



**STATE OF HAWAII
CAMPAIGN SPENDING COMMISSION**

235 SOUTH BERETANIA STREET, ROOM 300
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

February 2, 2016

TO: The Honorable Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor

The Honorable Maile S.L. Shimabukuro, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor

Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor

FROM: Kristin Izumi-Nitao, Executive Director *kei*
Campaign Spending Commission

SUBJECT: Testimony on S.B. No. 2437, Relating to Campaign Spending

Thursday, February 4, 2016
9:00 a.m., Conference Room 016

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this bill. Although the Campaign Spending Commission (“Commission”) takes no position on this measure, the Commission offers the following comments.

This bill amends several provisions of Chapter 11 of the Hawaii Revised Statutes (“HRS”) §11-340(c) by replacing “Hawaii Election Campaign Fund” with “Hawaii Citizens’ Election Fund.” The impetus for the name change for the trust fund is that the dramatically declining revenue from the \$3 taxpayer check-off into the trust fund may be because taxpayers do not understand the purpose and nature of the trust fund and that the name change would promote public awareness and understanding of the trust fund, thereby increasing taxpayers’ willingness to support the tax check-off. The Commission agrees that declining revenue from all sources of income is a serious impediment to the sustainability of the Commission. However, the Commission does not agree that there has been a “dramatic decline” in this tax revenue. In fact, since FY 2005, there have been five years where the tax revenue actually increased over the previous year. Also, there could be other reasons that more taxpayers are not choosing to send \$3 from the general fund to the trust fund. For example, a taxpayer may not believe that by choosing the check-off, the taxpayer’s refund or tax liability will not be affected. Or, the taxpayer might not support the public financing of candidates or the work of the Commission. Simply changing the name of the trust fund may not accomplish the purpose of the bill.

If this Committee is contemplating changing the name of the trust fund to reflect a purpose of the public financing of campaigns for public office, as this bill appears to do, the Commission respectfully recommends that this committee first consider funding the operational

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costs of the Commission from the general fund of the State through S.B. No. 2438, so that the monies in the trust fund can then be devoted to funding the partial public financing program as mandated in Article II, Section 5 of the Hawaii Constitution.

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
To: [JDLTestimony](#)
Cc:
Subject: *Submitted testimony for SB2437 on Feb 4, 2016 09:00AM*
Date: Tuesday, February 02, 2016 4:58:01 PM

SB2437

Submitted on: 2/2/2016

Testimony for JDL on Feb 4, 2016 09:00AM in Conference Room 016

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Javier Mendez-Alvarez	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

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Date: February 4, 2016

To: The Honorable Senator Gilbert S. C. Keith-Agaran, Chair
& Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor

From: Christine Trecker

Subject: Comments on SB 2437 Relating to Campaign Spending

I agree with SB 2437's premise that the name "Hawaii Election Campaign Fund" is vague and should be changed. It is important that taxpayers are neither confused nor misled by the name when deciding whether or not to check "yes" or "no" for \$3 to go to the Fund on their tax return. The current name is very broad, and does not clearly convey it is a Fund for the public financing of election campaigns.

While the proposed name "Hawaii Citizens Election Fund" in SB2437 is better than the current name, it too does not clearly convey what the Fund is constitutionally mandated to do – to provide public campaign financing to qualified candidates. It seems to me that a clearer, more descriptive name for the Fund would be **Public Campaign Financing Fund**.

I propose the name "Hawaii Election Campaign Fund" (HECF) be changed to "Public Campaign Financing Fund", and that this change be contingent upon the passage of SB2438. SB2438 seeks to replace the HECF with the general revenues of the State as the funding source to cover the operating expenses of the Campaign Spending Commission. SB2438 if passed would not only provide more stable funding for this vitally important Commission, it would allow the HECF to once again be used exclusively for its mandated purpose – the public financing of campaigns.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Christine Trecker