



House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs (JHA)
Chair David A. Tarnas, Vice Chair Mahina Poepoe

March 31, 2026, 2:00 p.m., Conference Room 325
SB2466 — Relating to the Chief Election Officer

TESTIMONY

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

Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and JHA Committee Members:

The League of Women Voters of Hawaii supports BILL NUMBER SB2466.

SB2466 specifies that the Chief Election Officer who passes the probationary period may only be terminated for cause.

The League of Women Voters of Hawaii believes in free and fair elections unhampered by harassment or intimidation. In the past, our concern was to protect voters, but in recent years we have seen election workers subjected to harassment and intimidation. This will provide the Chief Election Officer the same protection as civil servants.

We recall that in 2020, two Georgia election workers were falsely accused of election fraud, their lives were threatened forcing them to go into hiding. Many states have seen attempts to cast doubt on election results using false claims of election fraud, often resulting in harassment of election workers.

The National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) reports that 39 states and Washington, D.C., have laws specifically addressing protections for election officials and poll workers. Thirty-five states criminalized intimidation or interference with election workers. Twenty-four of these states and Washington, D.C., enacted or updated their laws since 2020. NCSL did not find statutes specifically protecting election workers in Hawaii.

League requests that the measure take effect upon passage.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.



HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY AND HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS
SB 2466 HD1 Relating to the Chief Elections Officer
March 31, 2026, at 2:00 PM, State Capitol CR 325 and Videoconference

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in OPPOSITION to SB 2466 HD1.

The Elections Commission complies with HRS §11-7.5 by providing oversight of election administration. They are responsible for investigating misconduct and ensuring compliance with state and federal law.

The current statute appropriately addresses the requirement for holding the Chief Election Officer is accountable to execute elections in accordance with state and federal laws.

HRS §11-1.6 Appointment of the chief election officer; requirements; term; restrictions; salary. reappointment; removal. (g) The chief election officer is an at-will employee. The elections commission shall provide written notification of any removal and state the reason for the removal.

Recent Elections Commission PIG (Permitted Interaction Group) reports found HAVA (Help America Vote Act) Hawaii State Plan violations and missing chain of custody records in all four counties. The HAVA violation has been in place since 2004. This could impact federal funding that Hawaii receives from HAVA. These reasons would justify the consideration for the removal of the Chief Elections Officer.

SB 2466 creates a one-year probationary period and allows termination for cause. If terminated for cause, the Chief Election Officer can appeal, leaving the role vacant while an Acting CEO steps in. This situation would significantly disrupt elections.

The existing At-will termination process without cause helps the Elections Commission quickly convene, review candidates, and promptly select a highly qualified individual for the position.

Please vote NO on SB 2466 HD1 to keep the Chief Election Officer accountable.

Respectfully,
Jamie Detwiler, Hawaiian Islands Republican Women



Protect Democracy

Move Forward

www.indivisiblehawaii.org

info@indivisiblehawaii.org

To: Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee

Hearing Date/Time: 03-31-26 2:00 PM

Place: Hawaii State Capitol, Conference Room 325

Re: Testimony in STRONG SUPPORT of SB2466 HD1

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

On behalf of Indivisible Hawai'i, I thank you for this opportunity to testify in strong support of SB2466 HD1.

We support this bill because the position of Chief Election Officer is critical to the certification of elections. As long as he or she has passed the standard state probationary period, the Chief Election Officer should be protected from termination due to arbitrary or partisan reasons.

It is no secret that election officers and workers across the country are increasingly subject to extreme politicization, harassment, and intimidation. With disinformation being spread by groups seeking to sow distrust in our elections, it is imperative that we take all prudent measures to protect election officials who have proven to be trustworthy and effective. SB2466 HD1 is a major step in that direction and will assure the public that our elections are overseen and protected by competent and ethical officials.

We thank you for your support and urge you to advance SB2466 HD1.

Mahalo nui loa,

Marlene Thom

Indivisible Hawai'i Good Government and Secure Elections Team

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

SB-2466-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/27/2026 6:54:46 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/31/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Thank you for this opportunity to support SB2466 which would contrain the Elections Commission from calling for the removal of Chief Elections Officer without cause like a 3 member panel did in August 2025.

Younghee Overly, a member of Indivisible Hawaii

SB-2466-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/27/2026 7:10:57 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/31/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

I strongly support SB2466. Ensuring that the Chief Election Officer can only be removed for cause is critical to maintaining the independence and integrity of our elections. This protection helps prevent political interference and builds public trust in our democratic process. I urge you to pass SB2466. Mahalo for your consideration.

Mahalo,

C Chang

SB-2466-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/27/2026 8:00:03 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/31/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha,

Please support this Bill

Larry Smith

Indivisible

BD 27

SB-2466-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/27/2026 8:05:03 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/31/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Martha Nakajima	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

SB-2466-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/27/2026 8:49:34 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/31/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nandita Sharma	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

It makes good sense to pass a bill that would allow Hawaii's Chief Elections Officer to be dismissed only for cause. Only someone intent on destroying a democratic voting system would disagree and want to dismiss our Chief Elections Officer on a whim or as a result of misinformation. This Bill is crucial to protect voters in Hawaii from reckless and self-serving actions by those who have been maligning election integrity in Hawaii (which is, in fact, very fair and safe).

Thank you.

SB-2466-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/27/2026 8:57:30 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/31/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Support!

SB-2466-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/27/2026 9:25:22 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/31/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I support SB2466.

SB-2466-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/27/2026 9:27:17 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/31/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

In support

SB-2466-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/27/2026 9:34:23 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/31/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

This bill Specifies that the Chief Elections Officer who passes the standard state probationary period may only be terminated for cause. This bill is meant to constrain the Elections Commission in calling for the removal of Chief Elections Officer Scott Nago, as was done by a 3-member panel in August 2025.

Both Sen Rhoads and Rep Tarnas support this bill. Related to HB1552 and SB2143.

Thank you, Jane Aquino, Indivisible

SB-2466-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/27/2026 10:06:24 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/31/2026 2:00:00 PM

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-2466-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/27/2026 11:19:36 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/31/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

The Chief Elections Officer should only be terminated for cause. The Elections Commission must not be able to use this office for political maneuvering.

SB-2466-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/28/2026 12:56:51 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/31/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I strongly SUPPORT SB2466.

Mahalo,

Kanani Kai

Member Indivisible Hawaii.

SB-2466-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/28/2026 7:11:15 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/31/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I strongly support this bill which will help safeguard the election process by safeguarding the chief elections officer from undue interference and outside pressure. Please help ensure fair elections by passing this bill.

SB-2466-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/28/2026 8:59:04 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/31/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Writing in strong support - thank you!

SB-2466-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/28/2026 4:17:55 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/31/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha, I am writing in support of SB2466. I think codifying this statute into state law is a good idea. Mahalo for your consideration.

SB-2466-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2026 2:49:49 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/31/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tammy M DeBernardi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I wholeheartedly support this bill and support the idea that the Chief Elections Officer who passes the standard state probationary period may only be terminated for cause.
Tammy DeBernardi, Ocean View

SB-2466-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2026 3:11:52 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/31/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stephen Munkelt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in **strong support of SB2466 as an individual and a member of IHSN (indivisible Hawaii Statewide Network)**. This bill would amend section 11-1.6(g) of the HRS to allow for the termination of the Chief Election Officer for good cause.

Elections and election procedures should be free, fair, and non-partisan. However, our elections commission is made up of political appointees, and is therefore susceptible to political pressures. When that occurs the commission could terminate the Chief in order to overcome political differences having nothing to do with free and fair elections.

This bill to protect the elections chief position from political manipulation is in the best interest of Hawaii's voters and a key step in stabilizing this critical office.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I urge you to **move SB2466 forward**.

Stephen Munkelt

SB-2466-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2026 5:06:18 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/31/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I support that the Chief Elections Officer who passes the standard state probationary period may only be terminated for cause.

Mahalo,

Gail Morrison

SB-2466-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2026 6:03:15 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/31/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Denize Machit	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please vote yes on this very important bill. We need to strengthen our election system by creating a structure, to which good governance will guide and protect us during unforeseen circumstances. Mahalo nui loa for allowing me to express myself.

Denize Machit

96813

SB-2466-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2026 7:26:36 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/31/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Please help minimize the risk of disruptions in our lawful electoral process by specifying a plan in the unlikely event of a vacancy in the Chief Elections Officer position at any point in the elections timeline. Please pass SB2466 HD1.

Thank you for allowing me to testify in strong support of this important bill.

SB-2466-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/30/2026 6:51:41 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/31/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Thank you

SB-2466-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/30/2026 10:56:57 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/31/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Chair Tarnas and Committee Members,

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

I STRONGLY OPPOSE BILL SB-2466 HD1.

SB-2466 HD1 amends section 11-1.6(g), Hawai'i Revised Statutes, to state that "The chief election officer shall be an at-will employee and may only be terminated for cause." This single sentence contains an internal contradiction that will create confusion, weaken accountability, and invite litigation.

Under well-understood employment principles, an "at-will" employee may be terminated at any time for any lawful reason, or even for no stated reason, without the employer having to prove "cause." By contrast, a "for cause" standard means the employer may only terminate if it can show specific, legitimate grounds that rise to a defined level of misconduct, nonperformance, or other serious failure. Putting both concepts side by side—"at-will" and "may only be terminated for cause"—blurs the legal standard and asks courts to reconcile two opposing ideas in future disputes.

In practical terms, the clause "may only be terminated for cause" overrides the core feature of at-will employment, because it removes the elections commission's discretion to act without first proving that "cause" exists. At the same time, SB-2466 HD1 does not define "for cause" in statute or specify what level of mismanagement, bias, or failure to perform duties would satisfy that standard. This combination—stripping away at-will discretion while leaving "cause" undefined—creates a vague but very high bar for removal of the chief election officer.

For a position as critical as the chief election officer, this is especially troubling. The public needs confidence that if there are serious problems in how elections are administered, the Elections Commission can act clearly and decisively. Instead, SB-2466 HD1 would lock the commission into a standard that is both internally inconsistent and unclear, almost guaranteeing that any attempt at removal will become a contentious legal fight over what "for cause" means rather than a straightforward judgment about performance and public trust.

Because SB-2466 HD1 undermines clarity, weakens effective oversight of the chief election officer, and is likely to lead to unnecessary litigation over an internally inconsistent standard. I respectfully urge you to defer indefinitely SB-2466 HD1.

Mahalo,

Brett Kulbis
U.S. Navy Retired

SB-2466-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/30/2026 2:31:59 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/31/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tara Gregory	Individual	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

I stand on my former testimony of the many laws state and federal that justify "cause" currently regarding Scott Nago. Also including the tens of millions in federal funds he's received to conduct proper chain of custody and a statewide audit of which he refuses to do. I will be also submitting oral testimony tomorrow.

SB-2466-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/30/2026 8:17:00 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/31/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
TERI SAVAIINAEA	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair David A. Tarnas and Members of the Committee,

My name is Teri Kia Savaiinaea, and I respectfully oppose SB2466 HD1.

While this measure retains the “at-will” designation in name, it effectively removes that standard by restricting termination of the Chief Elections Officer to “for cause” only. This change limits the Elections Commission’s ability to act decisively when leadership performance or public confidence becomes a concern.

The administration of elections is one of the most critical functions of government. It requires not only technical compliance, but also transparency, accountability, and public trust.

Hawai‘i receives federal funding to administer elections through the Help America Vote Act (HAVA), and that funding carries clear compliance expectations. The Elections Commission must retain the flexibility to ensure those standards are consistently met and to take action when necessary.

By narrowing the authority to remove the Chief Elections Officer, this bill weakens oversight and creates unnecessary barriers to accountability.

At a time when public confidence in elections must be strengthened, not insulated, the State should not adopt policies that limit oversight or reduce accountability in election leadership—especially where federal standards and public trust are at stake.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to oppose SB2466 HD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Teri Kia Savaiinaea
Wai‘anae Resident

COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

Rep. David A. Tarnas, Chair

Rep. Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair

HEARING:

Tuesday, March 31, 2026 at 2:00 pm, Conference Room 325 and Via Videoconference

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 2466, HD1 - RELATING TO THE CHIEF ELECTIONS OFFICER.

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

My name is Christine Andrews and I am a long-time resident of Wailuku, Maui. I write to you today in **strong support of SB 2466, HD1**, Relating to the Chief Election Officer, which specifies that the Chief Election Officer may only be terminated for cause.

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

Senate Bill 2466, HD1 is intended to constrain the Elections Commission's authority to fire Scott Nago, the current Chief Election Officer, as was recommended by a three-member panel last August. The goal of anti-democratic forces is to subvert faith in our elections as a means of suppressing the vote and allowing election outcomes to be contested. For excellent resources on the overall subject of subverting elections as a tenant of the authoritarian playbook, I direct you to Democracy Docket and to Protect Democracy.

In the context of Hawaii elections, there were allegations of vote count discrepancy brought forward by certain members of the Elections Commission. A 220-page report from Election Commissioners Osterkamp, McAdam and Kahirolani Papalimu determined however that "a purported discrepancy of more than 19,000 ballots"² between Hawai'i County and the state in the 2024 general election was unfounded. The report stated, "we find a complete lack of credible evidence to support the claim of a significant ballot discrepancy."

The report added, "When we encourage voters to pursue conspiracies or to believe that government workers are hiding ballots or creating new ones, we significantly damage the system on which our democracy depends." We must be ever-vigilant against outside influences attempting to hijack state control over elections, subvert the will of the voters, and create doubt over the security of our elections. It is, again, a noted antidemocratic strategy to sow doubt about elections as a means of suppressing the vote and undermining democracy. **I support SB 2466, HD1** as a necessary measure to protect the role of the Chief Election Officer from unfounded attacks and ensure he may only be terminated for cause.

Mahalo for supporting efforts to protect our elections,

Christine Andrews, JD

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

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

SB-2466-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2026 12:08:55 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/31/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Doris Segal Matsunaga	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support SB2466 HD1

Doris Segal Matsunaga

Waimea, Hawaii Island