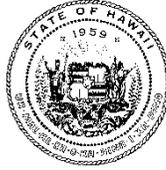


KRISTIN E. IZUMI-NITAO
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



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

STATE OF HAWAII
CAMPAIGN SPENDING COMMISSION

235 SOUTH BERETANIA STREET, ROOM 300
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

February 27, 2026

TO: The Honorable Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

The Honorable Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means

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

SUBJECT: **Testimony on S.B. No. 2313, S.D.1, Relating to Public Financing for
Candidates to Elected Office.**
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Monday, March 2, 2026, at 10:02 a.m.
Conference Room 211 & Videoconference

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill. The Campaign Spending Commission (“Commission”) supports the intent of this bill and provides the following comments.

This bill establishes a comprehensive system of public financing for all candidates seeking election to state and county public offices to beginning with the 2028 general election year, appropriates funds to the Hawaii Election Campaign Fund, and appropriates funds to the Commission. This public financing program is modeled after the pilot Hawaii County Council Comprehensive Public Funding Project¹ that ran in 2010 and 2012.

The bill establishes the maximum amount of comprehensive public funds (“CPF Max”) for each office as well as the minimum qualifying \$5 contributions (“\$5 MQC”) that must be raised for each office. The following table shows the \$5 MQC and CPF Max for each office:

¹ Act 244, 2008 Haw. Sess. Laws.

Office	\$5 MQC	CPF Max
Governor	6,250	\$2,500,000
Lieutenant Governor	3,000	\$1,200,000
Senator	250	\$100,000
Representative	125	\$50,000
OHA	100	\$40,000
Honolulu Mayor	5,750	\$2,300,000
Hawaii Mayor	900	\$360,000
Maui Mayor	1,500	\$600,000
Kauai Mayor ²	875	\$350,000
Hon. Pros. Atty	563	\$225,000
Hawaii Pros. Atty	100	\$40,000
Kauai Pros. Atty	63	\$25,000
Hon. County Council	338	\$135,000
Hawaii County Council	50	\$20,000
Maui County Council	138	\$55,000
Kauai County Council	75	\$30,000

If one candidate for each office qualified and received the CPF Max in the 2028 election period, this program will pay out **\$15,110,000** in public financing to the qualified candidates. In contrast, if one candidate for each office qualified to receive partial public funding in the 2026 elections, the state will pay a maximum of **\$2,948,612** in public financing. Under §11-O of the proposed new subpart to Part XIII of Chapter 11, Hawaii Revised Statutes, there must be a minimum of \$30,000,000 in the Hawaii Election Campaign Fund on September 1, 2027, in order for the Commission to run the comprehensive public financing program established by the bill.

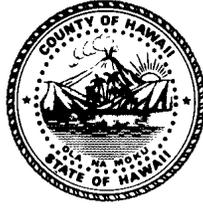
The Commission notes \$30,200,000 in general fund appropriation to the Hawaii Election Campaign Fund is necessary to implement the new comprehensive public financing program as described in this bill. In addition, the Commission would need appropriation of \$200,000 in this and the next fiscal years from the Hawaii Election Campaign Fund in Section 7 of the bill for the Commission to hire two full-time equivalent (2.0 FTE) permanent positions to prepare for comprehensive public financing in the 2028 elections. Currently, the Commission has 5 staff and is in the process of hiring an investigator and elections assistant due to the increase in candidates, candidate committees, and noncandidate committees which require hundreds of staff hours to assist with over the phone, in person, and by email. In contrast to Hawaii County Council Comprehensive Public Funding Project for which this program is modeled, this bill addresses all elected offices, and therefore, the scope and magnitude of providing at least four trainings set forth in Section 11-N will be significant especially in consideration of the penalties set forth in Section 11-M. This further underscore the importance of increasing staff at the Commission.

² On page 19, line 4 of the bill, “mayor of” should be inserted after “(9) For the office of.”

The balance in the Hawaii Election Campaign Fund is \$2,412,282.94 as of June 30, 2025. This amount is insufficient to pay for the comprehensive public funding program, including the additional personnel the Commission will need, and thus, the total appropriation of \$30,200,000 is necessary to fulfill the requirements of this bill.

The Commission respectfully requests that this Committee pass this bill with appropriation.

Jennifer Kagiwada
Council Member District 2 South Hilo



Office: (808) 961-8272
jennifer.kagiwada@hawaiicounty.gov

HAWAI‘I COUNTY COUNCIL - DISTRICT 2

25 Aupuni Street • Hilo, Hawai‘i 96720

DATE: February 25, 2026
TO: Senate Committee on Ways and Means
FROM: Jennifer Kagiwada, Council Member
Council District 2
SUBJECT: SB2313

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Committee Members,

I strongly support SB2313. Public campaign financing is essential to keeping Hawaii’s elections fair and transparent. In a state with small, island-based communities, personal connections and wealthy donors can give some candidates an unfair advantage over others who may have stronger community support but less funding. By encouraging small contributions from everyday voters, this bill strengthens local participation and ensures candidates reflect the voices of residents rather than private interests. It also builds public trust by making the electoral process more transparent.

Hawaii’s unique geography, small districts, and history of close ties between money and politics make public financing a critical tool for fairer elections. This system empowers both candidates and communities, ensuring that political power stays with the people—not outside interests with no regard for local needs.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jenn Kagiwada'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Jenn Kagiwada

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 8:51:53 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
John & Rita Shockley	Testifying for Free Access Coalition	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha!

The Free Access Coalition supports SB2313.

If the public's trust in government can be revived, it will be when private and corporate interests are not the primary funders of candidates for office. Most dedicated and honest candidates cannot afford to conduct a modern campaign. This would be a step in the right direction.

Mahalo for your time.

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 6:10:15 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nako?olani Warrington	Testifying for Kupuna for the Moopuna	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

STRONG SUPPORT for SB 2313 SD1

Support Clean Elections! Mahalo.



**Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action (HAPA) Supports SB 2313 SD1
Monday, March 2nd, 10:31 AM in Conference Room 211 & Videoconference**

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee on Ways and Means,

Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action strongly supports SB 2313, SD1, relating to public financing for candidates to elected office.

Public trust in government in Hawai'i is at a historic low. The reasons are not hard to find. When campaign contributions from wealthy donors and special interests are the primary pathway to elected office, the public reasonably concludes that government serves those interests first. SB 2313 addresses that structural problem directly.

This bill establishes a voluntary, comprehensive public financing system for all state and county candidates beginning with the 2028 general election. Candidates who choose to participate collect a minimum number of small \$5 qualifying contributions from registered voters in their district, demonstrating genuine community support. Once certified, they receive public funds sufficient to run a competitive campaign and agree to accept no private contributions from any source for the duration of their campaign and term in office.

We recognize that Ways and Means must weigh the fiscal implications of this bill. We urge the committee to consider the full picture. The cost of operating a comprehensive public financing program is modest relative to the state budget. Maine has run a similar program since 2000 at a fraction of the cost of the contracts, subsidies, and policy decisions that can be influenced by the current pay-to-play system. The projected cost of this program is dwarfed by the economic and democratic cost of a system in which access to power is determined by access to money.

Hawai'i already has a partial public financing system. This bill makes it comprehensive. It builds on an existing foundation and extends it to every level of state and county office. The infrastructure and administrative capacity needed to implement this program can be developed responsibly before the 2028 election year with appropriate appropriations.

When candidates are accountable to voters instead of donors, governance improves. That is the return on investment this bill offers.

We respectfully urge support for SB 2313, SD1.

Thank you for your consideration,

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

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

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2026 10:34:51 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:02:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
laurel brier	Testifying for Kauai Women's Caucus	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

There is overwhelming public support in Hawai'i for a "Clean Elections" program to get big money out of our politics by providing for full public financing of elections while prohibiting private contributions.



Committee on Ways and Means
Chair Donovan Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Sharon Moriwake
Monday, March 2, 10:02 am
Room [number]

SB2313 SD1 – RELATING TO PUBLIC FINANCING FOR CANDIDATES TO ELECTED OFFICE

TESTIMONY

Bepie Shapiro, Legislative Committee, League of Women Voters of Hawaii

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwake, and Committee Members:

The League of Women Voters of Hawaii strongly supports SB2313 SD1, which would establish a comprehensive public financing program for all candidates seeking election to state and county public offices in the State, require the Campaign Spending Commission to submit reports to the Legislature, and appropriate funds.

The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that methods of financing political campaigns should enhance political equality for all citizens; protect representative democracy from being distorted by big spending in election campaigns; ensure the public's right to know who is using money to influence elections; enable candidates to compete equitably for public office; ensure that candidates have sufficient funds to communicate their messages to the public; and combat corruption and undue influence in government.

SB2313 SD1 suggests amounts to fund the Hawaii Election Campaign Fund for implementation of the comprehensive public financing program (CPFP). SD1 also recognizes the significant ongoing workload for the Campaign Spending Commission which would be required to prepare for and implement the CPFP, and recommends two additional staff positions for the CSC, which currently operates with a very small staff. The League of Women Voters of Hawaii supports the suggested amounts and believes they are reasonable to support the benefits of this bill for Hawaii State and County, described below.

Delegates and voters in the 1978 Constitutional Convention in Hawaii realized the importance of this concept, resulting in the creation of the Hawaii Election Campaign Fund and Hawaii's partial public funding option. Below is a quote from the Convention during the discussion of the HECF: **“ . . . if we think these tremendous sums being spent [on elections], these tremendous sums being contributed, are not sums for which we are going to ultimately pay because of poor government . . . and because of undue influence . . .we are fooling ourselves.”** Delegate Naomi Campbell during the 1978 Constitutional Convention.

Public financing of campaigns for political office is an investment in good governance, like budgeting for the Office of Elections or the Campaign Spending Commission or the Legislature itself. (See the recommendations of the Commission to Improve Standards of Conduct). Public Financing can return the value invested in it by increasing the extent to which elected officials work for the benefit of all state residents, rather than wealthy businesses or individuals; increasing voter confidence in government; and encouraging more citizen participation in elections and communication with their representatives.

It is probable that legislative spending and state contracts would be more effective and efficient when directed by the needs and values of the population, rather than being swayed by financial relationships with special interests.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 7:06:37 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:02:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christopher Dean	Testifying for Clean the Pacific	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We strongly support SB 2313. Look at what is happening to our Federal Government, our democracy, our constitution, our country. This disaster on the federal level is caused by corporate personhood, Citizens United, and McCutcheon, as well as hundreds of billions of dollars being funded into super PACs. I don't feel like I need to point out the devastating consequences of money in politics. It should be obvious to anyone who is reasonably intelligent and educated to see what is happening. Please pass this measure so we can begin to repair our broken political system. Mahalo.



To: The Senate Committee on Ways and Means (WAM)
From: Sherry Pollack, Co-Founder, 350Hawaii.org
Date: Monday, March 2, 2026, 10:02am

In strong support of SB2313 SD1

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and WAM Committee members;

I am Co-Founder of the Hawaii chapter of 350.org, the largest international organization dedicated to fighting climate change. 350Hawaii.org is in **strong support of SB2313 SD1** that establishes a comprehensive system of public financing for all candidates seeking election to state and county public offices in the State.

SB2313 SD1 will help restore the people's trust in government. Considering the convictions of Senator J. Kalani English and Representative Ty Cullen for cash bribes, it is clear that the legislature must do everything in its power to remove the influence that money has on our politics, including reforms like public financing. Public financing of elections is one of the most important ways to free our state political system from undue influence from corporations, businesses, and special interest groups. Three out of four voters support a clean elections program.

Public financing will make campaigning easier. No one likes asking individuals for large sums of money. Public financing will free candidates from fundraisers and countless phone calls. Reducing or even eliminating candidates' reliance on wealthy donors and the need to perpetually fundraise frees candidates and officials to spend more time with their constituents and to focus on the most pressing issues of their community, like skyrocketing utility bills and climate action to address the growing climate crisis. It also promotes public trust in officials and in government.

SB2313 SD1 would provide participating candidates with competitive amounts of funding they need to run an effective campaign. This system worked very well for Hawaii County Council races in 2010 and 2012, and currently works very well statewide in places like Connecticut and Maine.

SB2313 SD1 is a vital reform for fixing the broken campaign finance system, enabling candidates to run competitively without relying on special interest money. Please take this opportunity to get money out of politics. Pass SB2313 SD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in **strong support** of this important legislation.

Sherry Pollack
Co-Founder, 350Hawaii.org



SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

March 2, 2026

10:02 AM

Conference Room 211

In **SUPPORT** of **SB2313 SD1**: RELATING TO PUBLIC FINANCING FOR CANDIDATES TO ELECTED OFFICE

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of our over 20,000 members and supporters, the Sierra Club of Hawai'i **SUPPORTS SB2313 SD1**, which will help to relieve political candidates of the need to fundraise from private entities, and thereby foster more rigorous discussion and refinement of candidates' policy platforms for the betterment of our islands and local communities.

Our democratic system of governance is premised on the concept of an informed electorate choosing candidates whose policy priorities align with what their constituents care about the most. Unfortunately, the modern-day costs of running a "viable" campaign often require candidates to expend considerable time and energy raising funds from private sources, rather than developing, debating, and refining campaign platforms, and engaging voters in this critical process.

Moreover, candidates must often solicit donations from private, corporate entities whose interests may be inherently narrower than those of the public at large. As a result, conflicts or perceived conflicts too often arise between policymaking that may be of particular benefit to certain classes of private entities, and the more comprehensive concerns of the broader community – including with regards to the environmental and cultural integrity, and the long-term livability, of our islands.

By providing for public financing of campaigns for elected office, this measure would help enable candidates and elected representatives to engage with their grassroots constituents during the campaign season; research, debate, and refine their campaign policy platforms; and thereby come into or return to office with a stronger and more comprehensive vision for policies that will ultimately benefit the public interest, as well as the public trust in our democratic system of governance.

Accordingly, the Sierra Club of Hawai'i respectfully urges the Committee to **PASS** SB2313 SD1. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 6:47:21 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

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

Comments:

Dear Chair Dela Cruz and Vice-Chair Moriwaki,

I am writing in strong support of SB2313, which seeks to provide comprehensive public financing for state- and countywide elections beginning in 2028. We have seen the pernicious effects of monied interests in our state politics, which have been increasingly marred by corruption and pay-to-play scandals. Public financing both lowers the bar for talented candidates to run for office and restores the public's trust in our system being a fair one that represents the will of the people. Hawaii is ready to bear the modest cost for a freer and fairer democratic system in exchange for the invaluable faith in our democratic systems. Please amend this bill as it was originally intended and in a form that will pass cleanly through both chambers without the need for reconciliation and the closed-door deliberations that entails.

Mahalo nui loa,

David Ball

Waiialae-Kahala

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 8:22:30 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

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

Comments:

Thank you for hearing SB2313.

a member of Indivisible Hawaii

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 8:58:17 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

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

Comments:

I support SB2313.

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 9:01:27 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mark Van Horne	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

By allowing candidates to run competitive campaigns without relying on private donations, this bill helps level the playing field and encourages more community-focused leaders to step forward. It also allows elected officials to spend more time listening to constituents and working on solutions, instead of constantly fundraising.

Hawai‘i has already shown a commitment to clean elections, and past pilot programs demonstrated that public financing can work here.

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 9:40:14 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

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

Comments:

It is obviously vitally important to remove money from elections in Hawaii. One way to do this is public financing. I saw this work when I lived in Maine. Let's learn from successful examples and make elections about the qualifications of the candidates, and not about who has more money.

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 2:39:16 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kanani Kai	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I SUPPORT SB2313.

Mahalo,

Kanani Kai

Member Indivisible Hawaii

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 6:00:25 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michelle Bonk	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please help level the playing field and encourage more community-focused leaders to step forward, and allow elected officials to spend more time listening to constituents and working on solutions, instead of constantly fundraising, by passing this bill

Hawai'i has already shown a commitment to clean elections, and past pilot programs demonstrated that public financing can work here.

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 9:38:54 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
James E Raymond	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 10:50:34 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

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

Comments:

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

I am in strong support of SB2313.

Money shouldn't be the driving factor in elections. Politicians need to be concerned with issues at hand rather than fundraising and bowing to wealthy donors and special interests. We must give everyday people a real voice in our elections. This bill helps level the playing field and encourages more community-focused leaders to step forward.

Mahalo, Gail Morrison, Honolulu 96815

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 11:55:35 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

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

Comments:

In support

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 3:44:39 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cassidy Hollenbeck	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in support.



Protect Democracy

Move Forward

www.indivisiblehawaii.org

info@indivisiblehawaii.org

To: Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee

Hearing Date/Time: 03-02-26 10:31 AM

Place: Hawaii State Capitol, Conference Room 211

Re: Testimony in STRONG SUPPORT of SB 2313, SD1

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of Indivisible Hawai'i, I thank you for this opportunity to testify in strong support of SB 2313.

Too many people believe our political system is driven by money instead of community needs. Public financing is a proven way to reduce the influence of wealthy donors and special interests, while giving everyday people a real voice in our elections.

By allowing candidates to run competitive campaigns without relying on private donations, this bill helps level the playing field and encourages more community-focused leaders to step forward. It also allows elected officials to spend more time listening to constituents and working on solutions instead of constantly fundraising. (Incidentally, Chair Dela Cruz, I'm one of your constituents in Mililani Mauka.)

Hawai'i has already shown a commitment to clean elections, and past pilot programs demonstrated that public financing can work here. We thank you for your support of SB 2313.

Sincerely,

Marlene Thom

Indivisible Hawai'i Good Government & Secure Elections Team

The mission of the 14-chapter Indivisible Hawai'i Statewide Network (IHSN) is to protect Hawai'i and democracy by defending civil rights, communities and values, most importantly, Hawai'i's Constitutionally protected spirit of Aloha. In October 2025, IHSN with other partners turned out over 22,000 residents on all major islands to say No Dictators! and to stand up for democracy. This call-to-action was part of Indivisible national's mobilization of more than 7 million across the country as the voice of the people, committed to election integrity and to evolving as a place of equity, opportunity and peace.

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 4:54:01 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

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 testifying today in strong support of SB2313, which would establish a comprehensive system of publicly-financed elections for Hawai‘i.

Our democracy is built on a simple, powerful ideal: that every voter has an equal voice and that elected officials are accountable first and foremost to the people they serve. Yet, the reality of our current campaign finance system has eroded this foundation. Running for office has become a relentless fundraising race, where candidates must spend countless hours dialing for dollars from wealthy individuals, corporations, and special interests.

This creates a cycle of dependency and influence that distorts our democracy. When campaigns are privately funded, candidates are understandably beholden to the priorities of their largest donors. This dynamic shapes which issues are championed, which bills are advanced, and whose voices are heard loudest in the halls of power. It means that a donor with a large checkbook often has more access and influence than an ordinary constituent.

SB2313 offers a transformative solution: it allows qualified candidates to fund their campaigns using public funds, freeing them from the private fundraising treadmill. This "clean elections" model has a proven track record. In jurisdictions that have adopted similar systems—from Maine to Arizona to cities across the nation—we see more competitive races, more diverse candidates who can run without personal wealth or wealthy networks, and legislators who report spending far more time listening to constituents instead of courting donors.

This bill is an investment in the integrity of our government and the power of our people. It puts voters back in the driver's seat. When candidates are not obligated to any special interest, they are free to be truly accountable to the public interest. They can debate policies on their merits, respond to the needs of their communities, and make decisions based on what is best for Hawai‘i's future, not what satisfies a donor.

Publicly financed elections will foster a healthier, more robust democracy where ideas compete on a level playing field, and where any committed citizen of good character can run for office without being forced into a system of legalized corruption.

For a government that is truly of, by, and for the people, I urge you to pass SB2313.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 11:34:52 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

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

Comments:

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

I am writing personally and as a member of the Indivisible Hawaii Statewide Network. I strongly support SB2313 which strengthens Hawai'i's public campaign financing system by offering full public funding to qualified candidates for state and county office who agree not to accept private campaign donations. Too many people believe our political system is driven by money instead of community needs. Public financing is a proven way to reduce the influence of wealthy donors and special interests, while giving everyday people a real voice in our elections.

By allowing candidates to run competitive campaigns without relying on private donations, this bill helps level the playing field and encourages more community-focused leaders to step forward. It also allows elected officials to spend more time listening to constituents and working on solutions, instead of constantly fundraising.

Hawai'i has already shown a commitment to clean elections, and past pilot programs demonstrated that public financing can work here.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify for this bill.

Robert Justice, M.D., Kapolei

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 5:58:13 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

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

Comments:

Thank you



TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF SB2313, RELATING TO PUBLIC FINANCING FOR CANDIDATES TO ELECTED OFFICE

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

March 2, 2026

To the Honorable Chair and Members of the Committee:

The Democratic Party of Hawai'i strongly supports **SB2313 SD1**. This measure strengthens Hawai'i's commitment to fair, trustworthy elections by reducing the influence, or appearance of influence, of big money in politics and expanding meaningful participation in our democracy.

Free and fair elections depend on public confidence that policy decisions are made in the public interest, not purchased through access or donations. SB2313 SD1 directly responds to long-standing concerns that campaign finance systems can advantage wealthy donors and special interests, and it establishes a voluntary "clean elections" style option so candidates can run viable campaigns without relying on private donations.

With elections too often dominated by those well well-established in politics, who are either incumbents or running for higher office, who use existing connections to raise funds and scare off any competition, it is essential our state and county establish comprehensive public campaign financing to allow anyone with sufficient community support to be able to run without fear of the financial hurdle.

Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to testify in strong support of SB2313 SD1. Should you have any questions or require further information, please contact the Democratic Party of Hawai'i at legislation@hawaiidemocrats.org.

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 11:28:47 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shannon Matson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

As a former candidate for State House who ran twice on partial public funding I am writing you in strong support of comprehensive public funding. Everyone else is going to tell you the reasons why this is important (which I sincerely agree with after advocating for publicly funded elections at the County and State level for two decades), so I'd like to focus instead on two points to strengthen this bill.

After reading the current bill I have two items I'd like you to consider.

1) Please consider a change in the formula used for calculations regarding Hawaii County Council funding. \$13,400 is extremely low and would be almost impossible for a first time candidate to run a competitive campaign at that rate. Please consider an amendment to adjust that.

2) I continue to remain of the mind that unless and until ALL candidates are required to abide by the same contribution and expenditure restrictions, regardless of public financing or otherwise, it will be impossible to have truly "free and fair" elections. Please continue to use your positions of influence to advocate for ways to get private interest money out of our elections.

Mahalo for your time and consideration,

Shannon M.

Hawai'i Island Resident

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 12:25:49 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shannon Rudolph	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUPPORT

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 12:58:42 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Susan Douglas	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TY!

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 1:15:10 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

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

Comments:

*Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki and Members of the Committee
I am in strong support of SB2313.*

*Too many people believe our political system is driven by money instead of community needs.
Public financing is a proven way to reduce the influence of wealthy donors and special interests,
while giving everyday people a real voice in our elections.*

*By allowing candidates to run competitive campaigns without relying on private donations, this
bill helps level the playing field and encourages more community-focused leaders to step
forward. It also allows elected officials to spend more time listening to constituents and working
on solutions, instead of constantly fundraising.*

*Hawai'i has already shown a commitment to clean elections, and past pilot programs
demonstrated that public financing can work here.*

Mahalo,

Georgia Hoopes, Kalaheo

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 2:53:46 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mala Wingerd	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I support of SB2313.

Although I support any and all efforts to get corporate 'bribes' out of our politics, this bill is still not enough! We should require ALL candidates use only public money, and no longer allow ads or money from *any* private 'donors'! They do this in France, and although their govt is not perfect, it a good start to cleaning up graft!

Thank you for reviewing our comments.

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 5:20:37 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

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

Comments:

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry, STRONGLY OPPOSE

CAMPAIGN DONTATION/FUNDRAISING FOR PUBLIC OFFICE.

THIS IS THE ONLY POSITION IN THE USA W/O A JOB INTERVIEW. PAY TO PLAY.

2313 SB RELATING TO PUBLIC FINANCING FOR CANDIDATES TO ELECTED OFFICE.

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 6:14:24 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

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

Comments:

Thank you!

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 7:34:25 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer Lum	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in strong support of SB2313.

Too many people believe our political system is driven by money and not community needs. Public financing is a proven way to reduce the influence of wealthy donors and special interests, while giving everyday people a real voice in our elections.

By allowing candidates to run competitive campaigns without relying on private donations, this bill helps level the playing field and encourages more community-focused leaders to step forward. It also allows elected officials to spend more time listening to constituents and working on solutions, instead of constantly fundraising.

Hawai'i has already shown a commitment to clean elections, and past pilot programs demonstrated that public financing can work here. And we want to provide candidates who can get things done for the people, and not just wealthy people who have enough money to support politicians.

Mahalo,

Jen Lum, 'Ewa Beach

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 7:36:33 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kathy Shimata	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

*Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki and Members of the Committee
I am in strong support of SB2313.*

Many people believe our political system is driven by money instead of community needs. Public financing is a proven way to reduce the influence of wealthy donors and special interests, while giving everyday people a real voice in our elections.

By allowing candidates to run competitive campaigns without relying on private donations, this bill helps level the playing field and encourages more community-focused leaders to step forward. It also allows elected officials to spend more time listening to constituents and working on solutions, instead of constantly fundraising.

Hawai'i has already shown a commitment to clean elections, and past pilot programs demonstrated that public financing can work here. Please support SB2313.

Mahalo,

Kathy Shimata

Honolulu

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 7:40:29 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

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

Comments:

I strongly support SB2313 SD1 and am pleased to see that Senator Gabbard who represents my district of Kapolei is a co-introducer of this bill.

I believe that many voters may feel that their legislators are more responsive to the needs and interests of big donors to their campaigns and less responsive to the average constituents in their community. This attitude may result in feelings of helplessness to affect the lawmaking process, alienation from civic involvement, and declining to exercise the all-important right to vote.

Full public financing of campaigns will counter this perception because it levels the playing field, allows new blood to run for office without concerns about raising large sums of money, and frees legislators to legislate rather than fund-raising.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 7:09:44 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki and Members of the Committee
I am in strong support of SB2313.

Too many people believe our political system is driven by money instead of community needs. Public financing is a proven way to reduce the influence of wealthy donors and special interests, while giving everyday people a real voice in our elections.

By allowing candidates to run competitive campaigns without relying on private donations, this bill helps level the playing field and encourages more community-focused leaders to step forward. It also allows elected officials to spend more time listening to constituents and working on solutions, instead of constantly fundraising.

Hawai'i has already shown a commitment to clean elections, and past pilot programs demonstrated that public financing can work here.

We must make our elections and government more transparent.

Mahalo for this opportunity to provide testimony,

Noelle Lindenmann, Kailua-Kona

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 8:11:15 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Charlene K. Rowley	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki and Members of the Committee
I am in strong support of SB2313.

Too many people believe our political system is driven by money instead of community needs. Public financing is a proven way to reduce the influence of wealthy donors and special interests, while giving everyday people a real voice in our elections.

By allowing candidates to run competitive campaigns without relying on private donations, this bill helps level the playing field and encourages more community-focused leaders to step forward. It also allows elected officials to spend more time listening to constituents and working on solutions, instead of constantly fundraising.

Hawai'i has already shown a commitment to clean elections, and past pilot programs demonstrated that public financing can work here. Please restore our faith in congress by supporting this measure and passing meaningful reforms this legislative cycle.

Sincerely,

Charlene Kiana Rowley, Kula Maui

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 8:13:27 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

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

Comments:

Greetings Committee Members,

I am writing in strong support of SB2313, which will provide comprehensive public funding of elections. By providing full public financing for qualified candidates, SB 2313 will break the link between private money and electoral success. This will create a fairer and more honest system where elected officials are accountable to their constituents rather than big donors.

So many people today are highly cynical about the political process and distrustful of politicians. We need to get the influence of big money out of politics!! We have had too many examples recently of why this is needed!

Mahalo for your attention.

Marcia Kemble

Makiki

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 8:16:00 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
John C Wert III	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I fully support SB2313. It's about time we removed big money from our elections. Hawai'i's political system is broken. The heavy reliance on campaign contributions from wealthy donors and special interests has led to a system where 2 in 3 people believe elected officials are more focused on the interests of their donors than the needs of their communities. As a result, good policies are often blocked while harmful ones move forward. This dynamic erodes public trust and encourages corruption. SB 2313 is a critical step toward fixing this broken system by allowing candidates to run competitive campaigns without being dependent on special interest money.

By providing full public financing for qualified candidates, SB 2313 will break the link between private money and electoral success. This will create a fairer and more honest system where elected officials are accountable to their constituents rather than big donors. Importantly, similar programs in other states show that public financing does not lead to higher incumbent turnover or drastic shifts in political makeup, but it does change who holds influence in government—ensuring that everyday people, not just the wealthy few, have a voice.

Public financing is both popular and cost-effective. Three out of four voters support a clean elections program. States like Connecticut and Maine have successfully run similar programs for decades, and Hawai'i County piloted a version in 2010 and 2012. Even if Hawai'i saw higher participation rates than any other state, estimates show the cost would be less than \$10 million per year—just 0.05% of the state budget. That's under \$7 per resident or less than \$1 per tourist—a small price to pay for a more transparent, accountable government.

For these reasons, I urge you to pass SB 2313. This bill will restore trust in our democracy, empower candidates to focus on their communities rather than fundraising, and ensure that our government truly serves the people of Hawai'i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 8:25:57 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Julia Marrack	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 2313, which would strengthen Hawaii’s public campaign financing system and help reduce the influence of money in our elections.

Hawai‘i’s political system is broken. The heavy reliance on campaign contributions from wealthy donors and special interests has led to a system where 2 in 3 people believe elected officials are more focused on the interests of their donors than the needs of their communities. As a result, good policies are often blocked while harmful ones move forward. This dynamic erodes public trust and encourages corruption. SB 2313 is a critical step toward fixing this broken system by allowing candidates to run competitive campaigns without being dependent on special interest money.

By providing full public financing for qualified candidates, SB 2313 will break the link between private money and electoral success. This will create a fairer and more honest system where elected officials are accountable to their constituents rather than big donors. Importantly, similar programs in other states show that public financing does not lead to higher incumbent turnover or drastic shifts in political makeup, but it does change who holds influence in government—ensuring that everyday people, not just the wealthy few, have a voice.

Public financing is both popular and cost-effective. Three out of four voters support a clean elections program. States like Connecticut and Maine have successfully run similar programs for decades, and Hawai‘i County piloted a version in 2010 and 2012. Even if Hawai‘i saw higher participation rates than any other state, estimates show the cost would be less than \$10 million per year—just 0.05% of the state budget. That’s under \$7 per resident or less than \$1 per tourist—a small price to pay for a more transparent, accountable government.

For these reasons, I urge you to pass SB 2313. This bill will restore trust in our democracy, empower candidates to focus on their communities rather than fundraising, and ensure that our government truly serves the people of Hawai‘i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Julia Marrack

Kamuela, 96743

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 8:45:56 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Terri Yoshinaga	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill.

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 8:53:43 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Eliza Yoshida	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 2313, which would strengthen Hawaii’s public campaign financing system and help reduce the influence of money in our elections.

Hawai‘i’s political system is broken. The heavy reliance on campaign contributions from wealthy donors and special interests has led to a system where 2 in 3 people believe elected officials are more focused on the interests of their donors than the needs of their communities. As a result, good policies are often blocked while harmful ones move forward. This dynamic erodes public trust and encourages corruption. SB 2313 is a critical step toward fixing this broken system by allowing candidates to run competitive campaigns without being dependent on special interest money.

By providing full public financing for qualified candidates, SB 2313 will break the link between private money and electoral success. This will create a fairer and more honest system where elected officials are accountable to their constituents rather than big donors. Importantly, similar programs in other states show that public financing does not lead to higher incumbent turnover or drastic shifts in political makeup, but it does change who holds influence in government—ensuring that everyday people, not just the wealthy few, have a voice.

Public financing is both popular and cost-effective. Three out of four voters support a clean elections program. States like Connecticut and Maine have successfully run similar programs for decades, and Hawai‘i County piloted a version in 2010 and 2012. Even if Hawai‘i saw higher participation rates than any other state, estimates show the cost would be less than \$10 million per year—just 0.05% of the state budget. That’s under \$7 per resident or less than \$1 per tourist—a small price to pay for a more transparent, accountable government.

For these reasons, I urge you to pass SB 2313. This bill will restore trust in our democracy, empower candidates to focus on their communities rather than fundraising, and ensure that our government truly serves the people of Hawai‘i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 8:53:48 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

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

Comments:

Honorable Members,

I am writing to ask that you support SB2313 the Comprehensive Public Financing of Elections bill.

Thank you for your attention and onsideration.

Melissa Barker

Kapaa, HI

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 8:56:11 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

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

Comments:

My name is Jane Arnold and I live in Kaimuki. I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 2313, which would strengthen Hawaii's public campaign financing system and help reduce the influence of money in our elections.

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 8:58:26 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
frederick a.nitta, md, inc	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Passing this bill is one of the only means of establishing trust in our government. For too long, special interests have controlled the entire state. As a service to all present and future residents of Hawaii, please change the status quo, where those in power control the state for their own interests.

Please choose the path that is good for all of us.

Dr. Frederick A Nitta, M.D., Inc.

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 9:08:24 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jodi Robinson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jodi Robinson, and I am testifying in strong support of Senate Bill 2313 as an individual.

I care deeply about strengthening democracy in Hawai‘i, especially creating pathways for more grassroots and community-based candidates to run and win. Over the years, I have watched how powerful special interests shape elections—both locally and nationally. The constant pressure to raise money from large donors and PACs distorts who can run, who can compete, and ultimately who gets heard. It has become clear to me that we must begin to decouple money from politics if we want a government that truly reflects our communities.

Too often, fundraising ability, not community trust or lived experience, determines viability. This discourages everyday leaders, especially working parents, young people, and those without wealthy networks, from even considering a run for office. SB 2313 offers a meaningful solution by strengthening Hawai‘i’s public campaign financing system and allowing qualified candidates to run competitive campaigns without relying on special interest money.

Public financing changes who has influence. It allows candidates to spend their time talking with constituents rather than dialing for dollars. Evidence from other states shows that clean elections programs do not destabilize political systems or create extreme swings, but they do make space for a broader range of candidates and reduce the outsized power of wealthy donors.

This reform is also practical and cost-effective. Even at high participation levels, the estimated cost would represent a tiny fraction of the state budget. An investment of just a few dollars per resident each year to strengthen public trust and accountability in government. SB 2313 would help ensure that elected officials are accountable first and foremost to the people they represent, instead of those who contribute resources to their campaigns.

I respectfully urge you to pass SB 2313.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 9:29:34 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Laurence Ward	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 2313, which would strengthen Hawaii's public campaign financing system and help reduce the influence of money in our elections.

I urge you to pass SB 2313. This bill will restore trust in our democracy, empower candidates to focus on their communities rather than fundraising, and ensure that our government truly serves the people of Hawai'i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Dr. Laurence Ward, ND

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 9:32:28 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Donna Sue Shepherd	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

STOP BACK DOOR CORUPTION BY OUR LEADERS FOR GOOD NOW!!

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 9:33:28 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
JNovel808	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I stand in favor of public financing for elections to help ensure that all elections are clean and clear.

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 9:40:42 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Regina Gregory	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

support

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 9:49:14 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tanja Miller	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 2313, which would strengthen Hawaii’s public campaign financing system and help reduce the influence of money in our elections.

Hawai‘i’s political system is broken. The heavy reliance on campaign contributions from wealthy donors and special interests has led to a system where 2 in 3 people believe elected officials are more focused on the interests of their donors than the needs of their communities. As a result, good policies are often blocked while harmful ones move forward. This dynamic erodes public trust and encourages corruption. SB 2313 is a critical step toward fixing this broken system by allowing candidates to run competitive campaigns without being dependent on special interest money.

By providing full public financing for qualified candidates, SB 2313 will break the link between private money and electoral success. This will create a fairer and more honest system where elected officials are accountable to their constituents rather than big donors. Importantly, similar programs in other states show that public financing does not lead to higher incumbent turnover or drastic shifts in political makeup, but it does change who holds influence in government—ensuring that everyday people, not just the wealthy few, have a voice.

Public financing is both popular and cost-effective. Three out of four voters support a clean elections program. States like Connecticut and Maine have successfully run similar programs for decades, and Hawai‘i County piloted a version in 2010 and 2012. Even if Hawai‘i saw higher participation rates than any other state, estimates show the cost would be less than \$10 million per year—just 0.05% of the state budget. That’s under \$7 per resident or less than \$1 per tourist—a small price to pay for a more transparent, accountable government.

For these reasons, I urge you to pass SB 2313. This bill will restore trust in our democracy, empower candidates to focus on their communities rather than fundraising, and ensure that our government truly serves the people of Hawai‘i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Tanja Miller

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 10:00:15 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Brodie Lockard.

I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 2313, which would strengthen Hawaii’s public campaign financing system and help reduce the influence of money in our elections.

Hawai‘i’s political system is broken. The heavy reliance on campaign contributions from wealthy donors and special interests has led to a system where 2 in 3 people believe elected officials are more focused on the interests of their donors than the needs of their communities. As a result, good policies are often blocked while harmful ones move forward. This dynamic erodes public trust and encourages corruption. SB 2313 is a critical step toward fixing this broken system by allowing candidates to run competitive campaigns without being dependent on special interest money.

By providing full public financing for qualified candidates, SB 2313 will break the link between private money and electoral success. This will create a fairer and more honest system where elected officials are accountable to their constituents rather than big donors. Importantly, similar programs in other states show that public financing does not lead to higher incumbent turnover or drastic shifts in political makeup, but it does change who holds influence in government—ensuring that everyday people, not just the wealthy few, have a voice.

Public financing is both popular and cost-effective. Three out of four voters support a clean elections program. States like Connecticut and Maine have successfully run similar programs for decades, and Hawai‘i County piloted a version in 2010 and 2012. Even if Hawai‘i saw higher participation rates than any other state, estimates show the cost would be less than \$10 million per year—just 0.05% of the state budget. That’s under \$7 per resident or less than \$1 per tourist—a small price to pay for a more transparent, accountable government.

For these reasons, I urge you to pass SB 2313. This bill will restore trust in our democracy, empower candidates to focus on their communities rather than fundraising, and ensure that our government truly serves the people of Hawai‘i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 10:11:25 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lorrie Taylor	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We need to have fair elections. End pay to play.

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 10:11:46 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kahi Pacarro	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 2313, which would strengthen Hawaii’s public campaign financing system and help reduce the influence of money in our elections.

Hawai‘i’s political system is broken. The heavy reliance on campaign contributions from wealthy donors and special interests has led to a system where 2 in 3 people believe elected officials are more focused on the interests of their donors than the needs of their communities. As a result, good policies are often blocked while harmful ones move forward. This dynamic erodes public trust and encourages corruption. SB 2313 is a critical step toward fixing this broken system by allowing candidates to run competitive campaigns without being dependent on special interest money.

By providing full public financing for qualified candidates, SB 2313 will break the link between private money and electoral success. This will create a fairer and more honest system where elected officials are accountable to their constituents rather than big donors. Importantly, similar programs in other states show that public financing does not lead to higher incumbent turnover or drastic shifts in political makeup, but it does change who holds influence in government—ensuring that everyday people, not just the wealthy few, have a voice.

Public financing is both popular and cost-effective. Three out of four voters support a clean elections program. States like Connecticut and Maine have successfully run similar programs for decades, and Hawai‘i County piloted a version in 2010 and 2012. Even if Hawai‘i saw higher participation rates than any other state, estimates show the cost would be less than \$10 million per year—just 0.05% of the state budget. That’s under \$7 per resident or less than \$1 per tourist—a small price to pay for a more transparent, accountable government.

For these reasons, I urge you to pass SB 2313. This bill will restore trust in our democracy, empower candidates to focus on their communities rather than fundraising, and ensure that our government truly serves the people of Hawai‘i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

SB-2313-SD-1

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

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dawn Morais Webster Ph.D.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

It's past time to do something about the corrrpting influnce of money in our politics. Voters expect and deserve bettter,

I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 2313, which would strengthen Hawaii’s public campaign financing system and help reduce the influence of money in our elections.

Hawai‘i’s political system is broken. The heavy reliance on campaign contributions from wealthy donors and special interests has led to a system where 2 in 3 people believe elected officials are more focused on the interests of their donors than the needs of their communities. As a result, good policies are often blocked while harmful ones move forward. This dynamic erodes public trust and encourages corruption. SB 2313 is a critical step toward fixing this broken system by allowing candidates to run competitive campaigns without being dependent on special interest money.

By providing full public financing for qualified candidates, SB 2313 will break the link between private money and electoral success. This will create a fairer and more honest system where elected officials are accountable to their constituents rather than big donors. Importantly, similar programs in other states show that public financing does not lead to higher incumbent turnover or drastic shifts in political makeup, but it does change who holds influence in government—ensuring that everyday people, not just the wealthy few, have a voice.

Public financing is both popular and cost-effective. Three out of four voters support a clean elections program. States like Connecticut and Maine have successfully run similar programs for decades, and Hawai‘i County piloted a version in 2010 and 2012. Even if Hawai‘i saw higher participation rates than any other state, estimates show the cost would be less than \$10 million per year—just 0.05% of the state budget. That’s under \$7 per resident or less than \$1 per tourist—a small price to pay for a more transparent, accountable government.

For these reasons, I urge you to pass SB 2313. This bill will restore trust in our democracy, empower candidates to focus on their communities rather than fundraising, and ensure that our government truly serves the people of Hawai‘i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 10:23:30 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Safia Gravel	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 2313, which would strengthen Hawaii’s public campaign financing system and help reduce the influence of money in our elections.

Hawai‘i’s political system is broken. The heavy reliance on campaign contributions from wealthy donors and special interests has led to a system where 2 in 3 people believe elected officials are more focused on the interests of their donors than the needs of their communities. As a result, good policies are often blocked while harmful ones move forward. This dynamic erodes public trust and encourages corruption. SB 2313 is a critical step toward fixing this broken system by allowing candidates to run competitive campaigns without being dependent on special interest money.

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For these reasons, I urge you to pass SB 2313. This bill will restore trust in our democracy, empower candidates to focus on their communities rather than fundraising, and ensure that our government truly serves the people of Hawai‘i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Safia Gravel, Hilo HI

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 10:31:47 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kingi Gilbert	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I like the idea of equal public financing for qualified candidates. I think this will be fairer than big donors. Vote support!

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 10:36:41 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Anita Trubitt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in favor of SB2313

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 10:38:32 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
TOM DIGRAZIA	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strongly support!

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 10:57:39 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Elizabeth Nelson and I strongly support this measure. I have heard over and over that people do not feel their votes count, that the money people will take over the vote anyway. We need to change this. So I am counting on you to help this happen.

Thank you, Elizabeth Nelson

Kaneohe

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 11:00:20 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
ANDREW ISODA	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 2313, which would strengthen Hawaii’s public campaign financing system and help reduce the influence of money in our elections.

Hawai‘i’s political system is broken. The heavy reliance on campaign contributions from wealthy donors and special interests has led to a system where 2 in 3 people believe elected officials are more focused on the interests of their donors than the needs of their communities. As a result, good policies are often blocked while harmful ones move forward. This dynamic erodes public trust and encourages corruption. SB 2313 is a critical step toward fixing this broken system by allowing candidates to run competitive campaigns without being dependent on special interest money.

By providing full public financing for qualified candidates, SB 2313 will break the link between private money and electoral success. This will create a fairer and more honest system where elected officials are accountable to their constituents rather than big donors. Importantly, similar programs in other states show that public financing does not lead to higher incumbent turnover or drastic shifts in political makeup, but it does change who holds influence in government—ensuring that everyday people, not just the wealthy few, have a voice.

Public financing is both popular and cost-effective. Three out of four voters support a clean elections program. States like Connecticut and Maine have successfully run similar programs for decades, and Hawai‘i County piloted a version in 2010 and 2012. Even if Hawai‘i saw higher participation rates than any other state, estimates show the cost would be less than \$10 million per year—just 0.05% of the state budget. That’s under \$7 per resident or less than \$1 per tourist—a small price to pay for a more transparent, accountable government.

For these reasons, I urge you to pass SB 2313. This bill will restore trust in our democracy, empower candidates to focus on their communities rather than fundraising, and ensure that our government truly serves the people of Hawai‘i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Andrew Isoda
Lahaina ‘ Mau’i



COMMENTS ON SB2313 SD1
RELATING TO PUBLIC FINANCING FOR
CANDIDATES TO ELECTED OFFICE

Ke Kōmike ‘Aha Kenekoa o ke Ki‘ina Hana a me nā
Kumuwaiwai
Ke Kapikala o Hawai‘i

Malaki 2, 2026

10:31AM

Lumi 211

Aloha e Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means:

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) offers **COMMENTS** on **SB2313 SD1**, which establishes a comprehensive system of public financing for candidates running for office in State and County elections.

OHA supports public financing as a good government measure. Increased access to publicly financed campaigns makes elections more accessible, open, and fair. However, OHA is concerned about the disparate funding provisions included in this proposed measure. In SB2313 SD1, OHA candidates participating in the program would receive a maximum \$40,000 in public funds. Candidates for OHA Trustee are required to run statewide election campaigns on par with candidates for Lieutenant Governor, who receive a maximum \$1,200,000. In the 2024 General Election, the OHA Moloka‘i-Lāna‘i race received 287,216 votes, the Kaua‘i race received 284,571 votes, and the OHA At-Large race received 325,858 votes. In the 2022 Primary Election, the Democrat Lieutenant Governor’s race received a total of 242,350 votes, and the Republican Lieutenant Governor’s race received 66,830 votes.

For the public financing program to meet its full potential and appropriately fund OHA candidates, **we respectfully request that section 2, lines 13-15 be amended for OHA candidates to receive \$804,000 in the primary, \$396,000 in the general, for a maximum of \$1,200,000, on par with the lieutenant governor.** This amendment is necessary for candidates for OHA Trustee to effectively reach voters Statewide and run well-informed and fair campaigns.

For the reasons stated above, OHA respectfully urges this committee to **consider our concerns and adopt our proposed amendment** to help us better serve our Constitutional obligations to Native Hawaiians and promote equitable governance. Without these amendments, candidates for OHA Trustee do not have equal access to public financing provisions.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify on this critical issue.

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 11:33:11 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mackenzie Harrington	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 2313, which would strengthen Hawaii’s public campaign financing system and help reduce the influence of money in our elections.

Hawai‘i’s political system is broken. The heavy reliance on campaign contributions from wealthy donors and special interests has led to a system where 2 in 3 people believe elected officials are more focused on the interests of their donors than the needs of their communities. As a result, good policies are often blocked while harmful ones move forward. This dynamic erodes public trust and encourages corruption. SB 2313 is a critical step toward fixing this broken system by allowing candidates to run competitive campaigns without being dependent on special interest money.

By providing full public financing for qualified candidates, SB 2313 will break the link between private money and electoral success. This will create a fairer and more honest system where elected officials are accountable to their constituents rather than big donors. Importantly, similar programs in other states show that public financing does not lead to higher incumbent turnover or drastic shifts in political makeup, but it does change who holds influence in government—ensuring that everyday people, not just the wealthy few, have a voice.

Public financing is both popular and cost-effective. Three out of four voters support a clean elections program. States like Connecticut and Maine have successfully run similar programs for decades, and Hawai‘i County piloted a version in 2010 and 2012. Even if Hawai‘i saw higher participation rates than any other state, estimates show the cost would be less than \$10 million per year—just 0.05% of the state budget. That’s under \$7 per resident or less than \$1 per tourist—a small price to pay for a more transparent, accountable government.

For these reasons, I urge you to pass SB 2313. This bill will restore trust in our democracy, empower candidates to focus on their communities rather than fundraising, and ensure that our government truly serves the people of Hawai‘i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 11:46:16 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lois Langham	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 2313, which would strengthen Hawaii’s public campaign financing system and help reduce the influence of money in our elections.

Hawai‘i’s political system is broken. The heavy reliance on campaign contributions from wealthy donors and special interests has led to a system where 2 in 3 people believe elected officials are more focused on the interests of their donors than the needs of their communities. As a result, good policies are often blocked while harmful ones move forward. This dynamic erodes public trust and encourages corruption. SB 2313 is a critical step toward fixing this broken system by allowing candidates to run competitive campaigns without being dependent on special interest money.

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For these reasons, I urge you to pass SB 2313. This bill will restore trust in our democracy, empower candidates to focus on their communities rather than fundraising, and ensure that our government truly serves the people of Hawai'i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 11:48:00 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lindsay Roth	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Lindsay Roth, and I am a licensed clinical social worker and small business owner on Hawai'i Island. I am writing in strong support of SB2313.

In my clinical practice, I see firsthand how policy decisions ripple into the daily lives of individuals and families. When legislation prioritizes fairness, transparency, and community well-being, it strengthens not only our systems but also the mental and emotional health of our people.

SB2313 represents a thoughtful step toward building a more accountable and resilient Hawai'i. Policies that protect community interests and promote long-term stability reduce stress, increase trust in institutions, and support collective well-being. Prevention-oriented legislation is far more effective — and humane — than responding after harm has already occurred.

As a social worker, I understand that systemic stressors compound over time. Strengthening safeguards at the policy level protects families, keiki, and future generations from preventable hardship.

I respectfully urge you to pass SB2313.

Mahalo for your time and service to our state.

Sincerely,
Lindsay Roth, LCSW
Hawai'i Island

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

HEARING:

Monday, March 2, 2026 at 10:31 am
Conference Room 211 & Videoconference

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 2313, SD1 - RELATING TO PUBLIC FINANCING FOR CANDIDATES TO ELECTED OFFICE.

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, Senator Hashimoto for my district, Senator DeCoite for Upcountry Maui, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Christine Andrews. I am a long-term resident of Wailuku, Maui and an attorney licensed for over 25 years. I write to you today in **strong support of SB 2313, SD1**, Relating to Public Financing for Candidates to Elected Office, which establishes a comprehensive system of public financing for all candidates seeking election to state and county public offices in the State, to begin with the 2028 general election year; requires the Campaign Spending Commission to submit reports to the Legislature; and appropriates funds.

As a resident of Maui, it is time to get money out of our politics. Here on Maui, large global corporations and outside investors and developers have influenced our policies in a way that harms our environment, our communities, and our sense of trust in government. Methods of financing political campaigns should enable candidates to compete equitably for public office and ensure that candidates have sufficient funds to communicate their messages to the public.

Comprehensive public funding programs are the best way to meet these goals. It is far past time for the comprehensive reform envisioned by SB 2313, SD1, and while the investment it will require is substantial, the dividends of such a program will enhance government efficiency by reducing corruption and self-dealing by our electeds. The money available to candidates through Hawaii's Partial Public Funding Program (PPFP) has not changed in over twenty years. Over that time, increases in media prices, postage, and labor costs have made the current amounts inadequate, far below amounts spent by privately funded candidates who won election to the same office. As a result of the disparity, the number of candidates using PPFP continues to decrease. It is time for the comprehensive public funding program envisioned by SB 2313, SD1. **I call upon you all to bring this vision to fruition by voting in support of SB 2313, SD1.**

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony,

Christine Andrews, JD
Wailuku, Maui

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 12:07:26 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

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

Comments:

Until we get corporate aand big spender support out of our elections, we will continue to experience these unfortunate election mishaps. Money should not sway elections and at this time, it is really the only thing that matters. Please support this bill to level the playing field.

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 12:36:41 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Brian C Mark	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support the goals of this bill, which include, but not limited to the following:

- Reduce influence of large donors
- Encourage more people to run for office
- Increase transparency and trust in elections

Mahalo,

Brian C. Mark

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 12:41:45 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
david gierlach	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 2313, which would strengthen Hawaii’s public campaign financing system and help reduce the influence of money in our elections.

Hawai‘i’s political system is broken. The heavy reliance on campaign contributions from wealthy donors and special interests has led to a system where 2 in 3 people believe elected officials are more focused on the interests of their donors than the needs of their communities. As a result, good policies are often blocked while harmful ones move forward. This dynamic erodes public trust and encourages corruption. SB 2313 is a critical step toward fixing this broken system by allowing candidates to run competitive campaigns without being dependent on special interest money.

By providing full public financing for qualified candidates, SB 2313 will break the link between private money and electoral success. This will create a fairer and more honest system where elected officials are accountable to their constituents rather than big donors. Importantly, similar programs in other states show that public financing does not lead to higher incumbent turnover or drastic shifts in political makeup, but it does change who holds influence in government—ensuring that everyday people, not just the wealthy few, have a voice.

Public financing is both popular and cost-effective. Three out of four voters support a clean elections program. States like Connecticut and Maine have successfully run similar programs for decades, and Hawai‘i County piloted a version in 2010 and 2012. Even if Hawai‘i saw higher participation rates than any other state, estimates show the cost would be less than \$10 million per year—just 0.05% of the state budget. That’s under \$7 per resident or less than \$1 per tourist—a small price to pay for a more transparent, accountable government.

For these reasons, I urge you to pass SB 2313. This bill will restore trust in our democracy, empower candidates to focus on their communities rather than fundraising, and ensure that our government truly serves the people of Hawai‘i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

The Rev David J. Gierlach

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 1:02:18 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

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

Comments:

STRONG SUPPORT!

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 1:13:52 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sarah Barbour	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 2313, which would strengthen Hawai'i's public campaign financing system and help reduce the influence of money in our elections.

The following has been written by the Our Hawai'i campaign, and I attest that I have read and strongly agree with all of it.

Hawai'i's political system is broken. The heavy reliance on campaign contributions from wealthy donors and special interests has led to a system where 2 in 3 people believe elected officials are more focused on the interests of their donors than the needs of their communities. As a result, good policies are often blocked while harmful ones move forward. This dynamic erodes public trust and encourages corruption. SB 2313 is a critical step toward fixing this broken system by allowing candidates to run competitive campaigns without being dependent on special interest money.

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For these reasons, I urge you to pass SB 2313. This bill will restore trust in our democracy, empower candidates to focus on their communities rather than fundraising, and ensure that our government truly serves the people of Hawai'i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 1:37:34 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christopher Egbo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strong Support for SB2313 — Comprehensive Public Financing of Elections

Aloha Chairperson Dela Cruz and Members of the Committee on Ways and Means,

My name is Christopher Egbo, and I am a concerned citizen of Honolulu writing in strong support of SB2313, which would establish a comprehensive system of public financing for candidates seeking election to state and county offices in Hawai‘i.

Our state is at a crossroads. Recent headlines about bribery allegations, undisclosed campaign donations, and the ongoing federal cases that sent former legislators to prison have eroded public trust in our government . We cannot afford a "pay-to-play" culture where everyday citizens wonder if decisions are made for the public good or for the highest bidder. SB2313 offers a clear path forward.

The statistics around campaign financing are telling. When legislators must constantly raise money from a small pool of large donors, it creates a system where access is limited to the wealthy and well-connected. SB2313 flips that model. By providing public financing for candidates who agree to reject private contributions, we allow our leaders to focus on representing their constituents—not courting donors . This is a win-win for our communities: voters get representatives who answer to them, and qualified candidates from all walks of life can run for office without being wealthy or reliant on special interests.

As the Clean Elections Hawai‘i coalition has made clear, this is not an anti-business measure—it is pro-democracy, pro-transparency, and pro-people . It ensures that our government works for everyone, not just those who can write large checks. With each new corruption scandal, the cost of inaction grows higher. Investing in publicly financed elections is investing in the integrity of our government itself.

In the wake of repeated ethics failures—from the 2022 convictions of Kalani English and Ty Cullen to the more recent questions surrounding the 2022 legislative session—our reliance on a donor-driven system has proven unsustainable . SB2313 would ensure that candidates are accountable to voters, not special interests. It would open up the political process to everyday people and restore faith that our leaders are working for us.

This is a smart, necessary, and long-overdue investment in the future of our democracy. I urge you to support SB2313.

Mahalo for your time and consideration,

Christopher Egbo
Concerned Citizen of Honolulu

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 1:49:07 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gary Hooser	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support comprehensive full public funding of elections. No half measures - We need Clean Elections now.

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 1:55:40 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Robert I Nehmad	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am a resident in the State of Hawaii and I support this Bill

Hope that the Legislature approves this Bill based on the desires of the population.

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 2:01:15 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alice Abellanida	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I urge you to support this bill.

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 2:11:32 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 2313, which would strengthen Hawai‘i’s public campaign financing system and help reduce the influence of money in our elections.

Hawai‘i’s political system is broken. The heavy reliance on campaign contributions from wealthy donors and special interests has led to a system where 2 in 3 people believe elected officials are more focused on the interests of their donors than the needs of their communities. As a result, good policies are often blocked while harmful ones move forward. This dynamic erodes public trust and encourages corruption. SB 2313 is a critical step toward fixing this broken system by allowing candidates to run competitive campaigns without being dependent on special interest money.

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Public financing is both popular and cost-effective. Three out of four voters support a clean elections program. States like Connecticut and Maine have successfully run similar programs for decades, and Hawai‘i County piloted a version in 2010 and 2012. Even if Hawai‘i saw higher participation rates than any other state, estimates show the cost would be less than \$10 million per year—just 0.05% of the state budget. That’s under \$7 per resident or less than \$1 per tourist—a small price to pay for a more transparent, accountable government.

For these reasons, I urge you to pass SB 2313. This bill will restore trust in our democracy, empower candidates to focus on their communities rather than fundraising, and ensure that our government truly serves the people of Hawai‘i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 2:19:50 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Frank DeGiacomo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 2313, which would strengthen Hawaii’s public campaign financing system and help reduce the influence of money in our elections.

Hawai‘i’s political system is broken. The heavy reliance on campaign contributions from wealthy donors and special interests has led to a system where 2 in 3 people believe elected officials are more focused on the interests of their donors than the needs of their communities. As a result, good policies are often blocked while harmful ones move forward. This dynamic erodes public trust and encourages corruption. SB 2313 is a critical step toward fixing this broken system by allowing candidates to run competitive campaigns without being dependent on special interest money.

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Hawai`i is facing an existential crisis. Between various climate catastrophes that are coming any day, a potential financial crisis resulting from the federal government being dismantled and fragile economic conditions for the country as whole due to tariffs/low wages/high debt loads/high housing and medical costs etc., to the brain drain from Hawai`i due to the high cost of living, as well as the coming AI unemployment tsunami, if you at all care about this state we need lots of change faster. Currently special interest money from rich folks and corporations is slamming the breaks on absolutely

imperative change. We need the ability to elect people to provide bold leadership that will have an agenda of change in favor of everyday people. Instead we're arguing over saving your jobs and spending \$10mil.

Public financing is both popular and cost-effective. Three out of four voters support a clean elections program. States like Connecticut and Maine have successfully run similar programs for decades, and Hawai'i County piloted a version in 2010 and 2012. Even if Hawai'i saw higher participation rates than any other state, estimates show the cost would be less than \$10 million per year—just 0.05% of the state budget. That's under \$7 per resident or less than \$1 per tourist—a small price to pay for a more transparent, accountable government.

For these reasons, I urge you to pass SB 2313. This bill will restore trust in our democracy, empower candidates to focus on their communities rather than fundraising, and ensure that our government truly serves the people of Hawai'i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 2:20:22 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Katherine Fryer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 2313, which would strengthen Hawaii’s public campaign financing system and help reduce the influence of money in our elections.

Hawai‘i’s political system is broken. The heavy reliance on campaign contributions from wealthy donors and special interests has led to a system where 2 in 3 people believe elected officials are more focused on the interests of their donors than the needs of their communities. As a result, good policies are often blocked while harmful ones move forward. This dynamic erodes public trust and encourages corruption. SB 2313 is a critical step toward fixing this broken system by allowing candidates to run competitive campaigns without being dependent on special interest money.

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I urge you to pass SB 2313. This bill will restore trust in our democracy, empower candidates to focus on their communities rather than fundraising, and ensure that our government truly serves the people of Hawai‘i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 2:38:58 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
janice palma-glenie	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

cleaning up elections, including getting special interest money out of campaigns is THE most importnat way to help protect and improve our democracy.

Hawai`i Island had a good program years ago, but it had glitches that needed working out. instead, the program was dropped -- unitl, hopefully, now.

your voice, your integrity, your power are needed to help prerserve the concept of a public-driven republic. Here's your big chance to make a positive impact on all of us and the keiki of the future.

mahalo for support SB2313.

janice palma-glennie

kailua-kona

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 3:00:37 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

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

Comments:

Hello Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is **Nanea Lo**, and I am a resident of Hawai‘i. I am submitting this testimony in **strong support of SB2313**, which establishes a system of comprehensive public financing for candidates for state and county office beginning with the 2028 general election.

I support this bill because Hawai‘i’s current campaign finance system too often gives outsized influence to wealthy donors and special interests instead of everyday voters. Candidates should be able to focus on serving their communities—not spending countless hours fundraising or relying on large private contributions. SB2313 helps shift the balance of power back to the people by allowing candidates with genuine grassroots support to run viable campaigns without dependence on big money.

Comprehensive public financing strengthens our democracy by reducing the influence of special interests, increasing public trust in elected officials, and encouraging broader participation in civic life. When campaigns are funded by the public, elected leaders are accountable to voters—not donors. This system also opens the door for more working-class residents, young people, and community leaders to run for office, bringing diverse perspectives into government.

SB2313 builds on Hawai‘i’s long-standing commitment to ethical governance and fair elections. By investing in clean, publicly financed elections, we invest in a more transparent, inclusive, and accountable democracy.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to **pass SB2313**.

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-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 4:10:43 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
pamela burrell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Senators,

I support this measure wholeheartedly. We need an even playing field for ALL potential candidates, not just the ones with name recognition. I would love to see younger folks with great ideas, honesty and a love for Hawaii be able to be elected for the betterment of Hawaii's future.

Even the playing field. Give new ideas a chance to be heard.

Imua,

Pamela Burrell, Kalihiwai, Kaua'i

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 4:30:32 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Anna Camacho	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members,

When 2 in 3 people believe their elected officials answer to donors before constituents, that's not cynicism, that's learned distrust.

SB2313 would strengthen Hawaii's public campaign financing system and help reduce the influence of money in our elections.

Full public financing means a candidate from Pālolo or Pāhoa can run a real campaign and win with community support, rather than just check writers.

States like Connecticut and Maine have successfully run similar programs for decades, and Hawai'i County piloted a version in 2010 and 2012.

Estimates show the cost would be less than \$10 million per year, or 0.05% of the state budget. That's under \$7 per resident or less than \$1 per tourist!

3 out of 4 voters support clean elections. The people are already there; the question is whether this body is willing to meet them.

We deserve a government that answers to the people. For these reasons, I urge you to pass SB 2313.

Mahalo.

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 4:32:08 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

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

Comments:

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

I am in strong support of SB2313.

Too many people believe our political system is driven by money instead of community needs. Public financing is a proven way to reduce the influence of wealthy donors and special interests, while giving everyday people a real voice in our elections.

By allowing candidates to run competitive campaigns without relying on private donations, this bill helps level the playing field and encourages more community-focused leaders to step forward. It also allows elected officials to spend more time listening to constituents and working on solutions, instead of constantly fundraising.

Hawai'i has already shown a commitment to clean elections, and past pilot programs demonstrated that public financing can work here.

Mahalo, Jane Aquino, Oahu

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 5:12:53 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
The Rev. Prof. GREGORY JOHNSON	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Keep our elections CLEAN and FREE of undisclosed financial contributions.

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 5:18:01 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

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

Comments:

Chair and Members of the Committee,

I urge you to support Senate Bill 2313, which would strengthen Hawaii’s public campaign financing system and help reduce the influence of money in our elections.

Hawai‘i’s political system is broken. The heavy reliance on campaign contributions from wealthy donors and special interests has led to a system where 2 in 3 people believe elected officials are more focused on the interests of their donors than the needs of their communities. As a result, good policies are often blocked while harmful ones move forward. This dynamic erodes public trust and encourages corruption. SB 2313 is a critical step toward fixing this broken system by allowing candidates to run competitive campaigns without being dependent on special interest money.

By providing full public financing for qualified candidates, SB 2313 will break the link between private money and electoral success. This will create a fairer and more honest system where elected officials are accountable to their constituents rather than big donors. Importantly, similar programs in other states show that public financing does not lead to higher incumbent turnover or drastic shifts in political makeup, but it does change who holds influence in government—ensuring that everyday people, not just the wealthy few, have a voice.

Public financing is both popular and cost-effective. Three out of four voters support a clean elections program. States like Connecticut and Maine have successfully run similar programs for decades, and Hawai‘i County piloted a version in 2010 and 2012. Even if Hawai‘i saw higher participation rates than any other state, estimates show the cost would be less than \$10 million per year—just 0.05% of the state budget. That’s under \$7 per resident or less than \$1 per tourist—a small price to pay for a more transparent, accountable government.

For these reasons, I urge you to pass SB 2313. This bill will restore trust in our democracy, empower candidates to focus on their communities rather than fundraising, and ensure that our government truly serves the people of Hawai‘i.

Thank you

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 5:34:21 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jeannine Johnson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha mai kākou, I have supported Clean Elections in Hawai‘i since 2005 and give my strong support for SB2313. It’s crucially important that this body does everything in its power to remove the influence money has on our politics. Corruption is far too rampant in Hawai‘i and the pay-to-play behavior of our politicians needs to end now. Money in politics holds back progress on all the issues important to local working families: from affordable housing, to cost of living, to protecting our environment, and more. If we are serious about ending corruption and creating a system that works for all residents and not just the wealthy few, we need to pass SB2313 now. Mahalo!

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 5:40:16 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Forest Frizzell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 2313, which would strengthen Hawai‘i’s public campaign financing system and help reduce the influence of money in our elections.

Hawai‘i’s political system is broken. The heavy reliance on campaign contributions from wealthy donors and special interests has led to a system where 2 in 3 people believe elected officials are more focused on the interests of their donors than the needs of their communities. As a result, good policies are often blocked while harmful ones move forward. This dynamic erodes public trust and encourages corruption. SB 2313 is a critical step toward fixing this broken system by allowing candidates to run competitive campaigns without being dependent on special interest money.

By providing full public financing for qualified candidates, SB 2313 will break the link between private money and electoral success. This will create a fairer and more honest system where elected officials are accountable to their constituents rather than big donors. Importantly, similar programs in other states show that public financing does not lead to higher incumbent turnover or drastic shifts in political makeup, but it does change who holds influence in government—ensuring that everyday people, not just the wealthy few, have a voice.

Public financing is both popular and cost-effective. Three out of four voters support a clean elections program. States like Connecticut and Maine have successfully run similar programs for decades, and Hawai‘i County piloted a version in 2010 and 2012. Even if Hawai‘i saw higher participation rates than any other state, estimates show the cost would be less than \$10 million per year—just 0.05% of the state budget. That’s under \$7 per resident or less than \$1 per tourist—a small price to pay for a more transparent, accountable government.

For these reasons, I urge you to pass SB 2313. This bill will restore trust in our democracy, empower candidates to focus on their communities rather than fundraising, and ensure that our government truly serves the people of Hawai‘i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 5:49:45 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Peter R Daspit	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 2313, which would strengthen Hawaii’s public campaign financing system and help reduce the influence of money in our elections.

Hawai‘i’s political system is broken. The heavy reliance on campaign contributions from wealthy donors and special interests has led to a system where 2 in 3 people believe elected officials are more focused on the interests of their donors than the needs of their communities. As a result, good policies are often blocked while harmful ones move forward. This dynamic erodes public trust and encourages corruption. SB 2313 is a critical step toward fixing this broken system by allowing candidates to run competitive campaigns without being dependent on special interest money.

By providing full public financing for qualified candidates, SB 2313 will break the link between private money and electoral success. This will create a fairer and more honest system where elected officials are accountable to their constituents rather than big donors. Importantly, similar programs in other states show that public financing does not lead to higher incumbent turnover or drastic shifts in political makeup, but it does change who holds influence in government—ensuring that everyday people, not just the wealthy few, have a voice.

Public financing is both popular and cost-effective. Three out of four voters support a clean elections program. States like Connecticut and Maine have successfully run similar programs for decades, and Hawai‘i County piloted a version in 2010 and 2012. Even if Hawai‘i saw higher participation rates than any other state, estimates show the cost would be less than \$10 million per year—just 0.05% of the state budget. That’s under \$7 per resident or less than \$1 per tourist—a small price to pay for a more transparent, accountable government.

For these reasons, I urge you to pass SB 2313. This bill will restore trust in our democracy, empower candidates to focus on their communities rather than fundraising, and ensure that our government truly serves the people of Hawai‘i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Peter Daspit, Kailua

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 5:59:01 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jim Klyman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Yes Please, lets make funding election campagins easier for the candidates. There has to be some method to fund campagins that will weed out wanna be non-serious candidates, but I'm not sure how to fairly make this determination, but it should be well explained in this law.

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 6:24:41 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Katie Haggard	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 2313, which would strengthen Hawaii’s public campaign financing system and help reduce the influence of money in our elections.

Hawai‘i’s political system is broken. The heavy reliance on campaign contributions from wealthy donors and special interests has led to a system where 2 in 3 people believe elected officials are more focused on the interests of their donors than the needs of their communities. As a result, good policies are often blocked while harmful ones move forward. This dynamic erodes public trust and encourages corruption. SB 2313 is a critical step toward fixing this broken system by allowing candidates to run competitive campaigns without being dependent on special interest money.

By providing full public financing for qualified candidates, SB 2313 will break the link between private money and electoral success. This will create a fairer and more honest system where elected officials are accountable to their constituents rather than big donors. Importantly, similar programs in other states show that public financing does not lead to higher incumbent turnover or drastic shifts in political makeup, but it does change who holds influence in government—ensuring that everyday people, not just the wealthy few, have a voice.

Public financing is both popular and cost-effective. Three out of four voters support a clean elections program. States like Connecticut and Maine have successfully run similar programs for decades, and Hawai‘i County piloted a version in 2010 and 2012. Even if Hawai‘i saw higher participation rates than any other state, estimates show the cost would be less than \$10 million per year—just 0.05% of the state budget. That’s under \$7 per resident or less than \$1 per tourist—a small price to pay for a more transparent, accountable government.

For these reasons, I urge you to pass SB 2313. This bill will restore trust in our democracy, empower candidates to focus on their communities rather than fundraising, and ensure that our government truly serves the people of Hawai‘i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 9:32:31 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
C.Yamamoto	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in strong support of SB2313.

Too many people believe our political system is driven by money instead of community needs. Public financing is a proven way to reduce the influence of wealthy donors and special interests, while giving everyday people a real voice in our elections.

By allowing candidates to run competitive campaigns without relying on private donations, this bill helps level the playing field and encourages more community-focused leaders to step forward. It also allows elected officials to spend more time listening to constituents and working on solutions, instead of constantly fundraising.

Hawai'i has already shown a commitment to clean elections, and past pilot programs demonstrated that public financing can work here.

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 10:08:55 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Inoa Martinez	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 2313, which would strengthen Hawaii’s public campaign financing system and help reduce the influence of money in our elections.

Hawai‘i’s political system is broken. The heavy reliance on campaign contributions from wealthy donors and special interests has led to a system where 2 in 3 people believe elected officials are more focused on the interests of their donors than the needs of their communities. As a result, good policies are often blocked while harmful ones move forward. This dynamic erodes public trust and encourages corruption. SB 2313 is a critical step toward fixing this broken system by allowing candidates to run competitive campaigns without being dependent on special interest money.

By providing full public financing for qualified candidates, SB 2313 will break the link between private money and electoral success. This will create a fairer and more honest system where elected officials are accountable to their constituents rather than big donors. Importantly, similar programs in other states show that public financing does not lead to higher incumbent turnover or drastic shifts in political makeup, but it does change who holds influence in government—ensuring that everyday people, not just the wealthy few, have a voice.

Public financing is both popular and cost-effective. Three out of four voters support a clean elections program. States like Connecticut and Maine have successfully run similar programs for decades, and Hawai‘i County piloted a version in 2010 and 2012. Even if Hawai‘i saw higher participation rates than any other state, estimates show the cost would be less than \$10 million per year—just 0.05% of the state budget. That’s under \$7 per resident or less than \$1 per tourist—a small price to pay for a more transparent, accountable government.

For these reasons, I urge you to pass SB 2313. This bill will restore trust in our democracy, empower candidates to focus on their communities rather than fundraising, and ensure that our government truly serves the people of Hawai‘i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Eileen Cain
720 Mahi'ai St., Apt. E
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96826-5635
eileencaïn808@gmail.com
February 26, 2026

Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair, Committee on Ways and Means
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair,
Members of the Committee on Ways and Means

Aloha, Senators,

I am submitting this testimony in support of SB2313 SD1, "Relating to Public Financing for Candidates to Elected Office." This bill would have numerous beneficial outcomes for the people of Hawai'i.

- The public's perception of corruption in elected office would be addressed by this bill. SB2313 SD1 proposes to eliminate one possible source of corruption, namely campaign contributions by monied interests.
- This bill would eliminate undue financial influence over or even intimidation of elected officials. Perhaps some elected officials feel that it is difficult for them to vote for what is in the public's best interest because of contractors acting out of selfishness, trying to sway officials or even intimidate them. **Publicly financed elections** would allow officials to breathe easy, to be free from such tactics.
- This bill would safeguard the public interest. Citizens like me need to trust that decisions made by elected officials are not dominated by powerful lobbies paid for by contractors or large corporations.
- We citizens could believe that our voices are actually heard when we give testimony, that our needs and views are given serious consideration, even if we don't have a lot of money.
- In addition, some people don't run for office, even though they are qualified and have good ideas for the State, because they can't afford campaign expenses. Trying to work for a living, raise a family, and raise funds to run for office is too hard. Thus, the public misses out on candidates who might be knowledgeable and serve them well. **Publicly financed elections** would eliminate this barrier for qualified candidates that the voting public might choose to represent them.

Please vote in favor of **SB2313 SD1**.

Mahalo,

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

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 10:22:30 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cory Harden	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha legislators,

This bill supports elected officials who are not beholden to private interests, and frees them from the constant strain of fund-raising. Pilot programs have shown great promise. Let's build on them.

mahalo,
Cory Harden

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2026 12:34:06 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Robin Leachman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in strong support of SB2313

Mahalo, Robin

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2026 6:09:51 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 2313, which would strengthen Hawaii’s public campaign financing system and help reduce the influence of money in our elections.

Hawai‘i’s political system is broken. The heavy reliance on campaign contributions from wealthy donors and special interests has led to a system where 2 in 3 people believe elected officials are more focused on the interests of their donors than the needs of their communities. As a result, good policies are often blocked while harmful ones move forward. This dynamic erodes public trust and encourages corruption. SB 2313 is a critical step toward fixing this broken system by allowing candidates to run competitive campaigns without being dependent on special interest money.

By providing full public financing for qualified candidates, SB 2313 will break the link between private money and electoral success. This will create a fairer and more honest system where elected officials are accountable to their constituents rather than big donors. Importantly, similar programs in other states show that public financing does not lead to higher incumbent turnover or drastic shifts in political makeup, but it does change who holds influence in government—ensuring that everyday people, not just the wealthy few, have a voice.

Public financing is both popular and cost-effective. Three out of four voters support a clean elections program. States like Connecticut and Maine have successfully run similar programs for decades, and Hawai‘i County piloted a version in 2010 and 2012. Even if Hawai‘i saw higher participation rates than any other state, estimates show the cost would be less than \$10 million per year—just 0.05% of the state budget. That’s under \$7 per resident or less than \$1 per tourist—a small price to pay for a more transparent, accountable government.

For these reasons, I urge you to pass SB 2313. This bill will restore trust in our democracy, empower candidates to focus on their communities rather than fundraising, and ensure that our government truly serves the people of Hawai‘i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Nancy Harter, Lahaina, HI

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2026 7:08:28 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lisa Galloway	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please give Hawai'i clean elections.

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2026 7:16:20 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Margaret ANN Renick	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please PASS this much needed bill!!! Mahalo

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2026 8:25:18 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Yvette Kay	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

*Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki and Members of the Committee
I am in strong support of SB2313.*

Too many people believe our political system is driven by money instead of community needs. Public financing is a proven way to reduce the influence of wealthy donors and special interests, while giving everyday people a real voice in our elections.

By allowing candidates to run competitive campaigns without relying on private donations, this bill helps level the playing field and encourages more community-focused leaders to step forward. It also allows elected officials to spend more time listening to constituents and working on solutions, instead of constantly fundraising.

Hawai'i has already shown a commitment to clean elections, and past pilot programs demonstrated that public financing can work here.

Mahalo,

Yvette Kay

Kailua Kona, HI

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2026 8:35:20 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Karen Takamine	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support SB2313 and **clean elections**. Please do not unalive these bills!

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2026 8:35:50 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kaylee	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair and Members of the Committee,

I respectfully submit testimony in strong support of SB2313, which establishes a comprehensive system of public financing for candidates seeking election to state and county offices in Hawai‘i beginning in the 2028 election cycle.

Public financing of elections represents an important investment in strengthening Hawai‘i’s democracy by ensuring that participation in public office is accessible to community leaders from all socioeconomic backgrounds, not only those with access to significant financial networks or private fundraising resources.

Hawai‘i’s communities are rich with cultural knowledge, lived experience, and local leadership. However, the rising cost of running for office continues to create barriers that disproportionately impact Native Hawaiian leaders, working class residents, young professionals, and individuals rooted in community service rather than political fundraising structures. SB2313 helps remove these structural barriers by allowing candidates to focus on community engagement, policy solutions, and constituent needs instead of continuous fundraising obligations.

A comprehensive public financing system promotes greater equity in political participation, increased transparency and public trust in government, reduced reliance on large private donations, and broader representation reflective of Hawai‘i’s diverse communities.

When candidates are empowered to run viable campaigns without dependence on major donors, policymaking becomes more responsive to residents rather than financial influence. This

strengthens public confidence in government institutions and encourages civic participation across the state.

SB2313 builds upon Hawai'i's commitment to fair elections by modernizing and expanding access to public campaign financing in a way that supports competitive, community centered elections statewide.

Investing in democratic access today helps ensure stronger governance and more representative leadership for future generations.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to PASS SB2313.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2026 9:01:17 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Paul Palmer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

By providing full public financing for qualified candidates, SB 2313 will break the link between private money and electoral success.

Elected officials are accountable to their constituents rather than BIG donors.

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2026 9:33:25 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:02:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Aimee E McCullough	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I am in strong support of SB2313

Too many people believe our political system is driven by money instead of community needs. Public financing is a proven way to reduce the influence of wealthy donors and special interests, while giving everyday people a real voice in our elections.

By allowing candidates to run competitive campaigns without relying on private donations, this bill helps level the playing field and encourages more community-focused leaders to step forward. It also allows elected officials to spend more time listening to constituents and working on solutions, instead of constantly fundraising.

Hawai'i has already shown a commitment to clean elections, and past pilot programs demonstrated that public financing can work here.

Thank you,

Aimee McCullough, PsyD

Kailua

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2026 10:12:24 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:02:00 AM

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

Comments:

I support efforts to strengthen public financing as I believe it can be an effective tool to help reduce the influence monied interests has on policy making. The current system allows those with money to have more access to elected officials. The additional funding investment in public financing, I believe, will provide returns in the form of better policy outcomes (as opposed to the current system that many in the public believe is rife with graft, wasteful spending, and pay-to-play).

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2026 10:14:48 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:02:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Richard Tillotson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this bill

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2026 1:15:23 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:02:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Priscilla Stuckey	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

I strongly support Senate Bill 2313 to expand our public campaign financing system in Hawai'i.

Money is not speech, no matter what any court of the land says. Money belongs to people, and people get one vote each. That's the law. So we need campaign finance reform in this country to return the power to ALL THE PEOPLE, not to people with money.

In Hawai'i we need campaign finance reform because so much of our political system relies on contributions from wealthy donors and special interests. As a result, good policies are often blocked while harmful ones move forward. This dynamic erodes public trust and encourages corruption. SB 2313 is a critical step toward fixing this broken system by allowing candidates to run competitive campaigns without being dependent on special interest money.

By providing full public financing for qualified candidates, SB 2313 will break the link between private money and electoral success. It will help restore political power to ALL THE VOTERS, not just the voters with money.

This will create a fairer and more honest system where elected officials are accountable to their constituents rather than to big donors. Every eligible voter, not just the wealthy few, must have a voice so that Hawai'i can live up to its promise: to be a vibrant, diverse, and democratic society that can model full democratic participation in its political process.

Three out of four voters support a clean elections program. States like Connecticut and Maine have successfully run similar programs for decades, and Hawai'i County piloted a version in 2010 and 2012.

Clean elections are cost effective. Estimates show the cost would be less than \$10 million per year—just 0.05% of the state budget. That's under \$7 per resident or less than \$1 per tourist—a small price to pay for a more transparent, accountable government.

Please pass SB 2313. We need to take big money out of our elections process so that all the people of this state have a voice.

Mahalo,

Priscilla Stuckey, PhD, Kihei

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2026 1:41:25 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:02:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Thomas Brandt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUPPORT!

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2026 2:26:17 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:02:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha, I am writing in support of SB2313 SD1. I am in favor of public financing for our elections. Mahalo for your consideration.

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2026 2:32:53 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:02:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kalehua kaopua	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

"I support SB 2313 because it gets big money out of politics and ensures our leaders are accountable to local voters, not wealthy special interests. It levels the playing field so that any qualified person not just the well-connected can afford to run for office and serve our community."

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2026 2:51:53 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:02:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Erin Hagan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 2313, which would strengthen Hawaii’s public campaign financing system and help reduce the influence of money in our elections.

Hawai‘i’s political system is broken. The heavy reliance on campaign contributions from wealthy donors and special interests has led to a system where 2 in 3 people believe elected officials are more focused on the interests of their donors than the needs of their communities. As a result, good policies are often blocked while harmful ones move forward. This dynamic erodes public trust and encourages corruption. SB 2313 is a critical step toward fixing this broken system by allowing candidates to run competitive campaigns without being dependent on special interest money.

By providing full public financing for qualified candidates, SB 2313 will break the link between private money and electoral success. This will create a fairer and more honest system where elected officials are accountable to their constituents rather than big donors. Importantly, similar programs in other states show that public financing does not lead to higher incumbent turnover or drastic shifts in political makeup, but it does change who holds influence in government—ensuring that everyday people, not just the wealthy few, have a voice.

Public financing is both popular and cost-effective. Three out of four voters support a clean elections program. States like Connecticut and Maine have successfully run similar programs for decades, and Hawai‘i County piloted a version in 2010 and 2012. Even if Hawai‘i saw higher participation rates than any other state, estimates show the cost would be less than \$10 million per year—just 0.05% of the state budget. That’s under \$7 per resident or less than \$1 per tourist—a small price to pay for a more transparent, accountable government.

For these reasons, I urge you to pass SB 2313. This bill will restore trust in our democracy, empower candidates to focus on their communities rather than fundraising, and ensure that our government truly serves the people of Hawai‘i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Erin Hagan

Waialua

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2026 2:56:37 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:02:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Leah Morse	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I am in strong support of SB2313.

Too many people believe our political system is driven by money instead of community needs. Public financing is a proven way to reduce the influence of wealthy donors and special interests, while giving everyday people a real voice in our elections.

By allowing candidates to run competitive campaigns without relying on private donations, this bill helps level the playing field and encourages more community-focused leaders to step forward. It also allows elected officials to spend more time listening to constituents and working on solutions, instead of constantly fundraising.

Hawai'i has already shown a commitment to clean elections, and past pilot programs demonstrated that public financing can work here.

Mahalo,

Leah Morse, Honolulu

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2026 3:55:27 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:02:00 AM

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

Comments:

SUPPORT! Get money out of politics NOW!

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2026 4:13:47 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:02:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Amara Karuna	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

*Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki and Members of the Committee
I am in strong support of SB2313.*

*Too many people believe our political system is driven by money instead of community needs.
Public financing is a proven way to reduce the influence of wealthy donors and special interests,
while giving everyday people a real voice in our elections.*

*By allowing candidates to run competitive campaigns without relying on private donations, this
bill helps level the playing field and encourages more community-focused leaders to step
forward. It also allows elected officials to spend more time listening to constituents and working
on solutions, instead of constantly fundraising.*

*Hawai'i has already shown a commitment to clean elections, and past pilot programs
demonstrated that public financing can work here.*

Fair elections are so important.

Mahalo,

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2026 4:37:05 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:02:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
emily gambino	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 2313, which would strengthen Hawaii’s public campaign financing system and help reduce the influence of money in our elections.

Hawai‘i’s political system is broken. The heavy reliance on campaign contributions from wealthy donors and special interests has led to a system where 2 in 3 people believe elected officials are more focused on the interests of their donors than the needs of their communities. As a result, good policies are often blocked while harmful ones move forward. This dynamic erodes public trust and encourages corruption. SB 2313 is a critical step toward fixing this broken system by allowing candidates to run competitive campaigns without being dependent on special interest money.

By providing full public financing for qualified candidates, SB 2313 will break the link between private money and electoral success. This will create a fairer and more honest system where elected officials are accountable to their constituents rather than big donors. Importantly, similar programs in other states show that public financing does not lead to higher incumbent turnover or drastic shifts in political makeup, but it does change who holds influence in government—ensuring that everyday people, not just the wealthy few, have a voice.

Public financing is both popular and cost-effective. Three out of four voters support a clean elections program. States like Connecticut and Maine have successfully run similar programs for decades, and Hawai‘i County piloted a version in 2010 and 2012. Even if Hawai‘i saw higher participation rates than any other state, estimates show the cost would be less than \$10 million per year—just 0.05% of the state budget. That’s under \$7 per resident or less than \$1 per tourist—a small price to pay for a more transparent, accountable government.

For these reasons, I urge you to pass SB 2313. This bill will restore trust in our democracy, empower candidates to focus on their communities rather than fundraising, and ensure that our government truly serves the people of Hawai‘i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Emily Gambino

Makawao, HI

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2026 4:38:33 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:02:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Diane Ware	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

*Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki and Members of the Committee
I am in strong support of SB2313 to reduce corrupt pay to play practices in government.*

Too many people believe our political system is driven by money instead of community needs and I am one of those people. Public financing is a proven way to reduce the influence of wealthy donors and special interests, while giving everyday people a real voice in our elections.

By allowing candidates to run competitive campaigns without relying on private donations, this bill helps level the playing field and encourages more community-focused leaders to step forward. It also allows elected officials to spend more time listening to constituents and working on solutions, instead of constantly fundraising.

Hawai'i has already shown a commitment to clean elections, and past pilot programs demonstrated that public financing can

Mahalo,

Diane Ware Volcano 96785

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2026 5:08:09 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:02:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Annette Barry	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 2313, which would strengthen Hawaii’s public campaign financing system and help reduce the influence of money in our elections.

Hawai‘i’s political system is broken. The heavy reliance on campaign contributions from wealthy donors and special interests has led to a system where 2 in 3 people believe elected officials are more focused on the interests of their donors than the needs of their communities. As a result, good policies are often blocked while harmful ones move forward. This dynamic erodes public trust and encourages corruption. SB 2313 is a critical step toward fixing this broken system by allowing candidates to run competitive campaigns without being dependent on special interest money.

By providing full public financing for qualified candidates, SB 2313 will break the link between private money and electoral success. This will create a fairer and more honest system where elected officials are accountable to their constituents rather than big donors. Importantly, similar programs in other states show that public financing does not lead to higher incumbent turnover or drastic shifts in political makeup, but it does change who holds influence in government—ensuring that everyday people, not just the wealthy few, have a voice.

Public financing is both popular and cost-effective. Three out of four voters support a clean elections program. States like Connecticut and Maine have successfully run similar programs for decades, and Hawai‘i County piloted a version in 2010 and 2012. Even if Hawai‘i saw higher participation rates than any other state, estimates show the cost would be less than \$10 million per year—just 0.05% of the state budget. That’s under \$7 per resident or less than \$1 per tourist—a small price to pay for a more transparent, accountable government.

For these reasons, I urge you to pass SB 2313. This bill will restore trust in our democracy, empower candidates to focus on their communities rather than fundraising, and ensure that our government truly serves the people of Hawai‘i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2026 5:12:11 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:02:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nicole LeClaire	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 2313, which would strengthen Hawaii’s public campaign financing system and help reduce the influence of money in our elections.

Hawai‘i’s political system is broken. The heavy reliance on campaign contributions from wealthy donors and special interests has led to a system where 2 in 3 people believe elected officials are more focused on the interests of their donors than the needs of their communities. As a result, good policies are often blocked while harmful ones move forward. This dynamic erodes public trust and encourages corruption. SB 2313 is a critical step toward fixing this broken system by allowing candidates to run competitive campaigns without being dependent on special interest money.

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Public financing is both popular and cost-effective. Three out of four voters support a clean elections program. States like Connecticut and Maine have successfully run similar programs for decades, and Hawai‘i County piloted a version in 2010 and 2012. Even if Hawai‘i saw higher participation rates than any other state, estimates show the cost would be less than \$10 million per year—just 0.05% of the state budget. That’s under \$7 per resident or less than \$1 per tourist—a small price to pay for a more transparent, accountable government.

For these reasons, I urge you to pass SB 2313. This bill will restore trust in our democracy, empower candidates to focus on their communities rather than fundraising, and ensure that our government truly serves the people of Hawai‘i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2026 5:14:29 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:02:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sherry Shimizu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

February 27, 2026

Dearest Honorable Senators Dela Cruz (Chair), Moriwaki (Vice Chair), and Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means (WAM):

I am testifying today to express my support for SB2313 SD1, so money isn't a barrier for passionate candidates who would like to run for their respective offices. Please pass SB2313 SD1 in order to enhance the accessibility and inclusivity of public campaigning in Hawai'i regardless of how much finance backing they have.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this imperative matter.

Sincerely,
Sherry Shimizu

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2026 5:18:30 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:02:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stephanie Austin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

After many recently uncovered scandals (and some older ones) it is very important to pass this bill: voters need to be assured that those elected are representing THEM, and not big business (or worse!)

Please pass this important legislation!

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2026 6:11:06 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:02:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Larry Alfrey	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 2313, which would strengthen Hawaii’s public campaign financing system and help reduce the influence of money in our elections.

Hawai‘i’s political system is broken. The heavy reliance on campaign contributions from wealthy donors and special interests has led to a system where 2 in 3 people believe elected officials are more focused on the interests of their donors than the needs of their communities. As a result, good policies are often blocked while harmful ones move forward. This dynamic erodes public trust and encourages corruption. SB 2313 is a critical step toward fixing this broken system by allowing candidates to run competitive campaigns without being dependent on special interest money.

By providing full public financing for qualified candidates, SB 2313 will break the link between private money and electoral success. This will create a fairer and more honest system where elected officials are accountable to their constituents rather than big donors. Importantly, similar programs in other states show that public financing does not lead to higher incumbent turnover or drastic shifts in political makeup, but it does change who holds influence in government—ensuring that everyday people, not just the wealthy few, have a voice.

Public financing is both popular and cost-effective. Three out of four voters support a clean elections program. States like Connecticut and Maine have successfully run similar programs for decades, and Hawai‘i County piloted a version in 2010 and 2012. Even if Hawai‘i saw higher participation rates than any other state, estimates show the cost would be less than \$10 million per year—just 0.05% of the state budget. That’s under \$7 per resident or less than \$1 per tourist—a small price to pay for a more transparent, accountable government.

For these reasons, I urge you to pass SB 2313. This bill will restore trust in our democracy, empower candidates to focus on their communities rather than fundraising, and ensure that our government truly serves the people of Hawai‘i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2026 6:26:44 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:02:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Richard Janik	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Obivously, the legislatures, ie the House andf Senate, cannot stop illegal campaign funds, especially from construction companies.

This law is needed to futher diswade state congresses from illegal fund raising.

I fully support this reform.

Richard Janik, MD

Lihue, HI

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2026 6:44:19 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:02:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Eileen McKee	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of the SB 2313. This bill will strengthen Hawai'i's public campaign financing system and help reduce the influence of money in our elections. The bill will create a fairer and more honest system where elected officials are accountable to their constituents rather than big money donors. Public financing is popular and cost effective. Three out of four voters support a clean elections program. Please pass SB 2313. Let's help restore our trust in democracy by empowering candidates to focus on their communities rather than fundraising.

Mahalo for considering my testimony.

Eileen McKee, Kihei

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2026 6:55:02 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:02:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Paul Kimo Pestana	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 2313, which would strengthen Hawaii’s public campaign financing system and help reduce the influence of money in our elections.

Hawai‘i’s political system is broken. The heavy reliance on campaign contributions from wealthy donors and special interests has led to a system where 2 in 3 people believe elected officials are more focused on the interests of their donors than the needs of their communities. As a result, good policies are often blocked while harmful ones move forward. This dynamic erodes public trust and encourages corruption. SB 2313 is a critical step toward fixing this broken system by allowing candidates to run competitive campaigns without being dependent on special interest money.

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SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2026 7:15:13 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:02:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Donna R Walker	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We fully support this bill!

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2026 9:02:30 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:02:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marlies Lee	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support SB 2313

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2026 9:14:45 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:02:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lily Troy MD	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support SB2313 SD1

**Senator Donovan Dela Cruz , Chair, Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki , Vice
Chair, Members**

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

SB 2313

02 March 2026

10:02 a.m.

CR 211 & Videoconference

I support SB 2313

Aloha kākou,

I, Robert Nawahine Mansfield, Jr. strongly support SB 2313 and urge your support.

The heavy reliance on large campaign contributions jeopardizes our democracy; the inherent dynamics encourage SB corruption.

By providing full public financing for qualified candidates, SB 2313 will insure all of the electorate is the engine of our democracy.

Mahalo a nui loa,

**Robert Nawahine Mansfield, Jr.
Moiliili**

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 2:56:06 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:02:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Donna Carsten	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 2313, which would strengthen Hawaii’s public campaign financing system and help reduce the influence of money in our elections.

Hawai‘i’s political system is broken. The heavy reliance on campaign contributions from wealthy donors and special interests has led to a system where 2 in 3 people believe elected officials are more focused on the interests of their donors than the needs of their communities. As a result, good policies are often blocked while harmful ones move forward. This dynamic erodes public trust and encourages corruption. SB 2313 is a critical step toward fixing this broken system by allowing candidates to run competitive campaigns without being dependent on special interest money.

By providing full public financing for qualified candidates, SB 2313 will break the link between private money and electoral success. This will create a fairer and more honest system where elected officials are accountable to their constituents rather than big donors. Importantly, similar programs in other states show that public financing does not lead to higher incumbent turnover or drastic shifts in political makeup, but it does change who holds influence in government—ensuring that everyday people, not just the wealthy few, have a voice.

Public financing is both popular and cost-effective. Three out of four voters support a clean elections program. States like Connecticut and Maine have successfully run similar programs for decades, and Hawai‘i County piloted a version in 2010 and 2012. Even if Hawai‘i saw higher participation rates than any other state, estimates show the cost would be less than \$10 million per year—just 0.05% of the state budget. That’s under \$7 per resident or less than \$1 per tourist—a small price to pay for a more transparent, accountable government.

For these reasons, I urge you to pass SB 2313. This bill will restore trust in our democracy, empower candidates to focus on their communities rather than fundraising, and ensure that our government truly serves the people of Hawai‘i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 5:40:53 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:02:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Leimomi Khan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support with Amendment

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:

I submit this testimony in support of S.B. 2313, S.D. 1, with amendments.

I strongly support the establishment of a comprehensive public financing program that allows qualified candidates to run for office without reliance on large private contributions. This measure represents an important step toward increasing public confidence in government and expanding access to public service.

I respectfully request amendments to address parity for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs. OHA trustee elections are conducted on a statewide ballot and require candidates to campaign across the entire State, yet the bill currently funds those races at a level below State House contests and applies a district-based qualifying structure that does not align with the statewide electorate that elects OHA trustees.

A modest adjustment to bring the public financing level for OHA into parity with State House races, and to clarify that qualifying support may be demonstrated on a statewide basis, would improve the internal consistency of the measure while preserving its overall structure.

I offer this testimony based on many years of active participation in Hawai'i's electoral and Native Hawaiian civic processes and with deep respect for the Legislature's work to strengthen our democracy.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this important bill.

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 7:41:48 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:02:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Danelle Guion	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I SUPPORT SB2313, because it is TIME WE THE PEOPLE are ithe ones who pay for OUR ELECTIONS, and take OTHER money out of the equation.

Thank you.

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 9:45:44 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:02:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Glenn Metzler	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support SB2313 SD1. Public financing of elections is one of the most important ways to free our state political system from undue influence from corporations, businesses, and special interest groups.

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 10:14:28 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:02:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 2313, which would strengthen Hawaii’s public campaign financing system and help reduce the influence of money in our elections.

Hawai‘i’s political system is broken. The heavy reliance on campaign contributions from wealthy donors and special interests has led to a system where 2 in 3 people believe elected officials are more focused on the interests of their donors than the needs of their communities. As a result, good policies are often blocked while harmful ones move forward. This dynamic erodes public trust and encourages corruption. SB 2313 is a critical step toward fixing this broken system by allowing candidates to run competitive campaigns without being dependent on special interest money.

By providing full public financing for qualified candidates, SB 2313 will break the link between private money and electoral success. This will create a fairer and more honest system where elected officials are accountable to their constituents rather than big donors. Importantly, similar programs in other states show that public financing does not lead to higher incumbent turnover or drastic shifts in political makeup, but it does change who holds influence in government—ensuring that everyday people, not just the wealthy few, have a voice.

Public financing is both popular and cost-effective. Three out of four voters support a clean elections program. States like Connecticut and Maine have successfully run similar programs for decades, and Hawai‘i County piloted a version in 2010 and 2012. Even if Hawai‘i saw higher participation rates than any other state, estimates show the cost would be less than \$10 million per year—just 0.05% of the state budget. That’s under \$7 per resident or less than \$1 per tourist—a small price to pay for a more transparent, accountable government.

For these reasons, I urge you to pass SB 2313. This bill will restore trust in our democracy, empower candidates to focus on their communities rather than fundraising, and ensure that our government truly serves the people of Hawai‘i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 10:22:47 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:02:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bob Grossmann, PhD	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

A good step toward reducing undue election influence and corruption.

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 11:09:03 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:02:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ninon Rynerson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

we support renewable resourced electricity In favor of

Easy access to chargers for electric vehicles

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 11:48:02 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:02:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
John Bickel	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Clean up government by taking money raising out of campaigns.

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 1:21:15 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:02:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Giovanni Sclarandis	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

- I strongly support SB2313 SD1. This measure will help restore the people's trust in government. Considering the convictions of Senator J. Kalani English and Representative Ty Cullen for cash bribes, it is clear that the legislature must do everything in its power to remove the influence that money has on our politics, including reforms like public financing. Public financing of elections is one of the most important ways to free our state political system from undue influence from corporations, businesses, and special interest groups. Three quarters of Hawai'i voters support a system of fully publicly financed elections.

-- Public financing will make campaigning easier. No one likes asking individuals for large sums of money. Public financing will free candidates from fundraisers and countless phone calls. Reducing or even eliminating candidates' reliance on wealthy donors and the need to perpetually fundraise frees candidates and officials to spend more time with their constituents and to focus on the most pressing issues of their community, such as the impacts from the growing climate crisis. It also promotes public trust in officials and in government.

-- There is overwhelming public support in Hawai'i for a "Clean Elections" program to get big money out of our politics by providing for full public financing of elections while prohibiting private contributions. Public financing is both popular and cost-effective, with three out of four voters supporting a clean elections program

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 1:54:39 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:02:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and honorable members of Committee,

My name is Susan RobertsEmery. I write on behalf of the members of the Green Party of Hawai'i, as one of the Co Chairs. Public Financing of campaigns is one way to show your constituents, that you hear them. It creates a level playing field so more candidates, who are regular community members can run for office. There is overwhelming public support in Hawai'i for a "Clean Elections" program to get big money out of our politics by providing for full public financing of elections while prohibiting private contributions. Public financing is both popular and cost-effective, with three out of four voters supporting a clean elections program.

We urge you to Pass SB2313 SD1.

Mahalo,

Susan RobertsEmery

Green Party of Hawai'i

Paauilo

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 1:59:51 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:02:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jim Cooper	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 2313, which would strengthen Hawaii’s public campaign financing system and help reduce the influence of money in our elections.

Hawai‘i’s political system is broken. The heavy reliance on campaign contributions from wealthy donors and special interests has led to a system where 2 in 3 people believe elected officials are more focused on the interests of their donors than the needs of their communities. As a result, good policies are often blocked while harmful ones move forward. This dynamic erodes public trust and encourages corruption. SB 2313 is a critical step toward fixing this broken system by allowing candidates to run competitive campaigns without being dependent on special interest money.

Public financing is both popular and cost-effective. Three out of four voters support a clean elections program. States like Connecticut and Maine have successfully run similar programs for decades, and Hawai‘i County piloted a version in 2010 and 2012. Even if Hawai‘i saw higher participation rates than any other state, estimates show the cost would be less than \$10 million per year—just 0.05% of the state budget. That’s under \$7 per resident or less than \$1 per tourist—a small price to pay for a more transparent, accountable government.

For these reasons, I urge you to pass SB 2313. This bill will restore trust in our democracy, empower candidates to focus on their communities rather than fundraising, and ensure that our government truly serves the people of Hawai‘i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Committee on Ways and Means
Chair, Donovan Dela Cruz Vice Chair, Sharon Moriwaki
Committee Members
Senators Lynn DeCoite, Brandon Elefante, Troy Hashimoto, Lorraine Inouye,
Dru Mamo Kanuha, Michelle Kidani, Donna Mercado Kim, Chris Lee,
Herbert "Tim" Richards III, Glenn Wakai and Kurt Fevella

Re: SB2313 SD1 Establishes a comprehensive system of public financing for all candidates seeking election to state and county public offices in the State, to begin with the 2028 general election year. Requires the Campaign Spending Commission to submit reports to the Legislature.

My name is Rita Kama-Kimura and I stand in strong opposition to these types of bills!

The tax payors of this State are already over-taxed. However, the introducers of this bill want to use our money, tax-payor monies to support candidates we don't know and probably do not support?

Besides the tax payor monies to be donated to each qualifying candidate running for office (is there a limit or is it pretty much free for all?) what other cost will be needed to cover/finance this program?

I suggest taking a look at the testimony submitted by the Campaign Spending Commission that indicates they will need to hire two full-time equivalent permanent positions. Further they are in the process of hiring an investigator and elections assistant due to the increase in candidates, candidate committees, etc. Any idea what this will amount to?

So, this additional money will come from? us of course! the already overtaxed Hawaii resident.

If money is to be used to fund any campaigns/candidates, we the people will make that decision ourselves, the last thing we need is for the government to get involved!

So, with that I again ask you to stop this bill SB2313 SD1, now and stop wasting our money and leave those decisions with us, the people!

Respectfully but very concerned,
Rita Kama-Kimura

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 4:19:15 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:02:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tanya Aynessazian	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

At its heart, this bill is about restoring balance to our democracy. Our system is supposed to reflect one simple truth: that every voice matters equally, and that elected officials answer first to the people — not to their donors.

But that is not the reality many of us see. Running for office has become a nonstop fundraising marathon. Even when intentions are good, that structure creates dependency. And dependency shapes influence.

When campaigns rely on private money, access naturally follows relationships founded upon money. The biggest donors often have the loudest voice in the room. That affects which bills move, which issues are prioritized, and who gets heard. It quietly distorts the promise of equal representation.

A healthy democracy is one that is truly of, by and for the people. This bill is an investment in public trust and in our communities' most impassioned leaders. It creates a level playing field where ideas compete on their merits, and where everyday citizens — not just the well-connected or well-funded — can step forward to lead.

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 5:06:12 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:02:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lori Kizer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support and pass SB2313 to help fix Hawaii's broken political system. Mahalo.

Lori Kizer, Kapaa

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 6:48:04 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:02:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Robert Culbertson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 2313, which would strengthen Hawaii’s public campaign financing system and help reduce the influence of money in our elections.

Hawai‘i’s political system is broken. The heavy reliance on campaign contributions from wealthy donors and special interests has led to a system where 2 in 3 people believe elected officials are more focused on the interests of their donors than the needs of their communities. As a result, good policies are often blocked while harmful ones move forward. This dynamic erodes public trust and encourages corruption. SB 2313 is a critical step toward fixing this broken system by allowing candidates to run competitive campaigns without being dependent on special interest money.

By providing full public financing for qualified candidates, SB 2313 will break the link between private money and electoral success. This will create a fairer and more honest system where elected officials are accountable to their constituents rather than big donors. Importantly, similar programs in other states show that public financing does not lead to higher incumbent turnover or drastic shifts in political makeup, but it does change who holds influence in government—ensuring that everyday people, not just the wealthy few, have a voice.

Public financing is both popular and cost-effective. Three out of four voters support a clean elections program. States like Connecticut and Maine have successfully run similar programs for decades, and Hawai‘i County piloted a version in 2010 and 2012. Even if Hawai‘i saw higher participation rates than any other state, estimates show the cost would be less than \$10 million per year—just 0.05% of the state budget. That’s under \$7 per resident or less than \$1 per tourist—a small price to pay for a more transparent, accountable government.

For these reasons, I urge you to pass SB 2313. This bill will restore trust in our democracy, empower candidates to focus on their communities rather than fundraising, and ensure that our government truly serves the people of Hawai‘i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Rob Culbertson

Honokaa

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 6:58:53 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:02:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Felicidy Phimmasone	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly **support SB2313 SDI.**

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 7:09:02 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:02:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
John	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, my family and I fully support SB2313 for several reasons and we humbly ask for your serious consideration for this, which will level the field and keep outside and big money out of our politics. There's so much to be cynical about these days, but please don't give us yet another reason to be cynical. Step up, do the right thing. Mahalo, Lyle o'hana, Volcano/Ka'u

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 7:20:02 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:02:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ruth Robison	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To: Chair Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Sharon Y. Moriwaki and Members of the Committee on Ways and Means

From: Ruth Robison

I have been a resident of Hawai`i since 1962 and of Hilo since 1982.

This testimony is in strong support of

2313 SB RELATING TO PUBLIC FINANCING FOR CANDIDATES TO ELECTED OFFICE.
--

75% of voters in Hawai`i support a "Clean Elections" program to get big money out of our politics by providing for full public financing of elections while prohibiting private contributions. Public financing is both popular and cost-effective.

Please support SB2313 SD1.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 9:22:37 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:02:00 AM

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

Comments:

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

My name is Carolyn Eaton. I am a resident of Honolulu, and I appreciate this opportunity to express strong support for this measure.

Public financing for candidates to elected office in Hawai'i will enable worthy candidates without "deep pockets" to compete with those whose corporate or union backers (PACs) have repeatedly affected election wins.

Mahalo for your hard work to improve the lives of the people of Hawai'i.

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 9:33:48 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:02:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Valerie Wayne	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass this bill to ensure the integrity of our elections in Hawaii. It's so important that we have clean elections!

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 10:23:16 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:02:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rita Massey	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Senate Ways and Means,

I am writing in support of SB2313 - Comprehensive Public Financing of Elections.

We need to get big money out of politics so our Representatives can truly represent the average constituent, not big donors.

We need to have a political process that is truly democratic and responds to the wishes and needs of the general public, not a few big donors. This bill is a step in the right direction to make our government responsive to the people it is supposed to serve.

How much time are HI lawmakers spending soliciting campaign donations that could be better spent doing the gratifying work of serving their constituents? It could be a win-win for the public and the lawmakers in that the public is better served and the lawmaker's job is easier and less stressful by having publicly funded campaigns.

Please vote to move forward this bill SB2313. Mahalo.

Rita Massey

Kihei

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 10:46:35 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:02:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
JON BRODZIAK	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My goal is to support **SB2313 SD1** because Hawai‘i needs elections that answer to voters, not to money. The problem is that private fundraising invites undue influence and weakens trust, especially after recent bribery convictions involving former lawmakers. The solution is a comprehensive public financing system for state and county races, starting with the **2028 general election**, so qualified candidates can run without selling their time and attention to donors.

Chair and members of the committee, I strongly support **SB2313 SD1** because it can restore public confidence by reducing the role of private money in campaigns. Hawai‘i has seen what cash-for-favors looks like in real life, and those cases should push us toward reforms that shrink the space where bribery and “helpful contributions” can flourish.

Public financing also improves the daily conduct of campaigns by letting candidates spend less time fundraising and more time meeting constituents. Few people admire the ritual of endless calls for money, and it does not produce better laws. When candidates rely less on wealthy donors and special interests, they can focus more on community needs, including the very practical work of preparing for climate impacts.

This reform is popular because people understand a simple truth: private money should not be allowed to buy public decisions. A recent Hawai‘i voter survey found strong support for a Clean Elections style public financing program and broad concern that donations obligate legislators. **SB2313 SD1** offers a fair bargain—candidates get a clean path to compete, and the public gets elections that look less like an auction. Please pass **SB2313 SD1** and put Hawai‘i on track for publicly financed state and county elections beginning in **2028**.

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 11:20:35 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:02:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
LEE ANNE SPENCER	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 2313, which would strengthen Hawaii’s public campaign financing system and help reduce the influence of money in our elections.

Hawai‘i’s political system is broken. The heavy reliance on campaign contributions from wealthy donors and special interests has led to a system where 2 in 3 people believe elected officials are more focused on the interests of their donors than the needs of their communities. As a result, good policies are often blocked while harmful ones move forward. This dynamic erodes public trust and encourages corruption. SB 2313 is a critical step toward fixing this broken system by allowing candidates to run competitive campaigns without being dependent on special interest money.

By providing full public financing for qualified candidates, SB 2313 will break the link between private money and electoral success. This will create a fairer and more honest system where elected officials are accountable to their constituents rather than big donors. Importantly, similar programs in other states show that public financing does not lead to higher incumbent turnover or drastic shifts in political makeup, but it does change who holds influence in government—ensuring that everyday people, not just the wealthy few, have a voice.

Public financing is both popular and cost-effective. Three out of four voters support a clean elections program. States like Connecticut and Maine have successfully run similar programs for decades, and Hawai‘i County piloted a version in 2010 and 2012. Even if Hawai‘i saw higher participation rates than any other state, estimates show the cost would be less than \$10 million per year—just 0.05% of the state budget. That’s under \$7 per resident or less than \$1 per tourist—a small price to pay for a more transparent, accountable government.

For these reasons, I urge you to pass SB 2313. This bill will restore trust in our democracy, empower candidates to focus on their communities rather than fundraising, and ensure that our government truly serves the people of Hawai‘i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 6:16:54 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:02:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lauren Ballesteros-Watanabe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice-Chair Moriwaki and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in **strong support** of Senate Bill2313, which would strengthen Hawaii’s public campaign financing system and help reduce the influence of money in our elections.

Hawai‘i’s political system is broken. The heavy reliance on campaign contributions from wealthy donors and special interests has led to a system where 2 in 3 people believe elected officials are more focused on the interests of their donors than the needs of their communities. As a result, good policies are often blocked while harmful ones move forward. This dynamic erodes public trust and encourages corruption. SB2313 is a critical step toward fixing this broken system by allowing candidates to run competitive campaigns without being dependent on special interest money.

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Public financing is both popular and cost-effective. Three out of four voters support a clean elections program. States like Connecticut and Maine have successfully run similar programs for decades, and Hawai‘i County piloted a version in 2010 and 2012. Even if Hawai‘i saw higher participation rates than any other state, estimates show the cost would be less than \$10 million per year—just 0.05% of the state budget. That’s under \$7 per resident or less than \$1 per tourist—a small price to pay for a more transparent, accountable government.

For these reasons, I urge you to **pass SB2313**. This bill will restore trust in our democracy, empower candidates to focus on their communities rather than fundraising, and ensure that our government truly serves the people of Hawai‘i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

-Lauren Ballesters-Watanabe



Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is **Maki Morinoue**, and I am testifying on behalf of **HULI PAC**, a grassroots organization dedicated to endorsing and supporting leaders of integrity who prioritize the 'āina and people of Hawai'i Island.

I strongly support **SB2313**.

SB2313 strengthens Hawai'i's public campaign financing system by offering full public funding to qualified candidates for state and county office who agree not to accept private campaign donations. This is a bold and necessary step toward restoring public trust in our democracy.

Hawai'i's elections are increasingly influenced by large donors and outside money. Many residents believe that elected officials are more responsive to contributors than to the communities they serve. Whether or not that perception reflects individual intent, the impact is real: trust erodes, civic participation declines, and everyday people feel shut out of the political process.

SB2313 creates a viable alternative. It allows candidates to run competitive campaigns without relying on private fundraising. It reduces the pressure to court special interests and allows candidates to focus on engaging directly with voters. Most importantly, it shifts political power back toward the public.

When candidates are fully publicly funded and agree to refuse private donations, the playing field becomes more equitable. Teachers, small business owners, community advocates, and working parents can consider running for office without needing access to wealthy networks. This strengthens democracy and broadens representation.

Public financing is not about partisanship. It is about integrity, fairness, and accountability. It ensures that policy decisions are guided by public good — not donor influence.

SB2313 is a meaningful reform that aligns with Hawai'i's values of transparency, kuleana, and shared governance.

Please pass SB2313 and help restore faith in our democratic system.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Maki Morinoue

HULI PAC

Hawai'i Island

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 9:45:35 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:02:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alana Hart	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support SB 2313 as a way to get big money out of politics, curb corruption, enhance transparency, and allow candidates to better connect and reflect the values of their constituents. Big money donors sway the legislator in ways that often devalue the residents of Hawaii, and public funded campaigns will help to realign the values of those in office with that of the voting public. I support this bill and would applaud its adoption as a step forward in regaining the public's trust in our elected officials.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 9:51:34 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:02:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Janet Teare	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this bill to enable public financing of elections to make the campaigns more fair.
May the most qualified candidate win not thw candidate with the most funding.

I'm a member of East Hawaii Indivisible

Thank you

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 11:58:11 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:02:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Hayley Peter-Contesse	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support SB2313 SD1. This measure will help restore the people’s trust in government. Considering the convictions of Senator J. Kalani English and Representative Ty Cullen for cash bribes, it is clear that the legislature must do everything in its power to remove the influence that money has on our politics, including reforms like public financing. Public financing of elections is one of the most important ways to free our state political system from undue influence from corporations, businesses, and special interest groups. Three quarters of Hawai'i voters support a system of fully publicly financed elections.

Public financing will make campaigning easier. No one likes asking individuals for large sums of money. Public financing will free candidates from fundraisers and countless phone calls. Reducing or even eliminating candidates’ reliance on wealthy donors and the need to perpetually fundraise frees candidates and officials to spend more time with their constituents and to focus on the most pressing issues of their community, such as the impacts from the growing climate crisis. It also promotes public trust in officials and in government.

There is overwhelming public support in Hawai'i for a "Clean Elections" program to get big money out of our politics by providing for full public financing of elections while prohibiting private contributions. Public financing is both popular and cost-effective, with three out of four voters supporting a clean elections program.

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 12:32:35 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:02:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jackie Keefe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jackie Keefe, and I am **in strong support of SB2313 SD1**, which establishes a comprehensive system of public financing for all candidates seeking election to state and county public offices in the State, to begin with the 2028 general election year.

No one should have to be independently wealthy or reliant upon corporate donors to run for office. Public financing will make campaigning easier. No one likes asking individuals for large sums of money. Public financing will free candidates from fundraisers and countless phone calls. Reducing or even eliminating candidates' reliance on wealthy donors and the need to perpetually fundraise frees candidates and officials to spend more time with their constituents and to focus on the most pressing issues of their community, such as the impacts from the growing climate crisis. It also promotes public trust in officials and in government.

There is overwhelming public support in Hawai'i for a "Clean Elections" program to get big money out of our politics by providing for full public financing of elections while prohibiting private contributions. Public financing is both popular and cost-effective, with three out of four voters supporting a clean elections program.

Please **pass SB2313 SD1** to show your constituents that you hear them and care what they have to say!

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Jackie Keefe, Lahaina

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 1:29:36 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:02:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
robin knox	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support SB2313 SD1. This measure will help restore the people’s trust in government. Considering the convictions of Senator J. Kalani English and Representative Ty Cullen for cash bribes, it is clear that the legislature must do everything in its power to remove the influence that money has on our politics, including reforms like public financing. Public financing of elections is one of the most important ways to free our state political system from undue influence from corporations, businesses, and special interest groups. Three quarters of Hawai'i voters support a system of fully publicly financed elections.

When I ran for Maui County Council in 2022, my opponent received funding from off-island interests that allowed him to purchase a large number of county-wide mailers. IT cost upwards of \$30,000 to do a County-wide mailer. In Maui County all voters vote for council members from all 9 residency areas. Campaigns that receive immense funding from off-island, out of state, non Hawaii resident donors have a huge advantage of those who fund their campaigns with small, local, voting donors. Get the money out of politics and you will root out the corruption as well.

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 1:41:19 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:02:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Amber Coppings	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 2313, which would strengthen Hawaii’s public campaign financing system and help reduce the influence of money in our elections.

Hawai‘i’s political system is broken. The heavy reliance on campaign contributions from wealthy donors and special interests has led to a system where 2 in 3 people believe elected officials are more focused on the interests of their donors than the needs of their communities. As a result, good policies are often blocked while harmful ones move forward. This dynamic erodes public trust and encourages corruption. SB 2313 is a critical step toward fixing this broken system by allowing candidates to run competitive campaigns without being dependent on special interest money.

By providing full public financing for qualified candidates, SB 2313 will break the link between private money and electoral success. This will create a fairer and more honest system where elected officials are accountable to their constituents rather than big donors. Importantly, similar programs in other states show that public financing does not lead to higher incumbent turnover or drastic shifts in political makeup, but it does change who holds influence in government—ensuring that everyday people, not just the wealthy few, have a voice. We all deserve a voice in a democracy. If how we spend money is considered "speech", then we need to be sure that financial support is available for qualifying candidates.

Public financing is both popular and cost-effective. Three out of four voters support a clean elections program. States like Connecticut and Maine have successfully run similar programs for decades, and Hawai‘i County piloted a version in 2010 and 2012. Even if Hawai‘i saw higher participation rates than any other state, estimates show the cost would be less than \$10 million per year—just 0.05% of the state budget. That’s under \$7 per resident or less than \$1 per tourist—a small price to pay for a more transparent, accountable government.

For these reasons, I urge you to pass SB 2313. This bill will restore trust in our democracy, empower candidates to focus on their communities rather than fundraising, and ensure that our government truly serves the people of Hawai‘i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 1:55:40 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:02:00 AM

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

Comments:

I am in strong support of SB2313.

Too many people believe our political system is driven by money instead of community needs. Public financing is a proven way to reduce the influence of wealthy donors and special interests.

By allowing candidates to run competitive campaigns without relying on private donations, this bill helps level the playing field and encourages more community-focused leaders to step forward. It also allows elected officials to spend more time listening to constituents and working on solutions, instead of constantly fundraising.

Mahalo!



MARCH 2, 2026

SENATE BILL 2313 SD1

CURRENT REFERRAL: WAM

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Kris Coffield,
President

David Negaard,
Director

Mireille Ellsworth,
Director

Justin Salisbury,
Director

Eileen Roco,
Director

Beatrice DeRego,
Director

Corey Rosenlee,
Director

Amy Zhao,
*Policy and Partnerships
Strategist*

POSITION: SUPPORT

Imua Alliance supports SB 2313 SD1, relating to public financing for candidates to elected office, which establishes a comprehensive system of public financing for all candidates seeking election to state and county public offices in the State, to begin with the 2028 general election year.

Imua Alliance is a Hawai'i-based organization dedicated to ending all forms of exploitation, including corporate interference in our democracy.

This bill is about democratic access, fairness, and integrity. Public financing systems are designed to reduce the outsized influence of wealthy donors and special interests, enabling candidates, particularly those from working-class backgrounds and underrepresented communities, to run viable campaigns based on ideas, community trust, and public support, rather than access to large private fundraising networks.

Hawai'i's current campaign finance system reflects the same structural challenges seen nationwide. Research across states consistently shows that large donors and corporate interests wield disproportionate influence in elections and policymaking when campaigns rely heavily on private financing. Public financing programs, by contrast, have been shown to increase candidate diversity, including more women, Native Hawaiian, and community-based leaders, reduce candidates' reliance on large donors and lobbyist networks, and encourage candidates to spend more time engaging directly with constituents rather than fundraising. These outcomes align directly with Hawai'i's value of and kuleana in governance.

This measure also strengthens public trust in government. Transparency in elections is foundational to a healthy democracy. When voters believe that elected officials are accountable to the public rather than to wealthy donors, they are more likely to participate in elections, public hearings, and

civic life. Conversely, when campaign financing appears to be dominated by large private interests, public confidence erodes.

We need to adopt forward-looking responses to current political and fiscal realities, as this proposal achieves. **As federal budget pressures increase and states face difficult decisions about funding essential services, such as healthcare, housing, and food security, it becomes even more important that public policy decisions are made in the public interest, not influenced by concentrated financial power.** A strong public financing system helps ensure that decisions about Hawai'i's future are guided by community needs, not private money.

Public financing programs have been successfully implemented in multiple jurisdictions across the United States, including Maine, Arizona, New York City, and Seattle, where they have increased participation by small donors, reduced the influence of large contributions, and diversified the pool of candidates running for office. This, this bill brings Hawai'i into alignment with proven democratic reforms.

Finally, this is an investment in long-term democratic resilience. By creating a system that empowers ordinary residents to participate meaningfully in elections, whether as voters, donors, or candidates, it strengthens Hawai'i's civic fabric and ensures that future generations inherit a government that is and rooted in community voice.

With aloha,

Kris Coffield

President, Imua Alliance

SB-2313-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 2:50:26 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:02:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Taurie Kinoshita	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To the Honorable Committee,

I am writing in extremely strong support of SB2313 SD1.

This crucial bill will make public campaign financing easier. No one likes asking individuals for large sums of money. Public financing will free candidates from fundraisers and countless phone calls. Reducing or even eliminating candidates' reliance on wealthy donors and the need to perpetually fundraise frees candidates and officials to spend more time with their constituents and to focus on the most pressing issues of their community, such as the impacts from the growing climate crisis. It also promotes public trust in officials and in government.

Furthermore, there is overwhelming public support in Hawai'i for a "Clean Elections" program to get big money out of our politics by providing for full public financing of elections while prohibiting private contributions. Public financing is both popular and cost-effective, with three out of four voters supporting a clean elections program.

Please pass SB2313 SD1.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Taurie Kinoshita