



HOUSE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM
Friday, February 11, 2022, 9:30 am, State Capitol Room 309 & Videoconference
HB 1871

Relating to Gifts

TESTIMONY

Douglas Meller, Legislative Committee, League of Women Voters of Hawaii

Chair McKelvey and Committee Members:

The League of Women Voters of Hawaii does not support HB 1871 as currently drafted. If it's not appropriate for public employees who administer permits to routinely accept "gifts of aloha" or free meals from permit applicants, then it's not appropriate for legislators to routinely accept "gifts of aloha" or free meals from people who want to influence legislation. State legislators should NOT be exempted from either gift limitations or gift reporting requirements that apply to all other public employees.

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 1871
RELATING TO GIFTS.

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

Common Cause Hawaii submits testimony in opposition to HB 1871, which excludes from the State Code of Ethics' prohibition against acceptance of gifts by legislators and employees, foreign protocol gifts, gifts of aloha, invitations to certain events, and meals, under certain conditions.

Common Cause Hawaii is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, grassroots organization focused on upholding the core values of our representative democracy through advocating for a government that is ethical, transparent, and accountable to the people of Hawaii and not special interests.

Strong, uncompromising ethics laws should not be watered down with exceptions during these times of corruption in our government. Legislators and government employees – public servants – should not be legally allowed to accept gifts, meals, and invitations to attend events while mingling with special interests to do the people's work. This is not how The People's business should be conducted.

HB 1871 will further undermine The People's faith and trust, the little that is left, in our government and our democracy and, instead, create more opportunity for dishonesty, corruption, and special interests to flourish.

Further, Common Cause Hawaii calls attention to Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) § 84-11.5(a)(1) which provides in relevant part that every legislator and employee shall annually file a disclosure with the State Ethics Commission disclosing the legislator or employee, or spouse or dependent child of a legislator or employee's receipt "directly or indirectly from one source any gift or gifts valued singly or in the aggregate in excess of \$200, whether the gift is in the form of money, service, goods, or in any other form". This provision will still be in effect even if HB 1871 is adopted.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in opposition to HB 1871, and Common Cause Hawaii asks that it be deferred indefinitely. If you have any questions, please contact me at sma@commoncause.org.

Very respectfully yours,

Sandy Ma
Executive Director, Common Cause Hawaii

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Submitted on: 2/10/2022 12:04:31 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Laura Safranski	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

It is disheartening that this is even on the table -- it's like adding water to a septic weed

opposed. full stop

HB-1871

Submitted on: 2/10/2022 2:34:36 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Gerard Silva	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

Gifts can not Be allowed it is the same as being Payed off for there services or Votes. This all has to end!!