

From: [Char O'Brien](#)
To: [Standards of Conduct](#)
Subject: Fwd: Time sensitive election stuff, plus 6 "reform agenda" proposals
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Dear Committee Members,

I am very passionate about campaign reform and getting money out of our democratic politics. I resonate with all of the points made here by my friend Gary Hooser and would like to recommend each of them to the committee.

Thank you for the valuable work you are doing for our State. I appreciate your hard work!

Charlotte O'Brien
PO Box 886
Haiku, HI 96708

Aloha charobrien@gmail.com,

I'm gonna jump right into it: First the coming general election, and then the "reform agenda" discussion. Please, stick with me on this - both are key.

Whether you live in the district or not, it doesn't matter. The election of the below two mana wahine will help move all Hawai'i forward.

I know each of them well and know without a shred of doubt, that when elected these two will be true change-makers.

Both represent the proverbial "emerging young leader". Both are totally awesome human beings, smart, solid in their core values of putting people and the planet above corporate profits, and relentless in their commitment to community.

But they are exhausted from winning their primaries and need our help to rebuild their campaign accounts. Please help if you can whether it be \$20, \$50, or \$100 - I think it's the least we can do for them.

[Fern Anuenue Holland](#) is a candidate for the Kaua'i County Council, [online campaign contributions to Fern's campaign can be made here](#). Note: On Kaua'i each voter may cast up to 7 votes. **I encourage voters to cast one of those votes for Fern Anuenue Holland and then perhaps cast another one, two, or perhaps up to three more at the very most.** This will maximize the value of your Council votes.

[Natalia Hussey-Burdick](#) is running for election to the State House of Representatives, Kailua - Kāne'ohe - Marine Corps Base Hawai'i (HD50). [Online campaign contributions to Natalia's campaign can be made here](#). Please take a moment to read this blog piece I wrote about Natalia before the primary election "[We Should All Be So Lucky As The Residents Of Kailua](#)"

Please make an online contribution to these two campaigns today, before Monday if you can. Each of them has a solid shot to win, but we need to step up and help them both to make sure that happens.

Cleaning House, and the Senate - 6 proposals for systemic change

It's time to pivot to policy.

Mail-in voting for the general election begins around October 20th, with votes counted on November 8th. The 2023 legislative session opens on January 18th. Subtract out major holidays - and you can see there are not a whole lot of days left to prepare for the session.

The issues and proposals around ethics, lobbying, and campaign finance reform will hopefully be at the top of the 2023 legislative agenda.

I'm cautiously optimistic that the recommendations due on December 2 from the "Commission to Improve Standards of Conduct (CISC)" will include the strong specific legislative proposals needed to help clean up our government, disempower the lobbying class, and level the playing field for candidates.

The Commission was initiated and established by the State House of Representatives in response to a federal investigation that's put two legislators in prison for accepting bribes.

Its purpose is to review and assess existing state laws and rules and provide recommendations to further the goals of the Code of Ethics, lobbying laws, campaign finance laws, and other applicable laws..." (paraphrased)

I've attended via Zoom a few of the Commission meetings and have been impressed with the quality discussion and earnestness expressed by Chair Judge Daniel R. Foley (retired) and the various Commission members.

The Commission continues to discuss and consider a long list of issues and proposals. **They are actively seeking additional public input.**

My hope is that the below list of proposals, or similar, will be included in their final recommendations offered to the legislature.

1) Allow voters to decide whether or not to establish term limits for State legislators. *Legislators in 15 other states including California are term-limited.

2) Establish a publicly fully funded election program providing qualified candidates sufficient means to run credible campaigns. Maine and Arizona both have established successful programs that can serve as models.

3) Require the legislature to comply with the state constitution Article III – Section 12 which says: "Every meeting of a committee in either house or of a committee comprised of a member or members of both houses held for the purpose of making a decision on matters referred to the committee shall be open to the public." *In other words ban backroom secret meetings that now occur in both the conference committee process and in regular committee meetings.

4) Require recorded votes by committee members for every decision impacting bills referred to their committee. Remove the unilateral power of the Chair replacing it with rules making it clear that the Chair may make decision recommendations, but all decisions are validated and made public by a recorded vote of committee members. *The current practice of allowing the Chair to kill bills, behind closed doors, without a vote, violates the core principles of our democracy and is inherently corrupt.

5) Require all elected officials holding a State or County office to disclose all outside income. This disclosure shall include the specific source of the income, the amount of income received, and the service provided in return for that income. *This should include client/consultant income from LLCs owned in whole or part by the elected official, and include income from legal clients of those elected officials who are also private attorneys.

6) Restrict the use of campaign funds for use only in the campaign cycle they are donated in, and only for activities directly related to that campaign. *This means no hoarding of funds, and stopping the practice of using campaign funds as a general slush fund for non-campaign-related purposes.

Other important but less systemic in nature initiatives:

* **Ban the acceptance or solicitation of campaign contributions during the legislative session.** *28 other states place restrictions on giving and receiving campaign contributions during the legislative session.

* **Ban all campaign contributions from corporations and registered lobbyists.***22 other states completely prohibit corporations from contributing to political campaigns.

* **Reduce the maximum campaign contribution to \$500.**

Whether you support the above proposals or not, or if you have suggestions to improve them, and/or if you have other thoughts or ideas to offer - **PLEASE PARTICIPATE IN THIS VALUABLE DISCUSSION AND LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD.**

Email the Commission at standardsconduct@capitol.hawaii.gov

All comments and testimony is [placed on their webpage](#) and available for public review.

This is important. I truly believe the CISC Commission is taking its job seriously and will do the right thing, but strong and broad-based public input is an essential element of making this happen.

[Gary Hooser](http://garyhooser.blog)
<https://garyhooser.blog>

*Something I'm thinking you might enjoy - I wrote this 5 years ago and it popped up on my favorites list this morning! "[Putting Our Opponents On Blast](#)"

Obligatory disclosure: No candidate has authorized, approved, or is even aware of this email prior to me hitting "send" :-). The cost of MailChimp I pay for personally out of my own pocket, and the thoughts contained within this email are mine, and mine alone. No one tells me what to write. Certainly, no one pays me to write this stuff. To be clear, this is a labor of love.

