



STATE OF HAWAII
CAMPAIGN SPENDING COMMISSION

235 SOUTH BERETANIA STREET, ROOM 300
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

February 3, 2026

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

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

The Honorable Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Chair
Senate Committee on Labor and Technology

The Honorable Senator Rachele Lamosao, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Labor and Technology

Members of the Senate Committees on Judiciary and Labor and Technology

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

SUBJECT: **Testimony on S.B. No. 2533, Relating to the Campaign Spending Commission.**
Senate Committees on Judiciary and Labor and Technology
Thursday, February 5, 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 Commission oversees 700+ committees that have anywhere from 1-3 officers who contact the Commission for assistance. Over the years, the number of candidate committees has almost doubled from 300 to over 550 and the number of noncandidate committees has grown from 200 to over 300. These numbers continue to increase rather than decrease with each election period. Of significance is that with each election, there are hundreds of new candidates and noncandidate committees that do not understand how to comply with the various requirements of campaign finance law (e.g., registering; filing disclosure reports, fundraiser notices, electioneering communications, etc.; having disclaimers on advertising; reporting contributions, expenditures, loans, durable assets, etc.; terminating registration) thereby generating hundreds of staff hours assisting committees over the phone, in-person, and by email

¹ The companion bill is H.B. No. 2055.

as well as a number of enforcement actions for violations. Depending on whether it is an election year (which is in every even-numbered year), these 700+ committees file anywhere from 2-8 mandatory reports with the Commission and the number of reports will increase in specific situations (i.e., public funding, late contributions/ expenditures).

As a result of the 12 campaign finance bills that were enacted from the 2023 legislative session, the volume and scale of Commission staff duties have significantly increased. In the last fiscal year, close to 200 enforcement actions were initiated by the Commission. However, despite the increased duties and responsibilities, current Commission staff salaries remain below those of comparable offices performing similar duties across the state such as Hawaii State Ethics Commission, Office of the Auditor, Office of the Ombudsman, and Legislative Reference Bureau. Without competitive compensation, the Commission risks losing experienced personnel to better-paying agencies which would undermine the continuity and effectiveness of our services.

Additional funding would bring existing staff salaries in line with similar government offices who have compliance and enforcement duties. This adjustment is essential not only to recognize the value of our current staff but also to ensure equity, stability, and sustained excellence as we expand our program. The Commissioners are aware of this disparity because staff salaries are compared with similar government offices during performance evaluations; however, due to the Commission's limited budget, there has not been an opportunity to fix compensation commensurate with performance. As such, this request is to address this disparity on a more permanent basis.

The Commission respectfully requests that this committee pass this measure.



LATE

**House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs
Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action (HAPA) Supports: SB2533
Wednesday February 3rd, at 9 am; Conference Room 16**

Dear Chair Rhoads, Chair Elefante, and Members of the Committee,

Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action (HAPA) submits testimony in strong support of SB2533.

We appreciate the important work of the Campaign Spending Commission and the key role it plays in protecting the integrity of our elections. As one of the State's main independent watchdogs, the Commission helps ensure transparency, accountability, and compliance with campaign finance laws that safeguard our democracy.

Public trust in government relies on strong, independent oversight. The Campaign Spending Commission, like the State Ethics Commission, the Auditor, the Office of the Ombudsman, and the Legislative Reference Bureau, has important compliance and enforcement duties that require expertise, independence, and professionalism. However, the Commission's compensation has not kept up with other similar agencies.

SB2533 recognizes that effective oversight depends on recruiting and keeping experienced, highly qualified staff. Making the Commission's pay equal to that of similar agencies is not just fair; it is necessary for consistent, credible, and effective enforcement of campaign finance laws.

This bill invests in the integrity of Hawai'i's democracy. By strengthening the Campaign Spending Commission, SB2533 helps keep our elections transparent, accountable, and deserving of public trust.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anne Frederick', is positioned above the printed name.

Anne Frederick
Executive Director

SB-2533

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 1:48:59 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michelle R Stefanik	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill! No salary increases until the cost of living in Hawaii is drastically reduced, and the number of people moving out of Hawaii is less than the number moving to Hawaii. The people of Hawaii need a break! This is not something that should be in the budget right now. The current salary is sufficient and more than what most people in Hawaii make. Please vote NO.