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**STATE OF HAWAII**  
**DEPARTMENT OF ACCOUNTING AND GENERAL SERVICES**  
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WRITTEN TESTIMONY  
OF  
CURT T. OTAGURO, STATE COMPTROLLER  
DEPARTMENT OF ACCOUNTING AND GENERAL SERVICES  
TO THE

SENATE COMMITTEE  
ON  
JUDICIARY

MARCH 18, 2022, 9:30 A.M.  
VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE & CONFERENCE ROOM 016, STATE CAPITOL

H.B. 2069, HD2

RELATING TO GIFTS

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Keohokalole, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on H.B. 2069, HD2.

The Department of Accounting and General Services (DAGS) strongly supports this bill and offers the following comments:

1. Gifts received from visiting dignitaries have political, cultural, and historic value that may not be reflected in their monetary worth. A paper certificate, while being 'valued' at a few dollars, has immense value as a representation of the relationship that has been forged between the gifting party and the State. As such, it needs to be tracked, protected, and preserved so that the next time a delegation from the same group visits, these former protocol gifts can be prominently displayed to illustrate the long and storied history between the visitors and the State.

2. It is important to stress that protocol gifts have a very narrow definition and are very infrequently received. This bill should not prove to be an onerous, time-consuming process as it only applies to non-perishable gifts of any value received by representatives of Federal or State Agencies, foreign governments, non-profits, or social organizations.
3. Currently, tracking of such protocol gifts is lacking with little to no traceability. When the original recipients of the protocol gifts separate from State service, without a clearly defined and maintained list of protocol gifts received, an irretrievable loss of the protocol gifts can occur thereby negatively affecting the State's ability to showcase the history of interaction between the State and original gifting party.
4. There has recently been much negative press about the tracking of protocol gifts at the Federal level, with articles and photos of Executive Branch staff at the highest levels taking home protocols gifts received during the last change of administration -- and these same gifts being retrieved from personal homes or subsequently being listed as 'missing'. The interest at a national level in this issue illustrates the importance of ensuring these important gifts stay accessible to the People.
5. Important protocol gifts received by any State employee, regardless of branch or rank, from officials, federal officers, state officials from other states, or other representatives of organizations should be treated as a valued asset of the State, available for continued public inspection, and available for display in the future when individuals from the gifting party return to visit Hawaii.
6. As the Keepers of Public Memory, the State Archives is well suited to track, preserve and make these protocol gifts available as needed for either public viewing or for State use when receiving returning delegations.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this matter

**HB-2069-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/16/2022 2:04:16 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/18/2022 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
AGS-Yi, Ju Sun	Testifying for DAGS Comptroller	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Representing State Comptroller, available for any questions. Testimony submitted by DAGS.

Statement Before The  
**SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY**

Friday, March 18, 2022

9:30 AM

Via Conference Room 016 &amp; Videoconference

in consideration of

**HB 2069, HD2**  
**RELATING TO GIFTS.**

Chair RHOADS, Vice Chair KEOHOKALOLE, and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee

Common Cause Hawaii supports HB 2069, HD2, which procedures for the custody, inventory, and care of protocol gifts received by members of either house of the legislature or state employees.

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.

Common Cause Hawaii understands that, from time to time, foreign officials, federal officers, or state officials from other states present legislators and other state employees with protocol gifts often meant to symbolize goodwill or strengthen international or national friendships. We support and appreciate that HB 2069, HD2, at page 3, lines 4-7, requires protocol gifts to be transferred to the state archives within thirty days of receipt.

A protocol gift, given in an official capacity, should be retained by state archives to be properly enjoyed by everyone in Hawaii, and should not be kept by any individual, which may give the appearance of having a corruptive influence. Hawaii needs strong and uncompromising ethics measures to start the long road to restoring trust in our government.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 2069, HD2. If you have any questions, please contact me at [sma@commoncause.org](mailto:sma@commoncause.org).

Very respectfully yours,

Sandy Ma  
Executive Director, Common Cause Hawaii