



SB728 SD1
RELATING TO THE OFFICE OF HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS
House Committee on Water, Land, & Hawaiian Affairs

March 13, 2019

10:00 a.m.

Room 325

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) offers the following **COMMENTS** on SB728 SD1, which would increase the maximum amount of public funds available to each candidate running for the OHA Board of Trustees.

OHA appreciates that SB728 SD1 would raise the amount of public campaign funding that OHA Board of Trustee candidates would be eligible to receive; however, OHA does note that other candidates running statewide campaigns are eligible to receive substantially more public funds.

Under Section 13D-1, Hawai‘i Revised Statutes, all nine OHA Trustees are elected at-large by all qualified voters in the state. Similar to other statewide offices, considerable resources may therefore be required for an OHA Trustee candidate to run a viable statewide campaign. According to the testimony of the State of Hawai‘i Campaign Spending Commission, providing OHA Trustee candidates with the same access to public campaign funds as other candidates for statewide offices, such as the lieutenant governor, would allow OHA candidates to receive up to \$99,787 in public funds. OHA notes that SB728 SD1 would instead provide OHA candidates with less than \$22,000.

OHA respectfully suggests that the Committee may wish to consider increasing the public campaign funding limit for OHA Trustee candidates to an amount more commensurate with that currently established for other statewide campaigns.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



STATE OF HAWAII
CAMPAIGN SPENDING COMMISSION

235 SOUTH BERETANIA STREET, ROOM 300
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

March 12, 2019

TO: The Honorable Ryan I. Yamane, Chair
House Committee on Water, Land, and Hawaiian Affairs

The Honorable Chris Todd, Vice Chair
House Committee on Water, Land, and Hawaiian Affairs

Members of the House Committee on Water, Land, and Hawaiian Affairs

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

SUBJECT: **Testimony on S.B. No. 728, SD 1 Relating to the Office of Hawaiian Affairs**

Wednesday, March 13, 2019
10:00 a.m., Conference Room 325

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill. The Campaign Spending Commission ("Commission") provides the following comments on this bill.

Section 1 of this bill amends Hawaii Revised Statutes ("HRS") §11-425 by deleting the current maximum amount of public funds available for candidates running for the office of Hawaiian affairs ("OHA") of \$1,500 in any election year and replaces this by increasing the maximum amount to fifteen percent of the OHA expenditure limit established in Hawaii Revised Statutes ("HRS") §11-423 for each election. Thus, if this bill were to go into effect for the 2020 elections, the maximum amount of public funding available to OHA candidates will increase from \$1,500 in any election year to \$21,383 per election and will be funded from the Hawaii Election Campaign Fund ("HECF")¹. This is a significant increase under this bill.

Section 2 of this bill also amends HRS §11-429 by increasing the minimum amount of qualifying contributions that must be raised by OHA candidates from the current \$1,500 to \$5,000. Under HRS §11-302, a qualifying contribution is defined as an aggregate monetary contribution of \$100 or less by an individual Hawaii resident during a matching payment period. Candidates will not qualify for any public funding until they can raise this minimum amount of \$5,000 in qualifying contributions. The Commission supports this increase in the higher minimum amount.

¹ The current balance of the HECF is \$969,390.03.

March 12, 2019

House of Representatives' Committee on Water, Land, and Hawaiian Affairs

Re: SB 728, SD1 Relating to the Office of Hawaiian Affairs

Date: March 13, 2019

Time: 10:00 a.m.

Room: 325 at the State Capitol

Honorable House Committee Members of the House Committee on Water, Land, and Hawaiian Affairs:

The Council for Native Hawaiian Affairs testifies in **Strong Support of SB 728 SD1** which increases the amount of money available from partial public funding to candidates running for the statewide office of Trustee for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA). This change is warranted because other state wide offices have substantially more funds available to them to support their run, as is the case with both the Lieutenant Governor and the Governor.

Such a change is necessary because OHA candidates are elected statewide, just as the Lieutenant Governor is, yet OHA candidates are authorized by HRS 11-423(d)(5) to only receive partial public funding at the rate of \$.20 multiplied by the number of voters in the last general election, whereas a candidate for Lieutenant Governor is able to receive public funding at the rate of \$1.40 multiplied by the number of voters in the last general election. This \$1.20 in lesser funding per voter available to an OHA candidate compared to what the Lieutenant Governor is now able to receive is unfair and inequitable on its face, especially when one considers that both offices must run for election across the entire state.

We support the amendments adopted by the Senate through SB 728 SD1 as a means to increase OHA candidates' access to public funding while taking into account the historical data demonstrating that most OHA electoral campaigns spend at much lower amounts than do candidates for the Lieutenant Governor's office. The amounts set forth in SB 728 SD1 appear to strike a reasonable compromise in the amount of public funding which individual OHA candidates should be allowed to access.

Passage of SB 728 SD1 will decrease the financial burden on one's candidacy for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, may increase the quality of the candidates running for the OHA board, and may encourage more individuals to stand and run for election for these OHA offices.

Respectfully,



J. Kuhio Lewis
Chief Executive Officer



Wednesday, March 13, 2019

Senate Bill 728 SD1
Supporting the Intent

Aloha Chair Yamane, Vice Chair Todd, and Members of the Committee on Water, Land, and Hawaiian Affairs,

The Democratic Party of Hawai'i (The Party) **supports the intent of SB728 SD1 Relating to the Office of Hawaiian Affairs**, which increases the maximum amount of public funds available to each candidate running for the board of trustees of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs to fifteen percent of the expenditure limit established for each election and increases the amount each Board of Trustees candidate must raise in order to qualify for public funds.

The Party appreciates the legislature's interest in and ongoing discussion of public funding for candidates seeking public office, in this case for the Board of Trustees of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs. The Party supports public funding for all elections for public office.

For these reasons we support the intent of this measure.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Josh Frost
Co-Chair, Legislation Committee
Democratic Party of Hawai'i

Zahava Zaidoff
Co-Chair, Legislation Committee
Democratic Party of Hawai'i

TESTIMONY OF ESTHER KIA'AINA IN SUPPORT OF SB 728, SD1 BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WATER, LAND, AND HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

March 13, 2019, 10 a.m., Conference Room 325

Chair Yamane, Vice-Chair Todd, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Esther Kia'aina of Nanakuli, Oahu. I am testifying in support of SB 728, SD1, which increases the maximum amount of public funds available to candidates running for the Board of Trustees, Office of Hawaiian Affairs.

The importance of SB 728, SD1 is that it provides some form of equity in the amount of funds available to all OHA candidates, whether they are At-Large or Island Resident candidates, who must run a state-wide campaign. Such funds can be used for the necessary costs associated with outreach and campaigning on each of the islands.

I appreciate the Hawaii Campaign Spending Commission's recommendations that have been incorporated into this current version of the bill. SB 728, SD1 will increase the amount of funds that OHA candidates are eligible to receive in public funding from \$1500 cumulatively for an election to \$21,383 each for the primary and general elections. This is an increase of \$41,266 from current state law. I believe it will incentivize qualified OHA candidates to run and increase vibrancy and competition.

I respectfully urge the committee members to support the passage of SB 728, SD1 out of your Committee.

Respectfully,

Esther Kia'aina
estherkiaaina@aol.com