



Senate JDL Committee
Chair Clayton Hee, Vice Chair Maile Shimabukuro

Thursday 2/2/12 at 9:30AM in Room 016
SB 2493 – Campaign Spending

LATE TESTIMONY

TESTIMONY

Nikki Love, Executive Director, Common Cause Hawaii

Chair Hee, Vice Chair Shimabukuro, and Committee Members:

Common Cause Hawaii offers the following comments on SB 2493, regarding campaign spending.

DEADLINES FOR REPORTS

We support the changes in Section 3 regarding deadlines for campaign spending reports. This change is necessary due to the new earlier Primary Election date. Moving up the deadline for the first preliminary report is important to ensure disclosure and transparency, and avoid the redundancy of having two reporting deadlines only one day apart.

NONCANDIDATE COMMITTEE REPORTS

We support the improvements proposed in Section 4 regarding noncandidate committees (PACs). These changes would clarify the reporting of PAC contributions made and received, and require PACs to disclose which candidates were supported or opposed by independent expenditures.

INDEPENDENT EXPENDITURES IN CAMPAIGNS

We ask the Committee to consider additional steps to ensure transparency in the area of independent expenditures in campaigns. This is a particularly timely issue, given recent court decisions and increased public concern about money in politics in this election year.

As you know, the controversial 2010 Supreme Court decision in Citizens United v. FEC paved the way for unlimited spending by corporations and unions to influence elections. New “Super PACs” and other entities are popping up at the federal and state levels to take

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advantage of these new opportunities for campaign money.

The public's understanding of this issue has grown over the past two years, and the concern about campaign finance is becoming more widespread. This is even leading to a growing movement nationwide for a U.S. Constitutional Amendment to overturn Citizens United and rein in campaign spending by corporations. A recent Civil Beat poll showed that an overwhelming majority of Hawaii voters support this idea.

In this context, other states are beefing up their disclosure requirements, and Hawaii is falling behind. We would ask the Committee to consider additional changes to the law to improve transparency for independent expenditures. This could include requiring corporations and other entities to disclose their independent expenditures; requiring corporations, PACs, and other entities to report their late expenditures; and requiring disclosure of the hidden funders of campaign advertisements. These ideas have been included in another bill, **SB 2953**.

Mahalo for your attention to this issue, and mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony.