



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 Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs
Bill Number: H.B. 1475
Hearing Date/Time: February 24, 2022, 2:00 p.m.
Re: Testimony of the Hawai'i State Ethics Commission **SUPPORTING**
H.B. 1475, Relating to Mandatory Ethics Training

Aloha Chair Nakashima, Vice Chair Matayoshi, 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.

Statement Before The
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

Thursday, February 24, 2022

2:00 PM

Via Video Conference and Conference Room 325

in consideration of
HB 1475**RELATING TO MANDATORY ETHICS TRAINING.**

Chair NAKASHIMA, Vice Chair MATAYOSHI, and Members of the House Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs 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

CHAIR NAKASHIMA, VICE-CHAIR MATAYOSHI & MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE
JUDICIARY AND HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

House Bill 1475 & Senate Bill 2039

Thursday - February 24th, 2022

2:00pm at Hawaii State Capitol Rm. 325 via Videoconference

IN SUPPORT

Aloha Chair Nakashima, Vice-Chair Matayoshi and Members of The House Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs Committee.

I am Euoan Jei Anthony Pasion Raquel, currently a student of Social Work at The University of Hawaii at Manoa. I am writing this letter to testify my support for HB 1475 and SB 2039.

I strongly believe that having good training and background in ethics is extremely important and appropriate for any employees and employers. Especially if they are servants of the State.

Through my studies, I have learned that ethics are important practices in my field because they are the sets of consistent values and principles that are professionally applied in Social Work. These sets of principles then go on to ensure and protect the rights of marginalized, oppressed, and underprivileged members of society. Therefore a vital bill to pass for the sake of those groups of people due to the state constantly working with overlooked members of the community.

I believe that this bill should have already been passed and approved years ago. The State's duty is to protect individuals rights and liberties. This measure would have ensured that Humans are not perfect and have biases and therefore will make decisions on said biases and cause to make unethical actions that discriminate against individuals and groups of people. This bill being passed is a bare minimum action that the State can do to ensure basic human rights are still secured in our State of Hawaii in the form of ethic training applications.

Once again, I, Euan Jeihan Anthony Pasion Raquel, someone who has the passion to assist those in need and to speak when injustice is seen; urges the State of Hawai'i to pass House Bill 1475 so that we may continue our society's progress to social justice and change. Let's continue to protect those who are being affected by biases and systemic discrimination. I believe that this bill is one step closer to that goal.

Mahalo for your consideration

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Euan Jeihan Raquel". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Euan Jeihan Anthony Raquel

ejar@hawaii.edu

Undergraduate Student | University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

Thompson School of Social Work and Public Health