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**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 *KIN*  
Campaign Spending Commission

**SUBJECT: Testimony on S.B. No. 2445, Relating to Campaign Finance**

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

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this bill. The Campaign Spending Commission takes no position on this measure.

This bill amends Hawaii Revised Statutes ("HRS") §11-381(a)(3) & (a)(5) by permitting a candidate's charitable donation or scholarship award during the prohibited period (date of filing nomination papers to the date of the general election) once that candidate is duly and legally elected to office during that time period pursuant to HRS §§12-41 or 12-42. The purpose of the prohibited period for donations or scholarships would no longer apply once the candidate is deemed duly elected upon the filing of nomination papers or after the primary election.



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COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY AND LABOR

THURSDAY, Feb. 4, 2016, 9:00 A.M., CONFERENCE ROOM 016  
SB2445 RELATING TO CAMPAIGN FINANCE

TESTIMONY

Beppie Shapiro, League of Women Voters of Hawaii

Chair KEITH-AGARAN, Vice-Chair Shimabukuro, and Committee Members:

**The League of Women Voters of Hawaii opposes SB2445, which weakens the restrictions on use of campaign funds.**

Contributions to bona fide non-profits with laudable public missions, and awarding of scholarships to students is highly commendable.

Our objection is to the use of campaign funds for these awards. The legitimate use of campaign funds should be to provide communications with the public through media advertisements, mailings listing the candidates qualifications and issue positions, making signs, rallies and meetings, buying tee shirts for active supporters, car expenses, office rent, paid staff, etc.

During an election period, contributions to this type of non-profit organization and awarding of scholarships is prohibited. This bill creates an exemption for candidates who run un-opposed.

Donations of surplus campaign funds is easily construed as a form of vote buying. When a candidate donates instruments to a school band in his district, the favorable publicity buys him/her a lot of good will and gratitude which s/he presumably expects will sway voters in his/her favor.

Even when no votes are needed in the current election cycle, they probably will be in future elections if this incumbent competes for office. It is already very difficult for newcomers to compete with incumbents, and this bill potentially places another finger on the scale favoring certain incumbents.

People who contribute to an election campaign believe they are helping to elect the candidate, not to letting the candidate decide to which charitable organization their dollars should be donated.

The League of Women Voters has as its motto, "Making Democracy Work." Every policy, like keeping our elections fair, adds to the direction we take toward or away from this goal.

We urge you to hold SB 2445.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

**From:** [mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov)  
**To:** [JDLTestimony](#)  
**Cc:**  
**Subject:** \*Submitted testimony for SB2445 on Feb 4, 2016 09:00AM\*  
**Date:** Tuesday, February 02, 2016 4:58:33 PM

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**SB2445**

Submitted on: 2/2/2016

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
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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