



LATE TESTIMONY
Hawaii

COMMON CAUSE

Holding Power Accountable

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**Senate PGM Committee
Chair Will Espero, Vice Chair Michelle Kidani**

**Saturday 2/12/11 at 10:00 AM in Room 229
SB 214 – County Ethics Commissions**

TESTIMONY

Nikki Love, Executive Director, Common Cause Hawaii

Chair Espero, Vice Chair Kidani, and Committee Members:

Common Cause Hawaii supports SB 214, which provides standards for the selection of county ethics commission members to ensure their impartiality and independence.

The current process for appointment seems to create an obvious conflict for those on county ethics commissions. The commissioners are appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the Council – the very same individuals over which the commissioners have to enforce ethics laws. This undermines impartiality and independence, and does not promote public trust. To address that, this bill would provide a better way – requiring an independent body which would facilitate a more proper selection process.

By contrast, the process to select State Ethics Commissioners utilizes an independent body in the following process: (1) open applications from the public to the Judicial Council, requiring resumes and letters of recommendation, (2) screening by the Judicial Council, and finally (3) appointment by the Governor. The initial steps via the Judicial Council provide a process for review of qualifications/recommendations and also a degree of independence from the appointing authority.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony.