



LATE

Senate Committee on Judiciary
Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action (HAPA) Strongly Supports: SB2380
Tuesday February 2nd, at 9 am; Conference Room 016

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

HAPA is submitting testimony in STRONG Support of SB2380, which proposes a constitutional amendment to establish a continuous Legislature and requires the Legislature to convene on a regular, year-round schedule

Complex challenges like the housing shortage, growing environmental concerns, and the need for quality public education, amongst many issues, call for more time than our current session allows. By meeting throughout the year, lawmakers can address issues as they arise rather than waiting for the next session or a special session.

In just the past six years, our state has experienced many emergency crises that require faster or more flexible responses. Recent environmental emergencies like the Red Hill fuel leak revealed the need for steady and ongoing legislative oversight. During the COVID-19 pandemic, policies had to be revisited and adjusted often. Even with the Lahaina fire, we needed our state legislature to address the urgent need for improved disaster response protocols and long-term recovery plans for affected communities. Instability at the federal level increasingly requires our state to respond quickly to policy shifts and funding cuts. The part-time calendar just cannot keep pace with the constant changes.

Thousands of bills are introduced each year, yet many do not receive full consideration under the current framework. Measures are even frequently postponed because committee chairs believe they lack sufficient time to make informed decisions. Consequently, more than half of the proposals introduced at the beginning of the legislative session are either deferred or not scheduled for a hearing.

Additionally, a year-round legislature will improve transparency and public engagement. When hearings are more frequent and predictable, residents can schedule testimony without feeling rushed and not deter them from participating. This also helps residents living in the neighbor islands and rural areas who may face travel or technology obstacles, giving them more time to prepare and, should they choose, be present in person.

Thank you for your support and consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Anne Frederick".

Anne Frederick
Executive Director



FEBRUARY 3, 2026

SENATE BILL 2380

CURRENT REFERRAL: JDC

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Amy Zhao,
Policy and Partnerships Strategist

POSITION: SUPPORT

Imua Alliance supports SB 2380, which would establish a framework for a continuous legislative session in Hawai‘i, allowing committee meetings and legislative work to proceed year-round rather than being compressed into the current part-time January–May period.

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

Compressed sessions limit legislative effectiveness. Hawai‘i’s current system condenses thousands of bills, hearings, stakeholder consultations, and budgetary deliberations into approximately five months each year (January–May). According to reports from national legislative studies, condensed sessions contribute to rushed policy deliberation, reduced stakeholder engagement, and increased work outside of committee hearings, often in informal or remote settings that are less accessible to the public. As noted by the National Conference of State Legislatures, in its 2021 study “Session Length and Effectiveness”, states with continuous or extended sessions consistently report higher rates of public testimony, deeper committee engagement, and more thoughtful deliberation on complex policy topics.

Comparative data illustrates real benefits. Oregon and Washington operate longer legislative cycles (biennial with extended meeting periods or biennial with annual interim sessions) and have documented that expanded committee availability leads to earlier bill drafts, improved technical review, and better incorporation of public input. According to the Oregon Legislative Policy and Research Office, longer sessions improve policy analysis and reduce last-minute amendments that can undermine transparency and oversight.

Year-round continuity supports public participation and transparency. A hallmark of democratic governance is sustained engagement between policymakers and the communities they represent. Continuous session structures help ensure that public testimony is heard in real time and not compressed into limited hearing windows. They also allow for incremental

review of fiscal impacts and mid-course corrections that are challenging in a heavily compressed schedule. Testimony provided early in the session can meaningfully shape legislation, rather than being an afterthought in a late-March or April hearing rush, and impactful measures can be given more time for public vetting, rather than being scrapped without justification because of time and scheduling constraints.

Continuity fosters better policy outcomes and institutional memory. If adopted by voters, SB 2380's framework would allow committees and working groups to build longer timelines for complex interagency coordination. According to legislative scholars, the ability to work year-round significantly reduces the policy "whiplash" experienced when statutes must be drafted, vetted, amended, and passed in just a few months. Longer cycles also help reduce staff burnout and improve legislative research quality, increasing the legislature's capacity to address emergent issues—such as housing affordability, climate resilience, artificial intelligence, or health equity—without procedural strain.

Economic and administrative benefits are tied to better governance. While Hawai‘i's compact session may appear cost-efficient on its face, rushed timelines increase administrative costs in other ways: last-minute budget adjustments, implementation delays, and reactive policymaking can lead to inefficiencies and unanticipated fiscal risks. Longer or continuous sessions, balanced with appropriate cost containment, promote proactive budgeting and better alignment with executive and agency planning cycles.

For these reasons, Imua Alliance urges the legislature to adopt this measure and allow the voters to decide whether to transition toward a legislative structure that prioritizes thoughtful deliberation and more meaningful public engagement.

With aloha,

Kris Coffield

President, Imua Alliance

LATE

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Keeping Hawai‘i clean,
green and beautiful
since 1912



February 2, 2026

RE: The Outdoor Circle support for SB2380—Continuous Legislative Session

Dear Senator Rhoads and Committee Members,

The Outdoor Circle supports SB2380 to establish a continuous legislative session.

Like many nonprofits which may weigh in on matters of importance to them in the legislative process, we have found that the time required to carefully consider legislation to support or oppose is not sufficient in the current legislative calendar with our many other activities we carry out over the course of the year. The rushed process now is almost frantic, leaves us unable to connect with legislators and other groups who may share or oppose certain legislation, leads to missed deadlines, conflicting schedules, and inability to participate as effectively as we would like when we like.

A year-round legislature would allow for more thoughtful crafting and discussion of issues, relationship building, better participation by the public, and less stress on everyone, among other benefits.

Others will testify as to these many points in more detail, but we did wish to express our support for the passage of SB2380.

Sincerely,

Winston Welch
Executive Director

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SB-2380

Submitted on: 1/31/2026 8:07:54 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michael A. Cobb Jr	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose having the legislature in session year round because there will be no deadline for bills to die. This will make the legislature less efficient due to procrastination. They will use blank bills to push an agenda year round. The citizens need a break each year from the tax and spend.

SB-2380

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 8:54:06 AM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lila Mower	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this proposal.

LATE

SB-2380

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 10:28:31 AM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ellen Awai	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support the intent of this bill SB2380, the present legislative session is too short, important bills are not being heard due to a lack of cultural competence of the history of the Native Hawaiians and the rest of the world. But for the entire year?? Legislators should be out in their own communities to hear the voices of all their constituents and not hold second jobs as professionals, such as medical doctors which causes a conflict of interest within our society. It seems that the natives do not want to know the legislative process and don't care since they have been lied to and brainwashed for centuries, believing that the United States was #1 and that their colonization of institutions in education, government, and medical were right in how they discriminated against the natives like they did to the Native Americans. Voices are only heard by those that do not know the issues of our largest population, the 90%, but just the few vocal ones who came to our islands to enjoy life and profit from our islands.

The counties should be in charge because they are closer to the people, although the state is necessary to distribute federal funding appropriately. That is unless the Kingdom of Hawaii becomes visible and changes the entire political scene.

#1 Lies pushed on the natives of our islands:

We all come from the same woman in Africa 180,000 years ago, through DNA testing.

Jesus was not Christian, he was Jewish and if born in that area he was not white.

The Chinese went around the world with Marco Polo in 1405 and 1435 and the evidence is a 7-mile rock wall above San Francisco built in the 1400s. So they were here before white colonizers. Magellan with the translated native languages to English does not even make it into the Pacific Ocean and the Portuguese crew with black slaves and possibly Chinese cooks made it to Hawaii in the 1500s. The natives took them in and renamed them.

Therefore, Hawaii was not discovered in 1778 by Capt Cook.

Look at our State Seal, the woman on the right is the Goddess of Columbia, who recruited the military before Uncle Sam and Saved the Black & Chinese man from persecution in the 1870s and was on all our coins and stands at Punchbowl.

The U.S. needed Hawaii in 1893 because they were going through Depression and Carnegie in Pennsylvania let go his union workers from his steel industry!

LATE

SB-2380

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 1:56:18 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ken Stover	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

support

LATE

SB-2380

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 2:06:51 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Keoni Shizuma	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I whole heartily agree with this change. The current condensed timeframe in which the legislature is open creates extreme bottlenecks and makes it incredibly difficult for constituents to participate in the process. If the legislature operated more along the lines that city councils did, meeting regularly throughout the year, committees being held regularly throughout the year, as well as the opening the possibility for the meetings to be held in different locations around the state, would definitely increase constituent involvement in the process and familiarity with their representatives. I see this as a major win for improving government transparency and engagement.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Keoni Shizuma