

SB-2530-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 5:56:24 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

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

Comments:

Preventing contractors and grantees from donating to politicians reduces the risk of undue influence or favoritism in government decisions and in the awarding of contracts and grants.

When the public sees that government contracts and grants are free from political influence, their trust in elected officials and government increases, leading to better democracy.

SB-2528-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 8:23:34 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

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

Comments:

Thank you for hearing SB2528.

a member of Indivisible Hawaii

SB-2528-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 8:59:00 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

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

Comments:

I support SB2528.

SB-2528-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 9:57:42 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

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

Comments:

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SB-2528-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 2:37:21 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kanani Kai	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I SUPPORT SB2528.

Mahalo,

Kanani Kai

Member Indivisible Hawaii

SB-2528-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 9:39:27 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
James E Raymond	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you -- I am a member of Indivisible Windward.

SB-2528-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 10:55:47 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

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

Comments:

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

I am in strong support of SB2528.

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

Mahalo, Gail Morrison, Honolulu 96815

SB-2528-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 11:56:59 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

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

Comments:

In support

SB-2528-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 3:46:49 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cassidy Hollenbeck	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in strong support of SB2528. By increasing the expenditure cap and adjusting matching funds to 2:1, this measure reflects the economic realities of today and encourages more candidates to participate in the program. Public financing levels the playing field for candidates without establishment backing and allows campaigns to focus on reaching voters instead of donors. This bill is a significant step toward enabling more candidates to utilize this program and reducing the influence of big money in our elections.



Protect Democracy

Move Forward

www.indivisiblehawaii.org

info@indivisiblehawaii.org

To: Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee

Hearing Date/Time: 03-02-26 10:31 AM

Place: Hawaii State Capitol, Conference Room 211

Re: Testimony in STRONG SUPPORT of SB 2528, SD1

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of Indivisible Hawai'i, I thank you for this opportunity to testify in strong support of SB 2528, SD1.

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

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

SB 2528 is a significant step toward enabling more candidates to utilize this program and reducing the influence of big money in our elections. We thank you for supporting this bill.

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-2528-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 4:57:43 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

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

Comments:

I support this bill, but greatly prefer SB2313.

SB-2528-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 11:49:11 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

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

Comments:

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

I am testifying personally and as a member of Indivisible Hawaii Statewide Network to strongly support SB2528. By increasing the expenditure cap and adjusting matching funds to 2:1, this bill reflects the economic realities of today and encourages more candidates to participate in the program.

Public financing levels the playing field for candidates without establishment backing and allows campaigns to focus on reaching voters instead of donors. While I would prefer full public financing of elections, this bill is a significant step toward enabling more candidates to utilize this program and reducing the influence of big money in our elections.

Mahalo,

Robert Justice, M.D., Kapolei

SB-2528-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 5:59:05 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

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

Comments:

Thank you

SB-2528-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 12:26:44 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shannon Rudolph	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUPPORT

SB-2528-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 12:59:17 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Susan Douglas	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TY!

SB-2528-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 1:17:52 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki and Members of the Committee,

I am in strong support of SB2528.

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

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

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

Mahalo,

Georgia Hoopes, Kalaheo

SB-2528-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 2:58:05 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mala Wingerd	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I support of SB2528.

As I said on behalf of SB2313:

Although I support any and all efforts to get corporate "bribes" out of our politics, this bill is still not enough! We should require ALL candidates use only public money, and no longer allow ads or money from *any* private 'donors'! They do this in France, and although their govt is not perfect, it a good start to cleaning up graft!

Thank you for reviewing our comments.

SB-2528-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 5:27:14 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

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

Comments:

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry, STRONGLY OPPOSE

PUBLIC/PRIVATE CAMPAIGN DONATIONS

2528 SB RELATING TO PARTIAL PUBLIC FINANCING OF ELECTIONS.

SB-2528-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 6:14:48 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

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

Comments:

Thank you!

SB-2528-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 7:32:10 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kathy Shimata	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Kathy Shimata & I live in Honolulu. Elections are the heart of our democracy. Money prevents some worthy candidates from running for office.

[SB2528](#) aims to increase public funds that are available to candidates, increase the amount the state matches donations from 1:1 match to 2:1 match, and increase the expenditure limit for campaigns.

I urge you to support SB2528 to improve our democracy.

Mahalo,

Kathy Shimata

SB-2528-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 7:41:21 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer Lum	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in support of SB2528.

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

For too long, only the wealthy or well-connected have been able to run for office. It's time we make public office only supported by the public and not just entities with deep pockets.

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

Mahalo,

Jen Lum, 'Ewa Beach

SB-2528-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 7:51:52 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

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

Comments:

I support SB2528 SD1 because I believe significant public funding of campaigns reduces the need for candidates to pursue big donors which gives them more time to develop and communicate their stances on issues.

It also reduces the voter perception that only big money can play in politics.

Further, it enables new people to run cor office even if they do not have big money connections.

Thank you for allowing me to testify on this matter.

SB-2528-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 7:08:17 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Noelle Lindenmann	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki and Members of the Committee,

I am in strong support of SB2528.

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

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

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

Mahalo for this opportunity to provide testimony,

Noelle Lindenmann, Kailua-Kona

SB-2528-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 8:15:23 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Charlene K. Rowley	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki and Members of the Committee,

I am in strong support of SB2528.

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

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

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

Thank you,

Charlene Kiana Rowley, Kula Maui

SB-2528-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 8:26:25 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

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

Comments:

Greetings Committee Members,

I am writing to express support for SB2528, which seeks to increase the amount of partial public campaign financing available for all state and county elective offices. The partial public financing system is long overdue for an update, and this legislation represents a significant step toward enhancing the integrity and accessibility of our electoral process.

The major issue with the current partial public financing system is that for state legislative races, the caps are too low to make a meaningful contribution to a candidate's campaigning. Increasing public financing can help restore public trust in our political system.

Mahalo for your attention.

Marcia Kemble

Makiki



**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS
FOR SB2528 SD1**
RELATING TO PARTIAL PUBLIC FINANCING OF
ELECTIONS

Ke Kōmike ‘Aha Kenekoa o ke Ki‘ina Hana a me nā
Kumuwaiwai
Ke Kapikala o Hawai‘i

Malaki 2, 2026

10:31AM

Lumi 211

Aloha e Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means:

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS WITH AMENDMENTS SB2528 SD1**, which increases the amount of public funds available to candidates for public office who participate in the State’s Partial Public Financing program and increases participating candidates’ expenditure limits.

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

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

The statewide OHA Trustee races receive comparable votes to the Lieutenant Governor races. In the 2024 General Election, the OHA Moloka'i-Lāna'i race received 287,216 votes, the Kaua'i race received 284,571 votes, and the OHA At-Large race received 325,858 votes. In the 2022 Primary Election, the Democrat Lieutenant Governor's race received a total of 242,350 votes, and the Republican Lieutenant Governor's race received 66,830 votes.

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

As a matter of fairness and equity, OHA respectfully requests that OHA be treated comparably to other statewide office holders through **necessary amendments to HRS sections 11-423 and 425**. Specifically, **the multiplier set in HRS § 11-423 should put OHA candidates' expenditure limit on parity with the Lieutenant Governor, another statewide office holder (increase from \$0.20 to \$1.68)**.

For the reasons stated above, OHA respectfully urges this committee to **PASS SB2528 SD1 with AMENDMENTS**.

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

SB-2528-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 12:05:59 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
ANDREW ISODA	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki and Members of the Committee,

I am in strong support of SB2528.

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

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

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

Mahalo,

*Andrew Isoda
Lahaina, Mau'i*

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

HEARING:

Monday, March 2, 2026 at 10:31 am
Conference Room 211 & Videoconference

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 2528, SD1 - RELATING TO PARTIAL PUBLIC FINANCING OF ELECTIONS.

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, Senator Hashimoto for my district, Senator DeCoite for Upcountry Maui, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Christine Andrews. I am a long-term resident of Wailuku, Maui and an attorney licensed for over 25 years. I write to you today in **strong support of SB 2528, SD1**, Relating to Partial Public Financing of Elections, which increases the expenditure limit and the amount of partial public campaign financing available for all elective offices, adjusts the minimum amount of qualifying contributions certain candidates must receive to participate in the program, increases the matching fund payments for excess qualifying contributions, and appropriates funds for the program.

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

Comprehensive public funding programs, such as proposed by SB2313, are the best way to meet these goals, but the enhancement to Hawaii's Partial Public Funding Program (PPFP) proposed by SB 2528, SD1 is an important step toward those goals. The money available to candidates through the PPFP has not changed in over twenty years. Over that time, increases in media prices, postage, and labor costs have made the current amounts inadequate, far below amounts spent by privately funded candidates who won election to the same office. As a result of the disparity, the number of candidates using PPFP continues to decrease. The increases proposed in SB 2528, SD1 are an improvement and SB 2528, SD1 also cuts the number of qualifying contributions required to access public funding for several offices, making the program easier to access.

Senate Bill 2528, SD1 also provides for increased funding for Hawaii election campaign fund (HECF). This is important because under the definition of the PPFP, if the HECF runs out of money before all qualified candidates have received anticipated payments, the program will stop making payments. This erodes candidates' trust in and their willingness to use the program. It is time to help level the playing field so that the candidate best qualified to serve their constituents, not just the one most able to fundraise from wealthy donors, are able to be elected to office. **I respectfully request your vote in support of SB 2528, SD1.**

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony,

Christine Andrews, JD
Wailuku, Maui

TO: The Senate Committee on Ways and Means (WAM)

HEARING DATE: March 2, 2026, at 10:31 AM

FROM: Jasmine Steiner, KahuPuna, Puna, Hawai'i

SUBJECT: STRONGLY OPPOSE SB2528 – Stop Subsidizing Political Corruption with Puna's Taxes

My name is Jasmine Steiner. I am a daughter of the Puna 'āina, a district that has been treated as a "sacrifice zone" for forty years. While our community fights for basic road access, health monitoring, and justice against a **fraudulent Geothermal EIS**, this bill proposes to take \$30 million of public money to fund the very political machines that keep us oppressed.

I stand in absolute opposition to **SB2528**. Politicians should raise their own funds—not use the public as an ATM to buy their way back into power.

The Loopholes & Corruption of SB2528

1. **The "Super-Match" Loophole (Section 11-429):** This bill doubles the matching rate from \$1 to **\$2 for every \$1 raised**. This doesn't help grassroots candidates; it "supercharges" the power of private donors using *our* tax dollars. It allows candidates to spend more time courting wealthy donors whose influence is then tripled by the State.
2. **Increasing Expenditure Limits (Section 11-423):** This bill proposes a **20% increase** in what candidates can spend. Instead of capping the cost of elections to reduce the influence of "pay-to-play" politics, you are encouraging an expensive "arms race" that rural communities like Puna **can never win**.
3. **Prioritizing Politicians Over Puna:** In Puna, we are begging for recovery funds for the Lower East Rift Zone (LERZ) and roads like Pohoiki, and for them to stop wasting money on useless projects like the dredging of the boat ramp. We the Puna people are fighting an injunction in the Intermediate Court of Appeals because the State refused to stop PGV's fraudulent operations. **To spend \$30 million on "partial public financing" while the Puna district lacks a 24/7 health helpline or safe roads is a violation of our civil rights.**
4. **Enabling the "Sacrifice Zone":** For decades, money has influenced the "fast-tracking" of geothermal projects that harm our land and air. **SB2528 is designed to protect the status quo by ensuring that established politicians have a**

guaranteed pool of public money, making it nearly impossible for real community advocates to challenge the system.

Conclusion

We do not want "partial" financing; **we want clean government. If a politician cannot inspire their own constituents to fund a campaign, they have no business representing us. Do not use Puna's tax dollars to silence Puna's voice.**

I urge you to KILL THE BILL SB2528. Redirect these funds to actual community needs—like LERZ Kilauea recovery and independent environmental monitoring—instead of political campaigns.

Me ke aloha 'āina,

Jasmine Steiner

KahuPuna, Puna

[*Wearepuna@gmail.com*](mailto:Wearepuna@gmail.com)

13-430 pohoiki road Pahoa HI 96778

[*wearepuna.wixsite.com/aloha-activism*](http://wearepuna.wixsite.com/aloha-activism)



SB-2528-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 4:34:31 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

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

Comments:

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

I am in strong support of SB2528.

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

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

This bill is a significant step toward enabling more candidates to utilize this program and reducing the influence of big money in our elections. Let's get corruption out of politics

Mahalo, Jane Aquino, Manoa, Oahu

SB-2528-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 5:41:00 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

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

Comments:

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki and Members of the Committee,

I urge you to support SB2528.

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

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

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

Thank you

SB-2528-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 6:34:07 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Susan B Roberts Emery	Testifying for Green Party of Hawai'i	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki and Members of the Committee,

My name is Susan RobertsEmery, as Co Chair of the Green Party of Hawai'i, I am writing on behalf of our members, who are in Very Strong Support of SB2528 SD1.

By increasing the expenditure cap and adjusting matching funds to 2:1, this measure reflects the economic realities of today and encourages more candidates to participate in the program. The Green Party is Grassroots Party that does not take " donations " from corporations . This bill will level the playing field and allow more candidates to fundraise in their communities and get 2:1 public funding. Candidates should represent their constituents and this bill will help all candidates get a fair look by the voters.

The Green Party of Hawai'i urges this committee to Pass SB2528 SD1.

Mahalo,

Susan RobertsEmery

Green Party of Hawai'i

Paauilo

SB-2528-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 9:34:53 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
C.Yamamoto	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support SB2528.

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

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

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

SB-2528-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 10:27:07 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cory Harden	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha legislators,

It's not just eggs and gas that cost more these days--it's campaigns, too. This bill supports elected officials who are not beholden to private interests, and gets them talking to more voters and fewer donors.

mahalo,
Cory Harden

SB-2528-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2026 8:26:55 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Yvette Kay	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki and Members of the Committee,

I am in strong support of SB2528.

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

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

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

Mahalo,

Yvette Kay

Kailua Kona, HI

SB-2528-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2026 9:04:17 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Inam Rahman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

WRITTEN TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT WITH FISCAL AMENDMENTS

SB2528 – Relating to Partial Public Campaign Financing

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Dr. Inam Rahman, MD, a resident of Waipahu, Hawaii, small business owner, and longtime participant in civic and public policy discussions in Hawaii. I submit this testimony in strong support of SB2528, with recommended fiscal amendments to ensure long-term sustainability and responsible stewardship of taxpayer funds.

Support for the Intent of the Measure

SB2528 modernizes Hawaii’s partial public campaign financing system, which has not been meaningfully updated since the mid-1990s. Inflation, rising communication costs, and the increasing role of digital campaigning have rendered existing funding caps outdated.

By increasing matching funds and adjusting qualifying thresholds, the bill:

- Encourages broader candidate participation
- Reduces dependence on large private donors

- Promotes fairness and electoral competitiveness
- Strengthens public confidence in democratic institutions

A healthy democracy benefits when candidates from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds can run viable campaigns without disproportionate reliance on concentrated financial interests.

Fiscal Responsibility Is Essential

While the policy objective is commendable, the bill should incorporate guardrails to ensure predictable and sustainable fiscal impact. I respectfully propose the following amendments:

1. Establish a Program Funding Cap Per Election Cycle

Amend the bill to include a defined appropriation ceiling (for example, \$2–4 million per election cycle). If demand exceeds available funds, distributions could be made on a pro-rata basis.

This ensures:

- Predictable state exposure
- Protection of core General Fund priorities
- Transparent budgeting

2. Phase-In the Enhanced Matching Rate

The proposed increase to a 2:1 match significantly raises potential cost.

A prudent approach would:

- Implement 1.5:1 for the first election cycle
- Increase to 2:1 following fiscal review and performance analysis

This allows evaluation before full expansion.

3. Diversify Funding Sources

To reduce pressure on the General Fund, the Legislature may consider:

- Expanding voluntary tax check-off mechanisms
- Allocating a portion of campaign finance civil penalties
- Exploring modest filing fee adjustments

A blended funding model strengthens durability.

4. Add a Sunset Review or Mandatory Legislative Evaluation

Include a requirement that the Campaign Spending Commission report after two election cycles on:

- Participation rates
- Total program cost
- Impact on small-donor engagement
- Administrative burden

Data-driven oversight ensures accountability.

5. Strengthen Grassroots Incentives

To enhance democratic legitimacy, require qualifying contributions to:

- Come from a minimum number of in-district small donors
- Be capped at modest amounts (e.g., \$100 or less)

This reinforces the principle that public financing amplifies citizen participation—not institutional advantage.

Conclusion

SB2528 represents a thoughtful step toward modernizing Hawaii’s campaign finance framework. With measured fiscal safeguards and phased implementation, it can:

- Promote equitable elections
- Protect taxpayer resources
- Encourage broader civic participation
- Maintain public trust

I respectfully urge the Committee to pass SB2528 with fiscal amendments that balance reform with responsibility.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully submitted,

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