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**House JUD Committee
Chair Gilbert Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair Karl Rhoads**

**Thursday 4/7/11 at 2:00 PM in Room 325
HCR 51 & HR 44 – Corporate Personhood**

TESTIMONY

Nikki Love, Executive Director, Common Cause Hawaii

Chair Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair Rhoads, and Committee Members:

Common Cause Hawaii supports HCR 51 and HR 44. These resolutions urge Congress to propose an amendment to the U.S. Constitution to provide that corporations are not persons under the law.

These resolutions make an important statement about our vision for the role of corporations in our political process. Last year's Supreme Court decision in *Citizens United v. FEC* allowed corporations to spend unlimited amounts of money on independent expenditures, based on the absurd notion that corporations have free speech rights like people do. Shortly after the *Citizens United* decision, a Washington Post/ABC News poll found that 80% of the public disagreed with the decision, and that disagreement came from across the spectrum of party and ideology.

That court decision has led to additional lawsuits around the country, brought by those seeking to dismantle our nation's campaign finance laws. Elected officials and concerned citizens are attempting combat the problem with different reform measures, however, the options for meaningful campaign finance reform are significantly limited. It is now critical to address the core point: corporations should not have the same rights as people in our democratic process.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony.

LATE TESTIMONY



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF HAWAII

TESTIMONY ON HCR 51/HR 44 URGING THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS TO PROPOSE AN AMENDMENT TO THE UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION FOR THE STATES' CONSIDERATION TO PROVIDE THAT CORPORATIONS ARE NOT PERSONS UNDER THE LAWS OF THE UNITED STATES OR ANY OF ITS JURISDICTIONAL SUBDIVISIONS.

Committee on Judiciary
Rep. Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Chair
Rep. Karl Rhoads, Vice Chair
Date: Thursday, April 07, 2011
Time: 2:00 P.M.
Place: Conference Room 325

Testifier: Jean Aoki, LWV Legislative Committee

Chair Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair Rhoads, members of the Committee on Judiciary,

The League of Women Voters of Hawaii strongly supports House Concurrent Resolution 51 and House Resolution 44 which proposes an amendment to the Constitution of the United States.

We don't really need to add to the reasons to support this resolution; the Whereases beautifully presents the people's case.

The sad situation is that the campaign spending laws which have endeavored to lay a level playing field for all candidates have been gradually replaced by laws that negatively affect the fairness in our electoral process, aided and abetted by court decisions including those of the US Supreme Court, beginning with Buckley v. Valeo which equates money with speech and joined by the latest Citizens United v. FEC.

We need this amendment to the United States Constitution to stem the overwhelmingly tilting of our nation toward a meritocracy if we haven't reached that point already. It is sad watching ordinary people being fed so much misinformation by organizations fueled by unregulated money that they are willing to support policies that work against their individual interests.

Please pass HR 44 and HCR 51 and hope that both chambers will unite in urging Congress to support the proposed amendment. Why not also send this to the legislatures of all of the states.

Thank you for considering this important legislation.

LATE TESTIMONY