

SB-2737-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 9:49:34 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
William Caron	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I am writing in **strong support** of SB2737, which would establish the offense of failure to report bribery by a state or county elected official as a misdemeanor.

Bribery is a crime that thrives in the shadows. It is an act of profound betrayal that corrodes public trust, undermines the integrity of our democratic processes, and places private gain above the public good. While Hawai‘i has laws on the books to prosecute those who offer or accept bribes, our legal framework currently lacks a critical component: accountability for witnesses who stand by and do nothing.

SB2737 closes this dangerous gap.

This bill requires any elected official who knows of or witnesses the conferring, offering, solicitation, or acceptance of a bribe to report that conduct to the Department of the Attorney General within 60 days. Failure to do so would be a misdemeanor.

The need for this legislation has never been clearer. We are currently in the midst of an ongoing state investigation into an unidentified lawmaker who, according to federal records, was recorded accepting \$35,000 in cash—a scandal that has cast a long shadow over the Capitol this session. While the federal government declined to prosecute, the conduct alleged is exactly the kind of corrupt influence that this bill seeks to expose.

But this bill is not just about any single case. It is about creating a culture of accountability. When bribery occurs, it is rarely a victimless crime committed in a vacuum. These transactions often happen in the presence of staffers, other officials, or intermediaries. Currently, those who look the other way face no consequences for their silence. By creating a legal duty to report, SB2737 transforms passive witnesses into active guardians of integrity.

The consequences of inaction are severe. Unchecked bribery festers, leading to more corruption, skewed public policy, and a citizenry that loses faith in its government. This bill sends a clear and necessary message: silence is complicity.

We urge this committee to pass SB2737. It is a straightforward, common-sense measure that strengthens transparency, reinforces ethical standards, and safeguards Hawai'i's democracy for its residents and future generations.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

SB-2737-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 12:38:58 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I support this bill.

SB-2737-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 1:36:58 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs,

I am a resident of Kapolei and a member of the Indivisible Hawai'i Statewide Network. I am writing to testify in strong support of SB2737 SD1. The Bill establishes the offense of failure to report bribery as a misdemeanor. If a public servant reasonably knows or witnesses that a bribe was offered, solicited, or accepted, they must report it to the Attorney General, a county prosecutor, a law enforcement agency, the State Ethics Commission, or a county ethics board within 60 days.

This bill is important because bribery often continues not because it goes unnoticed, but because it goes unreported. While bribery is illegal, current law does not require public officials to report it, allowing misconduct to remain hidden or unaddressed.

SB2737 will establish a clear duty for public servants to report known or suspected bribery. Public service should carry an obligation to speak up when bribery occurs.

This bill reinforces ethical standards, and helps restore trust in our government.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Robert L. Justice, M.D.

SB-2737-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 5:20:34 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/18/2026 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 SB2737 which establishes the offense of failure to report bribery by a state elected official as a misdemeanor.

Younghee Overly, a member of Indivisible Hawaii

SB-2737-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 8:23:06 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kathleen Dickson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Elefante, Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

I am in strong support of SB2824.

SB2824 will establish a clear duty for public servants to report known or suspected bribery. Public service should carry an obligation to speak up when bribery occurs.

This bill is important because bribery often persists when it is treated as an “open secret.” Even when people are aware something is wrong, the lack of a reporting requirement allows unethical behavior to remain hidden, uninvestigated, and normalized.

It would seem to be unnecessary to enact such a bill as this, but history has shown it should be enacted everywhere.

This bill reinforces ethical standards, and helps restore trust in our government.

Mahalo,

Kate Dickso, Waikiki

SB-2737-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 9:55:56 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

This bill directly addresses a key accountability gap: when misconduct is known but not reported, it undermines the people’s trust and delays corrective action. By mandating timely reporting to the Attorney General, SB2737 helps ensure investigations can proceed without avoidable delays, supporting a more transparent and ethical government.

It becomes more importat, day after day, as we still don't know who the legislator is who took \$35,000 in cash in a brown paper bag.

Please move this bill forward.

lynne matusow

COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

Rep. David A. Tarnas, Chair

Rep. Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair

HEARING:

Wednesday, March 18, 2026 at 2:00 pm

Conference Room 325 and Via Videoconference

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 2737, SD1 - RELATING TO BRIBERY.

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, Rep. Cochran of Maui, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Christine Andrews, and I live in Wailuku, Maui. I write to you today in **support of SB 2737, SD1, Relating to Bribery**, which establishes the offense of failure to report bribery by a state elected official as a misdemeanor; requires a state elected official who knows of or witnesses the conferring, offering, solicitation, or acceptance of a pecuniary benefit in violation of the bribery statute to report the conduct to the Department of the Attorney General, a county prosecuting attorney, a law enforcement agency, the State Ethics Commission, or a county ethics board within sixty days; and defines "state elected official".

I have been an attorney licensed in Hawai'i for over 25 years. I am sure the members of the Committee are aware of the New York Times article, "Inside the Late-Night Parties Where Hawaii Politicians Raked In Money," published in January, 2024, with the tagline, "[a]fter the state passed a law barring government contractors from donating to politicians, fund-raising parties showed just how completely the reform effort failed"¹. As a long-term resident of Maui, at a time when my Lahaina neighbors were depending on the kindness of donations pouring in from around the world to help with recovery from the wildfire, an article in a major newspaper highlighting apparent corruption and apparent bribery in Hawaii is not only shameful, it directly impairs the recovery of the people of Lahaina by creating a chilling effect on charitable contributions.

We must act together now to establish norms and standards that address unethical behavior on the part of our elected officials and those who attempt to influence them in a manner contrary to the public interest. Currently, bribery often continues not because it goes unnoticed, but because it goes unreported. While bribery is illegal, current law does not require elected officials to report it, allowing misconduct to remain hidden or unaddressed.

This bill is important because bribery often persists when it is treated as an "open secret." Even when people are aware something is wrong, the lack of a reporting requirement allows unethical behavior to remain hidden, uninvestigated, and normalized. I request your support of SB2737, SD1 which will establish a clear duty for state elected officials to report known or witnessed bribery. Public service should carry an obligation to speak up when bribery occurs.

Mahalo nui for taking an important step for restoring trust in government **by supporting SB2737 SD1.**

Christine L. Andrews, J.D.

Wailuku, Maui

¹ Blaze Lovell, Eric Sagara & Irene Casado Sanchez. Inside the Late-Night Parties Where Hawaii Politicians Raked In Money. New York Times; January 17, 2024.

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Submitted on: 3/17/2026 11:15:29 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/18/2026 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.

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Submitted on: 3/17/2026 11:24:26 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Let us give public servants a reason to report bribery which can counteract the strong norm of "see nothing, say nothing."

Thank you for accepting my testimony in support of SB2737.

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Submitted on: 3/17/2026 1:03:10 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair Elefante, Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

I am in strong support of SB2824.

SB2824 will establish a clear duty for public servants to report known or suspected bribery. Public service should carry an obligation to speak up when bribery occurs.

This bill is important because bribery often persists when it is treated as an “open secret.” Even when people are aware something is wrong, the lack of a reporting requirement allows unethical behavior to remain hidden, uninvestigated, and normalized.

This bill reinforces ethical standards, and helps restore trust in our government.

Mahalo,

Gail Morrison, Honolulu

SB-2737-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 1:38:07 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha, I support SB2737 which requires elected officials to report known or witnessed bribery. Mahalo for your consideration.