

STAND. COM. REP. NO. 2440

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 19 2026

RE: S.B. No. 2528
S.D. 1

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President of the Senate
Thirty-Third State Legislature
Regular Session of 2026
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Judiciary, to which was referred S.B. No. 2528 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO PARTIAL PUBLIC FINANCING OF ELECTIONS,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to:

- (1) Increase the expenditure limit and the amount of partial public campaign financing available for all elective offices;
- (2) Adjust the minimum amount of qualifying contributions certain candidates must receive to participate in the Partial Public Financing Program;
- (3) Increase the matching fund payments for excess qualifying contributions; and
- (4) Appropriate funds for the Program.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Campaign Spending Commission, League of Women Voters of Hawaii, Indivisible Hawai'i, Imua Alliance, HULI PAC, Our Hawaii, and fifty-two individuals.



Your Committee finds that public financing levels the playing field for candidates without establishment backing and allows campaigns to focus on reaching voters instead of donors. Although the State has had a Partial Public Financing Program in place for decades, few candidates currently participate because the existing amount available through the Partial Public Funding Program has not been increased in over two decades and fails to provide sufficient resources to run competitive campaigns. This measure will make elections more competitive, expand the role of small donors, reduce candidates' dependency on narrow funding networks, and diminish the influence of corporate money in local politics.

Your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Increasing the maximum amount of public funds available in each election to:
 - (A) Twenty percent of the expenditure limit for a candidate for the office of Governor, Lieutenant Governor, or Mayor of the City and County of Honolulu or County of Hawaii; and
 - (B) Twenty-five percent of the expenditure limit for a candidate for the office of state senator, state representative, Mayor of the County of Kauai or the County of Maui, county council member, or prosecuting attorney;
- (2) Increasing matching fund payments to \$4 for each \$1 of excess qualifying contributions;
- (3) Inserting a blank appropriation amount;
- (4) Amending section 1 to reflect its amended purpose;
- (5) Inserting an effective date of March 22, 2075, to encourage further discussion; and
- (6) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity and consistency.

Your Committee notes that this measure, as amended, contains an unspecified appropriation amount. Should your Committee on



Ways and Means choose to deliberate on this measure, your Committee respectfully requests that it consider inserting an amount of \$7,200,000 to increase the amount of funds available in the Partial Public Financing Program.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Judiciary that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of S.B. No. 2528, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 2528, S.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Ways and Means.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Judiciary,



KARL RHOADS, Chair

The Senate
Thirty-Third Legislature
State of Hawai'i

Record of Votes
Committee on Judiciary
JDC

Bill / Resolution No.:*	Committee Referral:	Date:		
SB 2528	JDC, WAM	2/12/26		
<input type="checkbox"/> The Committee is reconsidering its previous decision on this measure. If so, then the previous decision was to: _____				
The Recommendation is:				
<input type="checkbox"/> Pass, unamended 2312	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pass, with amendments 2311	<input type="checkbox"/> Hold 2310		
<input type="checkbox"/> Recommit 2313				
Members	Aye	Aye (WR)	Nay	Excused
RHOADS, Karl (C)	✓			
GABBARD, Mike (VC)	✓			
CHANG, Stanley				✓ ✓
SAN BUENAVENTURA, Joy A.				✓ ✓
AWA, Brenton	✓			
TOTAL	3	—	—	2
Recommendation:				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adopted <input type="checkbox"/> Not Adopted				
Chair's or Designee's Signature:				
				
Distribution:				
Original	Yellow	Pink		
File with Committee Report	Committee	Drafting Agency		

*Only one measure per Record of Votes