
HOUSE RESOLUTION

RE-ESTABLISHING A COMMISSION TO IMPROVE STANDARDS OF CONDUCT TO EXAMINE THE STRUCTURAL CONDITIONS OF THE HAWAII STATE LEGISLATURE THAT MAY HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THE FEDERAL CONVICTION OF A FORMER REPRESENTATIVE IN CONNECTION WITH A BRIBERY SCANDAL, AND TO RECOMMEND REFORMS.

1 WHEREAS, in 2022, a former member of the Hawaii State House
2 of Representatives pled guilty to one count of honest services
3 wire fraud in connection with a bribery scandal and admitted to
4 accepting payments in exchange for the exercise of the
5 legislator's official legislative duties; and

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7 WHEREAS, this conviction represented a profound breach of
8 public trust and a serious stain on the integrity of the Hawaii
9 State Legislature; and

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11 WHEREAS, a thorough reckoning with these events demands not
12 only accountability for the individual legislator's conduct, but
13 also an honest examination of the structural and institutional
14 conditions that created the environment in which this conduct
15 could occur; and

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17 WHEREAS, the concentrated power held by individual
18 legislators over the fate of legislation, including the
19 unilateral ability to advance or prevent the advancement of
20 bills without deliberation, debate, or a recorded vote, creates
21 conditions of opacity that are inherently susceptible to
22 corruption; and

23
24 WHEREAS, the current rules of the House of Representatives
25 vest extraordinary and largely unreviewable authority in a small
26 number of legislative leaders, including committee chairs, who
27 have the power to hold bills without conducting a hearing, and
28 leaders who have the power to determine which bills may advance
29 to the full House of Representatives for floor votes; and



1 WHEREAS, there is no mandatory disclosure requirement for
2 decisions to advance or obstruct legislation; and

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4 WHEREAS, these structural features reduce legislative
5 transparency, diminish the accountability of individual
6 lawmakers to their constituents, and create leverage that can be
7 exploited for private gain; and

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9 WHEREAS, the Commission to Improve Standards of Conduct,
10 popularly referred to as the Foley Commission, was previously
11 established to examine ethical standards and governance
12 practices in the Hawaii State Legislature; and

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14 WHEREAS, in December 2022, the Commission to Improve
15 Standards of Conduct issued its final report, which included
16 substantive recommendations for reform; and

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18 WHEREAS, the passage of time, the emergence of new evidence
19 of institutional failures, and the specific circumstances
20 surrounding the 2022 conviction of a former member of the House
21 of Representatives provide compelling justification for
22 restoring the Commission to Improve Standards of Conduct and
23 providing the Commission with an updated and expanded mandate;
24 and

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26 WHEREAS, restoring the Commission to Improve Standards of
27 Conduct and directing the Commission to examine the relationship
28 between concentrated legislative power and the risk of
29 corruption would demonstrate the Legislature's commitment to
30 earning back the trust of the people of Hawaii; and

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32 WHEREAS, the people of Hawaii deserve a Legislature in
33 which every member's vote carries equal weight, the fate of
34 legislation is determined by transparent deliberation rather
35 than by the private decisions of a few, and no single
36 legislator's ability to advance or kill a bill constitutes a
37 commodity that can be bought or sold; now, therefore,

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39 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
40 Thirty-third Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session



1 of 2026, that the Commission to Improve Standards of Conduct is
2 hereby re-established; and

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4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the purposes and duties of the
5 re-established Commission to Improve Standards of Conduct shall
6 be to:

- 7
8 (1) Examine the specific institutional, structural, and
9 cultural conditions within the Hawaii State
10 Legislature that preceded, and may have contributed
11 to, the circumstances underlying the 2022 conviction
12 of a former member of the House of Representatives;
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14 (2) Review existing laws, rules, customs, and practices
15 that concentrate authority over the advancement or
16 defeat of legislation in the hands of individual
17 legislators or small groups of leaders, including
18 rules governing committee and chair assignments,
19 committee referrals, hearing schedules, floor
20 calendars, and the exercise of chair discretion;
21
22 (3) Assess whether the Hawaii State Legislature provides
23 sufficient transparency and accountability to
24 constituents, including the extent to which
25 consequential legislative decisions are made in public
26 rather than in private; and
27
28 (4) Evaluate comparative legislative reform models from
29 other states and jurisdictions that have restructured
30 rules to distribute power more equitably among members
31 and increase accountability to voters; and
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33 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Speaker of the House of
34 Representatives shall invite individuals to serve on the
35 Commission to Improve Standards of Conduct; provided that
36 Commission members shall be individuals who:

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38 (1) Have due regard for independence;
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40 (2) Have expertise in legislative ethics and governance;
41 and



H.R. NO. 200

1 (3) Are representative of diverse perspectives from within
2 and outside the Legislature, including members of the
3 public, legal scholars, and civil society
4 organizations; and
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6 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Speaker of the House of
7 Representatives shall designate one member of the Commission to
8 serve as chairperson; and
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10 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Commission to Improve
11 Standards of Conduct is requested to conduct its work in public
12 to the greatest extent practicable, hold hearings that are
13 accessible to all residents of the State, and produce a record
14 that is made available to the public in full; and
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16 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Commission to Improve
17 Standards of Conduct is requested to submit a report of its
18 findings and recommendations, including any proposed
19 legislation, to the Legislature no later than sixty days prior
20 to the convening of the Regular Session of 2027; and
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22 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
23 Resolution be transmitted to the Governor and President of the
24 Senate.
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OFFERED BY:



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