



# THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF HAWAII

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TESTIMONY ON SB 2579, SD2, A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO CAMPAIGN SPENDING

House Committee on Judiciary  
Tuesday, March 11, 2008 2:00 p.m.  
Conference Room 325

**LATE TESTIMONY**

Testifier: Jean Aoki

Chair Waters, Vice Chair Oshiro, members of the Committee on Judiciary,

The League of Women Voters commends the provisions in SB 2579, SD2 that encourage the filing of complete and factual campaign spending reports in a timely fashion. These reports are vital in helping the commission monitor candidates' compliance with campaign spending laws.

Among the most distasteful of any regulatory agency's tasks is that of chasing after tardy reporting and getting corrections to incomplete and defective reports. Those require too much of the staff's time and effort. Imposing fines and penalties to encourage compliance is effective. I can vouch for it personally, having paid a \$50 fine for a late report, and having paid close attention to the reporting schedule after that.

The provision that we cannot support is the one that directs that all penalties be deposited in the General Fund. I understand that the rationale for that provision as raised a few years back is to prevent the over-aggressive pursuit of opportunities to build the Election Campaign Fund. But the law is very clear in determining who and under what circumstances election campaigns may be in violation of the laws. We don't think the oversight can be too aggressive. It can only be too lax.

The Election Campaign Fund was set up for the program of public funding of election campaigns. More than a decade ago, we found ourselves objecting to a bill that would require the funding of the Campaign Spending Commission's expenses including staff salaries, fringe benefits, and other operating expenses. Although we were resolute in our belief that the operating expenses of the CSC should not come from the Elections Campaign Fund, since the alternative was a severe cut in the CSC budget, we reluctantly supported the measure with the caveat that this should remain a temporary move awaiting better financial times.

We realize that the chances of reverting to past practice remains dim for the present at least. But we certainly do protest the diverting of money from penalties for violations of campaign spending laws and rules from the customary depository, the Elections Campaign Fund, to the general fund. We urge the deletion of this particular provision from SB 2579 SD2. Thank you!