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**February 23, 2026**

**SB2494: RELATING TO CORRUPTION**

**Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Committee on Judiciary**

The Office of the Public Defender (OPD) **opposes SB2494**, which establishes a nine-year statute of limitations for the crime of bribery, Hawaii Revised Statutes (“HRS”) § 710-1040.

SB2494 explains that the purpose of the bill is to ensure that violators of HRS § 710-1040 do not escape State prosecution in the event federal investigations and prosecutions of the same crimes extend past the current three-year statute of limitations. However, there is no explanation for the necessity of tripling the current statute of limitations beyond even the six-year statute of limitations for most Class A felonies. State prosecutions are hard to defend as evidence become lost and memories fade over time. SB2494 defeats the purpose of even having a statute of limitations.

Furthermore, federal investigations and prosecutions can arise for other acts that are also State crimes, and yet, SB2494 singles out bribery for special treatment. Such disparities raises questions of fairness in the treatment of similarly situated defendants.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

**DEPARTMENT OF THE PROSECUTING ATTORNEY  
KA 'OIHANA O KA LOIO HO'OPI'I  
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU**

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FIRST DEPUTY PROSECUTING ATTORNEY  
HOPE MUA LOIO HO'OPI'I

**THE HONORABLE KARL RHOADS, CHAIR  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY  
Thirty-Third State Legislature  
Regular Session of 2026  
State of Hawai'i**

February 23, 2026

**RE: S.B. 2494; RELATING TO CORRUPTION.**

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary, the Department of the Prosecuting Attorney for the City and County of Honolulu submits the following testimony in **support** of S.B. 2494.

S.B. 2494 extends the statute of limitations for the crime of bribery. Under current law, prosecutions for most felonies must commence within three years of the offense.<sup>1</sup> The time tolls for public corruption offenses while the official remains in office and for two years thereafter.<sup>2</sup> But the maximum extension is an additional three years.<sup>3</sup>

The federal statute of limitations for public corruption offenses is generally five years.<sup>4</sup> In 2009, Acting Assistant Attorney General M. Faith Burton supported an additional three-year extension for federal bribery cases, noting the “long-term systemic and insidious conduct” often involved.<sup>5</sup> A three-year extension to the state statute of limitations would streamline cooperation with federal investigations. It would also ensure that investigations are complete and thorough before charging.

The Department strongly urges this Committee to pass S.B. 2494.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

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<sup>1</sup> HRS § 701-108(d).

<sup>2</sup> HRS § 701-108(b).

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*

<sup>4</sup> 18 U.S.C. § 3282(a).

<sup>5</sup> Letter from M. Faith Burton, Acting Assistant Att’y Gen, to Chairman Patrick J. Leahy 1 (Mar.4, 2009), available at <https://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/ola/legacy/2010/11/05/030409-s49-public-corruption-prosecution-act.pdf>.

**LATE**

**SB-2494**

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 2:27:11 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/24/2026 9:45:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Brandon Makaawaawa	Testifying for Nation of Hawai'i	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Mai Kakou,

The Nation of Hawai'i strongly supports SB2494 as an important measure that advances accountability, strengthens public trust, and contributes to the ongoing process of reconciliation for the Hawaiian people. Reconciliation cannot occur without credible institutions and transparent governance. Laws that reinforce ethical conduct by public officials are necessary steps toward restoring confidence in decision-making processes that have historically affected Native Hawaiian communities and resources.

Native Hawaiians have experienced generations of decisions made without meaningful participation or accountability, particularly in matters involving land, natural resources, and cultural stewardship. When corruption or bribery influences public decision-making, it compounds historical inequities and undermines the ability of communities to trust that governance is being carried out in the public interest. Extending the statute of limitations for bribery offenses recognizes the reality that corruption investigations are complex and often require significant time to uncover. This change ensures that accountability is not limited by arbitrary timelines and that misconduct can be addressed fully when discovered.

SB2494 represents a clear policy choice in favor of transparency, integrity, and responsible governance. By strengthening the state's ability to investigate and prosecute bribery, the Legislature sends an important message that public office must never be used for private gain at the expense of the people of Hawai'i. Measures like this move reconciliation forward by demonstrating a commitment to fair governance and by rebuilding trust in institutions whose decisions have lasting impacts on Native Hawaiian communities.

The Nation of Hawai'i urges passage of SB2494 as a concrete action that supports ethical stewardship of public resources and helps accelerate progress toward reconciliation. We further encourage continued community education and clear reporting mechanisms to ensure that all

residents, including Native Hawaiian communities, can safely and effectively report misconduct when it occurs.

For these reasons, the Nation of Hawai'i respectfully urges the Committee to pass SB2494.

Aloha,

Brandon Maka'awa'awa

Vice President, Nation of Hawai'i

**LATE**

**SB-2494**

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 1:27:28 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/24/2026 9:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

**STRONG SUPPORT!**

**LATE**

**SB-2494**

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 2:17:13 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/24/2026 9:45:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Maki Morinoue	Testifying for HULI PAC	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha,

please support and pass SB2494. We need good governance.

Mahalo

Maki Morinoue

HULI PAC, Hawai'i Island

**SB-2494**

Submitted on: 2/22/2026 6:22:33 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/24/2026 9:45:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Gregpry Misakian	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

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

I am a member of the Good Government Caucus and I support SB2494.

Gregory Misakian

**LATE**

**SB-2494**

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 12:47:44 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/24/2026 9:45:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Dave Mulinix	Testifying for Greenpeace Hawaii	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

My name is Dave Mulinix, Co-Founder & Hawaii State Representative for Greenpeace Hawaii. On behalf of Greenpeace Hawaii's thousands of members and supporters statewide we stand in **STRONG SUPPORT** of SB2494 that Establishes a statute of limitations of nine years for a bribery offense.

Please pass SB2494 to help clean up government corruption in Hawaii.

Dave Mulinix

Greenpeace Hawaii

Co-Founder & Hawaii State Representative

Greenpeace Hawaii

**SB-2494**

Submitted on: 2/13/2026 11:44:02 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/24/2026 9:45:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Johnnie-Mae L. Perry	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry, STRONGLY SUPPORT

2494 SB RELATING TO CORRUPTION.

TO: Members of the Committee on Judiciary

FROM: Natalie Iwasa  
808-395-3233

HEARING: 9:45 a.m. Tuesday, February 24, 2026

SUBJECT: SB2494, Increase Statute of Limitations for Bribery - **SUPPORT**

Aloha Chair Rhoads and Committee Members,

Thank you for allowing the opportunity to provide testimony on SB2494, which would increase the statute of limitations for bribery to nine years. In light of the \$35,000 paper bag scandal and the length of time investigations may take, the longer period is needed.

Please vote "yes" on SB2494.

**SB-2494**

Submitted on: 2/18/2026 3:08:59 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/24/2026 9:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

I support

Tina Marie Even

**SB-2494**

Submitted on: 2/20/2026 9:15:42 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/24/2026 9:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

**STRONG SUPPORT!!!**

**LATE**

**SB-2494**

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 1:28:37 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/24/2026 9:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

I fully support SB2494. Hopefully the additional statute of limitations extension can bring further honesty to the legislative process in Hawai'i.

**LATE**

**SB-2494**

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 2:05:06 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/24/2026 9:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

The unethical and illegal practices that have occurred by Hawaii's state elected officials and state employees have skirted consequences because of time passing. Corruption that occurs should not have a length in time for prosecution. For the citizens to have trust in our elected officials laws must be passed to stop the ease with which this is occurring.

**LATE**

**SB-2494**

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 2:08:38 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/24/2026 9:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

No reason there should be any statute of limitations for a cop out.

**LATE**

**SB-2494**

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 2:51:27 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/24/2026 9:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Committee members:

I SUPPORT SB 2494 and ask that you do as well.

Mahalo.

Cheryl Burghardt

Nuuanu Oahu

**LATE**

**SB-2494**

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 3:48:49 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/24/2026 9:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

Let's do the right thing.

**LATE**

**SB-2494**

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 4:44:38 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/24/2026 9:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

It's past time to banish corruption in our government, PLEASE vote to pass this bill. Mahalo.

Lori Kizer, Kapaa

**LATE**

**SB-2494**

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 9:10:49 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/24/2026 9:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

Folks who take bribes taint everyone else who is doing their job honestly and make citizens question their government. There is no reason to protect either the briber or the person taking the bribe. Please advance this bill.

- Dan Freund, Kapaa

**LATE**

**SB-2494**

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 10:07:19 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/24/2026 9:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

Fully support . Good governance is so important

**LATE**

**SB-2494**

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 10:09:43 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/24/2026 9:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

Robert Petricci

SB2494

Strong support

Aloha chair Rhoads, vice chair Gabbard, committee members

I support extending the statute of limitations for these type of crimes and hope you do as well.

Mahalo

Robert Petricci

**LATE**

**SB-2494**

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 7:01:07 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/24/2026 9:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

We need to extend the Statute so that the investigation on the \$35K bribery case and be solved.  
Appoint a Special Prosector!

Mahalo, Jane Aquino, Indivisible Hawaii

**LATE**

**SB-2494**

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 7:57:53 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/24/2026 9:45:00 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 **strongly support SB2494**, which extends the statute of limitations.

Many serious offenses—particularly those involving corruption or complex financial misconduct—can take years to uncover. Current limitations periods may allow wrongdoing to go unaddressed simply because it was successfully concealed. Extending the statute of limitations ensures accountability is not avoided through delay and that justice remains possible once misconduct comes to light.

SB2494 strengthens public trust by reinforcing fairness, transparency, and the rule of law. I respectfully urge your support of this important measure.

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

**LATE**

**SB-2494**

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 8:35:59 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/24/2026 9:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

I strongly support this bill.

Mahalo!

Georgia Hoopes, Kalaheo

**LATE**

**SB-2494**

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 10:28:33 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/24/2026 9:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair and Members of the Committee,

I strongly support SB2494, which requires elected officials to report known or witnessed bribery.

Accountability in government is necessary, important, and vital for a healthy democracy. No one should be above the law, but unfortunately people in positions of power usually are. In order for us to trust our state government, we need to be able to trust those who are there to serve us. Please support Bill SB 2494.

Mahalo,

Kendall Krumm, Kailua

**LATE**

**SB-2494**

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 12:03:38 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/24/2026 9:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

Please pass this important bill.

Mahalo,

Victoria Anderson, Palolo