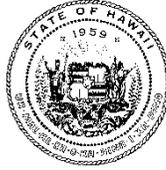


**KRISTIN E. IZUMI-NITAO**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



PHONE: (808) 586-0285  
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**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. 2528, S.D.1, Relating to Partial Public Financing of Elections.**  
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 this bill.

The purpose of this bill is to enhance Hawaii’s partial public financing program by increasing the maximum amount of public funds available for all offices to qualified candidates. It also makes a downward adjustment of the minimum qualifying contributions for certain offices because it appears that publicly financed candidates for those offices were having a difficult time raising the minimum qualifying contributions. Respectfully, the Commission is submitting this bill as an attempt to boost an existing program that is mandated by the State Constitution which has not changed and whose maximum dollar amounts have not changed since 1995.

This bill amends Hawaii Revised Statutes (“HRS”) sections as follows:

- 1) Increases the expenditure limits for elected offices by 20%,
- 2) HRS §11-425 by increasing the maximum amount of public funds available for all office of Governor, Lieutenant Governor, or Mayor of City and County of Honolulu or County of Hawaii from 10% to 20% and for a candidate for the office of State

Senator, State Representative, County Council Member, or prosecuting attorney from 15% to 25%. The bill also increases the maximum amount available for candidates for Mayor of the counties of Kauai and Maui by from 10% to 25% by moving those offices from subsection (a) to subsection (b) and increasing the maximum amount of public funds available for a candidate for trustee of OHA from \$1,500 for the election period to 7.5% of the expenditure limit for each election established in HRS §11-423(d).

- 3) HRS §11-429(a) by increasing the amount of qualifying contributions required for a candidate for trustee of OHA from more than \$1,500 in the aggregate to more than \$5,500 in the aggregate.
- 4) HRS §11-429(a) by reducing the minimum amounts of qualifying contributions for the office of prosecuting attorney for the city and county of Honolulu (from \$30,000 to \$25,000), and counties of Hawaii (from \$10,000 to \$5,000) and Kauai (from \$5,000 to \$3,000), and for the office of county council for the county of Maui (from \$5,000 to \$4,000) thereby making it easier for candidates to qualify.
- 5) HRS §11-429(b) by increasing matching fund payments from \$1 for each \$1 of qualifying contributions in excess of the minimum qualifying contribution amounts to \$4 for each \$1 of excess qualifying contributions.

For illustration, here is a comparison of the present partial public funding program in contrast to the enhanced partial public funding program set forth in this bill. For a qualified Senate candidate running opposed in District 1 in the 2026 election, the maximum amount of public funds available is \$7,269 in the primary election and another \$7,269 in the general election. In contrast, under this bill, this same candidate would receive \$14,537 in the primary election and another \$14,537 in the general election. For a qualified House candidate running opposed in District 1 in the 2026 election, the maximum amount of public funds available is \$3,562 in the primary election and another \$3,562 in the general election. In contrast, under this bill, this same candidate would receive \$7,124 in the primary election and \$7,124 in the general election.

For a qualified candidate running opposed for Kauai Mayor in the 2026 election, the maximum amount of public funds available is \$9,635 in the primary election and another \$9,635 in the general election. In contrast, under this bill, this same candidate would receive \$28,906 in the primary election and \$28,906 in the general election. For a qualified candidate running opposed for Maui Mayor in the 2026 election, the maximum amount of public funds available is \$23,002 in the primary election and another \$23,002 in the general election. In contrast, under this bill, this same candidate would receive \$69,005 in the primary election and \$69,005 in the general election. Lastly, for a qualified OHA candidate running opposed in the 2026 election, the maximum amount of public funds available is \$1,500 for the election period. In contrast,

under this bill, this same candidate would receive \$15,496 in the primary election and \$15,496 in the general election.

Under the bill, assuming one qualified candidate for each elective office<sup>1</sup> in the state, the maximum amount of public financing available would be \$2,636,526 in the 2026 primary election and another \$2,636,526 in the 2026 general election. As of June 30, 2025, the Hawaii Election Campaign Fund (“HECF”) balance was \$2,412,282.94. A general fund appropriation into the HECF is necessary if this bill is passed.

The Commission requests that this committee pass this bill.

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<sup>1</sup> The Commission is aware that not all elective offices appear on the ballot in an election year.



**Senate Committee on Ways and Means  
Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action (HAPA) Supports SB 2528 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 supports SB 2528, SD1, relating to partial public financing of elections.

Hawai'i's partial public financing program was designed to help candidates run without total dependence on large private donors. That is a worthy goal. But the program has not been updated since 1995. In the thirty years since, the cost of running a competitive campaign has risen significantly while the public funds available to participating candidates have remained flat. The result is a program that is increasingly difficult for candidates to rely on in a meaningful way.

SB 2528 addresses that directly. It raises expenditure limits, increases the maximum public funds available to candidates, and strengthens matching fund payments from \$1 to \$4 for every \$1 of qualifying contributions above the minimum threshold. These updates make the program more viable and more competitive with the private fundraising landscape candidates face today.

We recognize that this committee must weigh the appropriation required to fund these increases. We urge the committee to view this investment in the context of what it produces. A stronger partial public financing program means more candidates can run without depending on wealthy donors. That is a direct investment in the integrity of our elections and the health of our democracy.

SB 2528 and SB 2313 together represent a comprehensive approach to getting money out of politics in Hawai'i. We urge support for both.

We respectfully urge support for SB 2528 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



Committee on Ways and Means  
Chair Donovan Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Sharon Moriwake  
Monday, March 2, 10:02 am  
Conference Room 211 and videoconference  
SB2528 SD1 – RELATING TO PARTIAL PUBLIC FINANCING OF ELECTIONS.

#### TESTIMONY

Beppie 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 SB2528 SD1 which would restore the partial public financing program to its former relevance by increasing the expenditure limit and the amount of partial public campaign financing available for all state and county elective offices, adjusting the minimum amount of qualifying contributions certain candidates must receive to participate in the program, and increasing the matching fund payments for excess qualifying contributions. It also appropriates funds for the program. We also offer a suggestion for your consideration.**

The League of Women Voters of the US believes that 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. Although a comprehensive public funding program, such as proposed by SB2313, would be the best way to meet these goals, the enhancement to Hawaii's Partial Public Funding Program (PPFP) proposed by SB2528 and **especially by SB2528 SD1** offers an important step to move toward those goals.

The amount available through the PPFP to publicly funded candidates has not changed in over two decades. Inflation in media prices, postage, labor costs etc. make the current amounts far less than competitive. The current amounts available to qualified candidates for public funding are far below the average amounts spent by privately funded candidates who won election to the same office. Not surprisingly, the number of candidates using the PPFP has decreased every year since at least 2016.

The increases proposed in SB2528 SD1 would make the PFP truly a viable option for candidates seeking election.

In addition, SB2528 SD1 cuts the number of qualifying contributions required to access public funding for several offices, making the program easier to access.

Finally, recognizing the increased costs for these changes, and for the intended increase in the number of qualifying candidates, SB2528 SD1 provides for increased funding for Hawaii election campaign fund (HECF). This is even more important than it might seem because under the definition of the PFP, if the HECF runs out of money before all qualified candidates have received the anticipated payments, the program will stop making the payments, thus eroding both candidates' trust and willingness to use the program and citizens' appreciation of the PFP.

**Suggestion:** Recognizing the CSC staff demands of preparing for, implementing and monitoring these changes, and to the intended increase in the number of candidates initiating use of the PFP, we suggest funding an added staff position to the CSC, which is already overloaded with important requirements for its small staff.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.



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 SB2528.

SB2528 updates and strengthens Hawai'i's public campaign financing system by increasing the amount of public funds available to candidates, raising the state's match from 1:1 to 2:1, and increasing campaign expenditure limits. These are practical and necessary updates.

The current funding levels and expenditure caps have not been adjusted since 1995. In the past three decades, Hawai'i's cost of living has risen faster than the national average. Printing costs, venue rentals, digital outreach, mailers, and advertising have all increased significantly. Yet the public financing system has remained stagnant, making it harder for grassroots candidates to run viable campaigns.

By increasing the match to 2:1, SB2528 amplifies small-dollar donations and strengthens people-powered campaigns. It ensures that candidates who rely on community support — rather than large private donors — can remain competitive. Updating expenditure limits simply reflects economic reality and allows campaigns to keep pace with modern costs.

Public financing only works if it is realistic and functional. SB2528 helps ensure the system continues to support fair, competitive elections and reduces reliance on large contributors.

This bill strengthens democracy by empowering everyday residents to run for office and by amplifying the voices of small donors.

Please pass SB2528.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Maki Morinoue

HULI PAC

Hawai'i Island



MARCH 2, 2026

## SENATE BILL 2528 SD1

CURRENT REFERRAL: WAM

808-679-7454  
kris@imuaalliance.org  
www.imuaalliance.org  
@imuaalliance

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

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Imua Alliance supports SB 2528 SD1, relating to partial public financing of elections, which increases the expenditure limit and the amount of partial public campaign financing available for all elective offices; adjusts the minimum amount of qualifying contributions certain candidates must receive to participate in the program; and increases the matching fund payments for excess qualifying contributions.

Imua Alliance is a Hawai'i-based organization dedicated to ending all forms of exploitation, including corporate abuse of our democracy. Government should work for the public interest, not special interests.

Hawai'i has had partial public campaign financing in place for decades, rooted in the 1978 Constitutional Convention's direction to establish a campaign fund for partial public financing. Few candidates participate, however, because the current partial funding model fails to provide sufficient resources to run competitive campaigns.

Hawai'i's electoral environment is comparatively uncompetitive. An average of about 90% of incumbents were reelected over the past decade and challengers face structural disadvantages in establishing fundraising networks and building name recognition. Strengthening the match and availability of public funds, as this bill proposes, is helps give: participating candidates a realistic chance to keep pace with private financing.

Public financing programs are also associated with broader and more diverse participation in democracy, particularly when they amplify small contributions. For example, analysis of New York City's matching system found it increased both the number and diversity of residents who participate as donors, shifting candidate incentives toward engaging everyday constituents instead of concentrating time on large donors. Importantly for Hawai'i, this policy conversation is not abstract:

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Hawai'i has confronted repeated corruption scandals in recent years, and a UHERO policy brief explicitly situates public campaign financing as one reform to reduce reliance on wealthy donors and corporate interests.

Buttressing public campaign financing also has indirect, but important benefits for Hawai'i's clean economy and climate action goals. Hawai'i has some of the most ambitious climate targets in the nation—codifying 50% greenhouse gas reductions by 2030 and a carbon-neutral economy by 2045—but achieving these goals depends on responsive, accountable governance, and public trust in policy decisions that affect energy, transportation, land use, and economic incentives.

Research on public financing systems finds that when candidates rely less on large special-interest money and more on broad public support, they are encouraged to engage more directly with voters and prioritize community-wide concerns over narrow donor agendas, including long-term challenges like climate resilience and clean energy transitions.

Reinforced public financing can help ensure that elected leaders are empowered to advance policies—such as investments in renewable energy, equitable EV infrastructure, and climate adaptation funding—that reflect broad public support rather than industry influence. By making Hawai'i's democratic process more transparent and competitive, This bill supports governance that is better aligned with the state's clean economy and climate commitments.

Strengthening partial public financing is a pragmatic democracy reform: it can make elections more competitive, expand the role of small donors, and reduce candidates' dependency on narrow funding networks, while building on recent good government reforms to diminish the corrupting role of corporate money in local politics.

With aloha,

*Kris Coffield*

President, Imua Alliance

**SB-2530-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 5:56:24 AM

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

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

Comments:

Preventing contractors and grantees from donating to politicians reduces the risk of undue influence or favoritism in government decisions and in the awarding of contracts and grants.

When the public sees that government contracts and grants are free from political influence, their trust in elected officials and government increases, leading to better democracy.

**SB-2528-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 8:23:34 PM

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

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

Comments:

Thank you for hearing SB2528.

a member of Indivisible Hawaii

**SB-2528-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 8:59:00 PM

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

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

Comments:

I support SB2528.

**SB-2528-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 9:57:42 PM

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

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

Comments:

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**SB-2528-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 2:37:21 AM

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

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

Comments:

I SUPPORT SB2528.

Mahalo,

Kanani Kai

Member Indivisible Hawaii

**SB-2528-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 9:39:27 AM

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

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

Comments:

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

**SB-2528-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 10:55:47 AM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
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 SB2528.

Public financing levels the playing field for candidates without establishment backing and allows campaigns to focus on reaching voters instead of focusing on donors.

Mahalo, Gail Morrison, Honolulu 96815

**SB-2528-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 11:56:59 AM

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

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

Comments:

In support

**SB-2528-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 3:46:49 PM

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

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

Comments:

I am in strong support of SB2528. By increasing the expenditure cap and adjusting matching funds to 2:1, this measure reflects the economic realities of today and encourages more candidates to participate in the program. Public financing levels the playing field for candidates without establishment backing and allows campaigns to focus on reaching voters instead of donors. This bill is a significant step toward enabling more candidates to utilize this program and reducing the influence of big money in our elections.



Protect Democracy

Move Forward

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

[info@indivisiblehawaii.org](mailto: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 2528, 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 2528, SD1.

By increasing the expenditure cap and adjusting matching funds to 2:1, this measure reflects the economic realities of today and encourages more candidates to participate in the program.

Public financing levels the playing field for candidates without establishment backing and allows campaigns to focus on reaching voters instead of donors.

SB 2528 is a significant step toward enabling more candidates to utilize this program and reducing the influence of big money in our elections. We thank you for supporting this bill.

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-2528-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 4:57:43 PM

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

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

Comments:

I support this bill, but greatly prefer SB2313.

**SB-2528-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 11:49:11 PM

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

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

Comments:

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

I am testifying personally and as a member of Indivisible Hawaii Statewide Network to strongly support SB2528. By increasing the expenditure cap and adjusting matching funds to 2:1, this bill reflects the economic realities of today and encourages more candidates to participate in the program.

Public financing levels the playing field for candidates without establishment backing and allows campaigns to focus on reaching voters instead of donors. While I would prefer full public financing of elections, this bill is a significant step toward enabling more candidates to utilize this program and reducing the influence of big money in our elections.

Mahalo,

Robert Justice, M.D., Kapolei

**SB-2528-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 5:59:05 AM

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

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

Comments:

Thank you

**SB-2528-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 12:26:44 PM

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

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

Comments:

SUPPORT

**SB-2528-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 12:59:17 PM

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

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

Comments:

TY!

**SB-2528-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 1:17:52 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 SB2528.*

*By increasing the expenditure cap and adjusting matching funds to 2:1, this measure reflects the economic realities of today and encourages more candidates to participate in the program.*

*Public financing levels the playing field for candidates without establishment backing and allows campaigns to focus on reaching voters instead of donors.*

*This bill is a significant step toward enabling more candidates to utilize this program and reducing the influence of big money in our elections.*

*Mahalo,*

*Georgia Hoopes, Kalaheo*

**SB-2528-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 2:58:05 PM

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

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

Comments:

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

**I support of SB2528.**

As I said on behalf 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-2528-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 5:27:14 PM

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

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

Comments:

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry, STRONGLY OPPOSE

PUBLIC/PRIVATE CAMPAIGN DONATIONS

2528 SB RELATING TO PARTIAL PUBLIC FINANCING OF ELECTIONS.

**SB-2528-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 6:14:48 PM

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

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

Comments:

Thank you!

**SB-2528-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 7:32:10 PM

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

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

Comments:

My name is Kathy Shimata & I live in Honolulu. Elections are the heart of our democracy. Money prevents some worthy candidates from running for office.

[SB2528](#) aims to increase public funds that are available to candidates, increase the amount the state matches donations from 1:1 match to 2:1 match, and increase the expenditure limit for campaigns.

I urge you to support SB2528 to improve our democracy.

Mahalo,

Kathy Shimata

**SB-2528-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 7:41:21 PM

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

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

Comments:

I am in support of SB2528.

Public financing levels the playing field for candidates without establishment backing and allows campaigns to focus on reaching voters instead of donors.

For too long, only the wealthy or well-connected have been able to run for office. It's time we make public office only supported by the public and not just entities with deep pockets.

This bill is a significant step toward enabling more candidates to utilize this program and reducing the influence of big money in our elections.

Mahalo,

Jen Lum, 'Ewa Beach

**SB-2528-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 7:51:52 PM

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

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

Comments:

I support SB2528 SD1 because I believe significant public funding of campaigns reduces the need for candidates to pursue big donors which gives them more time to develop and communicate their stances on issues.

It also reduces the voter perception that only big money can play in politics.

Further, it enables new people to run cor office even if they do not have big money connections.

Thank you for allowing me to testify on this matter.

**SB-2528-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 7:08:17 AM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
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 SB2528.

By increasing the expenditure cap and adjusting matching funds to 2:1, this measure reflects the economic realities of today and encourages more candidates to participate in the program.

Public financing levels the playing field for candidates without establishment backing and allows campaigns to focus on reaching voters instead of donors.

This bill is a significant step toward enabling more candidates to utilize this program and reducing the influence of big money in our elections.

Mahalo for this opportunity to provide testimony,

Noelle Lindenmann, Kailua-Kona

**SB-2528-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 8:15:23 AM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
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 SB2528.

By increasing the expenditure cap and adjusting matching funds to 2:1, this measure reflects the economic realities of today and encourages more candidates to participate in the program.

Public financing levels the playing field for candidates without establishment backing and allows campaigns to focus on reaching voters instead of donors.

This bill is a significant step toward enabling more candidates to utilize this program and reducing the influence of big money in our elections.

Thank you,

Charlene Kiana Rowley, Kula Maui

**SB-2528-SD-1**

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

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

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

Comments:

Greetings Committee Members,

I am writing to express support for SB2528, which seeks to increase the amount of partial public campaign financing available for all state and county elective offices. The partial public financing system is long overdue for an update, and this legislation represents a significant step toward enhancing the integrity and accessibility of our electoral process.

The major issue with the current partial public financing system is that for state legislative races, the caps are too low to make a meaningful contribution to a candidate's campaigning. Increasing public financing can help restore public trust in our political system.

Mahalo for your attention.

Marcia Kemble

Makiki



**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS  
FOR SB2528 SD1**  
RELATING TO PARTIAL PUBLIC FINANCING OF  
ELECTIONS

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

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

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS WITH AMENDMENTS SB2528 SD1**, which increases the amount of public funds available to candidates for public office who participate in the State’s Partial Public Financing program and increases participating candidates’ expenditure limits.

OHA supports public financing as a good government measure, as it makes the public financing program a more viable option for candidates by increasing available funding. Publicly financed campaigns make elections more accessible, open, and fair.

However, OHA objects to the continued disparity with which it is treated under the Partial Public Financing law. HRS § 11-423(d) sets the campaign expenditure limits for candidates receiving public financing using a formula that multiplies the “number of voters in the last preceding general election registered to vote” in the relevant voting district by a specific dollar amount. OHA Trustees are the only candidates who run Statewide election campaigns that are not explicitly listed in this subpart, and thus default to the lowest multiplier category with “other offices,” or \$0.20 (20 cents). As a point of comparison, the Lieutenant Governor, who also runs a Statewide campaign, has a dollar multiplier of \$1.40. As a result, current expenditure limits for OHA candidates are approximately \$172,174, while expenditure limits for the Lieutenant Governor are \$1,205,215.

The statewide OHA Trustee races receive comparable votes to the Lieutenant Governor races. 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.

The total expenditure limits in HRS § 11-423(d) in turn affect the amount of public financing available to a candidate under HRS § 11-425, which sets public funding as a percentage of the total expenditure limits. While OHA appreciates that this measure would increase the maximum amount of public financing available to OHA candidates, this is still far below what comparable office holders would receive.

As a matter of fairness and equity, OHA respectfully requests that OHA be treated comparably to other statewide office holders through **necessary amendments to HRS sections 11-423 and 425**. Specifically, **the multiplier set in HRS § 11-423 should put OHA candidates' expenditure limit on parity with the Lieutenant Governor, another statewide office holder (increase from \$0.20 to \$1.68)**.

For the reasons stated above, OHA respectfully urges this committee to **PASS SB2528 SD1 with AMENDMENTS**.

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

**SB-2528-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 12:05:59 PM

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

*I am in strong support of SB2528.*

*By increasing the expenditure cap and adjusting matching funds to 2:1, this measure reflects the economic realities of today and encourages more candidates to participate in the program.*

*Public financing levels the playing field for candidates without establishment backing and allows campaigns to focus on reaching voters instead of donors.*

*This bill is a significant step toward enabling more candidates to utilize this program and reducing the influence of big money in our elections.*

*Mahalo,*

*Andrew Isoda  
Lahaina, Mau'i*

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 2528, SD1 - RELATING TO PARTIAL PUBLIC FINANCING OF ELECTIONS.**

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 2528, SD1**, Relating to Partial Public Financing of Elections, which increases the expenditure limit and the amount of partial public campaign financing available for all elective offices, adjusts the minimum amount of qualifying contributions certain candidates must receive to participate in the program, increases the matching fund payments for excess qualifying contributions, and appropriates funds for the program.

As a resident of Maui, I believe 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, such as proposed by SB2313, are the best way to meet these goals, but the enhancement to Hawaii's Partial Public Funding Program (PPFP) proposed by SB 2528, SD1 is an important step toward those goals. The money available to candidates through the 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. The increases proposed in SB 2528, SD1 are an improvement and SB 2528, SD1 also cuts the number of qualifying contributions required to access public funding for several offices, making the program easier to access.

Senate Bill 2528, SD1 also provides for increased funding for Hawaii election campaign fund (HECF). This is important because under the definition of the PPFP, if the HECF runs out of money before all qualified candidates have received anticipated payments, the program will stop making payments. This erodes candidates' trust in and their willingness to use the program. It is time to help level the playing field so that the candidate best qualified to serve their constituents, not just the one most able to fundraise from wealthy donors, are able to be elected to office. **I respectfully request your vote in support of SB 2528, SD1.**

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony,

Christine Andrews, JD  
Wailuku, Maui

**TO:** The Senate Committee on Ways and Means (WAM)

**HEARING DATE:** March 2, 2026, at 10:31 AM

**FROM:** Jasmine Steiner, KahuPuna, Puna, Hawai'i

**SUBJECT: STRONGLY OPPOSE SB2528** – Stop Subsidizing Political Corruption with Puna's Taxes

My name is Jasmine Steiner. I am a daughter of the Puna 'āina, a district that has been treated as a "sacrifice zone" for forty years. While our community fights for basic road access, health monitoring, and justice against a **fraudulent Geothermal EIS**, this bill proposes to take \$30 million of public money to fund the very political machines that keep us oppressed.

I stand in absolute opposition to **SB2528**. Politicians should raise their own funds—not use the public as an ATM to buy their way back into power.

### **The Loopholes & Corruption of SB2528**

1. **The "Super-Match" Loophole (Section 11-429):** This bill doubles the matching rate from \$1 to **\$2 for every \$1 raised**. This doesn't help grassroots candidates; it "supercharges" the power of private donors using *our* tax dollars. It allows candidates to spend more time courting wealthy donors whose influence is then tripled by the State.
2. **Increasing Expenditure Limits (Section 11-423):** This bill proposes a **20% increase** in what candidates can spend. Instead of capping the cost of elections to reduce the influence of "pay-to-play" politics, you are encouraging an expensive "arms race" that rural communities like Puna **can never win**.
3. **Prioritizing Politicians Over Puna:** In Puna, we are begging for recovery funds for the Lower East Rift Zone (LERZ) and roads like Pohoiki, and for them to stop wasting money on useless projects like the dredging of the boat ramp. We the Puna people are fighting an injunction in the Intermediate Court of Appeals because the State refused to stop PGV's fraudulent operations. **To spend \$30 million on "partial public financing" while the Puna district lacks a 24/7 health helpline or safe roads is a violation of our civil rights.**
4. **Enabling the "Sacrifice Zone":** For decades, money has influenced the "fast-tracking" of geothermal projects that harm our land and air. **SB2528 is designed to protect the status quo by ensuring that established politicians have a**

**guaranteed pool of public money, making it nearly impossible for real community advocates to challenge the system.**

## Conclusion

We do not want "partial" financing; **we want clean government. If a politician cannot inspire their own constituents to fund a campaign, they have no business representing us. Do not use Puna's tax dollars to silence Puna's voice.**

**I urge you to KILL THE BILL SB2528.** Redirect these funds to actual community needs—like LERZ Kilauea recovery and independent environmental monitoring—instead of political campaigns.

**Me ke aloha 'āina,**

**Jasmine Steiner**

*KahuPuna, Puna*

[\*Wearepuna@gmail.com\*](mailto:Wearepuna@gmail.com)

*13-430 pohoiki road Pahoa HI 96778*

[\*wearepuna.wixsite.com/aloha-activism\*](http://wearepuna.wixsite.com/aloha-activism)



**SB-2528-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 4:34:31 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
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 SB2528.**

**By increasing the expenditure cap and adjusting matching funds to 2:1, this measure reflects the economic realities of today and encourages more candidates to participate in the program.**

**Public financing levels the playing field for candidates without establishment backing and allows campaigns to focus on reaching voters instead of donors.**

**This bill is a significant step toward enabling more candidates to utilize this program and reducing the influence of big money in our elections. Let's get corruption out of politics**

**Mahalo, Jane Aquino, Manoa, Oahu**

**SB-2528-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 5:41:00 PM

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

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

Comments:

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

*I urge you to support SB2528.*

*By increasing the expenditure cap and adjusting matching funds to 2:1, this measure reflects the economic realities of today and encourages more candidates to participate in the program.*

*Public financing levels the playing field for candidates without establishment backing and allows campaigns to focus on reaching voters instead of donors.*

*This bill is a significant step toward enabling more candidates to utilize this program and reducing the influence of big money in our elections.*

*Thank you*

**SB-2528-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 6:34:07 PM

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

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

Comments:

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

*My name is Susan RobertsEmery, as Co Chair of the Green Party of Hawai'i, I am writing on behalf of our members, who are in Very Strong Support of SB2528 SD1.*

*By increasing the expenditure cap and adjusting matching funds to 2:1, this measure reflects the economic realities of today and encourages more candidates to participate in the program. The Green Party is Grassroots Party that does not take " donations " from corporations . This bill will level the playing field and allow more candidates to fundraise in their communities and get 2:1 public funding. Candidates should represent their constituents and this bill will help all candidates get a fair look by the voters.*

The Green Party of Hawai'i urges this committee to Pass SB2528 SD1.

*Mahalo,*

*Susan RobertsEmery*

*Green Party of Hawai'i*

*Paauilo*

**SB-2528-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 9:34:53 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 support SB2528.*

*By increasing the expenditure cap and adjusting matching funds to 2:1, this measure reflects the economic realities of today and encourages more candidates to participate in the program.*

*Public financing levels the playing field for candidates without establishment backing and allows campaigns to focus on reaching voters instead of donors.*

*This bill is a significant step toward enabling more candidates to utilize this program and reducing the influence of big money in our elections.*

**SB-2528-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 10:27:07 PM

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

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

Comments:

Aloha legislators,

It's not just eggs and gas that cost more these days--it's campaigns, too. This bill supports elected officials who are not beholden to private interests, and gets them talking to more voters and fewer donors.

mahalo,  
Cory Harden

**SB-2528-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/27/2026 8:26:55 AM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
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 SB2528.*

*By increasing the expenditure cap and adjusting matching funds to 2:1, this measure reflects the economic realities of today and encourages more candidates to participate in the program.*

*Public financing levels the playing field for candidates without establishment backing and allows campaigns to focus on reaching voters instead of donors.*

*This bill is a significant step toward enabling more candidates to utilize this program and reducing the influence of big money in our elections.*

*Mahalo,*

*Yvette Kay*

*Kailua Kona, HI*

**SB-2528-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/27/2026 9:04:17 AM

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

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

Comments:

WRITTEN TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT WITH FISCAL AMENDMENTS

SB2528 – Relating to Partial Public Campaign Financing

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Dr. Inam Rahman, MD, a resident of Waipahu, Hawaii, small business owner, and longtime participant in civic and public policy discussions in Hawaii. I submit this testimony in strong support of SB2528, with recommended fiscal amendments to ensure long-term sustainability and responsible stewardship of taxpayer funds.

Support for the Intent of the Measure

SB2528 modernizes Hawaii’s partial public campaign financing system, which has not been meaningfully updated since the mid-1990s. Inflation, rising communication costs, and the increasing role of digital campaigning have rendered existing funding caps outdated.

By increasing matching funds and adjusting qualifying thresholds, the bill:

- Encourages broader candidate participation
- Reduces dependence on large private donors

- Promotes fairness and electoral competitiveness
- Strengthens public confidence in democratic institutions

A healthy democracy benefits when candidates from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds can run viable campaigns without disproportionate reliance on concentrated financial interests.

### Fiscal Responsibility Is Essential

While the policy objective is commendable, the bill should incorporate guardrails to ensure predictable and sustainable fiscal impact. I respectfully propose the following amendments:

#### 1. Establish a Program Funding Cap Per Election Cycle

Amend the bill to include a defined appropriation ceiling (for example, \$2–4 million per election cycle). If demand exceeds available funds, distributions could be made on a pro-rata basis.

This ensures:

- Predictable state exposure
- Protection of core General Fund priorities
- Transparent budgeting

## 2. Phase-In the Enhanced Matching Rate

The proposed increase to a 2:1 match significantly raises potential cost.

A prudent approach would:

- Implement 1.5:1 for the first election cycle
- Increase to 2:1 following fiscal review and performance analysis

This allows evaluation before full expansion.

## 3. Diversify Funding Sources

To reduce pressure on the General Fund, the Legislature may consider:

- Expanding voluntary tax check-off mechanisms
- Allocating a portion of campaign finance civil penalties
- Exploring modest filing fee adjustments

A blended funding model strengthens durability.

#### 4. Add a Sunset Review or Mandatory Legislative Evaluation

Include a requirement that the Campaign Spending Commission report after two election cycles on:

- Participation rates
- Total program cost
- Impact on small-donor engagement
- Administrative burden

Data-driven oversight ensures accountability.

#### 5. Strengthen Grassroots Incentives

To enhance democratic legitimacy, require qualifying contributions to:

- Come from a minimum number of in-district small donors
- Be capped at modest amounts (e.g., \$100 or less)

This reinforces the principle that public financing amplifies citizen participation—not institutional advantage.

## Conclusion

SB2528 represents a thoughtful step toward modernizing Hawaii’s campaign finance framework. With measured fiscal safeguards and phased implementation, it can:

- Promote equitable elections
- Protect taxpayer resources
- Encourage broader civic participation
- Maintain public trust

I respectfully urge the Committee to pass SB2528 with fiscal amendments that balance reform with responsibility.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Inam Rahman, MD

Waipahu, Hawaii



**SB-2528-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/27/2026 10:11:26 AM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
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).

I prefer other campaign finance bills that establish a comprehensive system of public financing more than this one. I urge legislative and committee members to make sure those get a hearing. But from a pragmatic perspective, I'll take what I can get. The only thing I'll truly be unhappy about is a session that results in no meaningful changes and simply promotes the status quo.

**SB-2528-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/27/2026 1:42:34 PM

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

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

Comments:

SUPPORT!

**SB-2528-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/27/2026 2:30:03 PM

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

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

Comments:

Aloha, I am testifying in support of SB2528 SD1. I believe we should do what we can to support public financing of our elections. Mahalo for your consideration.

**SB-2528-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/27/2026 2:58:03 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
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 SB2528.**

**By increasing the expenditure cap and adjusting matching funds to 2:1, this measure reflects the economic realities of today and encourages more candidates to participate in the program.**

**Public financing levels the playing field for candidates without establishment backing and allows campaigns to focus on reaching voters instead of donors.**

**This bill is a significant step toward enabling more candidates to utilize this program and reducing the influence of big money in our elections.**

**Mahalo,**

**Leah Morse, Honolulu**

**SB-2528-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/27/2026 4:15:36 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 SB2528.*

*By increasing the expenditure cap and adjusting matching funds to 2:1, this measure reflects the economic realities of today and encourages more candidates to participate in the program.*

*Public financing levels the playing field for candidates without establishment backing and allows campaigns to focus on reaching voters instead of donors.*

*We need fair elections.*

*This bill is a significant step toward enabling more candidates to utilize this program and reducing the influence of big money in our elections.*

*Mahalo,*

*Amara Karuna, Pahoa, HI*

**SB-2528-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/27/2026 9:15:49 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Lily Troy MD	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support SB2528 SD1

**SB-2528-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 5:45:02 AM

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

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

Comments:

Support with amendment.

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

I submit this testimony in support of S.B. 2528, S.D. 1, with amendments.

I support the effort to strengthen Hawai‘i’s Partial Public Financing program so that small-donor participation can play a more meaningful role in our elections and so that public financing becomes a realistic option for more candidates.

OHA trustee elections are unique statewide contests that do not fit within a district-based classification, yet they currently default to the lowest expenditure limit category. I respectfully suggest the establishment of a proportional statewide formula specifically for OHA trustee elections and that the Campaign Spending Commission, in coordination with the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, be directed to recommend an appropriate multiplier based on the cost of conducting a viable statewide campaign and the fiscal capacity of the program.

In the meantime, in order to move this bill forward, I respectfully request an amendment to minimally align OHA with State House races so that OHA candidates are not placed at a structural disadvantage within the public financing system.

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.

**SB-2528-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 2:42:29 PM

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

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

Comments:

Please consider funding this bill that would bring Hawaii's Partial Public Funding program in line with inflationary changes. PPF helps expand opportunity of running for office to a diverse group of citizens and strengthens our democracy.

**SB-2528-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 3:05:37 PM

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

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

Comments:

Dear Chair WAM and committee Members,

I strongly support all efforts for public funding to equal the playing field and reduce inequality in funding and corporate/lobby special interests.

Mahalo nui,

Diane Ware Volcano 96785

**SB-2528-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 3:24:36 PM

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

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

Comments:

After 20 years, our public Election Campaign Fund program needs a raise. Please pass this bill to enable candidates to run campaigns responsible to the individual voters rather than big-money donors. This is a very important piece of clean elections.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Dr. Lorna Holmes,

Mo'ili'ili 96826

**SB-2528-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 4:00:45 PM

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

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

Comments:

I write in Strong Support of SB2528 SD1, individually and as a member of the League of Women Voters of Hawaii. By increasing the expenditure cap and adjusting matching funds to 2:1, this bill reflects the economic realities of today and encourages more candidates to participate in the program.

Public financing levels the playing field for candidates without establishment backing and allows campaigns to focus on reaching voters instead of donors. While I would prefer full public financing of elections, this bill is a significant step toward enabling more candidates to utilize this program and reducing the influence of big money in our elections.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important Bill

**SB-2528-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 4:19:00 PM

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

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

Comments:

Please support SB2528 SD1 with adequate funding to continue Hawaii's valuable public funding program. Our candidates should be able to campaign without an over-reliance on big-money donors.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this matter.

Julia Kosak  
Hilo, Hawaii

**SB-2528-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 4:23:39 PM

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

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

Comments:

I support comprehensive public financing; This bill is not enough. What if all candidates only used public money, and were capped on how much per constituent? What if we could see clearly how candidates spent public money to get hired for the job before we let them do it with millions and millions of dollars.

**SB-2528-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 4:41:32 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Cynthia Punihaole Kennedy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz; Vice Chair Moriwaki, and the members of the Ways and Means Committee

I strongly support SB 2528 SD 1. The amount of funding available through the Partial Public Funding Program (PPFP) has not been adjusted in over two decades. Due to inflation, the program’s impact has steadily diminished, making it far less effective and leading to fewer candidates choosing to participate in each election cycle.

SB2528 SD1 is a necessary and timely improvement. By updating funding levels to reflect today’s economic realities, this measure will restore the program’s effectiveness — strengthening voter power and ensuring elected officials remain more accountable to their constituents rather than to large private donors.

SB2528 SD1 also appropriately increases funding for the Hawai‘i Election Campaign Fund to support these adjustments and allow more candidates to participate in public financing.

I respectfully urge you to support SB2528 SD1 with adequate funding so that Hawai‘i’s public funding program can continue to promote fair elections, broaden participation, and strengthen public trust in our democracy.

Mahalo

Cynthia Punihaole Kennedy

Kalaoa, North Kona, Hawaii Island

**SB-2528-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 6:23:50 PM

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

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

Comments:

To: Chair Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Sharon Y. Moriwaki & 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 SB2528 SD1 RELATING TO PARTIAL PUBLIC FINANCING OF ELECTIONS.

The amount of money available through the Partial Public Funding Program (PPFP) to publicly funded candidates has not changed in over two decades. Inflation has made the program so much less useful that fewer candidates use it every year.

SB2528 SD1 is a necessary improvement so the program can continue its benefits – giving more power to voters and increasing officials’ attention to voters rather than big donors. SB2528 SD1 increases funding for the Hawaii Election Campaign Fund to pay for its changes, including supporting more candidates.

Please support SB2528 SD1 with adequate funding to continue our valuable public funding program.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

**SB-2528-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 7:00:25 PM

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

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

Comments:

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

I am in strong support of SB2528.

By increasing the expenditure cap and adjusting matching funds to 2:1, this measure reflects the economic realities of today and encourages more candidates to participate in the program.

Public financing levels the playing field for candidates without establishment backing and allows campaigns to focus on reaching voters instead of donors.

*This bill is a significant step toward enabling more candidates to utilize this program and reducing the influence of big money in our elections.*

Mahalo,

R A Culbertson

Honokaa

**SB-2528-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 9:36:30 PM

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

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

Comments:

Please support increased funding for publicly funded candidates for public office. With no increases in 20 years, the efficacy of the program has eroded. Passage of SB2028 will also reflect more accurately the differences in the number of voters in districts.

**SB-2528-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 9:17:11 AM

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

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

Comments:

Please support this bill to support public financing

**SB-2528-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 9:36:25 AM

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

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

Comments:

MAHALO Senators for keeping this bill alive and dedicating time and I hope funding to strengthen Hawai'i's Partial Public Funding of elections to help reduce the influence that "dark money" - private interests - have on elections. We would hope increasing the amount of funds available - and support for administering this program - would empower a more diverse field of candidates and permit these candidates to have more time to focus on constituent interaction - listening and learning and taking action to address their needs. This program -- if adequately funded - is a pro-active way for the Legislature to help reduce or prevent campaign spending abuses. We know funding is tight but this a priority at this time. MAHALO for considering this.

**SB-2528-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 9:43:11 AM

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

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

Comments:

Please support this bill with sufficient funding to continue our valuable program/ic funding program

**SB-2528-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 9:54:43 AM

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

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

Comments:

Please support this bill to make elections for fair. May the best candidate win, not the best funded.

I'm a member of East Hawaii Indivisible

Thank you

**Committee on Ways and Means**

Monday, March 2, 2026, 2026, 10:02 a.m.

State Capitol, Room 211

JANET MASON - TESTIMONY

**Chair DelaCruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki and Members of the Committee:**

I am submitting personal testimony in strong support of SB 2528 SD1, **Relating to Partial Public Funding of Elections.**

At this point in our history, I can't think of a better way Hawaii's legislature could underscore the importance of diminishing the role of money in politics than this bill. We all know it's difficult for low- and moderate-income individuals to launch a successful campaign for public office. In the interest of equity and recruiting talent to public life, we need to take a reasonable step to change this.

I have seen firsthand how challenging it is for most public officeholders to attend to the needs of their constituents, work on crafting improved public policy, build political coalitions to advance such policy, and regularly – especially in your House of Representatives – run a successful election campaign. To me, being a State or local public office holder shouldn't demand devoting undue attention to money raising in a campaign and (worse if elected) devoting undue attention to one's big donors.

I'm pretty sure there's an appropriation estimate available for this bill. Please think hard about spending a modest amount which could break the cycle of money in politics and fund this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair  
Committee on Ways and Means  
The Senate  
The Thirty-Third Legislature  
Regular Session of 2026  
State Capitol  
Honolulu, HI

**RE: SB2528 SD1, Relating to Partial Public Financing of Elections**

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Leelynn Brady, and I am a member of the League of Women Voters of Hawaii. I submit this testimony in my individual capacity and not on behalf of the League.

I support SB2528 SD1, which modernizes and strengthens Hawaii's partial public financing program. The program's funding levels were last updated in 1995, and the Legislature has recognized that the value of the dollar has changed significantly since that time. Adjusting expenditure limits and increasing available public funds ensures that the program reflects current economic realities rather than outdated assumptions.

In addition to increasing expenditure limits, the bill raises the maximum percentage of public funds available to candidates and increases the matching rate to \$4 for every \$1 in qualifying contributions above the minimum threshold. This strengthened small-donor match meaningfully amplifies community support and reduces reliance on large donors.

I wish to speak particularly from an accessibility perspective. Running for office requires financial resources not only for outreach and communication but also for compliance, staffing, transportation, childcare, translation services, and other necessary supports. When public financing levels remain stagnant for decades, candidates without personal wealth or established donor networks face disproportionate barriers to entry. Modernizing and expanding the public financing program helps ensure that working parents, individuals with disabilities, caregivers, and candidates from historically underrepresented communities can realistically consider public service.

By lowering certain qualifying thresholds and strengthening the small-dollar matching system, this bill supports a more diverse candidate pool. A democracy is strongest when pathways to candidacy are not limited by economic status. Accessibility should extend beyond voting to include the opportunity to run.

SB2528 SD1 does not create new systems; it updates and reinforces an existing framework to reflect today's costs and realities. In doing so, it strengthens public trust and broadens civic participation.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to pass SB2528 SD1.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Leelynn Brady

**SB-2528-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 11:53:52 AM

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

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

Comments:

support