



HAWAI'I STATE ETHICS COMMISSION

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

Committee: House Committee on Legislative Management
Bill Number: SB 2661 SD1
Hearing Date/Time: March 23, 2026, 2:30 p.m.
Regarding: Testimony in Support

Aloha Chair Quinlan, Vice-Chair Ichiyama, and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 2661 SD1, which strengthens public trust in government by establishing a uniform nepotism standard across all branches of state government while preserving limited, transparent flexibility for rare and justifiable circumstances.

This measure promotes fairness and consistency by applying nepotism restrictions to the Legislature and Judiciary – entities already generally subject to the State Ethics Code. A consistent statewide standard helps ensure that employment decisions are based on merit rather than personal relationships and reinforces public confidence in government processes. The bill also appropriately includes a narrowly tailored good-cause exception for situations involving a demonstrated lack of qualified applicants. This provision allows agencies to meet legitimate operational needs without undermining the underlying ethical safeguards, while ensuring that any exception is subject to public accountability.

The Commission notes that this measure would apply the State Ethics Code to justices and judges. While the Legislature has the constitutional authority to extend the Code in this manner, this would represent the first exercise of that authority. The Commission is capable of administering and enforcing these provisions if enacted; however, it offers this observation for the Legislature's consideration and defers to the Legislature on whether to pursue this policy change.

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

Very truly yours,

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

SB-2661-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/20/2026 1:33:30 PM

Testimony for LMG on 3/23/2026 2:30:00 PM

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

Comments:

Please accept this as testimony in strong support of this measure. All state employees, including legislative and judicial employees, should be subject to the same ethical standards prohibiting nepotism that are applicable to other state employees. This also helps restore the public's trust in government.

Lynne Matusow