



*Democracy Under the Rule of Law is Based on Public Access*

March 29, 2016

Committee on Ways and Means  
Hawai'i State Legislature

Re: H.B. 2156, Relating to Campaign Finance  
Hearing on Tuesday, 03/30/16, 9:15 AM, Rm. 211

Dear Chair Tokuda, Vice-Chair Dela Cruz, and Committee members:

Testifying in strong **opposition** to H.B. 2156, HD2, SD1.

It is sad that a bill to protect the beleaguered Hawai'i Election Campaign Fund has thus been transformed into a bill to authorize raids upon this fund.

The Hawai'i Election Campaign Fund was established in 1978 "to be used for partial public financing of campaigns of the State and its political subdivisions," according to Article II, Section 5 of our Constitution. And it was the original intent of H.B. 2156 to allow this important fund to fulfill this mandate from Hawai'i's people, by sourcing the operating expenses of the Campaign Spending Commission from the State's General Fund rather than from the Hawai'i Election Campaign fund.

The Hawai'i Election Campaign Fund should of course be used exclusively for its original purpose as stated in our Constitution, and for the purpose intended by the taxpayers who check the box on their tax return. Public funding, and a strong Campaign Spending Commission, are both critical to help protect the integrity of our democracy under the tsunami of dark money flowing into Hawai'i elections, as recognized in the original version of this bill. But unfortunately, this bill has since been corrupted. Please reject H.B. 2156, HD2, SD1.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

R. Elton Johnson, III  
Open Law Alliance