

SB 835

Report Title:

RELATING TO COUNTY ETHICS COMMISSIONS

Measure Title:

Authorizes the judicial council to nominate persons for appointment to a county ethics commission; provided that the county's charter or ordinance requires members of the commission to be appointed from nominations made by the judicial council.



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SENATE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY, GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS AND MILITARY AFFAIRS

Chair Senator Will Espero, Vice Chair Senator Rosalyn H. Baker

Tuesday, February 5, 2013 2:45 p.m. Conference Room 224

TESTIMONY ON SB 835, RELATING TO COUNTY ETHICS COMMISSIONS

Janet Mason, Vice-President, League of Women Voters of Hawaii

Chair Espero, Vice Chair Baker, and Committee Members:

The League of Women Voters of Hawaii strongly supports SB835, which authorizes the judicial council to nominate persons for appointment to a county ethics commission, when the county's charter or ordinance requires members of the commission to be appointed from nominations made by the judicial council.

The selection of County Ethics Commissioners by the judicial council should ensure independence and impartiality of selection. The proposed process would be a reasonable, nonpartisan approach.

We also heartily concur with requiring the counties to establish a selection process that ensures minimal involvement by those who are subject to an ethics commission's oversight. Nominees should not be subject to confirmation by the county legislative body. This will help assure the public of consistency in standards that apply to both the state and local governments, and reflect the people's expectations for integrity.

We strongly urge you to pass SB835. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in its support.



Senate Committee on Public Safety, Intergovernmental and Military Affairs (PSM)
Chair Will Espero, Vice Chair Rosalyn Baker

Tuesday 02/05/13 at 02:45PM in Room 224
SB835– Relating to County Ethics Commissions

TESTIMONY

Carmille Lim, Executive Director, Common Cause Hawaii

Dear Chair Espero, Vice Chair Baker, and members of the PSM Committee:

Common Cause Hawaii supports SB835, which would allow the judicial council to nominate persons for appointment to the county ethics commission (provided that the county’s charter or ordinance requires members of the commission to be appointed from nominations made by the judicial council).

The current process for appointment seems to create an obvious conflict for those on county ethics commissions: Currently, 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.

SB835 sets forth a streamlined and improved process for selecting county ethics commissioners – one that would limit the current conflict of interest. The judicial council would nominate individuals to the county ethics commission directly. This provides a process for review of qualifications and a degree of independence from the mayor.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB835.

SB835

Submitted on: 2/4/2013

Testimony for PSM on Feb 5, 2013 14:45PM in Conference Room 224

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Shannon Rudolph	Individual	Support	No