

**SB 1230**

**LATE TESTIMONY**



Senate Public Safety, Intergovernmental and Military Affairs Committee  
Chair Will Espero, Vice Chair Rosalyn H. Baker

Tuesday 02/17/15 at 1:05PM in Room 229  
SB1230 Relating to County Ethics Commissions

TESTIMONY OF SUPPORT  
Carmille Lim, Executive Director, Common Cause Hawaii

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

**Common Cause Hawaii supports SB1230**, which provides a process for the selection of county ethics commission members to ensure their impartiality and independence.

The current process for appointment creates an obvious conflict for those on county ethics commissions: The commissioners are appointed by the mayor and confirmed by the council—the same individuals over which the commissioners have to enforce ethics laws. This undermines impartiality and independence of the Commission, and does little to promote public trust in government.

SB1230 sets forth an improved process for selecting commissioners: the judicial council would select at least three nominees for each vacancy, and would consider the integrity, impartiality, and independence of the candidates; then the mayor would appoint commissioners from those nominees.

This provides a process for review of qualifications and a degree of independence from the appointing authority.

**Thank you for the opportunity to testify on SB1230.**

# LATE TESTIMONY



SB1230

PSM

Tuesday, February 17, 2015

1:05 p.m.

Room 229

**Hawaii's Voice for a Better Future**

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY,  
INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND MILITARY  
AFFAIRS

Senator Will Espero, Chair

Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Vice Chair

February 17, 2015

**Re: SB1230 Authorizes the judicial council to nominate persons for appointment to a county ethics commission**

## In Support

Dear Sen. Espero, Sen. Baker and members of the Committee:

The current process for appointment to a county ethics commission creates an obvious conflict. The commissioners are appointed by the mayor and confirmed by the council: in other words, they are chosen by the very same individuals over which the commissioners must enforce the ethics laws.

In contrast, the five members of the state ethics commission are appointed by the governor from a panel of ten persons nominated by the Judicial Council. The Hawaii supreme court appoints members of the judicial council.

This bill would allow the county councils to alter their charters and take advantage of the same process. That is, the Judicial Council would select and submit names for appointment.

Article XIV of the Hawaii State Constitution states, in part, "Ethics commissioners shall be selected in a manner which assures their independence and impartiality." This bill would provide a mechanism for county-level advocates to press for the same selection process at the county level as we have on the state level.

Kokua Council recommends that the Committee adopt this bill.

Larry Geller  
President, Kokua Council

Kokua Council c/o Harris Unit

The **Kokua Council** is one of Hawaii's oldest advocacy groups. Kokua Council seeks to empower seniors and other concerned citizens to be effective advocates in shaping the future and well-being of our community, with particular attention to those needing help in advocating for themselves. "We embrace diversity and extend a special invitation to any senior or intergenerational minded individual interested in advocating for these important issues in Hawaii."



LATE TESTIMONY

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SENATE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY, INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND MILLITARY AFFAIRS  
Tuesday, February 17, 2015, Room 229

SB 1230, RELATING TO COUNTY ETHICS COMMISSIONS  
TESTIMONY

Janet Mason, Co-Chair, Legislative Committee, League of Women Voters of Hawaii

Chair Espero, Vice-Chair Baker, and Committee Members:

The League of Women Voters of Hawaii strongly supports SB1230, 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 SB 1230. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in its support.