



HAWAI'I STATE ETHICS COMMISSION

State of Hawai'i · Bishop Square, 1001 Bishop Street, ASB Tower 970 · Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Committee: House Committee on Government Reform
Bill Number: H.B. 1475
Hearing Date/Time: February 11, 2022, 9:30 a.m.
Re: Testimony of the Hawai'i State Ethics Commission **SUPPORTING**
H.B. 1475, Relating to Mandatory Ethics Training

Aloha Chair McKelvey, Vice Chair Wildberger, and Committee Members:

The Hawai'i State Ethics Commission (“Commission”) **strongly supports** H.B. 1475, which requires all state employees to undergo mandatory ethics training within ninety days of becoming an employee and at least once every four years thereafter.

The Hawai'i State Constitution requires all public officers and employees to “exhibit the highest standards of ethical conduct. . . .”¹ The Commission supports mandatory training for all state employees as a critical component to meeting the high bar established by the Hawai'i Constitution. Over the past several years, the Commission developed an online training program – that can be taken at any time or place -- specifically in anticipation of a broader ethics training requirement. While previous training requirements were limited to elected officials and high-profile positions, the advent of an online system allows training requirements to be extended more broadly to all state employees.

Thank you for your continuing support of the Ethics Commission's work and for considering its testimony on H.B. 1475

Very truly yours,

/S/ Robert D. Harris
Robert D. Harris
Executive Director and General Counsel

¹ Article XIV, Constitution of the State of Hawai'i.



House Committee on Government Reform
Chair Angus McKelvey, Vice Chair Tina Wildberger

February 11, 2022, 9:30 a.m., Conference Room 309

HB 1475 — RELATING TO MANDATORY ETHICS TRAINING

TESTIMONY

Nancy Davlantes, Legislative Committee, League of Women Voters of Hawaii

Chair McKelvey, Vice Chair Wildberger, and Committee Members:

The League of Women Voters of Hawaii supports HB 1475 which would require all new state employees to complete ethics training either live or online within 90 days of the start of employment and every 4 years thereafter. It would also require existing employees to take periodic training to keep them reminded of the ethical requirements of a state employee.

The importance of a strictly enforced ethics training regimen cannot be discounted, particularly given the alarming news of two legislators recently charged with accepting bribes in connection with legislation regarding cesspools and wastewater management.

We can't know whether a lack of strictly enforced regular ethics training contributed to these events, but such lapses in ethical behavior can only provide ammunition to those who may already believe that corruption is a regular visitor to state operations in general and the legislature in particular.

The League is grateful that lawmakers are taking this very seriously and realizing that mandatory ethics training is of paramount importance.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Statement Before The
Friday, February 11, 2022
9:30 AM
Via Videoconference, Conference Room 309

in consideration of
HB 1475

RELATING TO MANDATORY ETHICS TRAINING.

Chair McKELVEY, Vice Chair WILDBERGER, and Members of the House Government Reform Committee

Common Cause Hawaii supports with suggested amendments HB 1475, which (1) requires all new state employees to complete ethics training either live or online within 90 days of the start of employment and every 4 years thereafter, (2) requires existing employees who have not received ethics training within the immediately preceding 3 years to complete live or online ethics training within 12 months of the Act's effective date and at least once every 4 years thereafter, and (3) specifies that certain state officers shall complete live ethics training.

Common Cause Hawaii is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, grassroots organization dedicated to reforming government and strengthening our representative democracy through improving governmental ethics, transparency, and accountability.

Mandatory ethics training of governmental employees is a necessity. Common Cause Hawaii suggests that mandatory ethics training be required of every employee every year, especially legislators, members of the board of education, trustees of the office of Hawaiian affairs, the governor, the lieutenant governor, executive department heads and deputies, and every other person whose financial disclosure statement is a public record pursuant to Hawaii Revised Statutes § 84-17(d). HB 1475 only requires ethics training once every four years.

Further, those employees who do not attend the required ethics training must be put on leave without pay or otherwise removed from their positions until they complete their trainings.

Hawaii needs strong and uncompromising ethics measures to start the long road to restoring trust in our government. Ethics reforms are probably the most important tools to restoring the people's trust in their elected leaders and government – to show people that their government is acting for the people's interest versus serving their own interests.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support with suggested amendments on HB 1475. If you have further questions of me, please contact me at sma@commoncause.org.

Very respectfully yours,

Sandy Ma
Executive Director, Common Cause Hawaii

HB-1475

Submitted on: 2/9/2022 6:04:38 PM

Testimony for GVR on 2/11/2022 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Mike Golojuch, Sr.	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support HB1475. Since I haven't reviewed all the Ethics laws, I hope there is a similar law for new legislators.

Mike Golojuch, Sr.

TO: Members of the Committee on Government Reform

FROM: Natalie Iwasa
808-395-3233

HEARING: 9:30 a.m. Friday, February 11, 2022

SUBJECT: HB1475, Mandatory Ethics Training - **SUPPORT & Suggested Amendment**

Aloha Chair McKelvey and Committee Members,

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to provide testimony on HB1475, which would require mandatory ethics training for state employees and members of certain boards.

I support this bill. Given recent events at the legislature and the speed at which things change, I ask that the **training be given every other year rather than every four years.**

HB-1475

Submitted on: 2/10/2022 12:04:51 PM

Testimony for GVR on 2/11/2022 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Dara Carlin, M.A.	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Stand in STRONG SUPPORT!!!