democracy.

In the context of Hawaii elections, there were allegations of vote count discrepancy brought forward by certain members of the Elections Commission. A 220-page report from Election Commissioners Osterkamp, McAdam and Kahiolani Papalimu determined however that "a purported discrepancy of more than 19,000 ballots²" between Hawai'i County and the state in the 2024 general election was unfounded. The report stated, "we find a complete lack of credible evidence to support the claim of a significant ballot discrepancy."

The report added, "When we encourage voters to pursue conspiracies or to believe that government workers are hiding ballots or creating new ones, we significantly damage the system on which our democracy depends." We must be ever-vigilant against outside influences attempting to hijack state control over elections, subvert the will of the voters, and create doubt over the security of our elections. It is, again, a noted antidemocratic strategy to sow doubt about elections as a means of suppressing the vote and undermining democracy. I **support SB 2143, SD1** as a necessary measure to protect the role of the Chief Election Officer from unfounded attacks and to ensure that, should he be removed, there is an order of succession in place to protect this vital role and the security of our elections.

Mahalo for supporting efforts to protect our elections,

Christine Andrews, JD

Wailuku, Maui

¹ Chad Blair, Honolulu Civil Beat, "Elections Commission Wants State Auditor To Examine Hawai'i's 2024 Vote," Oct. 1, 2025. <https://www.civilbeat.org/2025/10/elections-commission-wants-state-auditor-to-examine-hawai%CA%BBis-2024-vote/>

² State of Hawaii Elections Commission, Permitted Interaction Group Report on Purported Big Island Ballot Discrepancy, Sept. 29, 2025, <https://elections.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025-10-01-EC-Supplemental-Meeting-Packet.pdf>

SB-2143-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 1:23:16 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Pamela Elders	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and members of the Committee,

Please accept the following testimony in support of SB2143 SD1.

Elections run on strict timelines and legal obligations. If the Chief Election Officer position suddenly becomes vacant, there needs to be a clear plan for who is in charge while a permanent replacement is found. Right now, that plan doesn't exist.

This bill is particularly important when free and fair elections are under siege not only locally but from the current Administration. This is a step toward increased protection to ensure the voting process is not interrupted.

SB2143 SD1 fixes that by establishing a practical succession order within the Office of Elections, people who already know the work, without changing how the Elections Commission makes its permanent appointment. That's just good governance.

Please pass SB2143 SD1.

Mahalo,

Pam Elders

Laupahoehoe HI

SB-2143-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 3:37:31 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I support SB2143 SD1

SB-2143-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 4:55:38 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Von Kaanaana	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a constituent of the committee I urge the committee to support SB 2143.

The state of Hawai'i has an obligation to tax paying citizens to firstly employ those people first. A clear line of succession is the simplified solution to a wasteful incessant gap in operations.

This bill directly affects the public perception of a trustworthy government. It is important to your constituents that their right to vote and take part in a democratic election is a dealbreaker.

SB-2143-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 10:19:32 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Doug Pasnik	Individual	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

I respectfully submit testimony in opposition to SB2143 SD1.

While the stated purpose of this measure is to establish continuity within the Office of Elections during a vacancy in the position of Chief Election Officer, the proposed order of succession raises a significant governance and ethical concern that warrants careful reconsideration.

Specifically, the bill places the general counsel to the Office of Elections within the line of succession for the Chief Election Officer position . This structure creates an inherent conflict between the role of legal advisor and that of executive decision-maker.

The general counsel’s function is to provide independent legal advice to the Chief Election Officer and, by extension, to ensure that the Office of Elections operates in compliance with applicable laws and standards. This role necessarily includes advising on legal risk, identifying potential violations, and, where appropriate, recommending corrective action. These responsibilities require professional independence, objectivity, and the ability to provide candid legal counsel—even when that advice may be critical of operational decisions.

By placing general counsel in the line of succession, the bill introduces a structural tension that could compromise that independence. An attorney who may later assume the role of Chief Election Officer could face an inherent incentive—whether conscious or not—to align legal advice with future administrative interests, rather than maintaining strict objectivity.

This concern is not merely theoretical. The Hawai‘i Rules of Professional Conduct require attorneys to avoid conflicts of interest and to exercise independent professional judgment on behalf of their client. When the advisor is positioned to become the principal actor, the distinction between legal oversight and executive authority becomes blurred. Even the appearance of such a conflict is sufficient to undermine public confidence.

This is particularly important in the context of elections administration, where public trust is paramount. The integrity of the system depends not only on the actual fairness of processes, but on the clear separation of roles that ensures accountability and transparency.

If the Legislature’s intent is to provide continuity of operations, that objective can be achieved through a succession structure that prioritizes operational and administrative leadership

positions—such as those directly responsible for election logistics and execution—without introducing potential conflicts within the legal function.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to amend the bill to remove the general counsel from the line of succession, or otherwise reconsider this provision to preserve the independence of legal oversight within the Office of Elections.

SB-2143-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 3:55:34 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tara Gregory	Individual	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

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

My name is Tara Malia Gregory, and I am a resident of Hawai‘i and an advocate for fair elections. I am writing in opposition to SB2143 SD1 as it is currently written, and in support of amendments that ensure accountability, transparency, and public trust.

While I understand the intent of ensuring continuity within the Office of Elections, this bill fails to address the core issue of public confidence during a leadership transition.

As written, the bill allows internal staff to assume the role of Chief Election Officer through a chain of command, while requiring the Elections Commission to meet “expeditiously” to appoint a replacement. This language is too vague and does not provide enforceable accountability.

This bill must be amended to include a defined and enforceable timeline.

Specifically:

- On page 1, line 7, the requirement to meet “expeditiously” should be amended to require the Elections Commission to determine and appoint a new Chief Election Officer within 30 days of the vacancy

As an advocate for the people of Hawai‘i, I regularly participate in public meetings that last five to six hours at a time. I can confidently say that decisions of this magnitude can be made within two deliberation meetings and one voting meeting, approximately 15 to 18 hours of total discussion. The lack of a defined timeline is not a matter of capacity, but of accountability.

In addition, the bill must include clear and enforceable transparency requirements:

- Public notice of all applicants and finalists
- At least one publicly noticed hearing where candidates are presented and questioned
- A written and publicly available justification by the Elections Commission explaining the final selection

While this body may not be strictly required to follow Hawai‘i’s Sunshine Law in this specific function, it should operate in alignment with its principles. Transparency and public

accountability are consistent with both open government practices and the Aloha Spirit Law (HRS §5-7.5), which calls on public servants to act with integrity, humility, and respect for the people of Hawai‘i.

Finally, reliance on automatic internal succession must be strictly limited:

- Any acting Chief Election Officer should serve in a temporary capacity not to exceed 30 days
- The acting officer should be restricted from making permanent policy or procedural changes
- The acting officer must operate under full public reporting requirements during the interim period

Without these amendments, this bill reinforces internal continuity without sufficient external accountability.

Leadership transitions in our elections system must be timely, transparent, and accountable to the people.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to oppose SB2143 SD1 unless amended accordingly.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Tara Malia Gregory

Hawai‘i Resident