



**TESTIMONY OF  
THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL  
KA 'OIHANA O KA LOIO KUHINA  
THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE, 2026**

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**ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:**

S.B. NO. 2143, RELATING TO THE CHIEF ELECTION OFFICER.

**BEFORE THE:**

SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

**DATE:** Wednesday, February 18, 2026      **TIME:** 9:05 a.m.

**LOCATION:** State Capitol, Room 016

**TESTIFIER(S):** Anne E. Lopez, Attorney General, or  
Jung Min (Charles) Lee, Deputy Attorney General

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Chair Rhoads and Members of the Committee:

The Department of the Attorney General (Department) opposes this bill.

This bill amends section 11-1.6, Hawaii Revised Statutes, to provide that in the event of a vacancy in the position of Chief Election Officer, the Attorney General shall serve as the Interim Chief Election Officer until the Elections Commission appoints a permanent successor. The bill includes a "notwithstanding" clause to override existing law during this interim period.

The Department is concerned that requiring the Attorney General to serve as the Interim Chief Election officer creates substantial conflict-of-interest risks that could become the basis for election-related challenges. The Chief Election Officer administers elections and makes discretionary decisions that can become contested in administrative proceedings or litigation. At the same time, the Attorney General is the State's chief legal officer and may be called upon to advise state entities regarding election administration, represent the State in election-related litigation, or take legal positions regarding the validity of election procedures and outcomes. Assigning the Attorney General to simultaneously perform both roles—election administrator and the State's legal advocate in election matters—creates an inherent structural tension that can compromise the State's ability to manage, defend, and litigate election issues without disqualifying conflicts.

The Department is also concerned that the bill may raise issues of incompatible offices or dual office holding by directing the Attorney General to exercise the statutory powers and duties of the Chief Election Officer while continuing to serve as Attorney General. The bill does not limit the interim chief election officer's authority to ministerial or caretaker functions, and it does not impose a defined deadline for the Elections Commission to complete the appointment. As written, the interim arrangement could extend beyond a short transitional period, increasing the likelihood that these incompatibility and conflict concerns will arise in practice.

For these reasons, the Department respectfully requests that the Committee defer this bill.



# Hawai'i State Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer Plus Commission



*Advocating for the Hawai'i LGBTQIA+ Community*

Mailing Address: LGBTQ+ Commission, c/o The Department of Human Services,  
P.O. Box 339, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96809-0339

Email: [hawaiistatelgbtqpluscommission@gmail.com](mailto:hawaiistatelgbtqpluscommission@gmail.com)  
Web: <https://humanservices.hawaii.gov/lgbtq-commission/>

February 12, 2026

Senate's Committee on Judiciary  
Hawai'i State Capitol  
415 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, HI 96813

Hearing: Wednesday, February 18, 2026, at 9:05 AM

RE: **Strong Support for Senate Bill 2143**

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and fellow committee members,

I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 2143 on behalf of the Hawai'i State Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer Plus (LGBTQ+) Commission, which was established by the 2022 Hawai'i State Legislature to

“improve the State's interface with members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, plus community; identify the short- and long-range needs of its members; and ensure that there is an effective means of researching, planning, and advocating for the equity of this population in all aspects of state government.”

The Hawai'i State LGBTQ+ Commission submits this testimony in **strong support** of Senate Bill 2143, which provides that, in the event of a vacancy in the position of Chief Election Officer, the Attorney General of Hawaii shall serve as the Interim Chief Election Officer until the Hawaii Elections Commission appoints a new Chief Election Officer.

Free, fair, and certified elections are the cornerstone of our democracy. For marginalized communities, including māhū and LGBTQIA+ people, access to a transparent and functioning electoral process is not theoretical; it is foundational to our safety, representation, and civil rights. Without a designated back-up to the Chief Election Officer, Hawai'i risks facing a dangerous and unnecessary gap in authority at a critical moment in our electoral process.

If a vacancy were to occur without a clear interim successor, there would be no one authorized to certify our elections. Such a scenario would undermine public trust, create legal uncertainty, and potentially disenfranchise voters across our state. At a time when election integrity is being challenged nationwide, Hawai'i must ensure continuity, clarity, and stability in its election administration.

*Proudly established pursuant to Hawai'i Revised Statutes Chapter 369, as enacted through Act 41, Session Laws of Hawai'i 2022*

## HI State LGBTQ+ Commission Testimony in Support of SB 2143

We are aware that the Attorney General has expressed reservations about serving in this interim capacity. We respect those concerns. However, Senate Bill 2143 is not about preference, it is about preparedness. The bill establishes a clear and lawful chain of authority to ensure that, should the unexpected occur, our democratic processes continue without disruption. The Attorney General is a constitutionally established statewide office with the legal expertise and institutional capacity to temporarily fulfill this role until the Elections Commission appoints a permanent Chief Election Officer.

The LGBTQIA+ community has long understood that our rights are only as secure as the democratic systems that protect them. Ensuring that our elections can be certified under any circumstance is essential to maintaining the rule of law and protecting every resident's voice.

For these reasons, the Hawai'i State LGBTQ+ Commission respectfully urges the Committee to pass Senate Bill 2143.

If you or any member of your staff has any questions regarding my testimony you can reach me at [hawaiistatelgbtqpluscommission@gmail.com](mailto:hawaiistatelgbtqpluscommission@gmail.com).

Mahalo nui loa for your time and consideration,

Sandy Harjo Livingston (he/him/they/them)

Chair

[Hawai'i State LGBTQ+ Commission](#)



SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY  
SB 2143 Relating to the Chief Elections Officer  
February 18, 2026, at 9:05 AM, State Capitol CR 016 and Videoconference

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

The current procedure to select a Chief Elections Officer in the event of a vacancy is threatened by HB 1552 with partisan bias and government control.

Thank you for allowing me to testify in STRONG OPPOSITION of SB 2143 for the following reasons:

1. SB 2143 is a threat to the current law, §11-1.6 Appointment of the chief election officer; requirements; term; restrictions; salary; reappointment; removal. (a) The chief election officer shall be appointed by the elections commission, without regard to chapter 76. The appointment shall not be subject to the advice and consent of the senate. In the event of a vacancy, the elections commission shall meet expeditiously to select and appoint a new chief election officer to serve the remainder of the unexpired term.

The current law provides for a fair and balanced process for appointing a Chief Elections Officer.

By introducing bureaucratic control and government power as proposed in SB 2143, the ability to have a bi-partisan appointment of a Chief Elections Officer (CEO) by the Elections Commission is nullified. SB 2143 gives control to the majority party in office. Such changes will restrict the ability of Elections Commissioners representing parties to engage in meaningful discussions and debates, potentially limiting diverse perspectives and reducing the effectiveness of the selection process.

2. Conflict of Interest and Abuse of Power

Hawaii Revised Statutes §11-1.6 Appointment of the chief election officer, was established in accordance with the law. The appointment is to be conducted by a bi-partisan Elections Commission.

- SB 2143 threatens the current procedure of appointing a Chief Elections Officer
- By allowing the Attorney General to function as the Chief Election Officer, decisions and actions will be biased and give unfettered power to the administration in office.
- The Attorney General's office could potentially delay the appointment of a new CEO leading to government overreach.

### 3. Solutions, Recommendations, and Observations

- Keep the current practice of appointing a Chief Elections Officer. The Elections Commission is equipped and prepared to meet, discuss, and appoint a new CEO in the event of a vacancy.
- Consider supporting legislation for citizens to elect a Chief Elections Officer.

May I respectfully remind this committee that Article 1 of the Hawaii State Constitution states that all political power of this State is inherent in the people and the responsibility for the exercise thereof rests with the people. All government is founded on this authority.

For these reasons, please vote NO on SB2143. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jamie Detwiler, President  
Hawaiian Islands Republican Women



February 13, 2026

Senate's Committee on Judiciary  
Hawai'i State Capitol  
415 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, HI 96813

Hearing: Wednesday, February 18, 2026 at 9:05 AM

RE: **STRONG SUPPORT for Senate Bill 2143**

Aloha Chair Sayama, Vice-Chair Lee and fellow committee members,

Pride at Work – Hawai'i is an official chapter of [Pride at Work](#) which is a national nonprofit organization that represents LGBTQIA+ union members and their allies. We are an officially recognized constituency group of the AFL-CIO that organizes mutual support between the organized Labor Movement and the LGBTQIA+ Community to further social and economic justice. We write in **strong support of Seante Bill 2143**.

Pride at Work – Hawai'i submits this testimony in **strong support** of Senate Bill 2143, which provides that, in the event of a vacancy in the position of Chief Election Officer, the Attorney General of Hawaii shall serve as Interim Chief Election Officer until the Hawaii Elections Commission appoints a new Chief Election Officer.

For working people, voting is a labor issue. The right to vote is the mechanism by which workers shape the laws that govern wages, workplace safety, collective bargaining rights, public benefits, and economic justice. When elections are secure, transparent, and properly certified, workers have confidence that their voices matter. When there is uncertainty or instability in election administration, working families bear the consequences.

Senate Bill 2143 is a practical, commonsense measure to ensure continuity in Hawai'i's election system. Without a designated back-up to the Chief Election Officer, there is a real risk that, in the event of a vacancy, no one would have the authority to certify election results. That gap would create unnecessary chaos and undermine trust in outcomes that directly affect working people across our state.

This bill does not expand power, it clarifies responsibility. By designating the Attorney General as an interim authority only until a permanent appointment is made, the Legislature ensures there is no lapse in the chain of command during a critical moment in our democratic process. Protecting the integrity and continuity of election certification is a key piece of safeguarding workers' rights.

Pride at Work – Hawai'i believes that democracy and labor rights are inseparable. When working people can vote and trust that their votes will be properly counted and certified, we strengthen our unions, our communities, and our economy.

Pride at Work – Hawai'i's Testimony in STRONG SUPPORT of Re: SB 2143

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the Committee to pass Senate Bill 2143.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in strong support.

In Solidarity,

Michael Golojuch, Jr. (he/him)

President

[Pride at Work – Hawai'i](#)



Senate Committee on Judiciary (JDC)  
Chair Karl Rhoads, Vice Chair Mike Gabbard

February 18, 2026, 9:05 a.m., Room 016  
SB2143 — Relating to the Chief Election Officer

TESTIMONY

Amy Monk, Legislative Committee, League of Women Voters of Hawaii

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Committee Members:

**The League of Women Voters of Hawaii supports BILL NUMBER SB2143**

Current law requires the chief election officer to compile, certify and release the election results. This is a simple and nearly automatic occurrence that takes place after the counties report their ballot counts. Members of the LWVHI have pointed out that there should be an alternate in case the chief election officer be unable to certify the election results. This is particularly important in the US Presidential race where the results are used to determine which presidential electors who vote in the Electoral College.

We have already seen where phony alternate slates of electors were created and submitted in a 2020 Presidential election. The LWVHI believes that it is therefore prudent to provide for an official alternate in the event that the chief election officer position is unable to certify the election results.

League requests that the measure take effect upon passage.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.



Protect Democracy

Move Forward

[www.indivisiblehawaii.org](http://www.indivisiblehawaii.org)

[info@indivisiblehawaii.org](mailto:info@indivisiblehawaii.org)

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

**Hearing Date/Time:** 02-18-26 9:05AM

**Place:** Hawaii State Capitol, Conference Room 016

**Re:** Testimony in STRONG SUPPORT of SB2143

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

On behalf of Indivisible Hawai'i, I thank you for this opportunity to testify in strong support of SB2143.

This bill provides that in the event that the position of Chief Election Officer is vacant right before the election, the Attorney General would act as Interim Chief Election Officer until the Elections Commission appoints a new Chief Election Officer. This would ensure that the vote could be certified.

Given what happened on January 6, 2021, and the fact that the outcome of the 2020 Presidential Election is still being challenged today by a non-trivial segment of the population, it is imperative that we safeguard our elections by taking every prudent measure to ensure that elections results are protected, validated, and certified. SB2143 is a major step toward maintaining the electorate's trust and confidence in our elections.

We thank you for supporting SB2143 and urge you to adopt this bill.

Mahalo nui loa,

Marlene Thom

Indivisible Hawai'i Good Government and 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.*



**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 9:51:59 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shelby "Pikachu" Billionaire	Testifying for Kingdom of The Hawaiian Islands & Ohana Unity Party	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

**\*\*Testimony in Strong Support of SB2143 – Relating to the Chief Election Officer\*\***

Aloha kakou, Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am Master Shelby "Pikachu" Billionaire, HRM, Kingdom of The Hawaiian Islands, H.I., Chairman of the Ohana Unity Party. Aloha nui loa from the heart of our islands, where we live by the guiding spirit of **\*\*aloha\*\***—love, compassion, mercy, kindness, and grace—and where **\*\*‘ohana\*\*** means we ensure every part of our government runs smoothly and accountably, protecting the integrity of our elections so every voice is heard fairly, as the ‘ōlelo no‘eau teaches: \*‘Ike aku, ‘ike mai. Kōkua aku, kōkua mai. Pēlā ka nohona ‘ohana.\* “Observe others, be observed. Help others, be helped. That is the way of family life.”

Today, I stand in full support of SB2143, urging its passage to strengthen accountability and continuity in our elections process by providing a clear, immediate interim solution for vacancies in the Chief Election Officer position. This straightforward and necessary bill amends Section 11-1.6, Hawaii Revised Statutes, to address vacancies in the office of Chief Election Officer (the head of the Office of Elections responsible for administering statewide elections, voter registration, ballot integrity, and compliance with election laws).

Key provisions include: - Requiring the Elections Commission to meet **\*\*expeditiously\*\*** to select and appoint a new Chief Election Officer to serve the remainder of the unexpired term. - Designating the **\*\*Attorney General\*\*** to serve as **\*\*Interim Chief Election Officer\*\*** until the Commission makes the appointment—ensuring no gap in leadership or operations.

- Clarifying that this interim role applies notwithstanding any other law to the contrary. - Preserving existing rights, duties, penalties, and proceedings that matured before the Act's effective date.

- Taking effect upon approval. Hawaii's elections are the foundation of our democracy, and the Chief Election Officer plays a critical role in maintaining public trust, ensuring fair processes, and upholding voter access across our islands. A sudden vacancy—due to resignation, removal, illness, or other reasons—could disrupt operations, delay certifications, or create uncertainty during high-stakes periods like primaries or general elections.

By mandating swift Commission action and providing the Attorney General (a constitutional officer with broad authority and independence) as a qualified interim leader, SB2143 prevents paralysis, maintains continuity, and reinforces accountability in a key nonpartisan office. This aligns with efforts to modernize election administration and build resilience in our systems—especially important in a state where voter turnout and trust in institutions matter deeply to our ‘ohana.

This is a common-sense measure: it closes a potential gap without expanding powers or creating new bureaucracy, simply ensuring seamless transitions that protect the public's right to secure, accurate elections. **In closing, with deepest aloha and a call to mālama our democracy by safeguarding election integrity and leadership continuity, I respectfully ask the Committee to pass SB2143 without delay.**

Key reasons include:**- Ensures *expeditious* appointment by the Elections Commission while providing the *Attorney General* as a reliable interim Chief Election Officer—no leadership vacuum during critical transitions.**

**- Strengthens accountability and public trust in Hawaii's elections process, where the Chief Election Officer oversees voter registration, ballot security, and statewide compliance for hundreds of thousands of voters.**

**- Prevents disruptions that could affect election administration, certification, or public confidence—especially vital amid ongoing national discussions on election security and resilience.**

**- Preserves existing frameworks while adding clear, practical safeguards for continuity—embodying *kuleana* in government operations. - True embodiment of Hawaiian values: *aloha*, *‘ohana*, *mālama*, and *kōkua aku, kōkua mai*—protecting our shared democratic process, ensuring fair representation, and showing Hawaii leads with wisdom, stability, and heart.**

Mahalo nui loa for your kuleana in this important work to uphold our elections. I am available for any questions and urge you to pass SB2143—let us strengthen our democracy with aloha in action.

Master Shelby "Pikachu" Billionaire, HRM Kingdom of The Hawaiian Islands, H.I. Ohana Unity Party, Chairman [www.Ohanaunityparty.com](http://www.Ohanaunityparty.com) [Presidentbillionaire@gmail.com](mailto:Presidentbillionaire@gmail.com)



**Senate Committee on Judiciary  
Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action (HAPA) Strongly Supports SB 2143  
Wednesday, February 18th, 9:05 AM in Conference Room 016 & Videoconference**

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

Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action supports SB 2143, relating to Chief Election Officers.

Elections are not episodic events. They are ongoing processes with a strict timeline and statutory obligations. In the event of a vacancy in the Chief Election Officer position, even a brief leadership gap could create uncertainty at a critical time. This uncertainty could even be used to grow mistrust in our election outcomes.

SB 2143 provides clarity and continuity by designating the Attorney General to serve in an interim capacity until the Elections Commission appoints a new Chief Election Officer. This measure does not alter the Elections Commission's appointment authority. Rather, it ensures that election administration remains uninterrupted during a transition period.

Continuity of governance is a core component of the public trust. Providing a clear interim structure strengthens institutional resilience and protects the integrity of our election system.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge support for SB 2143

Thank you for your support and consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anne Frederick'.

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



## **TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF SB2143, RELATING TO THE CHIEF ELECTION OFFICER**

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY**

**February 18, 2026**

**To the Honorable Chair and Members of the Committee:**

The Democratic Party of Hawai'i **strongly supports SB2143.**

We believe that all people have the right to live in a free, open, and democratic society, and that government must remain accountable, transparent, and accessible to the people. This bill strengthens those values by ensuring continuity, stability, and clear lines of responsibility during any vacancy in the position of Chief Election Officer.

Elections are the foundation of our democracy. Protecting the integrity of our electoral process requires that there be no gaps in leadership or uncertainty in authority. By requiring the Elections Commission to meet expeditiously to appoint a new Chief Election Officer and designating the Attorney General as interim chief election officer during a vacancy, this measure promotes uninterrupted administration of elections and preserves public confidence in our democratic system.

This proposal also reinforces accountability and checks and balances. The Attorney General, as the State's chief legal officer, is bound by constitutional and ethical obligations to uphold the law and maintain transparency in government functions. Providing a clear interim structure avoids confusion, prevents administrative paralysis, and ensures that election operations continue in a lawful and orderly manner until the independent Elections Commission fulfills its appointment duty.

The Democratic Party of Hawai'i supports policies that protect the integrity of our electoral process, expand voter participation, and maintain public trust. Stable and continuous election administration is essential to advancing voting rights in the state and this bill helps safeguard that stability.

Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to testify in strong support of SB2143. Should you have any questions or require further information, please contact the Democratic Party of Hawai'i at [legislation@hawaiidemocrats.org](mailto:legislation@hawaiidemocrats.org).



**HA'AHEO, 'OHANA, KAULIKE, UI**  
Pride Family Justice Activate  
**WHERE PRIDE BECOMES POLITICAL POWER**

Website: [www.hokupac.org](http://www.hokupac.org) ♦ Email: [info@hokupac.org](mailto:info@hokupac.org)

February 12, 2026

Senate's Committee on Judiciary  
Hawai'i State Capitol  
415 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, HI 96813

Hearing: Wednesday, February 18, 2026 at 9:05 AM

**RE: STRONG SUPPORT for Senate Bill 2143 – Relating to THE CHIEF ELECTION OFFICER.**

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice-Chair Gabbard and fellow committee members,

This testimony on behalf of **HOKU PAC**, Hawai'i's LGBTQ+ political action committee dedicated to building queer political power and advancing policies that protect our communities. We write in **strong support of Senate Bill 2143**.

HOKU PAC submits this testimony in **strong support** of Senate Bill 2143, which ensures that in the event of a vacancy in the position of Chief Election Officer, the Attorney General of Hawaii will serve as Interim Chief Election Officer until the Hawaii Elections Commission appoints a new Chief Election Officer.

HOKU PAC was founded to protect and advance LGBTQIA+ political power in Hawai'i. Central to that mission is one simple principle: every eligible voter must be able to cast a ballot knowing it will be counted and properly certified. We work year-round to register voters, educate communities, and turn people out to the polls. That work only has meaning if there is a clear, lawful plan in place to ensure election results are certified without interruption.

Without a designated back-up to the Chief Election Officer, Hawai'i risks a scenario where no one has the authority to certify election results. That is not a hypothetical concern—it is a structural vulnerability. Senate Bill 2143 closes that gap by establishing continuity and clarity in election administration.

Let us be clear: opposing a measure that guarantees continuity in election certification is opposition to free and fair elections. This bill does not advantage any party or ideology. It does not alter how votes are cast or counted. It simply ensures that, should a vacancy occur, there is no lapse in authority that could jeopardize the certification of results. Those who resist this safeguard are choosing uncertainty over stability in our democratic process.

Our communities, especially māhū, LGBTQIA+, and QTPI+ voters and other historically marginalized groups, have fought too hard for access to the ballot to allow avoidable administrative gaps to threaten public confidence. When we ask people to participate in democracy, we owe them assurance that the system is prepared for any contingency.

Senate Bill 2143 provides that assurance. It is responsible governance. It is election integrity. And it is a necessary step to protect free and fair elections in Hawai'i.

HOKU PAC respectfully urges the Committee to pass Senate Bill 2143.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in strong support.

*Paid for by HOKU PAC – Not Authorized by any Candidate or Candidate Committee*

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 4:38:39 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Susan B Roberts Emery	Testifying for Green Party of Hawai'i	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Susan RobertsEmery, as Co Chair of the Green Party of Hawai'i asks, I write on behalf of our members to offer Support for SB2143. SB 2143 protects the stability of Hawai'i's election system by ensuring there is no gap in leadership if the Chief Election Officer position becomes vacant.

Elections require constant oversight and strict compliance with legal deadlines. This bill provides a clear interim structure so that election administration continues without disruption while the Elections Commission appoints a permanent replacement.

Thank you for your consideration !

Susan RobertsEmery

Green Party of Hawai'i

Paauilo



## HAWAII STATE AFL-CIO

888 Mililani Street, Suite 501 • Honolulu, Hawaii 96813  
Telephone: (808) 597-1441 • Fax: (808) 593-2149

**LATE**

February 18, 2026

The Thirty-Third Legislature  
The Senate  
Committee on Judiciary

**SUBJECT: TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB2143 – RELATING TO THE CHIEF ELECTION OFFICER**

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and members of the committee:

The Hawaii State AFL-CIO supports SB2143 because our election system must remain steady and governed by law, not by shifting political pressures. Recent public efforts to remove the current Chief Election Officer reflect the broader climate of scrutiny and organized campaigns directed at election officials. Regardless of the outcome of those efforts, state law must provide certainty if a vacancy is created. The responsibilities involved in overseeing our elections continue year-round. Deadlines must be met, systems must be maintained, and coordination across agencies must proceed without interruption.

Working families rely on the ballot to protect wages, workplace safety standards, public services, and collective bargaining rights. When election officials become the focus of sustained political campaigns, it increases the risk of disruption and confusion. A clearly defined interim structure protects the office itself and ensures continuity under established law rather than allowing uncertainty or political maneuvering to interfere with the conduct of elections.

We respectfully urge the committee to advance this measure.

Respectfully submitted,

Randy Perreira  
President  
Hawaii State AFL-CIO

## Written Testimony in Opposition to SB 2143

Chair and members,

I submit this written testimony in opposition to SB 2143.

The Hawai'i Department of the Attorney General has failed to enforce basic election laws and has actively obstructed oversight efforts, including blocking envelope counts and preventing independent verification. Against this backdrop, SB 2143 would place the Attorney General in direct control of the Office of Elections during any vacancy in the Chief Election Officer position—raising serious concerns about independence, transparency, and public trust.

The Hawai'i Elections Commission conducted a formal investigation into the administration of the 2024 General Election and made the following major findings:

1. Hawai'i's election results based on electronic records are unverifiable. Election officials withhold underlying daily data—including ballot counts, over-under reports, signature verification logs, and audit records—preventing independent verification.
2. None of the four County Clerk offices provided chain-of-custody records that comply with HAR §3-177-453, and more ballots were counted in the Statewide Voter Registration System than counties reported collecting.
3. The Office of Elections misleads the public about ballot security and the integrity of elections.
4. The Chief Election Officer did not certify the 2024 General Election in accordance with HRS §11-155.
5. The Elections Commission and the Deputy Attorney General's office suppressed complaints and evidence of malfeasance.

None of these issues have been investigated by the attorney General.

Most recently, the Attorney General's office blocked the Commission's effort to allow volunteers to count ballot envelopes from the Big Island, preventing basic physical verification of ballots.

During the 2024 General Election, the State reported counting more than 19,000 ballots than were collected by Hawaii County. Kauai County could not account for several thousand ballots. Maui County produced no records documenting ballot collections, and City and County of Honolulu did not report how many ballots were collected from drop boxes.

The Hawai'i Office of Elections has never undergone a comprehensive external audit, despite a formal request from the Elections Commission.

In this context, SB 2143 would consolidate even more authority in the Attorney General's office—the same office that has already obstructed oversight and blocked verification efforts. Rather than strengthening election integrity, this bill weakens independent review and concentrates power in an office currently under scrutiny.

Hawai'i does not need less oversight. It needs more.

We need:

- independent external audits of election operations
- transparent physical chain-of-custody documentation
- public access to election records
- enforcement of existing election laws

Elections must be verifiable, not merely administered.

Until these fundamental failures are corrected, placing the Attorney General in charge of elections during vacancies is inappropriate and dangerous to public confidence.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to oppose SB 2143.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony.

Sincerely

Ralph Cushnie

Elections Commissioner

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 9:52:45 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Linda Miyata	Individual	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

I respectfully oppose SB 2143 for these reasons:

- Shifts election oversight closer to the executive branch
- Risks politicizing an office meant to be independent
- Could undermine public confidence in election neutrality
- Creates precedent for expanding executive influence over elections
- Lacks clear justification for why a political appointee is the fallbackM

Mahalo for allowing the people to have a voice in this matter, especially the ones who voted for you.

Linda

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 6:27:51 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Corinne Solomon	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose SB2143.

Having the Attorney General serve as the Chief Elections Officer is an egregious conflict of interest, as the AG or the AG's office may be ruling on election lawsuits. You cannot rule on election lawsuits when you are the person running the elections!

The Elections Commission already had a legal pathway to fill a vacancy for the Chief Elections Officer.

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 7:47:53 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jen	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

How about NO!

If we wanted lawyers to run things we would have let the British win the revolutionary war.

Do you have any shame?

Who came up with this piece of shit bill? Shame.

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 8:22:20 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Deborah Umiamaka	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Re: Strong Opposition to Senate Bill 2143 (2026 Regular Session) – Vacancy in Chief Election Officer Position

As a concerned resident of Hawaii County, I strongly oppose SB2143, which designates the Attorney General as Interim Chief Election Officer during vacancies. This provision imperils election integrity by delegating critical responsibilities to a politically appointed official devoid of requisite election administration expertise.

Centralization of Authority

The Attorney General, whose mandate centers on legal enforcement, possesses neither the specialized training nor institutional independence essential for impartial election oversight. Such designation circumvents established civil service merit selection protocols, thereby jeopardizing public confidence in nonpartisan electoral processes amid post-2024 national scrutiny.

Deficiency of Oversight Mechanisms

SB2143 omits mandatory legislative confirmation, temporal limitations, or "for cause" termination criteria for the interim appointee. Absent these safeguards, it facilitates protracted executive dominion over pivotal election intervals, exposing vulnerabilities to mismanaged voter registries and resultant controversies.

Stakeholder Precedents and Concerns

Civil rights commissions and ethics watchdogs have historically contested analogous legislation for engendering executive overreach, as evidenced in prior Hawaii proceedings on voting integrity. Transparency advocates and minority political entities contend it obstructs expeditious independent appointments, thereby impeding exigent electoral obligations.

Partisan Context and Implications

Sponsored by Democrats under a 5-1 partisan alignment, the measure exacerbates perceptions of entrenched majority control during an era of intensified election security vigilance. In the

absence of extant opposition testimony, it warrants definitive rejection to preserve Hawaii's democratic institutional integrity.

I respectfully urge defeat of SB2143 to safeguard electoral independence.

Sincerely,

Deborah Umiamaka

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 8:35:26 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Michelle Bonk	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass this legislation to help protect the integrity of the election process in Hawai'i. This would ensure that the vote could be certified.

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 9:09:40 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Roger Hamada	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support SB2143.

I think it is imperative that any administrative or other loophole that might jeopardize the true expression of election results be eliminated.

SB2143 helps accomplish this goal.

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony on this bill.

Eileen Cain  
720 Mahi'ai St., Apt. E  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96826-5635  
eileencaïn808@gmail.com  
February 11, 2026

Dear Representative Tarnas, Chair, and Members of the House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs

**I am submitting this testimony in Favor of SB2143, Relating to the Chief Election Officer.**

We voters need to know that someone will have the authority to certify our elections. If the current Chief Election Officer position becomes vacant, the Attorney General should be designated to serve as the Interim Chief Election Officer until another Chief Election Officer can be appointed.

We want people of these islands to vote! And we citizens need to know that our vote counts by having election results certified.

**Please vote yes on SB2143.**

Mahalo and Aloha,

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

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 9:19:57 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Tim Huycke	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support SB2143.

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 11:15:59 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Gaye Chan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Election offices and officers have sadly become targets of election deniers, making unfounded claims. Even more sadly, our own Elections Commission has attempted this. This bill can help constrain the Elections Commission/s authority to fire Chief Election Officers.

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 12:09:18 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kanani Kai	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I SUPPORT SB2143.

Mahalo,

Kanani Kai

Member Indivisible Hawaii.

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 1:41:04 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

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

Comments:

**I respectfully oppose this bill.**

During the most recent Office of Elections Commission meeting, I became concerned when the Deputy Attorney General recommended that the Commission enter executive session before providing guidance regarding the 2024 Hawai'i County audit. This approach reduced transparency at a time when openness is especially important. Fortunately, the commissioners chose to proceed in a transparent manner.

In that discussion, the Deputy Attorney General interpreted the law to mean that an audit cannot be conducted until after the 22-month federal preservation period has passed. However, Hawai'i's election laws outline a clear process for how and when audits may occur, and it may be helpful to view these provisions together. Under **HRS §16-42**, a **post-election, pre-certification audit** of at least ten percent of precincts using the electronic voting system is required before results are certified. The related administrative rule, **HAR §3-177-762**, describes how these audits are conducted and clarifies that they may be carried out by the **Chief Election Officer, the county clerk, election officials, counting center officials, or a designated representative**, with safeguards in place for ballot handling and secure procedures. Another section sometimes referenced in discussions, **HRS §11-154**, focuses on the proper sealing, unsealing, and preservation of ballots, and notes that ballots may only be destroyed after meeting **federal retention requirements**, which include the **22-month preservation period** established under **52 U.S.C. §20701**. Although the federal rule requires the State to retain election materials for that period, it does not expressly prohibit authorized election officials from conducting audits or reviews during that time, provided preservation and security procedures are maintained. Considering these provisions together, the statutes appear to allow for audits to occur while still meeting both state and federal requirements for ballot handling and record preservation.

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 7:26:37 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Candice Lanette	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Yes, there should always be a back up in the case of our elections. Sage guarding the process of our elections if of the utmost importance.

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 8:04:05 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Janet Teare	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Both Senator Karl Rhoads (Chair, Judiciary Committee) and Representative David Tarnas (Chair, Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs Committee) have stated that they support this bill. It is intended to constrain the Elections Commission authority to fire Scott Nago, the current Chief Election Officer, as was recommended by a 3-member panel last August.

Please support this bill. I'm a member of East Hawaii Indivisible.

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 8:11:55 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Younghee Overly	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you for hearing this measure.

Younghee Overly, a member of Indivisible Hawaii

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 8:17:23 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

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

Comments:

I strongly support this bill, personally and as a member of Indivisible Hawaii. This bill helps safeguard the elections process by providing that, if by some coincidence the position of Chief Election Officer is vacant right before the election, the Attorney General would act as Interim Chief Election Officer until the Elections Commission appoints a new Chief Election Officer. This would ensure that the vote could be certified. ***We need strong laws to support free and fair elections now, more than ever.***

Elizabeth Kamida

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 8:40:15 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
James E Raymond	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you -- I am a member of Indivisible Windward.

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 9:22:10 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ron Brown	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this bill as an individual citizen of Hawaii and as a member of Indivisible; it supports the orderly and proper conduct of elections. And would prevent some MAGA attacks on these elections.

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 9:37:36 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Nancy D Moser	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In support

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 9:54:23 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Susan Duffy	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I respectfully submit testimony in opposition to this measure.

Vacancies in the Chief Election Officer position are most sensitive when they occur close to an election cycle. Under this bill, the Attorney General would assume full operational authority over election administration during that period.

The Attorney General, however, is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the Governor. By placing the Attorney General in the role of interim Chief Election Officer, this bill effectively inserts the executive branch directly into the administration of elections — even if only temporarily.

In a state where one political party holds overwhelming institutional power, maintaining structural safeguards against consolidation of authority is critical. This proposal moves in the opposite direction.

If the concern is ensuring continuity during a vacancy, the Legislature could consider:

- Authorizing a Deputy Chief Election Officer to serve as interim
- Allowing the Elections Commission to designate an internal acting administrator
- Setting a firm timeline for commission action without inserting executive branch control

These options would preserve independence while ensuring operational stability.

Again, I am opposed to this measure.

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 10:14:37 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Christopher Davis	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you for supporting this bill.

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 11:46:36 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Judith White	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Important to pass!

Judith White, Kapaa

Member Kauai Indivisible

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 11:47:06 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Patti Cook	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This is a priority for the 2026 Legislative session to protect the integrity and security of Hawai'i elections from attempts to shortcircuit or otherwise dismiss or override Hawai'i's Vote By Mail system that has a proven track record for accuracy and fraud prevention. Please expedite. Mahalo - Patti Cook

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 12:09:30 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Larry Smith	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strongly support

Larry Smith

Nuuanu

member Indivisible Hawaii

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 12:46:39 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Cheryl Bellamy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill because it provides that, if by some coincidence the position of Chief Election Officer is vacant right before the election, the Attorney General would act as Interim Chief Election Officer until the Elections Commission appoints a new Chief Election Officer. This would ensure that the vote could be certified.

I am a member of Indivisible Hawaii.

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 1:04:57 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Addie Berliner	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In Support of SB2143

I believe this bill will restore public confidence in Hawaii elections. With legal expertise, neutrality and investigative capacity, the interim AG appointment is a great choice!

Thank You for your time.

Addie Berliner

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 3:28:57 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha,

I am a retired physician, a resident of Kapolei, and a member of Indivisible. I apologize for missing the deadling by several hours but hope that my testimony will be considered anyway. SB2143 provides that if the position of Chief Election Officer is vacant right before the election, the Attorney General would act as Interim Chief Election Officer until the Elections Commission appoints a new Chief Election Officer. This would ensure that the vote could be certified.

Mahalo.

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 3:35:03 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jesse Hutchison	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you!

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 10:37:58 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Natalie Teruya	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill. And thank you to Scott Nago & team for all that they do.

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/13/2026 4:32:06 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Nancy Neubauer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill. We need to protect election integrity from.crazed ideologies attempting to destroy the foundation of the USA

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/13/2026 7:26:21 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Maryellen Tuttell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Free & fair elections are the bedrock of our democracy. We need to ensure that our elections run smoothly and we need a provision for elections to be certified in the event that there is a vacancy on the elections commission. I have serious concerns about our elections commission which seems to have been taken over by election deniers & conspiracy theorists.

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/13/2026 7:35:05 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Yvette Kay	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Yvette Kay and I am a resident of Kailua Kona, HI. I support SB2143 which provides that in the event of a vacancy in the position of Chief Election Officer, the Attorney General shall serve as the Interim Chief Election Officer until the Elections Commission appoints a new Chief Election Officer.

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/13/2026 7:44:42 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Teresa Parsons	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

There should never be "just one person" responsible for such an important task. I urge you to support this proposed legislation.

Thank you

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/13/2026 8:10:21 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Mike Golojuch, Sr.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support SB2143. We need this bill to safeguard our elections. Please pass.

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/13/2026 8:10:21 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Michele Golojuch	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I stand in full support of this bill.

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/13/2026 8:21:32 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Joie Yonamine	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in strong support of SB2143 both personally and as a member of the Indivisible Hawaii State Network (IHSN). This bill would provide that if the position of Chief Election Officer is vacant right before the election, the Attorney General would act as Interim Chief Election Officer until the Elections Commission appoints a new Chief Election Officer.

This would ensure that in the event of unforeseen vacancy, Hawaii will have procedures in place to ensure election certification can proceed, strengthening safeguards for the election process.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

Joie Yonamine, Manoa Valley

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/13/2026 8:54:38 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Sally Tomiko	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am strongly in favor of the state Attorney general acting as interim chair in case the Chief Election Officer Chair position is vacant, until such time as a permanent chair is in position. It is imperative to provide this so that Hawaii election integrity remains intact.

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/13/2026 9:07:50 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
janet Matlock	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

Certifying elections properly is a cornerstone of democracy. In this age of election denial, it becomes especially important to clearly identify who will be responsible for this important task should the Chief Election Officer position be vacant.

Your support of SB2143 is crucial, and greatly appreciated.

Mahalo,

janet Matlock, Kailua Kona

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/13/2026 10:26:00 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
LEE ANNE SPENCER	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We must protect our Election process. This bill is a common sense measure to ensure that someone is available to certify results in case there is no Chief Election Officer. This will ensure that our votes are certified in a timely manner and eliminate a possible path for election delays. Voting Yes is a no-brainer!

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/13/2026 10:29:40 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Daniel R Freund	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please advance this bill, which is a simple solution to the potential big problem of having no one to certify an election result because the Chief Election Officer position is vacant.

- Dan Freund, Kapaa

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/13/2026 10:30:30 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Pasion Delgado	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SB 2143

I support this measure to ensure election is certified. If something happens to the Chief Elections Officer the Attorney General will act as interim Chief Election Officer.

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/13/2026 10:42:11 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
JANE TOLLEFSRUD	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

It is a good idea to have a back-up plan. If, for some reason, the Chief Election Officer is not available to certify our votes, it makes sense to appoint our Attorney General to act as the interim Chief Election Officer, and insure that our votes are counted. Thank you for your continued support for protecting free and fair elections.

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/13/2026 11:18:44 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
DeWaine Tollefsrud	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha and Mahalo for this opportunity to testify my strong support for SB2143.

I have always been a strong advocate for having a solid 'Plan B' if plans go south. As we all know, the best laid plans can always fall apart. In coming elections we need to cover all contingencies including the possibility of a vacancy, for whatever reason, of the Chief Elections Officer. All of our votes count and we should not have to fear that our elections are not certified. The State Attorney General should have the authority to certify our elections should the office of Chief Election Officer be vacant.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in this important decision.

DeWaine Tollefsrud

Kea'au, HI 96749

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/13/2026 2:00:20 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Mecca Monson-Gere	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

Please support SB2143 and the idea that a Chief Elections Officer need not be seated for our votes to count. An interim is a wonderful way to ensure democracy prevails in the face of any bureaucratic failures.

Mahalo,

Mecca Monson-Gere

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/13/2026 2:43:00 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Noelle Lindenmann	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members:

I write today in **STRONG** support of SB2143.

This bill provides for any event of vacancy in the position of Chief Election Officer and is really important. The AG has the ability and should have the responsibility to service as the interim until a new one is appointed.

If we don't have a Chief Elections Officer, we will have no one to certify our elections and that disenfranchises all the voters.

Please support this bill. Mahalo for this opportunity to provide testimony.

Noelle Lindenmann, Kailua-Kona

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/13/2026 4:13:05 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Beth McDermott	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hawaii should never ever risk leaving our votes uncertified were we to lose our chief Elections Officer, Scott Nago. (Who is doing a great job by the way.) I write in 100% support of our AG serving as interim elections officer were this to become necessary. Hawaii has one of the best, most secure election systems in the entire country. Let's not risk blowing that, by ensuring we have a back up plan in place. This could not be more urgent while we live under an Administrtraiton in DC actively trying everything under the sun to destroy our nations free and fair elections!

Thsnk you for taking my testimony and taking this seriously

Beth McDermott

Indivisible- East Oahu Chapter

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/13/2026 5:55:30 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Mary Lu Kelley	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha.

I strongly support SB 2143. This bill provides that, in the event of a vacancy in the position of Chief Election Officer, the Attorney General shall serve as the Interim Chief Election Officer until the Elections Commission appoints a new Chief Election Officer. We need a Chief Election Officer plan like to this to protect Hawaii elections and Hawaii people.

Pass this bill. Do the right thing.

Thank you,

Mary Lu Kelley

Koloa, Kauai

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/13/2026 6:06:41 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Denize Machit	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill because we need clarity on how the office of elections is operated. Please support this legislation. Mahalo nui loa.

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/13/2026 10:47:53 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ellen Ebata	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice -Chair Gabbard, Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary,

My name is Ellen Ebata and I'm a resident of Koloa, Kauai.

I am writing in strong support of SB2143 which assigns the State Attorney General to serve in the event the Chief Election Officer position is vacated without an immediate replacement.

Continuity in election administration is essential. Absent a Chief Election Officer, elections cannot be certified, creating unnecessary uncertainty and undermining public confidence in our democratic process. The bill provides a practical safeguard to ensure that our elections remain functional and lawful, even during leadership transitions.

Recent unrelentless and rabid efforts to remove our current Chief Election Officer, Scott Nago, have been based on allegations that have not been substantiated. Regardless of political disagreement, the State must ensure that the integrity and certification of elections are protected from disruption, especially in this era of assaults on our rights.

I also strongly support maintaining access to mail-in voting which provides essential access for working people, seniors, people with disabilities and others who may have difficulty reaching polling locations. Claims that our mail-in system are rife with fraud have not been at all supported by a shred of credible evidence. This bill should receive the support of every legislator.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony and I respectfully urge you to support SB2143.

Sincerely,

Ellen Ebata

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/14/2026 10:07:06 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
John Wassell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this to ensure the votes are counted.

JJ Wassell

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/14/2026 11:10:53 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jessica Redford	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Ensure Hawaii has someone to certify our elections!

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/14/2026 1:11:56 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Vivian S. Toellner	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support SB2143, to protect our vote.

"I have been submitting testimony and watching Election Commission meetings. They have been hijacked by MAGA extremist who want to do away with **MAIL IN VOTING**, regardless of the overwhelming testimony of public testimony in favor of **MAIL IN VOTING** !

These few also keep meetings going for hours (6 hours) They keep accusing that 19,000 votes were manufactured on the Big Island of Hawai'i, and rehashing past elections counts.

**I was an election observer in Hilo at the counting center, and was impressed with the people and system.**

Please protect our **Right to Vote**. Aloha & Mahalo for accepting my testimony.

Most Sincerely, Vivian S. Toellner"

COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY  
Sen. Karl Rhoads, Chair  
Sen. Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair

HEARING:

Wednesday, February 18, 2026 at 9:05 AM  
Conference Room 016 & Videoconference  
State Capitol  
415 South Beretania Street

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT - SB 2143, RELATING TO CHIEF ELECTION OFFICER.**

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 **support of SB 2143**, Relating to the Chief Election Officer, which provides that, in the event of a vacancy in the position of Chief Election Officer, the Attorney General shall serve as the Interim Chief Election Officer until the Elections Commission appoints a new Chief Election Officer.

As Marc Elias, noted elections and voting rights attorney has noted in Democracy Docket, anti-democratic forces are engaged in efforts to suppress the vote and interfere in our elections. This is something we witnessed here in Hawai'i when the Elections Commission voted to ask the Legislature to consider returning Hawai'i to one-day, in-person voting, getting rid of mail-in voting altogether, and narrowly rejected a proposal to fire the chief election officer, Scott Nago.<sup>1</sup> It is frankly terrifying to think that extreme members of the Election Commission are making deliberate efforts to restrict voting options and fabricating doubt in our elections. I, myself, relied on mail-in voting in the 2024 election because I was on the mainland dealing with family matters at the time of the election. I do not want my vote suppressed over completely unfounded fears related to the security of mail-in voting and misinformation about election fraud.

SB 2143 is intended to constrain the Elections Commission's authority to fire Scott Nago, the current Chief Election Officer, as was recommended by a three-member panel last August. The goal of anti-democratic forces is to subvert faith in our elections as a means of suppressing the vote and allowing election outcomes to be contested. For excellent resources on the overall subject of subverting elections as a tenant of the authoritarian playbook, I direct you to Democracy Docket and to Protect Democracy.

In the context of Hawaii elections, there were allegations of vote count discrepancy brought forward by certain members of the Elections Commission. A 220-page report from Election Commissioners Osterkamp, McAdam and Kahiolani Papalimu determined however that "a purported discrepancy of more than 19,000 ballots<sup>2</sup>" between Hawai'i County and the state in the 2024 general election was

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<sup>1</sup> Chad Blair, Honolulu Civil Beat, "Elections Commission Wants State Auditor To Examine Hawai'i's 2024 Vote," Oct. 1, 2025.  
<https://www.civilbeat.org/2025/10/elections-commission-wants-state-auditor-to-examine-hawai%CA%BBis-2024-vote/>

<sup>2</sup> State of Hawaii Elections Commission, Permitted Interaction Group Report on Purported Big Island Ballot Discrepancy, Sept. 29, 2025,  
<https://elections.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025-10-01-EC-Supplemental-Meeting-Packet.pdf>

unfounded. The report stated, “we find a complete lack of credible evidence to support the claim of a significant ballot discrepancy.”

The report added, “When we encourage voters to pursue conspiracies or to believe that government workers are hiding ballots or creating new ones, we significantly damage the system on which our democracy depends.” We must be ever-vigilant against outside influences attempting to hijack state control over elections, subvert the will of the voters, and create doubt over the security of our elections. It is, again, a noted antidemocratic strategy to sow doubt about elections as a means of suppressing the vote and undermining democracy. I **support SB 2143** as a necessary measure to protect the role of the Chief Election Officer from unfounded attacks and to ensure that, should he be removed, the Attorney General is able to step in to replace him immediately.

Mahalo for supporting efforts to protect our elections,

Christine Andrews, JD  
Wailuku, Maui

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**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/14/2026 8:53:11 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Georgia L Hoopes	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha!

My names is Georgia Hoopes. I strongly support SB 2143. This bill provides that, in the event of a vacancy in the position of Chief Election Officer, the Attorney General shall serve as the Interim Chief Election Officer until the Elections Commission appoints a new Chief Election Officer.

Mahalo!

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/14/2026 10:21:25 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Lori Kizer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Writing from my home in Kapaa to ask that you please pass this very important bill. Mahalo.

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 12:12:45 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Brett Kulbis	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Rhoads and Committee Members,

My name is Brett Kulbis, I'm a 26yr retired Navy Veteran, who took a solemn oath to defend the Constitution from all enemies foreign and domestic, and that oath didn't expire when I retired. I live in Ewa Beach.

I STRONGLY OPPOSE BILL SB-2143 in its current iteration.

SB-2143 would amend HRS §11-1.6 so that, if the chief election officer's position becomes vacant, the attorney general automatically serves as interim chief election officer until the Elections Commission appoints a replacement. This may ensure continuity, but it also concentrates too much power in a single statewide official, creates conflicts of interest, and risks the appearance of partisanship.

The attorney general already controls law enforcement, civil litigation, and legal advice to state agencies. Adding direct control over election administration, even temporarily, means one office could both enforce the law and run the elections. Instead, the law should designate a nonpartisan, elections-focused successor—such as the deputy chief election officer or another senior professional within the Office of Elections—as the default interim chief election officer, subject to Elections Commission ratification.

Because the attorney general often handles election-related lawsuits and complaints, having the same official run elections undermines confidence that those matters are handled impartially. The bill should maintain a clear separation between the office that runs elections and the office that litigates or investigates them, with recusal and independent oversight whenever a successor's own actions are at issue.

SB-2143 also sets no time limit on how long the attorney general may serve as interim chief election officer. A "temporary" role could become an extended arrangement if the Commission delays. The bill should impose a firm deadline (for example, 60–90 days) for the Commission to appoint a new chief election officer and provide that, if it fails to act, a career elections professional—not the attorney general—serves as acting chief election officer until the vacancy is filled.

The Elections Commission was created to keep election administration somewhat independent from other political branches. Letting the attorney general step into the top elections role blurs that separation. A better approach is to require the Commission to maintain a written succession list inside the Office of Elections, and, if more accountability is needed, to consider senate confirmation for the permanent chief election officer rather than inserting the attorney general into the chain of command.

In a time of heightened skepticism about elections, Hawai‘i should avoid changes that politicize or centralize control over election administration.

I respectfully urge the Committee to amend or defer SB-2143.

Brett Kulbis

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 11:24:20 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Martha Nakajima	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill. Thank you, Martha. Nakajima, Honolulu, member of Indivisible

February 18, 2026

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard:

**Strong support for SB2134:**

This bill provides that, if by some coincidence the position of Chief Election Officer is vacant right before the election, the Attorney General would act as Interim Chief Election Officer until the Elections Commission appoints a new Chief Election Officer. This would ensure that the vote could be certified in a timely manner.

I urge the committee to pass **SB2134**.

Thank you for your consideration.

Keith Neal

Waimea

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 11:52:19 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Cristina Holt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Cristina Holt. I live on Hawai'i Island, and I support SB 2143.

Elections cannot pause.

If the position of Chief Election Officer becomes vacant, we cannot afford uncertainty, delay, or administrative drift while the Elections Commission deliberates. Continuity of operations matters. Deadlines do not move. Ballots do not wait. Compliance with federal and state law does not pause.

This bill provides clarity.

The Attorney General is the State's chief legal officer. The office already represents the State in election-related litigation, advises agencies on statutory interpretation, and is equipped to ensure compliance during a transition period.

This is not a permanent consolidation of authority. It is a temporary safeguard to prevent a vacuum.

The Elections Commission retains the authority to appoint a new Chief Election Officer. That structure does not change. What this bill does is ensure that, in the interim, there is a qualified, accountable public official responsible for maintaining election operations.

In moments of transition, ambiguity is the enemy of trust. Clear lines of authority strengthen public confidence.

SB 2143 provides a defined, lawful, and immediate interim solution.

For the sake of continuity, legal compliance, and operational stability, I urge you to advance this bill.

Mahalo for your time.

Cristina Holt  
Hawai'i Island



**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 12:52:17 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ruth Robison	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TO: Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Senate Judiciary Committee (JDC) Members

FROM: Ruth Robison

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I have been a resident of the state of Hawai`i since 1962 and Hilo since 1982. I am a member of the League of Women Voters of Hawai`i, but am testifying here as an individual.

I am offering testimony in strong support of SB2143: This bill provides that "Notwithstanding any law to the contrary, the attorney general shall serve as the interim chief election officer until the elections commission appoints a new chief election officer." This would ensure that any election could be certified in a timely manner. I urge that, as stated in the bill, the measure take effect upon the approval of SB2143.

Thank you for your service to the people of Hawai`i.

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 2:04:04 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jessica Kuzmier	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, I am writing in favor of SB2143. I believe it codifies a sense of stability in case of unforeseen circumstances. Mahalo for your consideration.

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 6:13:52 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Marguerite Koster	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am a resident of Honolulu (Kaka'ako) and I wish to provide testimony for my **STRONG SUPPORT** for SB 2143, which provides that, in the event of a vacancy in the position of Chief Election Officer, the Attorney General shall serve as the Interim Chief Election Officer until the Elections Commission appoints a new Chief Election Officer.

Mahalo nui loa,

Marguerite Koster

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 9:14:04 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Blaine De Ramos	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose SB2143

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 9:54:44 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Cory Harden	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha legislators,

Please support this to avoid election controversy, which is already being stoked.

mahalo,

Cory

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 5:53:00 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Deven English	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in strong opposition of this bill

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 9:23:29 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Judith Mura	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I, Judith Mura. Strongly Support SB2143

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 10:02:34 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Pamela Elders	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

As I read news reports from across the country, I am increasingly concerned about free and fair elections: elections without political interference at the local level and federal intervention from the Executive Branch. Given what has occurred in other states, it is extremely important to have a strong individual at the helm of the election system at all times who will stand up for the integrity of Hawaii's elections. I support the AG stepping in if there is a vacancy in the Chief Election Officer position because the AG knows the law and can be held accountable.

Elections require constant oversight and strict compliance with legal deadlines. This bill provides a clear interim structure so that election administration continues without disruption while the Elections Commission appoints a permanent replacement.

Mahalo,

Pamela Elders,

Laupahoehoe, Hawaii

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 10:19:56 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Joell Edwards	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Joell Edwards, a Wainiha resident and Chair of the Kaua‘i County Democrats. I offer this testimony today in my personal capacity.

I strongly support SB2143.

This measure protects the stability and integrity of Hawai‘i’s election system by ensuring there is no gap in leadership if the Chief Election Officer position becomes vacant. Our elections are built on careful administration, legal compliance, and strict timelines. Ballots must be prepared, voter rolls must be maintained, and statutory deadlines must be met without interruption.

Even a temporary lapse in oversight could create confusion, delay, or undermine public confidence. SB2143 provides a clear and responsible interim structure so that election operations continue seamlessly while the Elections Commission appoints a permanent replacement.

Continuity in election administration is not optional — it is foundational to public trust. This bill is a prudent safeguard to ensure our democratic processes remain steady, transparent, and secure.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Joell Edwards  
Wainiha, Kaua‘i

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 10:24:13 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
John Fitzpatrick	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

SB 2143 protects the stability of Hawai'i's election system by ensuring there is no gap in leadership if the Chief Election Officer position becomes vacant.

Elections require constant oversight and strict compliance with legal deadlines. This bill provides a clear interim structure so that election administration continues without disruption while the Elections Commission appoints a permanent replacement.

Mahalo,

John "Fitz" Fitzpatrick,

Makawao

*Ballots must be prepared, voter rolls must be maintained, and statutory deadlines must be met.*

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard

My name is Dale VanderBrink. I am the 2nd Vice Chair of the Ala Moana Kaka'ako Neighborhood Board. This is my personal testimony.

I am writing this in support of SB2143

This bill should be noncontroversial. A simple change to ensure the Chief Election Officer position is filled in the event the current one is removed for any such reason. However, we have seen groups of people using this bill as a means to attack our mail in the voting system and to vent about their beliefs that we have "massive voter fraud".

So my testimony today is rather simple. This change is very minor and helps ensure the position of Chief Election Officer is filled and not left vacant for any extended period of time. Please pass SB2143

Mahalo,

Dale

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 10:53:55 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Diane Ware	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Senate Judiciary Committee (JDC) Members**

**Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I am a member of the League of Women Voters of Hawai`i, but am testifying here as an individual.**

**I am offering testimony in strong support of SB2143: This bill provides that "Notwithstanding any law to the contrary, the attorney general shall serve as the interim chief election officer until the elections commission appoints a new chief election officer." This would ensure that any election could be certified in a timely manner. I urge that, as stated in the bill, the measure take effect upon the approval of SB2143.**

**Thank you for your service to the people of Hawai`i.**

Diane Ware Volcano HI 96785-0698

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 11:03:29 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Robert Nawahine Mansfield, Jr	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**SB 2143**

**COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY**

**Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair, Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice-Chair, Members of the Committee on Judiciary**

**09:05 a.m. Wednesday, 18 February 2026**

**Conference Room 016, Videoconference**

Aloha kākou,

I am a resident of Moiliili, O'ahu. Robert Nawahine Mansfield, Jr. and support **SB 2143** . *Your concerted support on behalf of the multitudes who struggle daily to make ends meet for their households is necessary in these uncertain times. We need to build a firewall around our voting system to protect us from big business control.*

*Thank you for making it possible for me to submit this testimony; for your time to read this.*

*Please carefully expedite filling the vacancy of Chief Election Officer.*

*Mahalo a nui loa,*

*Robert Nawahine Mansfield Jr.*

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 12:11:05 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Barbara J. Service	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Rhoads and committee members.

re: SB2143 Relating to the Chief Election Officer

My name is Barbara Service and I'm a resident of SD9 and HD18. I strongly support SB2143. The Chief Election Officer is the only person who can certify elections. It's a very important duty. In the event that he/she is unable to perform the task, it is essential that someone is designated to act. The Attorney General should fulfill that role, in an interim capacity, until a new Chief Election Officer is appointed.

Barbara J. Service. MSW

Child Welfare Supervisor (ret.)

Passionate Kupuna advocate

Committee on JUDICIARY  
Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard  
Wednesday, February 18, 2026, 9:05 a.m.  
Room 016, State Capitol

SB 2143 – RELATING TO THE CHIEF ELECTION OFFICER  
TESTIMONY  
Janet Mason

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Committee Members:

**I am providing personal testimony in support of SB 2143, Relating to the Chief Election Officer.**

This measure is a prudent step in being prepared for future elections. It is a common-sense approach so that Hawaii could continue to administer elections if the Chief Election Officer position is temporarily vacant.

Our electoral laws should provide a process for a temporary vacancy, one that works in tandem with our existing statutes for permanent appointments by the State Elections Commission.

Our Attorney General has raised legitimate objections to appointing a person who might be called upon to defend the State in an election contest. I defer to this Committee to specify an acceptable alternative.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 12:29:07 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Sheryl Binder Rawson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support SB2143 because:

- SB2143 providing a temporary substitute for our Chief Elections Officer is a prudent precaution to provide uninterrupted elections administration in Hawaii;
- This measure would be a temporary arrangement until the Elections Commission could appoint a new Chief Elections Officer;
- I would defer to this Committee about designating an Executive branch employee for this temporary appointment, but hope you will consider appointing the General Counsel for the Office of Elections, because this person would not represent the State in any elections complaints but is knowledgeable about State elections law and elections administration.

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 12:51:36 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Nina Buchanan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I defer to this Committee about designating an Executive branch employee for this temporary appointment, but hope you will consider appointing the General Counsel for the Office of Elections. We need a knowledgeable who can follow State elections law and administer elections in a fair, transparent manner.

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 1:12:25 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Michele Mitsumori	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

SB 2143 protects the stability of Hawai'i's election system by ensuring there is no gap in leadership if the Chief Election Officer position becomes vacant.

Elections require constant oversight and strict compliance with legal deadlines. This bill provides a clear interim structure so that election administration continues without disruption while the Elections Commission appoints a permanent replacement.

SB2143 facilitates stability, apparent seamless transition, and clear communication, which help strengthen trust in our elections system.

Mahalo,  
Michele Mitsumori  
Hilo 96720

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 1:13:18 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Tina Even	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**I support SB2143  
Tina Marie Even**

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 1:18:31 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Judith Mills-Wong	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In light of the attempts of the federal government to disrupt our elections, I hope the legislators will harden every aspect of the election process including taking the precaution to provide for a solution should there be a vacancy in the Chief Elections Officer position.

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 1:39:25 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Lorna Holmes	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I write in support of this bill to provide a temporary substitute for our Chief Elections Officer in case one is needed. This is a prudent precaution to insure uninterrupted elections administration in Hawaii.

I suggest appointing the General Counsel for the Office of Elections as substitute officer, because this person would not represent the State if there are any elections complaints (thus no conflict of interest), but is knowledgeable about State elections law and elections administration.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Dr. Lorna Holmes, Mo'ili'ili 96826

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 1:42:51 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Darryl Nordstrom	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, I strongly support Senate Bill 2143. It is vital to secure and protect our votes and the integrity of the election process.

Mahalo,

Darryl Nordstrom

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 2:02:53 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
cheryl burghardt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I **support** this bill.

SB 2143 protects the stability of Hawai'i's election system by ensuring there is no gap in leadership if the Chief Election Officer position becomes vacant.

Mahalo,

Cheryl Burghardt

Nuuanu Oahu

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 2:04:57 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Donna Ambrose	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

SB 2143 protects the stability of Hawai'i's election system by ensuring there is no gap in leadership if the Chief Election Officer position becomes vacant.

A sizeable percentage of the population already questions the soundness of our election system. Lack of a clear interim structure to fill the vital position of Chief Election Officer will only contribute to that outlook should said officer depart prematurely.

I urge you to pass this bill.

Mahalo,

Donna Ambrose

Kailua

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 2:37:16 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Christine Trecker	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support SB2143. This bill seeks to strengthen the certification process by requiring our State Attorney General to act as Interim Chief Election Officer, should that position become vacant, and to hold that position until such time the Elections Commission appoints a new Chief Election Officer.

Sadly, we are living during a time when our national elections are at serious risk of being undermined, including disruption in the vote certification process. This bill will help ensure Hawaii's vote in upcoming elections is certified.

Please pass SB2143. Thank you.

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 3:46:59 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
kimdonghyeon	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SB 2143 protects the stability of Hawai'i's election system by ensuring there is no gap in leadership if the Chief Election Officer position becomes vacant.

Elections require constant oversight and strict compliance with legal deadlines. This bill provides a clear interim structure so that election administration continues without disruption while the Elections Commission appoints a permanent replacement.

Mahalo,

kimdonghyeon

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 6:11:27 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ann Dorsey	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

Please ensure ballots are prepared, voter rolls are maintained, and statutory deadlines are met by supporting SB 2143, which protects the stability of Hawai'i's election system by ensuring there is no gap in leadership if the Chief Election Officer position becomes vacant.

Elections require constant oversight and strict compliance with legal deadlines. This bill provides a clear interim structure so that election administration continues without disruption while the Elections Commission appoints a permanent replacement.

Thank you

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 6:12:30 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Susan Dursin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and members of the Judiciary Committee:

With confusion concerning elections generated by the federal government, it is important that Hawaii have a clear plan providing for a Chief Elections Officer in case of an unexpected vacancy in that office.

It is the responsibility of the Elections Commission to appoint a person to fill that vacancy. The best choice is the General Counsel for the Office of Elections as that person well understands Hawaii election law and how elections are run.

Thank you,

Susan Dursin

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 7:03:17 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Gail Morrison	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As an individual and member of Indivisible Hawaii, I support this bill.

Thank you, Gail Morrison

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 8:19:55 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Netteange Monaus	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Here's a revised version that is clear, professional, and concise while keeping your original intent:

My name is Nette Monaus, and I respectfully support SB2143.

SB2143 is a prudent and necessary measure to ensure continuity and uninterrupted elections administration in Hawai'i. This bill provides a temporary solution to maintain stability and public confidence while the Elections Commission appoints a new Chief Elections Officer.

I defer to the Committee regarding the designation of an Executive Branch employee for this interim appointment. However, I respectfully encourage consideration of the General Counsel for the Office of Elections. Although this individual does not represent the State in elections complaints, they possess substantial knowledge of Hawai'i's elections law and administration and would be well-positioned to provide steady leadership during this transitional period.

Thank you for your time,

Nette Monaus

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 9:40:54 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Malia Kealoha	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please put the AG IN Charge of elections to protect the pro RSS.

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 5:42:47 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kehaulani Coleman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 7:49:24 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Tara Gregory	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose this bill.

For the past two years, I have personally participated in calls, public meetings, and formal discussions with the Office of Elections regarding compliance with federal law, specifically the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) and the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA).

During that time, I have repeatedly asked for transparency around voter roll maintenance, audit safeguards, federal reporting compliance, and access to public election data. Instead of clear answers and proactive disclosure, I have experienced delays, resistance to independent audit review, and ongoing concerns about whether Hawai'i is fully meeting federal standards.

HAVA was enacted to ensure uniform election safeguards and accountability. The NVRA requires proper voter list maintenance and transparency in how voter rolls are managed. These are not optional guidelines, they are federal protections designed to maintain public trust.

At a time when public confidence in elections is fragile nationwide, moving forward with legislation that increases automation or reduces verification safeguards without first addressing existing transparency concerns is deeply irresponsible.

Accountability is not partisan. Transparency is not extreme. Audit safeguards are not optional.

If the Office of Elections and the Attorney General are confident in full compliance, then there should be no resistance to clear audits, public reporting, and lawful access to voter roll information.

The people of Hawai'i deserve clarity, not defensiveness.

They deserve compliance, not stalling.

And they deserve leadership that protects the integrity of our elections without compromise.

Both the AG and CEO are not capable of fulfilling their duties. For these reasons, I stand firmly opposed to this bill.

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 8:22:41 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Peggy Brandt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing as a member of Indivisible in support for SB2143. Its passage is essential so that there is a chain of command in case the existing Chief Election Officer were incapacitated or removed for some reason, such that we could still certify our elections quickly and cleanly.

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 8:42:12 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nanea Lo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Hello Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Committee,**

My name is **Nanea Lo**, and I **STRONGLY SUPPORT SB 2143**.

SB 2143 protects the stability and integrity of Hawai‘i’s election system by ensuring there is no gap in leadership if the Chief Election Officer position becomes vacant.

Election administration requires continuous oversight and strict adherence to legal timelines and procedural requirements. Even a short disruption in leadership can jeopardize public confidence and create unnecessary risk to the orderly conduct of elections. This measure establishes a clear and responsible interim structure so election operations may continue seamlessly while the Hawai‘i Elections Commission appoints a permanent replacement.

By proactively addressing a potential leadership gap, SB 2143 strengthens continuity, accountability, and public trust in our democratic processes.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to **PASS SB 2143**.

me ke aloha ‘āina,

Nanea Lo, 96826

Sierra Club of Hawai‘i Member

Hawai‘i Workers Center Board Member

Honolulu Tenants Union Member

350 Hawai‘i Member

Carbon Cashback Hawai‘i Member

Hawai‘i Tax Fairness Coalition Member

**LATE**

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 11:35:27 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Gaylene L Barron	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I do not support this bill. Election integrity is vital to our democracy.

**LATE**

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 3:05:07 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Beverley Brand	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**TO: Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Senate Judiciary Committee (JDC)  
Members**

**Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I am a member of the League of Women Voters of Hawai`i, but am testifying here as an individual.**

**I am offering testimony in strong support of SB2143: This bill provides that "Notwithstanding any law to the contrary, the attorney general shall serve as the interim chief election officer until the elections commission appoints a new chief election officer." This would ensure that any election could be certified in a timely manner. I urge that, as stated in the bill, the measure take effect upon the approval of SB2143.**

**Thank you for your service to the people of Hawai`i.**

**LATE**

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 3:34:12 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Leslie Keating	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I value the integrity of our elections and want to see the process remain uninterrupted even in times of unexpected change. Please support this bill.

**LATE**

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 5:21:16 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Shana Wailana Kukila	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Senator Rhoads and the Senate Judiciary Committee,

My testimony is in **support of SB2143 Relating to the Chief Elections Officer**. This testimony is presented on behalf of myself as an individual and as a private member of the League of Women Voters of Hawai'i County. In the League, we are all volunteers who work hard at providing voter education to our members and the broader community.

It is extremely important to have free and fair elections for the sake of all citizens' right to vote and engage in a civil society. Although we hope this measure is not needed, we see it as a bulwark against election interference should it become a necessity. We should not leave the election to chance, particularly since we have a sense of broad mistrust for government leaders within the state of Hawai'i at this time of corruption and bribes in the highest of local government offices.

I encourage you to vote in support of this bill as one of many steps in providing the voters of Hawai'i with a free and fair election that is safe and accessible for all.

Mahalo,

Shana Kukila

**LATE**

**SB-2143**

Submitted on: 2/18/2026 7:14:06 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/18/2026 9:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Paul Giles	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I OPPOSE SB2143