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Statement of

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Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation
Before the

SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

February 27, 2026 at 10:30 a.m.

State Capitol, Room 016

In consideration of

SENATE BILL 2189

RELATING TO THE HAWAII HOUSING FINANCE AND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION.

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

HHFDC has **comments** on Senate Bill 2189, which repeals the requirement that the Chair of the HHFDC Board of Directors be a public member and repeals the prohibition on certain members of the HHFDC Board from serving as Chair.

The HHFDC Board was originally designed to be apolitical and community-facing. This structure ensures that decisions about affordable housing are made with impartiality and transparency, prioritizing the needs of Hawaii's residents over undue political considerations. By allowing State officials to serve as Chair, this bill could shift HHFDC's governance toward a more politically driven structure, reducing its independence and potentially diminishing community trust. There are benefits of the HHFDC Board remaining apolitical and community-oriented:

1. **Public Trust and Transparency.** When leadership is drawn from public members rather than political appointees, it reinforces confidence that decisions prioritize community needs over political agendas.
2. **Balanced Decision-Making.** A public Chair helps ensure that diverse perspectives, including those of residents, developers, and housing advocates, are considered in policy and project decisions.
3. **Focus on Mission, Not Politics.** HHFDC's core mission is to finance and develop affordable housing. Maintaining an apolitical structure allows the agency to focus on long-term housing solutions rather than short-term political priorities.

4. Community Engagement. A community-facing board fosters collaboration with local stakeholders, which is essential for successful housing development and neighborhood integration.

This bill raises important governance questions that could affect HHFDC's independence and effectiveness. We respectfully urge the committee to consider the long-term benefits of keeping HHFDC apolitical and community oriented.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.