



# HAWAI'I STATE ETHICS COMMISSION

*Komikina Ho'opono Kulekele o Hawai'i Moku'āina*

Committee:	Senate Committee on Judiciary
Bill Number:	SB 2661
Hearing Date/Time:	February 13, 2026, 9:00 a.m.
Regarding:	Testimony in Support with a <b>Proposed Amendment</b>

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice-Chair Gabbard, and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 2661, which strengthens public trust in government by establishing a uniform nepotism standard across all branches of state government while preserving limited, transparent flexibility for rare and justifiable circumstances.

This measure promotes fairness and consistency by applying nepotism restrictions to the Legislature and Judiciary—entities already generally subject to the State Ethics Code. A consistent statewide standard helps ensure that employment decisions are based on merit rather than personal relationships and reinforces public confidence in government processes. The bill also appropriately includes a narrowly tailored good-cause exception for situations involving a demonstrated lack of qualified applicants. This provision allows agencies to meet legitimate operational needs without undermining the underlying ethical safeguards, while ensuring that any exception is subject to public accountability.

**Proposed Amendment.** The Commission notes, however, that for this bill to achieve its intended goal, it would need to address both state employees and “legislators.” The exact language can be found in and copied from SB 2244.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony and for your consideration of this measure.

Very truly yours,

/S/ Robert D. Harris  
Robert D. Harris  
Executive Director and General Counsel

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 2/9/2026 8:11:48 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/13/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lynn Murakami Akatsuka	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support SB 2661 passage this legislative session.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on SB 2661.

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 12:24:38 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/13/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Debra Bringman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

## Comments:

I strongly support SB2661 because it closes a longstanding loophole in Hawai'i's ethics laws by finally applying anti-nepotism rules to the Legislative and Judicial branches. Current law prohibits most state employees from hiring, supervising, or awarding contracts to their relatives, but these safeguards do not extend to employees of the Legislature or Judiciary. SB2661 corrects this inconsistency and ensures that every branch of government is held to the same ethical standards, strengthening transparency, fairness, and public trust in state operations.

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 11:36:08 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/13/2026 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Please accept this as testimony in strong support of this measure. All state employees, including legislative and judicial employees, should be subject to the same ethical standards prohibiting nepotism that are applicable to other state employees. This also helps restore the public's trust in government.

Lynne Matusow

**LATE**

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 2/13/2026 9:00:20 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/13/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Beppie Shapiro	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support SB2661. Other branches of government have had this reasonable restriction for years, and it looks bad to have our Legislature exempt itself. With all the attention to corruption in the last few years, SB2661 provides an opportunity to show that our legislators take ethical issues seriously.

Thank you for hearing this bill, and for the opportunity to testify to me support.