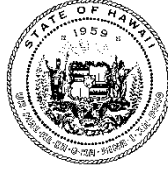


KRISTIN E. IZUMI-NITAO
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



PHONE: (808) 586-0285
FAX: (808) 586-0288
WWW.HAWAII.GOV/CAMPAIGN

STATE OF HAWAII
CAMPAIGN SPENDING COMMISSION

235 SOUTH BERETANIA STREET, ROOM 300
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

March 17, 2026

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

The Honorable Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary

Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary

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

SUBJECT: **Testimony on H.B. No. 1519, H.D.1, Relating to Campaign Contributions.**
Senate Committee on Judiciary
Friday, March 20, 2026, at 10:15 a.m.
Conference Room 016 & Videoconference

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill. The Campaign Spending Commission (“Commission”) supports this bill with comments which we believe will prevent the corruption, or at least the appearance of corruption, of elected officials as well as represents a crucial step towards transparency and accountability in government spending. In this respect, this bill will help improve public confidence in government and the electoral process.

This bill amends Hawaii Revised Statutes (“HRS”) §11-355 by extending the ban on contributions from state and county contractors to the compensated officers of the state contractors and their immediate family members during the duration of the contract exceeding the small purchase threshold under the Hawaii Public Procurement Code. Additionally, the ban is limited to the branch of government awarding or administering the contract. The Commission believes that it is common for contractors to get around the ban by having those persons connected to the contractor make political contributions. A few of these situations also involved false name contributions where the contributors were reimbursed for their contributions. The Commission is concerned that removing officers and immediate family members of county contractors and limiting the ban to the same branch of government undermines the intent of this bill and will not capture all possibilities of corruption. The Commission recommends removing the same branch of government restriction and including officers and the immediate family members of county contractors to the ban.

The bill also extends the ban to HRS Chapter 42F grantees of the state and the compensated officers of the grantee and their immediate family members during the duration of the grant exceeding \$250,000. Grantees, similar to contractors, receive state and local funds and thus should be treated similarly in the context of political contributions. The Commission notes a review of the Hawaii 2026 Final Operating and Capital Grant-In-Aid indicates many grants that would not be captured by this higher threshold limit including more than 10 capital improvement projects that have a greater potential for corruption. The Commission recommends lowering the threshold for grants to \$100,000 or more.

The Commission notes that this bill limits the scope of individuals prohibited from making contributions for the duration of the contract or grant to “compensated” officers. While the Commission supports narrowing the scope of individuals prohibited from making contributions, it is concerned that uncompensated officers have the ability to influence legislation to benefit the company and/or organization and recommends removing “compensated” from the bill.

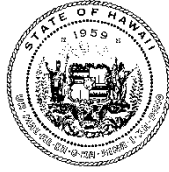
The bill requires state contractors or grantees to provide to the contracting, expending, or purchasing agency a list of the names of any officers and immediate family members of the state contractor or grantee within thirty calendar days of executing a state contract or grant and within thirty calendar days of changes to officers and immediate family members. The bill also defines “officer” to mean an individual who is listed as an officer on the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs Business Registration database. However, the Commission prefers the definition in H.B. 2052 because we believe this definition more accurately describes these individuals for purposes of campaign finance violations and request the definition be amended accordingly.

The Commission notes the addition of penalties for failing to comply with the disclosure requirements of this bill and believes it will encourage compliance. Further, the bill provides that the state office shall make the reported information available electronically to the Commission which shall then make the information available to candidate and noncandidate committees on a password-protected section on the Commission’s website. The Commission requests an appropriation to build a password-protected section in its electronic filing system as well as to account for training, and administrative support for the Commission to implement this part. In Standing Committee Report No. 1008, the House Finance Committee asked the Commission to consider notifying campaigns of updates to the list of individuals prohibited from making contributions or whether the system could automatically notify filers when a donor matches an individual on the list of individuals prohibited from making contributions. The Commission is in discussions with the vendor, modernizing its electronic filing system to determine if these options are possible and the costs associated with these enhancements. The Commission hopes to have an estimate from its vendor for these costs soon.

With respect to any constitutional concerns regarding the scope of this bill, the Commission defers to the Department of the Attorney General but believes that there are other

jurisdictions including Connecticut that have extended the campaign contributions ban to state contractors' principals and family members and withstood challenge on First Amendment grounds.

The Commission requests that this Committee pass this bill with amendments.



STATE OF HAWAI'I | KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I
STATE PROCUREMENT OFFICE
P.O. Box 119
Honolulu, Hawaii 96810-0119
Tel: (808) 586-0554
email: state_procurement_office@hawaii.gov
<http://spo.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY
OF
BONNIE KAHAKUI, ADMINISTRATOR
STATE PROCUREMENT OFFICE

TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE
ON
JUDICIARY
MARCH 20, 2026, 10:15 AM

HOUSE BILL 1519, HD1
RELATING TO CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on House Bill 1519, HD1. The State Procurement Office (SPO) appreciates that the House Draft 1 of this bill incorporates the recommendations to clarify the timing of contractor disclosures following contract execution, establish the use of a standardized and certified disclosure form, require updates upon changes during the contract term, and expressly confirm that purchasing agencies act solely as a conduit for transmitting information without responsibility to verify its accuracy. The SPO also appreciates the inclusion of clarifying language regarding definitions and implementation parameters to support consistent administration under Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) Chapters 103D and 103F.

The SPO recommends the following revisions for clarity:

- **SECTION 2, Page 3, lines 11-13, to read:**

"The campaign spending commission shall prescribe a standard form and require the contractor to certify the accuracy of the information on [of] the form."

- **SECTION 2, Page 4, lines 8-11, to read:**

"A contracting state agency may [~~withhold execution~~] delay the notice to proceed, suspend performance, or pursue remedies available under the contract or applicable law until the required information is submitted. "

- **SECTION 3, Page 5, lines 3-5, to read:**

"The campaign spending commission shall prescribe a standard form and require the recipient to certify the accuracy of the information on [of] the form."

- **SECTION 4, Page 6, lines 16-18, to read:**

"The campaign spending commission shall prescribe a standard form and require the contractor to certify the accuracy of the information on [of] the form."

- **SECTION 5, Page 8, lines 6-9, to read:**

"The campaign spending commission shall prescribe a standard form and require the contractor or provider to certify the accuracy of the information on [of] the form. "

- **SECTION 5, Page 9, lines 5-8, to read:**

"A purchasing agency may [withhold execution] delay the notice to proceed, suspend performance, or pursue remedies available under the contract or applicable procurement law until the required information is submitted."

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this measure.



Protect Democracy

Move Forward

www.indivisiblehawaii.org

info@indivisiblehawaii.org

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

Hearing Date/Time: 03-20-26 10:15 PM

Place: Hawaii State Capitol, Conference Room

Re: Testimony in SUPPORT of HB1519 HD1016

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

On behalf of Indivisible Hawai'i, I am submitting testimony in support of HB1519 HD1.

This bill closes a loophole that should have long been closed. Currently, a company can hold a state contract and although the company itself can't make campaign contributions, the CEO and his or her family members can.

HB1519 HD1 addresses this by extending those contribution restrictions to officers and their immediate family members for the life of the contract or grant, and by requiring public disclosure of who those people are. When public money is involved, the public deserves to know what's going on.

We ask that the amendments recommended by the Campaign Spending Commission be inserted into this bill. Limiting the contribution ban only to the same branch of government awarding or administering the contract weakens the bill and fails to reflect how corruption happens. CSC has warned that contractors can get around the bans by having connected individuals make contributions on their behalf, including situations involving reimbursed or false-name contributions. Removing the same-branch restriction and including officers and their immediate family members help ensure the law eliminates these workarounds rather than allowing them.

I urge the committee to pass HB1519 HD1 with recommended amendments.

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.



**Committee on Government Operations
Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action (HAPA) Supports HB1519 HD1
Tuesday, March 17, 2026, at 3:05 PM | Conference Room 225 & Videoconference**

Aloha Chair McKelvey, Vice Chair Gabbard, and members of the Committee,

HAPA supports HB1519, HD1, with some suggested amendment to make the bill stronger.

At its core, this bill is about protecting public trust. When large amounts of public money are awarded through government contracts and grants, the public must have confidence that those decisions are made based on merit, not political relationships or financial influence.

Pay-to-play restrictions exist for a reason. When the same individuals or entities receiving significant public funds are also contributing to the campaigns of the officials responsible for those decisions, it raises understandable concerns about fairness and integrity in government.

However, the current version of the bill limits the contribution ban only to the same branch of government awarding or administering the contract and removes county contractors and officers from coverage. The Campaign Spending Commission has warned that narrowing the bill in this way undermines its intent and leaves open clear opportunities for circumvention.

In practice, influence does not operate neatly within the boundaries of a single branch of government. Contractors and grantees interact with officials across the system, and limiting the ban this way weakens the safeguard the bill is intended to create.

The Commission has also noted that contribution bans can be easily avoided when donations are routed through connected individuals such as officers or immediate family members. If those relationships are not covered, the restriction becomes far less meaningful.

For these reasons, we strongly recommend removing the same-branch limitation and restoring coverage for county contractors, their officers, and immediate family members. Doing so ensures the bill actually achieves its purpose, preventing the perception or reality of pay-to-play in the use of public funds.

Public dollars should never come with political strings attached. Strengthening this bill will help ensure that Hawai'i's contracting and grantmaking decisions remain grounded in the public interest.

Thank you for your consideration,

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

Anne Frederick, Executive Director
Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action



Committee on Judiciary Chair Karl Rhoads, Vice Chair Mike Gabbard
Friday, March 20, 10:15 am]
Room 016 and videoconference
HB1519 HD1 – RELATING TO CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS

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 HB1519 HD1**, which prohibits compensated officers of state contractors or grantees with contracts or grants exceeding the small purchase thresholds established under the Hawaii Public Procurement Code, and their immediate family members, as defined in this bill, from making or soliciting certain campaign contributions for the duration of the contract; requires disclosure of the names of compensated officers and their immediate family members of state contractors and grantees within 30 days of contract/grant execution; requires the Campaign Spending Commission (CSC) to prescribe a standard disclosure form and requires the contractor or grantee to certify the accuracy of the form; requires contractors and grantees to update disclosures within thirty calendar days of any change in the officers or immediate family members; requires the contracting or expending state agency to provide the disclosures to the CSC within thirty calendar days of contract execution, while clarifying that the agency's role is limited to receiving and transmitting the information; establishes penalties for failure of a contractor or grantee to submit the information required; makes an appropriation to the State Procurement Office for adaptations required by this bill; and requires unlawful contributions to be returned to the contributor or escheat to the Hawaii Election Campaign Fund.

To save time for readers already familiar with the analysis of Hawaii Campaign Spending Commission (CSC) data published in the New York Times (NYT) in 2024*, I refer readers to the NYT article (link on p.2 below) for more detailed data. The article's sobering conclusion cries out for the changes described in HB1519. Our support is based on the following.

- 1)The same considerations of pay-to-play apply to grantees as to contractors.
- 2) Between 2006 - the year the pay-to-play law (HRS 11-355) was implemented – and 2024, people tied to government contractors gave state and local Hawaii politicians more than \$24 million: **about one-fifth of all donations** made. Most often, these

donations were given to politicians with the most power to determine contract awards. HRS 11-355 is undermined by contributions from officers, employees, and their families. HB1519 HD1 would restore the intent of HRS 11-355.

4) Returning illegal contributions to the contributor within 30 days, or, failing that, escheating the money to the appropriate state agency, is standard practice across campaign finance regulations. The money added to HECF funds will help offset CSC expenses of monitoring contributions by contractor officers and their immediate families.

4) One weakness in implementation of HRS 11-355 is that CSC staff often don't know the identities of a contractor's officers and their immediate families. HB1519 HD1 cures this problem.

We fully support the changes made in HD1.

LWVHI is grateful to those who drafted, introduced and amended this important bill, and to those who will carry it forward.

*Blaze Lovell, Eric Sagara & Irene Casado Sanchez. *Inside the Late-Night Parties Where Hawaii Politicians Raked In Money*. New York Times; January 17, 2024.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/17/us/hawaii-contractors-campaign-donations.html?searchResultPosition=7>

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.



MARCH 20, 2026

HOUSE BILL 1519 HD1

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: COMMENTS WITH AMENDMENTS

Imua Alliance provides the following comments with suggested amendments for HB 1519 HD1, relating to campaign contributions, which requires disclosure of the names of compensated officers, and their immediate family members, of state contractors with contracts exceeding the small purchase threshold established under the Hawai'i Public Procurement Code and grantees with grants exceeding \$250,000; prohibits the compensated officers of state contractors, and their immediate family members, from making, promising, or soliciting certain campaign contributions for the duration of the contract exceeding the small purchase threshold; prohibits state grantees, including compensated officers and their immediate family members, from making, promising, or soliciting certain contributions for the duration of the grant exceeding \$250,000; and requires unlawful contributions to be returned to the contributor or escheat to the Hawai'i Election Campaign Fund.

Imua Alliance is a Hawai'i-based organization dedicated to ending all forms of exploitation, including corporate interference in our democracy. Please amend Section 6 of this measure to ensure that it applies to all elected officials, at least at the state level, and does not exempt state legislators. The HD1 would only apply to "the candidate committee of a candidate who is a member of, or seeking election to, the same branch of the state government that exercises authority over the awarding or administration of that specific contract," i.e. the executive branch, since the executive is responsible for the administration of public contracts.

This undermines the purpose of the proposal and would allow contractor manipulation of our campaign system to continue, with contractors still being allowed to use contributions to legislators who fund their contracts as a form of political leverage. Again, please change this provision in Section 6 and prevent contractor corruption for all state officials, which is especially important considering ongoing investigations into campaign violations in our state.

Our democracy belongs to we, the people.

At a time when our nation is experiencing extreme political turmoil and basic civil liberties are under assault, we must take steps in Hawai'i to safeguard democratic participation. In the 2024 primary election, for example, our state experienced its lowest turnout in 65 years, with only 32.1 percent of registered voters filling out a ballot. This is, in part, a reflection of the public's deep cynicism with our electoral processes.

Hawai'i continues to be embroiled in public corruption scandals, following the bribery allegations that were levied against former Senate Majority Leader Kalani English and former State Representative Ty Cullen. Legal clouds surrounding a \$35,000 alleged bribery scandal are swirling around the legislature, to the detriment of public confidence, with the Hawai'i Attorney General opening an investigation into the potential offenses and the State House adopting a measure to begin this session calling for a thorough and hasty enquiry into the matter.

Other public officials, such as employees at local permitting offices, have also recently been ensnared in bribery scandals, in some cases with connections to Milton Choy, the lobbyist who was responsible for coordinating the bribery scheme that Sen. English and Rep. Cullen became a part of. These cases show that we have a moral crisis in our public institutions and must do all we can to restore integrity to government.

In 2024, a Civil Beat/New York Times investigation unveiled just how deeply pay-to-play culture is ingrained in local politics. After reviewing hundreds of thousands of campaign contributions and more than 70,000 government contracts, **reporters found that nearly \$1 out of every \$5 donated to politicians came from people tied to companies doing business with state and local governments.**

As Civil Beat reported at the time, when some companies were on the cusp of winning major government contracts, people connected to them donated large amounts of campaign funds to influential public officials who were in positions to sway the awards.

Perhaps the most telling part of the report is encapsulated in the following excerpt from the special investigation: *Even though those contributors generally didn't acknowledge their connections to the companies, they were not violating Hawai'i law, which only prohibits donations directly from the firms. "Everyone gets very upset with pay-to-play, but it's legal," said Kristin Izumi-Nitao, Executive Director of the Hawai'i Campaign Spending Commission.*

It might be legal today, but it shouldn't be any longer if we care about our future. Government should work for the public interest, not special interests. It is in that spirit that we support this bill to restore integrity to our state's electoral and governmental processes.

With aloha,

Kris Coffield

President, Imua Alliance

HB-1519-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 7:26:23 AM

Testimony for JDC on 3/20/2026 10:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

Dear Mr. Chairman and members of the Judiciary Committee,

As former chair of the Commission to Improve Standards of Conduct (CISC), I submit this testimony in support of HB 1519, HD1, RELATING TO CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS.

The CISC proposed a similar bill to the 2023 Session of the Legislature. CISC December 1, 2022 Report at 33. This bill would close a large loophole that allows a privileged few receiving lucrative contracts from the government from making contributions to candidates for government office. This loophole is referred to as "pay to play." It undermines the public's confidence and trust in government operations. It is long overdue to close this loophole.

Respectfully submitted,

Judge Daniel Foley (ret.)

HB-1519-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 7:27:02 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/20/2026 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ted Bohlen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUPPORT!

HB-1519-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 8:14:37 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/20/2026 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marcia Kemble	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Greetings Committee Members,

I am in strong support of HB1519, which would prevent state and county contractors, grantees, and their families from making political contributions while their contracts or grants are active. It will close a serious loophole and ensure that public funds are used for their intended purposes, not to sway political campaigns or decisions. This is one of the most important bills to me in this legislative session. It is SO IMPORTANT to make our elections more honest and more transparent! Many people are now so cynical and distrusting of politics, and the influence of big money is a major reason for that. This bill builds trust by making sure contractors and grantees stay focused on their work without causing any perception of political strings attached.

Mahalo for your attention.

Marcia Kemble

Makiki

HB-1519-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 12:36:57 AM

Testimony for JDC on 3/20/2026 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Brodie Lockard	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill.

HB-1519-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 5:27:24 AM

Testimony for JDC on 3/20/2026 10:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

Thank you for this opportunity to support HB1519 which would limit contractors' political contributions.

Younghee Overly, a member of Indivisible Hawaii

HB-1519-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 7:08:09 AM

Testimony for JDC on 3/20/2026 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Clayton Kamida	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I am writing as an individual and as a member of Indivisible Hawaii in **strong support** of HB1519. Hawaii has had a long history of "pay to play" political contributions made by companies and entities seeking contracts with the state and county.

Recently, the federal indictment of Dennis Mitsunaga and employees of Mitsunaga and Associates, the reports of the covert political fundraisers run by airport official Wesley Yonamine, and the controversy surrounding Lt. Governor Sylvia Luke have completely eroded the public's trust in elected officials. The payoffs to politicians must stop.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

-Clayton Kamida

HB-1519-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 11:19:13 AM

Testimony for JDC on 3/20/2026 10:15:00 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.

HB-1519-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 11:44:51 AM

Testimony for JDC on 3/20/2026 10:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

By preventing recipients of large government contracts and grants from contributing to political campaigns, this bill increases transparency and fairness to the process of democratic elections.

It can potentially change voters' perceptions that big money has undue influence on legislation, and can therefore help restore confidence in the electoral process, and, potentially, increase voter participation

Thank you for accepting my testimony in support of HB1519.

HB-1519-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 2:12:36 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/20/2026 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kehaulani Coleman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you

HB-1519-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 3:01:38 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/20/2026 10:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

Please advance this good government legislation,

- Dan Freund, Kapaa

COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY
Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair

HEARING:

Friday, March 20, 2026 at 10:15 am
Conference Room 016 & Videoconference

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 1519, HD1 - RELATING TO CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS.

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

My name is Christine Andrews and I am a long-time resident of Wailuku, Maui. I write to you today in **strong support of HB 1519, HD1**, relating to campaign contributions. HB 1519, HD1, applies to large contracts and grants exceeding \$250,000. It covers compensated officers and their immediate family members, prohibits donations to campaigns and political committees, and includes a disclosure requirement identifying compensated officers and their immediate family members.

Between 2006 - the year the pay-to-play law (HRS 11-355) was implemented – and 2024, people tied to government contractors gave state and local Hawaii politicians more than \$24 million: about one-fifth of all donations made. Most often, these donations were given to politicians with the most power to determine contract awards. HRS 11-355 is undermined by contributions from officers, employees, and their families. Preventing contractors and grantees from donating to political campaigns reduces the risk of undue influence or favoritism in government decisions and in the awarding of contracts and grants.

I am sure the members of the Committee are aware of the New York Times article, “Inside the Late-Night Parties Where Hawaii Politicians Raked In Money,” published in January, 2024, with the tagline, “[a]fter the state passed a law barring government contractors from donating to politicians, fund-raising parties showed just how completely the reform effort failed”¹. As a resident of Maui, at a time when my Lahaina neighbors were depending on the kindness of donations pouring in from around the world to help with recovery from the wildfire, an article highlighting apparent corruption in Hawaii to a national audience is something that needs remedy.

I appreciate the efforts of HB1519, HD1 to address this concern and to rebuild trust in our elected officials. When the public sees that government contracts and grants are free from political influence, their trust in elected officials and government increases. This bill builds on feedback from similar legislation that made it all the way to Conference Committee last year by focusing on paid officers of organizations and implementing disclosure requirements. Preventing state and county contractors, grantees, and their families from making political contributions while their contracts or grants are active closes a loophole and will help ensure that public funds are used for their intended purposes, rather than to sway political campaigns or decisions. Based upon the foregoing, I request **your strong support of HB1519, HD1**.

Mahalo nui for all you are doing to restore faith in government,

Christine L. Andrews, J.D.
Wailuku, Maui

¹ Blaze Lovell, Eric Sagara & Irene Casado Sanchez. Inside the Late-Night Parties Where Hawaii Politicians Raked In Money. New York Times; January 17, 2024.

HB-1519-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 6:44:59 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/20/2026 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ann Dorsey	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair McKelvey, Vice Chair Gabbard, and members of the Committee,

I urge you to support HB1519 HD1.

This bill closes a loophole that honestly should have been closed a long time ago. Right now, a company can hold a state contract and the company itself can't make campaign contributions, but the CEO and their family members can.

HB1519 HD1 fixes this by extending those contribution restrictions to officers and their immediate family members for the life of the contract or grant, and by requiring public disclosure of who those people are. When public money is involved, the public deserves to know what's going on.

Please insert the amendments recommended by the Campaign Spending Commission. Limiting the contribution ban only to the same branch of government awarding or administering the contract weakens the bill and fails to reflect how corruption actually happens. CSC has warned that contractors can get around these bans by having connected individuals make contributions on their behalf, including situations involving reimbursed or false-name contributions. Removing the same-branch restriction and including officers and their immediate family members helps ensure the law captures these workarounds rather than inviting them.

Please strengthen and pass HB1519 HD1.

Thank you

HB-1519-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 7:32:11 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/20/2026 10:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Committee Members.

I strongly support HB1519 HD1.

Mahalo,

Georgia Hoopes, Kalaheo

HB-1519-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 9:21:03 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/20/2026 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jesse Hutchison	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you!

HB-1519-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 9:34:42 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/20/2026 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mary Lu Kelley	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair McKelvey, Vice Chair Gabbard, and members of the Committee,

I'm writing from Kauai to submit testimony in support of HB1519 HD1.

This bill makes important corrections by closing a loophole that honestly should have been closed a long time ago. Right now, a company can hold a state contract and the company itself can't make campaign contributions, but the CEO and their family members can.

HB1519 HD1 fixes this by extending those contribution restrictions to officers and their immediate family members for the life of the contract or grant, and by requiring public disclosure of who those people are. When public money is involved, the public deserves to know what's going on.

Your job: Please insert the amendments recommended by the Campaign Spending Commission. Limiting the contribution ban only to the same branch of government awarding or administering the contract weakens the bill and fails to reflect how corruption actually happens. CSC has warned that contractors can get around these bans by having connected individuals make contributions on their behalf, including situations involving reimbursed or false-name contributions. Removing the same-branch restriction and including officers and their immediate family members helps ensure the law captures these workarounds rather than inviting them.

I strongly urge the committee to strengthen and pass HB1519 HD1.

Thank you,

Mary Lu Kelley, Koloa

HB-1519-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 9:37:32 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/20/2026 10:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

Please insert the amendments recommended by the Campaign Spending Commission. Limiting the contribution ban only to the same branch of government awarding or administering the contract weakens the bill and fails to reflect how corruption actually happens. CSC has warned that contractors can get around these bans by having connected individuals make contributions on their behalf, including situations involving reimbursed or false-name contributions. Removing the same-branch restriction and including officers and their immediate family members helps ensure the law captures these workarounds rather than inviting them.

HB-1519-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 9:51:50 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/20/2026 10:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

I support HB1519.

HB-1519-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/18/2026 12:31:19 AM

Testimony for JDC on 3/20/2026 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
B.A. McClintock	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This bill closes a loophole that honestly should have been closed a long time ago. Right now, a company can hold a state contract and the company itself can't make campaign contributions, but the CEO and their family members can.

HB1519 HD1 fixes this by extending those contribution restrictions to officers and their immediate family members for the life of the contract or grant, and by requiring public disclosure of who those people are. When public money is involved, the public deserves to know what's going on.

Please insert the amendments recommended by the Campaign Spending Commission. Limiting the contribution ban only to the same branch of government awarding or administering the contract weakens the bill and fails to reflect how corruption actually happens. CSC has warned that contractors can get around these bans by having connected individuals make contributions on their behalf, including situations involving reimbursed or false-name contributions. Removing the same-branch restriction and including officers and their immediate family members helps ensure the law captures these workarounds rather than inviting them.

I urge the committee to strengthen and pass HB1519

HB-1519-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/18/2026 4:43:34 AM

Testimony for JDC on 3/20/2026 10:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

In support

HB-1519-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/18/2026 6:12:26 AM

Testimony for JDC on 3/20/2026 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
maile nakano	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please limit political contributions and help build honest and transparent elections in Hawaii. Show aloha.

Mahalo, Maile from Honolulu

HB-1519-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/18/2026 7:51:19 AM

Testimony for JDC on 3/20/2026 10:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

Dear Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

I strongly support of HB1519 because I believe the public is best served when there is not a hint of any money passing between a contractor and a politician. To put it bluntly, people feel that such monies constitute a bribe and that the best contractor has not been chosen, that their tax money is being used not in their best interests but to further a politician's career.

Mahalo,

David Cuthbert, Pahoia, Hawai'i

HB-1519-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/18/2026 12:14:47 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/20/2026 10:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

Please accept this testimony as strong support of this measure. It is good, clean government. Pure and simple. Those benefitting from a contract should not be able to make campaign contributions. It appears dirty, just like the \$35,000 a legislator purportedly made in a brown paper bag several years ago.

Please move this bill forward.

Lynne Matusow

HB-1519-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/18/2026 1:04:04 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/20/2026 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cheryl Bellamy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB1519

This bill helps prevent state and county contractors, grantees, and their families from making political contributions while their contracts or grants are active. It closes a loophole and ensures public funds are used for their intended purposes instead of being used to sway political campaigns or decisions.

This bill makes our elections fairer and more transparent. It also builds trust by making sure contractors and grantees stay focused on their work without any perception of political strings attached.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

HB-1519-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/18/2026 2:21:53 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/20/2026 10:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha, I am writing in support of HB1519. I believe it will increase fairness and transparency with regards to our elections and boon to our representative democracy. Mahalo for your consideration.

HB-1519-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/18/2026 3:33:57 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/20/2026 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gail Morrison	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

I am in strong support of HB1519

Preventing state and county contractors, grantees, and their families from making political contributions while their contracts or grants are active closing a loophole and ensuring public funds are used for their intended purposes, not to sway political campaigns or decisions.

This bill makes our elections fairer and more transparent. It also builds trust by making sure contractors and grantees stay focused on their work without any perception of political strings attached.

Mahalo,

Gail Morrison, Honolulu

HB-1519-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/18/2026 4:03:40 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/20/2026 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kara Hoving	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair McKelvey, Vice Chair Gabbard, and members of the Committee,

I'm submitting testimony in support of HB1519 HD1.

Free, fair, and clean elections are fundamental to the functioning of a healthy democracy. The outcomes of elections and the actions of the government should be determined by the will of the people and the merit of the candidates' policy priorities, not by the will of corporate interests seeking to influence elections in order to line their own coffers.

HB1519 would help reduce the threat of corporate influences on Hawaii's elections. Right now, if a company holds a state contract, the company itself can't make campaign contributions, but the CEO and their family members can. This leaves a gaping loophole in the current campaign spending rules that should have been closed long ago.

HB1519 HD1 fixes this by extending those contribution restrictions to the company's officers and their immediate family members for the life of the contract or grant, and by requiring public disclosure of who those people are. When public money is involved, the public deserves full access to information on how decisions are being made and who is influencing those decisions.

In order to maximize the effectiveness of the proposed bill to promote good government, I also request that you please insert the amendments recommended by the Campaign Spending Commission. Limiting the contribution ban only to the same branch of government awarding or administering the contract weakens the bill and fails to reflect how corruption actually happens. CSC has warned that contractors can get around these bans by having connected individuals make contributions on their behalf, including situations involving reimbursed or false-name contributions. Removing the same-branch restriction and including officers and their immediate family members helps ensure the law captures these workarounds rather than inviting them.

Please take a stand for good government in Hawaii. I urge the committee to strengthen and pass HB1519 HD1.

Mahalo,

Kara Hoving, Aiea

HB-1519-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/18/2026 4:31:27 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/20/2026 10:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair; Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair; and Members of the Committee on Judiciary

I am a resident of Kapolei and a member of the Indivisible Hawai`i Statewide Network. I am writing to provide testimony in strong support of HB1519. The bill applies to large contracts and grants exceeding \$250,000. It covers compensated officers and their immediate family members, prohibits donations to campaigns and political committees, and includes a disclosure requirement identifying compensated officers and their immediate family members.

Preventing contractors and grantees from donating to political campaigns reduces the risk of undue influence or favoritism in government decisions and in the awarding of contracts and grants. When the public sees that government contracts and grants are free from political influence, their trust in elected officials and government increases.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this important bill.

Respectfully,

Robert L. Justice, M.D.

Eileen Cain
720 Mahi'ai St., Apt. E
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96826-5635
eileencaïn808@gmail.com
March 18, 2026

Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair, Senate Committee on Judiciary
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair
and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary

My love of fairness in government makes it necessary for me to ask you to vote in favor of HB1519 HD1.

1. This bill would eliminate undue financial influence over or even intimidation of elected officials. Perhaps some elected officials feel that it is difficult for them to vote for what is in the public's best interest because of contractors acting out of selfishness, trying to sway officials or even intimidate them. Publicly financed elections would allow officials to breathe easy, to be free from such tactics by monied interests.
2. This bill would safeguard the public interest. Citizens like me need to trust that decisions made by elected officials are not dominated by powerful lobbies paid for by contractors or large corporations.
3. We citizens need to know that our voices are actually heard when we give testimony, that our needs and views are given serious consideration, even if we don't have a lot of money.

Please vote yes on HB1519 HD1.

Mahalo,

Eileen Cain
Mō'ili'ili, Honolulu, Hawai'i

HB-1519-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/19/2026 7:00:08 AM

Testimony for JDC on 3/20/2026 10:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

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

I'm submitting testimony in support of HB1519 HD1.

This bill closes a loophole that honestly should have been closed a long time ago. Right now, a company can hold a state contract and the company itself can't make campaign contributions, but the CEO and their family members can.

HB1519 HD1 fixes this by extending those contribution restrictions to officers and their immediate family members for the life of the contract or grant, and by requiring public disclosure of who those people are. When public money is involved, the public deserves to know what's going on.

Please insert the amendments recommended by the Campaign Spending Commission. Limiting the contribution ban only to the same branch of government awarding or administering the contract weakens the bill and fails to reflect how corruption actually happens. CSC has warned that contractors can get around these bans by having connected individuals make contributions on their behalf, including situations involving reimbursed or false-name contributions. Removing the same-branch restriction and including officers and their immediate family members helps ensure the law captures these workarounds rather than inviting them.

Increasing transparency in this process is imperative.

I urge the committee to strengthen and pass HB1519 HD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Noelle Lindenmann, Kailua-Kona

HB-1519-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/19/2026 7:45:29 AM

Testimony for JDC on 3/20/2026 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jane Aquino	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

I am in strong support of HB1519

Preventing state and county contractors, grantees, and their families from making political contributions while their contracts or grants are active closing a loophole and ensuring public funds are used for their intended purposes, not to sway political campaigns or decisions.

Hawaii needs to stamp out pay to play. Let's get honest!

This bill makes our elections fairer and more transparent. It also builds trust by making sure contractors and grantees stay focused on their work without any perception of political strings attached.

Mahalo, Jane Aquino, Indivisible

LATE

HB-1519-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/19/2026 12:11:34 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/20/2026 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carolyn Eaton	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Carolyn Eaton. I am a resident of Honolulu and I strongly support this bill, with its amendment based on testimony by the Campaign Spending Commission (HD1).

Mahalo for your attention to this measure which will safeguard democratic process in Hawai'i.

HB-1519-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/19/2026 4:42:28 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/20/2026 10:15:00 AM



Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ross Isokane	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB1519 and respectfully ask the Senate to allow this measure to proceed to a final vote this session.

Public confidence in governance in Hawai‘i is extremely vulnerable right now. Recent media reports have raised serious concerns about campaign contributions from individuals connected to government contractors and organizations receiving large amounts of taxpayer funding. Investigative reporting on pandemic-era COVID testing contracts and the still-unbuilt Kapolei kidney center project that received approximately \$3 million in public funds illustrate why many residents are losing faith that taxpayer dollars are being managed responsibly. Whether or not any particular case ultimately proves improper, these situations reinforce the perception that political influence can follow public money.

When private entities profit from lucrative taxpayer-funded government contracts or grants, that is a privilege. A reasonable condition of that privilege is refraining from making political contributions and disclosing the names of officers and immediate families to ensure compliance.

Ideally, the disclosure list of officers and immediate family members connected to government contractors and grant recipients should also be maintained in a publicly accessible database. Public disclosure would reduce the burden on Campaign Spending Commission staff to monitor compliance and would allow journalists and members of the public to help identify potential violations. In an era of constrained government resources, transparency can allow the public itself to serve as an additional layer of oversight.

Ultimately, public funds belong to the people of Hawai‘i. I hope the Legislature prioritizes the interests of residents and taxpayers over the interests of individuals connected to lucrative government contracts and grants.