

From: [Shana Wailana Kukila](#)
To: [Standards of Conduct](#)
Subject: Testimony for August 24, 2022 Meeting: Legislative Process
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Attachments: [Standards of Conduct Legislative Process SK August 24 2022.pdf](#)

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Aloha Members of the Commission,

Attached please find my testimony, as a follow up to the last meeting in August. It reflects my personal opinion, and not that of any organization I work or volunteer with.

Mahalo,
Shana Kukila

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TO: Commission to Improve Standards of Conduct
RE: Public Comment for August 24, 2022 Hearing

Dear Commission Members,

Thank you for your time and dedication to improving the conduct of public servants in Hawai'i's government systems. This is a follow up to the last hearing you had in August.

It is clear from the testimony that you were speaking with gatekeepers such as politicians and legislators, but not their workforce such as legislative staff, who really do the work and who would have to do the work for these leaders who make any decisions. The testimony of Senator Lee had mentioned that they are part time legislators, yet he failed to mention their salaries, which are twice the salary of the average full-time worker in Hawai'i. It is his duty and obligation to be there for the constituents and the people of Hawai'i as a leader of this state, regardless of his "part time" status, as he is always serving no matter where he is.

The idea that being a legislator is just a job is flawed as well. We elect our officials, who have a duty to serve on our behalf and are never excused for behavior or actions "off the job." When elected, they are immediately under oath to conduct their personal and public lives with the utmost integrity, and not as another occupation or endeavor of casual choice. They are accountable to the people they serve 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, without exception. If they drive drunk, steal funds, or abuse their family in any way while not at the capitol, they are still held accountable. However, this is not how the legislature is currently run, for we know that legislators who break the law are not always held accountable for their actions, especially those who have committed serious breaches of public trust and even endangered the public safety.

The genuine legislators we have in office are all to be commended for their hard work and dedication to the people they serve, and those who have not lived up to this standard should be forced to give up their positions, even if the public has not moved to do so. What power do we have to do this besides our one vote? If a criminal action is committed by a legislator from any side of the aisle, there should be a mechanism that automatically triggers a disciplinary action. It should not be left up to the chairs or those in leadership, who may have political reasons for not disciplining a member. Mechanisms and protocols are needed to hold our legislators accountable to the constitution and to the people of Hawai'i. That is what I propose would help build public trust in government and politicians.

Bring more workers to the table, those who are behind the scenes, to talk about process and what will and won't work, because they are not running for office and will be saddled with any work these politicians legislate. Legislative and administrative staff are the backbone of the state capitol and every county and city council in the state. Perhaps they should be surveyed anonymously, so as not to jeopardize their jobs, if they are reluctant to share their thoughts. It could go a long way in solving some problems by bringing them to the table in some way.

Please consider the information above and take action upon it as a means to improve the safety and well being of Hawai'i's children and families.

Mahalo,
Shana Kukila