



STATE OF HAWAII
CAMPAIGN SPENDING COMMISSION

235 SOUTH BERETANIA STREET, ROOM 300
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

March 12, 2026

TO: The Honorable David A. Tarnas, Chair
House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs

The Honorable Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair
House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs

Members of the House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs

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

SUBJECT: **Testimony on S.B. No. 2247, S.D.1, Relating to Political Fundraising by Executive Branch Employees.**
House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs
Tuesday, March 17, 2026, at 2:00 p.m.
Conference Room 325 & Videoconference

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill. The Campaign Spending Commission ("Commission") supports this bill.

This bill adds a new section to part II of Chapter 84, Hawaii Revised Statutes prohibiting executive branch employees appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate from organizing, attending, hosting, or soliciting contributions for any political fundraiser for any candidate for elective office or from soliciting contributions from any individual or entity. The prohibition is effective from the date of Senate confirmation until the covered position ends. The Commission supports this bill which we believe will prevent "pay -to-play" practices, or at least the appearance of these practices and represents a step towards improving public confidence in government.

The Commission requests that this committee pass this measure.



HAWAI'I STATE ETHICS COMMISSION

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

Committee: House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs
Bill Number: SB 2247 SD1
Hearing Date/Time: March 17 2026, 2:00 p.m.
Regarding: Testimony in Support

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice-Chair Poepoe, and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **support** of S.B. 2247 SD1. This measure would prohibit certain executive branch nominees to compensated, Senate-confirmed positions from engaging in specified campaign fundraising activities. The Legislature has recognized that public confidence in state government depends on assurance that procurement decisions are made free from political influence. Even absent actual misconduct, the perception that fundraising relationships could influence contract awards or contract management can undermine trust in the fairness and integrity of governmental decision-making. This measure proposes narrow restrictions to a defined group of senior executive branch officials whose roles likely affect procurement decisions.

The proposed safeguards are consistent with core ethics principles that governmental authority – particularly authority involving the expenditure of public funds – must remain independent from political financial considerations. Clear separation between **procurement authority** and **campaign fundraising** helps protect vendors, public officials, and the public from circumstances that could reasonably call into question the objectivity of contracting decisions.

For these reasons, the Hawai'i State Ethics Commission respectfully supports this measure as a targeted measure to reduce pay-to-play risk and strengthen public confidence in the State's public government.

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

Very truly yours,

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



**Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs
Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action (HAPA) Supports SB2247 SD1
Tuesday, March 17, 2026, at 2:00 PM | Conference Room 325 & Videoconference**

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and members of the Committee,

HAPA supports SB2247 SD1, which prohibits a narrowly defined group of high-level executive branch employees from engaging in political fundraising activities while serving in their appointed roles.

Public confidence in government depends on knowing that procurement decisions and contract management are made based on merit, not political access. When the officials who hold authority over those decisions are also out organizing and attending campaign fundraisers, it creates a real problem, even if no actual misconduct occurs. The appearance of pay-to-play is damaging on its own. Contractors notice who shows up at fundraisers. Candidates notice who hosts them. That dynamic, left unaddressed, quietly corrodes the integrity of public procurement.

SB2247 SD1 addresses this in a targeted way. It applies only to executive branch employees who are nominated or appointed by the Governor to compensated positions subject to Senate confirmation. That is a small, clearly defined group of officials whose roles give them meaningful influence over state contracts and procurement decisions. The bill prohibits them from organizing, hosting, attending, or soliciting contributions for political fundraisers while they hold those positions.

Importantly, this bill does not restrict anyone's constitutional rights. These employees can still vote, make personal political contributions, and express political opinions as private citizens. The bill simply draws a line around the specific activities that create the greatest risk of undue influence or the appearance of it.

The cost of this reform is minimal. The cost of inaction, in eroded public trust and compromised procurement integrity, is far greater.

HAPA respectfully urges this committee to pass SB2247 SD1.

Thank you for your consideration,

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

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



Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs
Chair David Tarnas, Vice Chair Mahina Poepoe
Tuesday, March 17, 2026, 2:00pm
Room 325

SB2247 – RELATING TO POLITICAL FUNDRAISING BY EXECUTIVE BRANCH
EMPLOYEES

TESTIMONY

Judith Mills Wong, Legislative Committee, League of Women Voters of Hawaii

Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Committee Members:

The League of Women Voters of Hawaii SUPPORTS SB2247

The League of Women Voters believes government must be held to high ethical standards in order to earn the trust of its citizens. Sadly, trust in government has been eroded recently by the appearance of private influence on political decisions.

It is vital to public trust and to good decision-making that state contracts are free from political influence. Political fundraising by executive branch employees create the appearance and the risk that decisions made by those employees could be tainted by political influence.

This bill prohibits key employees of the Executive Branch from hosting political fundraisers or soliciting contributions for any candidate. We believe this would increase public trust in government and therefore we support SB2247.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

SB-2247-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/12/2026 3:28:30 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
William Caron	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and members of the committee,

I am writing in **strong support of SB2247**, which would prohibit certain executive branch employees—specifically those nominated or appointed by the Governor requiring Senate confirmation who may have influence over procurement and state contracts—from participating in political fundraising activities. This bill is a targeted, sensible reform to prevent even the appearance of pay-to-play politics in Hawai‘i government.

When officials who oversee contracts or procurement participate in campaign fundraising, it creates the appearance of impropriety. Even when no actual wrongdoing occurs, the perception that access to state contracts can be bought through campaign contributions erodes public trust. A developer seeking a contract should never feel—nor should the public ever suspect—that their donation to an official's fundraiser might influence the outcome. SB2247 draws a bright line between those who control the purse strings and those who ask for campaign dollars.

This bill targets the specific roles where influence is most concerning. It applies only to executive branch employees who require Senate confirmation and who have influence over procurement and contracts. These are the positions where the risk of perceived favoritism is highest. The bill does not broadly restrict all appointed officials—only those with direct sway over how public dollars are spent.

Perception matters as much as reality in a healthy democracy. Government ethics are not only about avoiding actual corruption; they are about maintaining public confidence that decisions are made fairly and impartially. When the public believes that contracts are awarded based on merit rather than connections, trust in institutions grows. When that trust is damaged, democracy itself suffers.

SB2247 is a preventive measure, not a punitive one. It does not assume wrongdoing; it simply removes the temptation and the appearance of conflict before either can take root. It is a common-sense guardrail that aligns Hawai‘i with best practices in good governance.

I urge you to pass this bill. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

SB-2247-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/12/2026 3:38:56 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Johnnie-Mae L. Perry	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry, OPPOSE

2247 SB RELATING TO POLITICAL FUNDRAISING BY EXECUTIVE BRANCH
EMPLOYEES.

ALL CAMPAIGN FUNDRAISING PUBLIC/PRIVATE FOR PUBLIC OFFICE

SB-2247-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/12/2026 5:03:45 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

This bill will help mitigate voter perceptions that contractors who "pay to play" receive preferential consideration in the awarding of government contracts.

Thank you for accepting my testimony.

SB-2247-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/13/2026 11:58:02 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

This is a good government bill, which, given the latest news tied to Ty Cullen, must be passed. It will help restore the public's faith in government.

lynne matusow

SB-2247-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/13/2026 3:02:42 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lila Mower	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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SB-2247-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/13/2026 3:13:56 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cristina Holt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and members of the committee.

My name is Cristina Holt. I am a resident of Hilo, Hawaii Island, and I support SB 2247 SD1.

This one is pretty simple. When the officials who control state contracts are also out hosting and attending political fundraisers, it creates an obvious problem. Even if nothing improper is happening, the appearance alone does real damage. Contractors notice who shows up at fundraisers. Candidates notice who hosts them. That dynamic quietly corrodes public trust in government procurement whether anyone intends it to or not.

SB 2247 SD1 draws a clear line. It prohibits a small, narrowly defined group of high-level appointed officials from organizing, hosting, attending, or soliciting contributions for political fundraisers while they hold their positions. That is it. They can still vote, donate personally, and say whatever they want as private citizens. The bill does not touch any of that. It just addresses the specific activity that creates the greatest risk of pay-to-play perception.

This costs almost nothing to implement. The cost of doing nothing, in eroded public trust and compromised procurement integrity, is much higher.

Please pass SB 2247 SD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Cristina Holt Hilo, Hawaii Island

SB-2247-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/15/2026 1:18:30 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Please advance this good government proposal.

- Dan Freund, Kapaa

SB-2247-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/15/2026 3:16:16 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and members of the Committee,

I'm submitting testimony in support of SB2247 SD1.

When the officials who control state contracts are also attending and hosting political fundraisers, it creates the impression that political donations and government contracts are connected. Even if nothing improper is happening, that appearance does real damage to public trust.

SB2247 SD1 is a narrow, practical fix. It prohibits a small, clearly defined group of high-level appointed officials from engaging in political fundraising while they hold their positions, without touching their rights to vote, donate personally, or speak their minds as citizens.

Please pass SB2247 SD1.

Mahalo,

Georgia Hoopes, Kalaheo

SB-2247-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/15/2026 4:24:43 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christine L. Andrews, J.D.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Mahalo for supporting this measure.

SB-2247-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/15/2026 5:27:38 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Greetings Committee Members,

Please support SB2447 SD1. Campaign finance laws only work if they can actually be enforced. Too often, violations are hidden through complex or misleading reporting and are not discovered until years later. When the statute of limitations expires before misconduct is uncovered, accountability disappears, and there are no consequences for bad actors.

Mahalo for your attention.

Marcia Kemble

Makiki

SB-2247-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/15/2026 5:43:52 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Melissa Barker	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I am writing to ask that you support of SB2247 SD1 which prohibits executive branch employees who are nominated or appointed by the Governor to compensated, Senate-confirmed positions from organizing, hosting, attending, or soliciting contributions for political fundraisers while they hold those roles. It does not restrict their right to vote, make personal political contributions, or express political views as private citizens. This restriction applies only for as long as they serve in a covered position.

Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Melissa Barker

Kapaa, HI

SB-2247-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/15/2026 6:00:24 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shay Chan Hodges	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and members of the Committee,

I'm submitting testimony in support of SB2247 SD1.

When the officials who control state contracts are also attending and hosting political fundraisers, it creates the impression that political donations and government contracts are connected. Even if nothing improper is happening, that appearance does real damage to public trust.

SB2247 SD1 is a narrow, practical fix. It prohibits a small, clearly defined group of high-level appointed officials from engaging in political fundraising while they hold their positions, without touching their rights to vote, donate personally, or speak their minds as citizens.

Please pass SB2247 SD1.

-Shay Chan Hodges, Maui, Hawaii

SB-2247-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 8:54:13 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Hello Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and members of the Committee,

I'm submitting testimony in support of SB2247 SD1.

When the officials who control state contracts are also attending and hosting political fundraisers, it creates the impression that political donations and government contracts are connected. Even if nothing improper is happening, that appearance does real damage to public trust.

SB2247 SD1 is a narrow, practical fix. It prohibits a small, clearly defined group of high-level appointed officials from engaging in political fundraising while they hold their positions, without touching their rights to vote, donate personally, or speak their minds as citizens.

Please pass SB2247 SD1.

Me ke aloha 'āina,

Nanea Lo, 96826

Sierra Club of Hawai'i Member

Hawai'i Workers Center Board Member

Clean Elections Hawai'i Member

Honolulu Tenants Union Member

350 Hawai'i Member

Carbon Cashback Hawai'i Member

Hawai'i Tax Fairness Coalition Member

SB-2247-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 9:40:19 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha, I am writing in support of SB2247 SD1. When officials who oversee contracts or procurement participate in campaign fundraising activities, it can create the appearance of pay-to-play politics, even if no wrongdoing occurs. This bill creates guardrails so this does not take place. Mahalo for your consideration.

SB-2247-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 11:28:41 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and members of the Committee,

I'm submitting testimony in support of SB2247 SD1.

When the officials who control state contracts are also attending and hosting political fundraisers, it creates the impression that political donations and government contracts are connected. Even if nothing improper is happening, that appearance does real damage to public trust.

SB2247 SD1 is a narrow, practical fix. It prohibits a small, clearly defined group of high-level appointed officials from engaging in political fundraising while they hold their positions, without touching their rights to vote, donate personally, or speak their minds as citizens.

Please pass SB2247 SD1.

Mahalo,

ANN V SAFFERY

HONOLULU, HI

SB-2247-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 1:27:27 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Pamela Elders	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and members of the Committee,

Please accept the following testimony in support of SB2247 SD1.

When the officials who control state contracts are also attending and hosting political fundraisers, it creates the impression that political donations and government contracts are connected. Even if nothing improper is happening, that appearance does real damage to public trust.

Your support of this bill strengthens confidence that Hawaii's elections are free and fair and sets a higher moral bar for elected officials. Pay to play must be stopped.

SB2247 SD1 is a narrow, practical fix. It prohibits a small, clearly defined group of high-level appointed officials from engaging in political fundraising while they hold their positions, without touching their rights to vote, donate personally, or speak their minds as citizens.

Please pass SB2247 SD1.

Mahalo,

Pam Elders

Laupahoehoe, HI

SB-2247-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 5:00:47 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/17/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Von Kaanaana	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a constituent of the committee I urge the committee to support SB 2247.

This governing body should be completely transparent and disable any opportunity to consider corruption by applying logical safeguards to restore the integrity of our due process.

I would like to remind the committee that your vote on this matter is in fact transparent, recorded, and noted for future speculation. Your constituents are paying attention and when it comes to justice it applies to everyone. Politicians SHOULD represent the BEST of us; supporting this bill agrees with that notion.