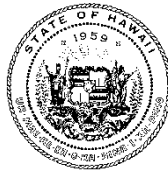


KRISTIN E. IZUMI-NITAO
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



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STATE OF HAWAII
CAMPAIGN SPENDING COMMISSION

235 SOUTH BERETANIA STREET, ROOM 300
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

March 17, 2026

TO: The Honorable David A. Tarnas, Chair
House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs

The Honorable Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair
House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs

Members of the House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs

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

SUBJECT: **Testimony on S.B. No. 2447, S.D.1, Relating to Campaign Finance.**
House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs
Wednesday, March 18, 2026, at 2:00 p.m.
Conference Room 325 & Videoconference

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

This bill amends Hawaii Revised Statutes (“HRS”) §11-412(g) by changing the commencement of the statute of limitations period from the date of violation or date of filing of the report to the discovery of the offense by the Commission. The Commission believes changing the commencement date of the statute of limitations to the date of discovery of the violation will prevent candidates, candidate committees, and noncandidate committees from delaying proper reporting on campaign finance reports to avoid prosecution.

The Commission requests that this committee pass this measure.



MARCH 18, 2026

SENATE BILL 2447 SD1

CURRENT REFERRAL: JHA

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

Kris Coffield,
President

David Negaard,
Director

Mireille Ellsworth,
Director

Justin Salisbury,
Director

Eileen Roco,
Director

Beatrice DeRego,
Director

Corey Rosenlee,
Director

Amy Zhao,
*Policy and Partnerships
Strategist*

POSITION: SUPPORT

Imua Alliance supports SB 2447 SD1, relating to campaign finance, which provides that the period of limitations for criminal prosecutions under campaign finance laws commences upon discovery of the offense by the Campaign Spending Commission, rather than being limited to five years from the violation date or report filing date.

Imua Alliance is a Hawai'i-based organization dedicated to ending all forms of exploitation, including electoral abuse. Public trust in government is foundational to our democracy. When people believe that their institutions operate transparently, ethically, and in the public interest, they are more likely to engage in civic life and participate in elections.. Conversely, ethical lapses erode trust and, in turn, reduce civic participation.

Recent events have highlighted the need for stronger accountability measures. In late 2025 and early 2026, media reporting revealed that a federal corruption inquiry involving former legislators included an allegation that approximately \$35,000 was paid to an influential state lawmaker in 2022. The reporting has prompted widespread public concern, including petitions from hundreds of community members calling for a full legislative investigation and renewed accountability safeguards.

Multiple outlets have noted that the matter was investigated by federal authorities without a parallel public legislative review or robust public process, leaving many in the community questioning whether current ethical and disclosure systems are sufficient. The Hawai'i Attorney General's office is currently investigating the matter at the best of the community and legislative leaders, who have called for a hasty and thorough inquiry.

This scandal and the community response it has generated underscore the urgent need to strengthen transparency, disclosure, and conflict-of-interest rules for public officials. This measure will allow the Campaign

Spending Commission ample time to investigate the potential \$35,000 campaign finance violation, which would otherwise be on the cusp of lapsing beyond the commission's statute of limitations given the inability of the commission to access information critical to examine the allegations to their fullest extent.

The alleged \$35,000 payment to an influential Hawai'i politician has also exposed a troubling gap in state-level accountability. As has been publicly discussed, the Hawai'i Campaign Spending Commission was unable to pursue enforcement action in part because the alleged conduct fell outside the Commission's current statute of limitations, leaving serious questions unanswered and undermining public confidence in our systems of electoral and government integrity.

This measure is ultimately about deciding who our state government represents: we, the people, or those who pay bribes behind closed doors to exploit our democracy. When the law prevents oversight bodies from even examining credible allegations of improper influence, the problem is not merely individual misconduct. It is a structural failure. This bill responds directly to this gap by strengthening transparency and accountability mechanisms, so that future allegations of this magnitude cannot evade scrutiny simply due to timing technicalities.

Passing this bill is essential to restoring communal trust and ensuring Hawai'i's campaign finance laws can respond meaningfully when the public most needs them.

With aloha,

Kris Coffield

President, Imua Alliance



Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs
Chair David Tarnas, Vice Chair Mahina Poepoe
Wednesday, March 18 2 pm
Room 325 and Videoconference
SB2447 SD1 RELATING TO CAMPAIGN FINANCE

TESTIMONY

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

Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Committee Members:

The League of Women Voters of Hawaii supports SB2447 SD1, which would modify the “statute of limitations” for campaign finance violations to state “The applicable period of limitations for a criminal prosecution under HRS Sections 11-412, and 701-108, shall not commence until discovery of the offense by the commission.”

Discovery of offense may be delayed considerably because candidates can revise submitted reports long after the originals were submitted, among other circumstances.

We are pleased with the modification in SD1, although we had not noticed the problem it addresses until the CSD pointed it out in testimony.

SB2447 SD1 would allow the CSC to respond appropriately when these circumstances arise, thus ensuring that those who violate CSC requirements bear some consequences, even if those consequences are delayed.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.



**Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs
Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action (HAPA) Supports SB2447 SD1
Wednesday, March 18, 2026, at 2:00 PM | Conference Room 325 & Videoconference**

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

HAPA supports SB2447 SD1, which fixes a significant gap in Hawai'i's campaign finance enforcement by changing when the five-year statute of limitations for criminal prosecutions begins to run.

Under current law, the clock starts on the date of the violation or the date the report covering that period was filed, whichever is later. That sounds reasonable on its surface, but in practice it creates a serious problem. Campaign finance violations are often hidden. They can be buried in complex filings, obscured through intermediaries, or simply not detectable until the Campaign Spending Commission has the information and resources to investigate. By the time a violation is discovered, the window to prosecute may already be closed.

SB2447 SD1 fixes this with a straightforward change: the five-year clock starts upon discovery of the violation by the Commission, not upon the violation itself. This is consistent with how statutes of limitations work in other contexts involving concealed or complex wrongdoing, where it makes no sense to start the clock before anyone could reasonably have known a crime occurred.

This is a targeted, practical fix. It does not extend the limitations period itself. It simply ensures that the period begins at a point when prosecution is actually possible.

Campaign finance laws only deter misconduct if they can actually be enforced. SB2447 SD1 helps make that enforcement real.

HAPA respectfully urges this committee to pass SB2447 SD1.

Mahalo,

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

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

SB-2447-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 11:04:24 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

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

I am testifying in strong support of SB2447, a straightforward and essential fix to our campaign finance enforcement laws. This bill ensures that secrecy does not become a shield for misconduct by starting the statute of limitations for criminal campaign finance violations when the offense is actually **discovered** by the Campaign Spending Commission, not when it occurred or was first reported.

Campaign finance violations are, by their very nature, often hidden. Illicit contributions, unreported expenditures, and coordinated spending are intentionally obscured from public view. Under current law, the clock begins ticking on the statute of limitations at the time of the violation—meaning that if the offense is successfully concealed for a few years, it effectively becomes immune from prosecution. This creates a perverse incentive: hide your misconduct well, and you will never be held accountable.

SB2447 closes this loophole. By starting the limitations period upon discovery by the Commission, the bill ensures that the sophistication of a concealment effort does not determine whether justice can be pursued. It rewards transparency and punishes deception, exactly as campaign finance law should.

This reform is not radical; it is common sense. Statutes of limitations that begin upon discovery are standard in fraud cases and other offenses where concealment is inherent to the violation. Our campaign finance laws should meet this same basic standard.

Public confidence in our elections depends on the belief that the rules apply to everyone and that violations will be pursued. SB2447 ensures that those who break the law cannot simply wait out the clock. I urge you to pass this bill and strengthen the integrity of our democratic process.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

SB-2447-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 9:59:19 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

What a great bill. This puts more teeth in honesty in government. Ty Cullen and Kalani English shamed the legislature, and \$35,000 in a brown bag continues that.

Please pass this bill.

Lynne Matusow

COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

Rep. David A. Tarnas, Chair

Rep. Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair

HEARING:

Wednesday, March 18, 2026 at 2:00 pm

Conference Room 325 and Via Videoconference

TESTIMONY IN **SUPPORT** OF SB 2447, SD1 - RELATING TO CAMPAIGN FINANCE.

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. I write to you today in support of SB 2447, SD1, relating to campaign finance, which provides that the period of limitations for criminal prosecutions under campaign finance laws commences upon discovery of the offense by the Campaign Spending Commission, rather than being limited to five years from the violation date or report filing date.

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

As an attorney licensed in the state of Hawai'i for over 25 years, it seems clear to me that this change in the start of the statute of limitations for prosecutions under campaign finance law to commence upon the discovery of the offense is in the public interest. The change provided for by SB 2447, SD1 will serve to discourage violations of the law as well as the unethical conduct surrounding keeping such violations secret. Hopefully, it will encourage persons with knowledge of offenses to come forward rather than wait for the statute of limitations to run out.

If passed, this bill should enhance public trust in our elected officials and restore faith in government. Based upon the foregoing, I request that you **vote in support of SB 2447, SD1**.

Mahalo nui for your efforts to improve upon Hawai'i's dark reputation for corruption.

Christine Andrews, J.D.

Wailuku, Maui

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

SB-2447-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 3:00:09 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Daniel R Freund	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please advance this good government legislation,

- Dan Freund, Kapaa

SB-2447-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 3:13:49 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lindsay Roth	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I am writing in support of SB2447 SD1.

Under current law, the statute of limitations for campaign finance violations begins on the date the violation occurs—even if the misconduct was concealed and not yet known to regulators. In practice, this can allow violations to escape accountability if they are discovered only after the five-year window has already passed.

SB2447 SD1 addresses this problem by starting the statute of limitations when the Campaign Spending Commission discovers the violation. This change reflects a common-sense approach used in many areas of law where misconduct may be hidden. Campaign finance regulations are only meaningful if they can be effectively enforced.

By ensuring that concealed violations can still be investigated and prosecuted once discovered, this measure strengthens transparency and accountability in Hawai'i's elections.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to pass SB2447 SD1.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Lindsay Roth LCSW
96740

SB-2447-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 6:25:40 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

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

I urge you to support SB2447 SD1.

Right now, the clock on campaign finance prosecutions starts running from the date of the violation, even if that violation was hidden and nobody knew about it yet. That means by the time the Campaign Spending Commission discovers wrongdoing, it may already be too late to prosecute.

SB2447 SD1 fixes this by starting the five-year clock when the Commission actually discovers the violation. That's how statutes of limitations should work when misconduct is concealed. Campaign finance laws are only a deterrent if they can actually be enforced.

Please ensure that they can be, pass SB2447 SD1.

Thank you

SB-2447-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 7:20:05 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/18/2026 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 SB2447 SD1.

Right now, the clock on campaign finance prosecutions starts running from the date of the violation, even if that violation was hidden and nobody knew about it yet. That means by the time the Campaign Spending Commission discovers wrongdoing, it may already be too late to prosecute.

SB2447 SD1 fixes this by starting the five-year clock when the Commission actually discovers the violation. That's how statutes of limitations should work when misconduct is concealed. Campaign finance laws are only a deterrent if they can actually be enforced.

Please pass SB2447 SD1.

Mahalo,

Georgia Hoopes, Kalaheo

SB-2447-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 9:00:52 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mary Lu Kelley	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I'm submitting testimony in support of SB2447 SD1.

Right now, the clock on campaign finance prosecutions starts running from the date of the violation, even if that violation was hidden and nobody knew about it yet. That means by the time the Campaign Spending Commission discovers wrongdoing, it may already be too late to prosecute.

This bill makes an important correction.

SB2447 SD1 fixes this by starting the five-year clock when the Commission actually discovers the violation. That's how statutes of limitations should work when misconduct is concealed. Campaign finance laws are only a deterrent if they can actually be enforced.

Do the right thing! Please pass SB2447 SD1.

Thank you,

Mary Lu Kelley, Koloa

SB-2447-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 9:12:16 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ruta Jordans	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Campaign finance laws are only a deterrent if they can actually be enforced. Start the clock from the time the violation is discovered.

SB-2447-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 9:56:12 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
kimdonghyeon	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I'm submitting testimony in support of SB2447 SD1.

Right now, the clock on campaign finance prosecutions starts running from the date of the violation, even if that violation was hidden and nobody knew about it yet. That means by the time the Campaign Spending Commission discovers wrongdoing, it may already be too late to prosecute.

SB2447 SD1 fixes this by starting the five-year clock when the Commission actually discovers the violation. That's how statutes of limitations should work when misconduct is concealed. Campaign finance laws are only a deterrent if they can actually be enforced.

Please pass SB2447 SD1.

Mahalo,

kimdonghyeon

SB-2447-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/18/2026 12:24:40 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
B.A. McClintock	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I'm submitting testimony in support of SB2447 SD1.

Right now, the clock on campaign finance prosecutions starts running from the date of the violation, even if that violation was hidden and nobody knew about it yet. That means by the time the Campaign Spending Commission discovers wrongdoing, it may already be too late to prosecute.

SB2447 SD1 fixes this by starting the five-year clock when the Commission actually discovers the violation. That's how statutes of limitations should work when misconduct is concealed. Campaign finance laws are only a deterrent if they can actually be enforced.

Please pass SB2447 SD1.

SB-2447-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/18/2026 3:51:44 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/18/2026 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 support of SB2447 SD1 which changes when the five-year statute of limitations for criminal prosecutions of campaign finance violations begins to run. It currently starts on the date of the violation or the date the relevant report was filed. This bill would change that to the date the Campaign Spending Commission discovers the violation.

Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Melissa Barker

Kapaa, HI

SB-2447-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/18/2026 4:18:18 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Danelle Guion	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Grandinetti, and members of the Committee,

I'm submitting testimony in support of SB2471 SD2. Corporations are legal creations of the State. They exist because the State grants them the privilege to exist, and the State has every right to define what powers come with that privilege. The power to spend money on elections was never supposed to be one of them.

SB2471 SD2 makes that explicit. It strips election spending out of the powers granted to corporations and other artificial persons under state law, while leaving every natural person's rights completely intact. That's the right call.

Please pass SB2471 SD2.

Thank you.

SB-2447-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/18/2026 7:18:54 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha, I am writing in support of SB2447 because I believe it will strengthen our campaign finance laws. Mahalo for your consideration.

SB-2447-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/18/2026 9:18:31 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/18/2026 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 SB2447 SD1.

Right now, the clock on campaign finance prosecutions starts running from the date of the violation, even if that violation was hidden and nobody knew about it yet. That means by the time the Campaign Spending Commission discovers wrongdoing, it may already be too late to prosecute.

SB2447 SD1 fixes this by starting the five-year clock when the Commission actually discovers the violation. That's how statutes of limitations should work when misconduct is concealed. Campaign finance laws are only a deterrent if they can actually be enforced.

Please pass SB2447 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