



**STATE OF HAWAII
CAMPAIGN SPENDING COMMISSION**

235 SOUTH BERETANIA STREET, ROOM 300
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

February 4, 2026

TO: The Honorable Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary

The Honorable Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary

Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary

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

SUBJECT: **Testimony on S.B. No. 2528, Relating to Partial Public Financing of
Elections.**
Senate Committee on Judiciary
Friday, February 6, 2026, at 9:00 a.m.
Conference Room 016 & Videoconference

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.¹ The Campaign Spending Commission (“Commission”) supports this bill.

The purpose of this bill is to enhance Hawaii’s partial public financing program by increasing the maximum amount of public funds available for all offices by 50%² (except for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (“OHA”) which will be significantly enhanced by over 1,000%) to qualified candidates. It also makes a downward adjustment of the minimum qualifying contributions for certain offices because it appears that publicly financed candidates for those offices were having a difficult time raising the minimum qualifying contributions. Respectfully, the Commission is submitting this bill as an attempt to boost an existing program that is mandated by the State Constitution which has not changed and whose maximum dollar amounts have not changed since 1995.

This bill amends Hawaii Revised Statutes (“HRS”) sections as follows:

- 1) Increases the expenditure limits for elected offices by 20%,

¹ The companion bill is H.B. 2050.

² The percentage of the expenditure limit, which determines the maximum amount of public funding available for each office, is increased by 50% in the bill.

- 2) HRS §11-425 by increasing the maximum amount of public funds available for all offices (except for the offices of the Mayor of the County of Kauai, Mayor of the County of Maui, and OHA trustee) by 50%. The bill also increases the maximum amount available for candidates for Mayor of the counties of Kauai and Maui by 125% by moving those offices from subsection (a) to subsection (b) and increasing the maximum amount of public funds available for a candidate for trustee of OHA from \$1,500 for the election period to 7.5% of the expenditure limit for each election established in HRS §11-423(d).
- 3) HRS §11-429(a) by increasing the amount of qualifying contributions required for a candidate for trustee of OHA from more than \$1,500 in the aggregate to more than \$5,500 in the aggregate.
- 4) HRS §11-429(a) by providing a downward adjustment of the minimum amounts of qualifying contributions for the office of prosecuting attorney for the city and county of Honolulu (from \$30,000 to \$25,000), and counties of Hawaii (from \$10,000 to \$5,000) and Kauai (from \$5,000 to \$3,000), and for the office of county council for the county of Maui (from \$5,000 to \$4,000).
- 5) HRS §11-429(b) by increasing matching fund payments from \$1 for each \$1 of qualifying contributions in excess of the minimum qualifying contribution amounts to \$2 for each \$1 of excess qualifying contributions.

For illustration, here is a comparison of the present partial public funding program in contrast to the enhanced partial public funding program set forth in this bill. For a qualified Senate candidate running opposed in District 1 in the 2026 election, the maximum amount of public funds available is \$7,269 in the primary election and another \$7,269 in the general election. In contrast, under this bill, this same candidate would receive \$10,903 in the primary election and another \$10,903 in the general election. For a qualified House candidate running opposed in District 1 in the 2026 election, the maximum amount of public funds available is \$3,562 in the primary election and another \$3,562 in the general election. In contrast, under this bill, this same candidate would receive \$5,343 in the primary election and \$5,343 in the general election.

For a qualified candidate running opposed for Kauai Mayor in the 2026 election, the maximum amount of public funds available is \$9,635 in the primary election and another \$9,635 in the general election. In contrast, under this bill, this same candidate would receive \$21,679 in the primary election and \$21,679 in the general election. For a qualified candidate running opposed for Maui Mayor in the 2026 election, the maximum amount of public funds available is \$23,002 in the primary election and another \$23,002 in the general election. In contrast, under this bill, this same candidate would receive \$51,754 in the primary election and \$51,754 in the general election. Lastly, for a qualified OHA candidate running opposed in the 2026 election,

Testimony of the Campaign Spending Commission
Thirty-Third Legislature, 2026
S.B. No. 2528, Relating to Partial Public Financing of Elections
February 4, 2026
Page 3

the maximum amount of public funds available is \$1,500 for the election period. In contrast, under this bill, this same candidate would receive \$15,496 in the primary election and \$15,496 in the general election.

Under the bill, assuming one qualified candidate for each elective office³ in the state, the maximum amount of public financing available would be \$2,339,652 in the 2026 primary election and another \$2,339,652 in the 2026 general election. As of June 30, 2025, the Hawaii Election Campaign Fund (“HECF”) balance was \$2,412,282.94. A general fund appropriation into the HECF is necessary if this bill is passed.

The Commission requests that this committee pass this bill.

³ The Commission is aware that not all elective offices appear on the ballot in an election year.



Committee on Judiciary Chair Karl Rhoads, Vice Chair Mike Gabbard
Friday, February 6, 9 am]
Room 016 and videoconference
SB2528 – Relating to Partial Public Financing of Elections

TESTIMONY

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

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Committee Members:

The League of Women Voters of Hawaii strongly supports SB2528, which would increase the expenditure limit and the amount of partial public campaign financing available for all elective offices; adjust the minimum amount of qualifying contributions certain candidates must receive to participate in the program; increase the matching fund payments for excess qualifying contributions; and appropriate funds for the program. We also offer a suggestion for your consideration.

The League of Women Voters of the US believes that 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.

Although a comprehensive public funding program, such as proposed by SB2313, would be the best way to meet these goals, the enhancement to Hawaii's Partial Public Funding Program (PPFP) proposed by SB2528 offers an important step to move toward those goals.

The amount available through the PPFP to publicly funded candidates has not changed in over two decades. Inflation in media prices, postage, and labor costs make the current amounts far less than competitive. The current amounts available to qualified candidates for public funding are far below the amounts spent by privately funded candidates who won election to the same office. Not surprisingly, the number of candidates using the PPFP has decreased every year since at least 2016. The increases proposed in SB2528 unquestionably offer an improvement on the status quo.

In addition, SB2528 cuts the number of qualifying contributions required to access public funding for several offices, making the program easier to access.

Finally, recognizing the increased costs for these changes, and for the intended increase in the number of qualifying candidates, SB2528 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 the anticipated payments, the program will stop making the payments, thus eroding both candidates' trust and willingness to use the program and citizens' appreciation of the PPFP.

Suggestion: Recognizing the CSC staff demands of adjusting to these changes and to the intended increase in the number of candidates initiating use of the PPFP, we suggest funding an added staff position to the CSC, which is already overloaded with important requirements for its small staff.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.



Protect Democracy

Move Forward

www.indivisiblehawaii.org
info@indivisiblehawaii.org

To: Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard,, and Members of the Committee

Hearing Date/Time: 02-06-26 9:00 AM

Place: Hawaii State Capitol, Conference Room 016

Re: Testimony in STRONG SUPPORT of SB2528

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

On behalf of Indivisible Hawai'i, thank you for this opportunity to testify 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.

SB2528 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 your support.

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.



FEBRUARY 6, 2026

SENATE BILL 2528

CURRENT REFERRAL: JDC

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 2528, 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; and increases the matching fund payments for excess qualifying contributions.

Imua Alliance is a Hawai'i-based organization dedicated to ending all forms of exploitation, including corporate abuse of our democracy. Government should work for the public interest, not special interests.

Hawai'i has had partial public campaign financing in place for decades, rooted in the 1978 Constitutional Convention's direction to establish a campaign fund for partial public financing. Few candidates participate, however, because the current partial funding model fails to provide sufficient resources to run competitive campaigns.

Hawai'i's electoral environment is comparatively uncompetitive. An average of about 90% of incumbents were reelected over the past decade and challengers face structural disadvantages in establishing fundraising networks and building name recognition. Strengthening the match and availability of public funds, as this bill proposes, is helps give: participating candidates a realistic chance to keep pace with private financing.

Public financing programs are also associated with broader and more diverse participation in democracy, particularly when they amplify small contributions. For example, analysis of New York City's matching system found it increased both the number and diversity of residents who participate as donors, shifting candidate incentives toward engaging everyday constituents instead of concentrating time on large donors. Importantly for Hawai'i, this policy conversation is not abstract:

Hawai‘i has confronted repeated corruption scandals in recent years, and a UHERO policy brief explicitly situates public campaign financing as one reform to reduce reliance on wealthy donors and corporate interests.

Buttressing public campaign financing also has indirect, but important benefits for Hawai‘i’s clean economy and climate action goals. Hawai‘i has some of the most ambitious climate targets in the nation—codifying 50% greenhouse gas reductions by 2030 and a carbon-neutral economy by 2045—but achieving these goals depends on responsive, accountable governance, and public trust in policy decisions that affect energy, transportation, land use, and economic incentives.

Research on public financing systems finds that when candidates rely less on large special-interest money and more on broad public support, they are encouraged to engage more directly with voters and prioritize community-wide concerns over narrow donor agendas, including long-term challenges like climate resilience and clean energy transitions.

Reinforced public financing can help ensure that elected leaders are empowered to advance policies—such as investments in renewable energy, equitable EV infrastructure, and climate adaptation funding—that reflect broad public support rather than industry influence. By making Hawai‘i’s democratic process more transparent and competitive, This bill supports governance that is better aligned with the state’s clean economy and climate commitments.

Strengthening partial public financing is a pragmatic democracy reform: it can make elections more competitive, expand the role of small donors, and reduce candidates’ dependency on narrow funding networks, while building on recent good government reforms to diminish the corrupting role of corporate money in local politics.

With aloha,

Kris Coffield

President, Imua Alliance

SB-2528

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 10:37:16 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

I support SB2528.

SB-2528

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 2:31:56 AM
Testimony for JDC on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Thank you for this opportunity to support SB2528 which would Increase the expenditure limit and the amount of partial public campaign financing available for all elective offices. This would take us closer to levelling the playing field for all candidates.

Younghée Overly, a member of Indivisible Hawaii

SB-2528

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 8:51:36 AM
Testimony for JDC on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

As a supporter of Indivisible Hawai'i I ask you to pass this bill.
Thank you.

SB-2528

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 10:05:05 AM
Testimony for JDC on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Judge Daniel Foley (ret.)	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Mr. Chairman & members of the Judiciary Committee,

As the former chair of the Commission to Improve Standards of Conduct (CISC), I submit this testimob in support of SB 2528 RELATING TO PARTIAL PUBLIC FINANCING OF ELECTIONS.

CISC found "that publicly funded elections can help counter the repercuSSION of Citizens United because public funding expands the reach of many small donors and can relieve candidates of the need to rely on the support of special interest groups or large donors." CISC Report December 1, 2022 at 32.

Judge Daniel Foley (ret.)

SB-2528

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 11:13:59 AM
Testimony for JDC on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Thank you for empowering people to participate in the government without having to be so dependent on deep pockets for financing their campaigns.

I believe also that this is a critical step towards rehabilitating the perception that big money has an inequitable influence on government.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

SB-2528

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 12:51:20 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Martha Nakajima	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill. Thank you. Martha Nakajima, Honolulu, member of Indivisible

SB-2528

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 6:05:35 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

My name is Elizabeth Weltin, and I am writing in strong support of SB2528.

Hawai‘i’s public financing system plays an important role in strengthening our democracy, but its current limits no longer reflect the real costs of running a viable campaign. SB2528 makes necessary updates by increasing expenditure limits, expanding partial public financing, adjusting qualifying contribution thresholds, and increasing matching funds. These changes will help ensure that the program remains accessible, competitive, and effective for candidates at every level.

By modernizing the public financing system, SB2528 helps reduce candidates’ reliance on large private donations and allows more people—especially community-based and working-class candidates—to run for office. This leads to elections that are more representative of Hawai‘i’s diverse communities and more accountable to everyday residents.

I appreciate that this measure is part of the Campaign Spending Commission package and has the stated support of both Senator Karl Rhoads and Representative David Tarnas. That leadership signals the seriousness and importance of maintaining a fair, transparent, and functional campaign finance system.

SB2528 strengthens public trust in our elections and supports a healthier democracy in Hawai‘i. I respectfully urge your support.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Elizabeth Weltin as an individual citizen and on behalf of Ka‘ū Voices-An Indivisible Chapter and member of the Indivisible Hawai‘i Statewide Network (IHSN)

SB-2528

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 7:38:29 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Nanea Lo, and I am submitting testimony in **strong support of SB2528**, part of the Campaign Spending Commission's legislative package to strengthen Hawai‘i's public campaign financing system.

SB2528 modernizes Hawai‘i's public financing program by increasing expenditure limits, expanding the amount of partial public financing available to candidates, adjusting qualifying contribution thresholds, and increasing matching funds for excess qualifying contributions. These updates are long overdue and necessary to ensure the program remains effective, relevant, and accessible in today's political and economic landscape.

I am a **Board Member of the Hawai‘i Workers Center** and a member of the **Honolulu Tenants Union, 350 Hawai‘i, Carbon Cashback Hawai‘i**, and the **Hawai‘i Tax Fairness Coalition**. Through this work, I regularly engage with working people, renters, and community members who feel excluded from political processes that are increasingly shaped by wealth and access to donors. SB2528 is critical because it helps level the playing field so candidates who are rooted in their communities—not corporate or special interests—can realistically run for office.

The cost of running a campaign has risen significantly, while existing public financing limits have not kept pace. Without updates like those proposed in SB2528, public financing risks becoming symbolic rather than functional, discouraging participation by candidates who lack personal wealth or affluent donor networks. Strengthening matching funds and expenditure limits ensures that public financing continues to be a meaningful pathway for grassroots candidates.

SB2528 also reinforces public trust in our democratic institutions. When candidates rely less on large private contributions and more on small donations amplified by public matching funds, elected officials are more accountable to the people they serve. This is especially important at a time when many residents feel disconnected from government decision-making.

I appreciate that both **Senator Karl Rhoads** and **Representative David Tarnas** have expressed support for this measure, and I strongly urge the Legislature to advance SB2528 as an investment in a more transparent, inclusive, and representative democracy for Hawai‘i.

me ke aloha ‘āina,

Nanea Lo, 96826

Hawai‘i Workers Center Board Member

Honolulu Tenants Union Member

350 Hawai‘i Member

Carbon Cashback Hawai‘i Member

Hawai‘i Tax Fairness Coalition Member

SB-2528

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 7:55:16 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Important to help level the playing field. Please pass,

Judith White, Psy.D.

Member, Hawaii Indiviisble

SB-2528

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 9:43:45 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Thank you

SB-2528

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 1:37:27 AM
Testimony for JDC on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Strong support

SB-2528

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 9:00:04 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ron Brown	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We should do all we can to make it hard for special interests to buy an election.

SB-2528

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 8:54:13 AM
Testimony for JDC on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

I support this bill as well as SB2313, but I greatly prefer SB2313.

SB-2528

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 9:24:35 AM
Testimony for JDC on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

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. House and Senate candidates who opt-in limit their fundraising abilities while not getting much out of the program, making it not worth much to participate. This is not the case for certain county council races like Maui or Kaua'i where at-large voting means that the caps — calculated based on the number of registered voters in the "district" in the prior election — are much higher.

Critically, this bill raises the expenditure limits across the board by 20%, allowing candidates who opt-in to receive public financing not at as significant of handicap against their opponents, allowing them to raise and spend the money required to win a race.

Increasing public financing can help restore public trust in our political system. When elected officials are less dependent on private contributions, constituents can have greater confidence that policy decisions are made in the public's best interest, rather than being swayed by major donors.

SB-2528

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 8:51:55 AM
Testimony for JDC on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kahi Pacarro	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This is very relevant to me as I am currently running for office. I would have loved to utilize public funding to remove burden on my constituents since I have decided not to take corporate donations. The level of support currently offered through the program is too low for a candidate to create a confident campaign. Raising the amount a candidate can access would make the program more viable.

In short, candidates want to use this avenue, but the program needs to be more competitive with the standard option. Or even better, make this the only option!

SB-2528

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 10:05:39 AM
Testimony for JDC on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lori Kizer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill and ask my elected officials to approve/pass. Mahalo.

SB-2528

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 9:35:46 AM
Testimony for JDC on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Paul Carter	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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. House and Senate candidates who opt-in limit their fundraising abilities while not getting much out of the program, making it not worth much to participate. This is not the case for certain county council races like Maui or Kaua'i where at-large voting means that the caps — calculated based on the number of registered voters in the "district" in the prior election — are much higher.

Critically, this bill raises the expenditure limits across the board by 20%, allowing candidates who opt-in to receive public financing not at as significant of handicap against their opponents, allowing them to raise and spend the money required to win a race.

Increasing public financing can help restore public trust in our political system. When elected officials are less dependent on private contributions, constituents can have greater confidence that policy decisions are made in the public's best interest, rather than being swayed by major donors.

Thank you for listening,

Dr. Paul Carter

201 River Rd., Waihe'e, HI

SB-2528

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 10:42:29 AM
Testimony for JDC on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 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

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 12:40:26 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Glenn Choy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this bill

SB-2528

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 1:37:03 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Erin Hagan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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. House and Senate candidates who opt-in limit their fundraising abilities while not getting much out of the program, making it not worth much to participate. This is not the case for certain county council races like Maui or Kaua'i where at-large voting means that the caps — calculated based on the number of registered voters in the "district" in the prior election — are much higher.

Critically, this bill raises the expenditure limits across the board by 20%, allowing candidates who opt-in to receive public financing not at as significant of handicap against their opponents, allowing them to raise and spend the money required to win a race.

Increasing public financing can help restore public trust in our political system. When elected officials are less dependent on private contributions, constituents can have greater confidence that policy decisions are made in the public's best interest, rather than being swayed by major donors.

Mahalo for your attention,

Erin Hagan

Waialua

SB-2528

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 2:09:46 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha, I am testifying in support of SB2528. I believe we should do what we can to support public financing of our elections. Mahalo for your consideration.

SB-2528

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 2:09:12 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

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. House and Senate candidates who opt-in limit their fundraising abilities while not getting much out of the program, making it not worth much to participate. This is not the case for certain county council races like Maui or Kaua'i where at-large voting means that the caps — calculated based on the number of registered voters in the "district" in the prior election — are much higher.

Critically, this bill raises the expenditure limits across the board by 20%, allowing candidates who opt-in to receive public financing not at as significant of handicap against their opponents, allowing them to raise and spend the money required to win a race.

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SB-2528

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 2:17:08 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

I support this bill! SB2528 Updates and expands the partial public financing of elections system.

Mahalo!

Georgia Hoopes, Kalaheo

SB-2528

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 3:09:41 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Please advance this good government initiative. - Dan Freund, Kapaa

SB-2528

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 2:36:55 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

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

I am testifying 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 testify,

Noelle Lindenmann, Kailua-Kona

SB-2528

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 3:50:26 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
David Ball	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this legislation

David Ball

Waialae-Kahala

SB-2528

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 3:57:59 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Personalized testimony is the most impactful way to influence lawmakers. Please use this as a guide to draft your own words

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.

Mahalo,

kimdonghyeon

SB-2528

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 4:14:55 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

SUPPORT

SB-2528

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 4:16:56 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Julie Ziemelis	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support SB2528 and urge you to pass this important measure.

By increasing expenditure caps and adjusting matching funds to a 2:1 ratio, this bill brings Hawaii's public campaign financing program into alignment with today's economic realities. These updates will make the program accessible to more candidates who want to participate.

Let's level the field, make it accessible, make it fair, and make it affordable to participate in elections.

Thank you!

SB-2528

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 4:17:14 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 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 consideration,

Marcia Kemble

Makiki

SB-2528

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 5:17:45 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jordan Kapono Nakamura	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, my name is Jordan Kapono Nakamura and I'm a Honolulu resident testifying in strong support of this bill which establishes a system of adequate public financing for state and county public offices. The current spending caps are so low that they translate to the advice that one cannot easily be advised to take public funding at all if a candidate reasonably hopes to win by spending an average recommended amount for a campaign that far exceeds the imposed spending limits that kick in once public funding is accepted. This bill helps repair an outdated system of public funding that is seeing lower and lower participation each year due to faulty design that deincentivizes the very candidates who need these funds the most from accepting them, as well as creating a fund that equates to a more meaningful public funding amount for working class candidates. Mahalo for your consideration and kokua for the people and future of Hawai'i.

SB-2528

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 5:40:03 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Eric Micha'el Leventhal	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha and greetings. As you know, this bill proposes to amend the Hawaii State Constitution to implement ranked-choice voting in all elections and eliminate primary elections. Ranked-choice voting, also known as instant-runoff voting, allows voters to rank candidates in order of preference, and if no candidate receives a majority of first-choice votes, the candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated, and their votes are redistributed based on the voters' next choices, continuing until a candidate secures over 50% of the vote.

This system aims to ensure elected officials have broader support, prevent "spoiler" effects where third-party candidates can inadvertently help elect a less preferred candidate, and potentially increase voter turnout and diversity in candidate pools. By eliminating primary elections, which currently have low voter participation and incur significant costs, Hawaii would streamline its election process and focus resources on a single, more inclusive general election.

Mahalo nui loa for supporting this initiative to strengthen the democratic process!

SB-2528

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 6:44:34 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

support

SB-2528

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 8:11:10 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Strongly support.

SB-2528

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 8:20:32 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jim Klyman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Given the inflation over the past few decades, the dollar does not go as far as it used to. Increasing the funding limits proposed by this bill seem rather modest for the support they would provide to a candidate. Then again, a little is better than nothing.

SB-2528

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 9:02:10 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kencho Gurung	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.

SB-2528

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 10:13:04 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Citizens United allowed wealthy interests to make campaign contributions anonymously. Hawaii began a program to partially fund campaigns publically. This measure will improve that program.

Please support SB2528.

Mahalo,

Kathy Shimata

SB-2528

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 10:13:32 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
LorrieAnn Santos	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha 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.

Private fundraising in the US elections corrupts the incentives of elected officials, advantages entrenched elites, and harms electoral competition. Public funding of elections would level the electoral playing field and better align the interests of elected officials and citizens.

The best empirical evidence suggests that public-funding programs promote candidate entry and electoral competition.

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

'O wau iho no,

Lorrie Ann Santos, Kane'ohe, O'ahu

SB-2528

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 11:27:33 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

As a Hawaii voter and member of Indivisible Hawaii, I support this bill only if SB2313 does not move forward. I believe that full public financing of elections is the only way to eliminate the influence of special interests on the legislative process. As a lesser alternative, SB2528 aims to increase public funds that are available to candidates. 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. This bill is a significant partial step towards enabling more candidates to utilize this program and reducing the influence of big money in our elections.

SB-2528

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 6:28:27 AM
Testimony for JDC on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Judith Mills-Wong	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

The League of Women Voters believes that 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. Increasing the levels and limits of Partial Public financing to account for inflation works toward that goal.

SB-2528

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 8:45:58 AM
Testimony for JDC on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jonathan Simonds	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I am writing in 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.

Thanks!

Jonathan, Hilo

LATE

SB-2528

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 10:28:18 AM
Testimony for JDC on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Greg Crawford	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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. House and Senate candidates who opt-in limit their fundraising abilities while not getting much out of the program, making it not worth much to participate. This is not the case for certain county council races like Maui or Kaua'i where at-large voting means that the caps — calculated based on the number of registered voters in the "district" in the prior election — are much higher.

Critically, this bill raises the expenditure limits across the board by 20%, allowing candidates who opt-in to receive public financing not as significant of handicap against their opponents, allowing them to raise and spend the money required to win a race.

Increasing public financing can help restore public trust in our political system. When elected officials are less dependent on private contributions, constituents can have greater confidence that policy decisions are made in the public's best interest, rather than being swayed by major donors.