



STATE OF HAWAII
CAMPAIGN SPENDING COMMISSION

235 SOUTH BERETANIA STREET, ROOM 300
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

February 27, 2023

TO: The Honorable Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair
House Committee on Finance

The Honorable Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair
House Committee on Finance

Members of the House Committee on Finance

FROM: Tony Baldomero, Associate Director for *TB*
Kristin Izumi-Nitao, Executive Director
Campaign Spending Commission

SUBJECT: **Testimony on H.B. No. 95, HD1, Relating to Partial Public Financing of Elections.**

Tuesday, February 28, 2023
11:30 a.m., Conference Room 308 & Videoconference

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.¹ The Campaign Spending Commission (“Commission”) supports this bill, with an amendment.

The purpose of this bill is to increase the amount of funds available to qualified candidates in Hawaii’s partial public financing program for all offices. The amounts of funds available in the program were last amended in 1995. This bill amends Hawaii Revised Statutes (“HRS”) §11-425 by increasing the maximum amount of public funds available for all offices (except for trustee of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (“OHA”)) by fifty per cent. The bill increases the maximum amount of public funds available for a candidate for trustee of OHA from \$1,500 for the election period to ten per cent of the expenditure limit for each election established in HRS §11-423(d). The bill amends HRS §11-429(a) by increasing the amount of qualifying contributions required for a candidate for trustee of OHA from more than \$1,500 in the aggregate to more than \$5,000 in the aggregate. The bill also amends HRS §11-429(b) by increasing matching fund payments from \$1 for each \$1 of qualifying contributions in excess of the minimum qualifying contribution amounts to \$2 for each \$1 of excess qualifying contributions. The bill provides a downward adjustment of the minimum amounts of qualifying contributions for the office of prosecuting attorney for the city and county of Honolulu, and counties of Hawaii and Kauai, and for the office of county council for the county of Maui.

¹ The companion bill is S.B. No. 200.

For illustration, the maximum amount of public funds available to a candidate in Senate District 1 in 2022 was \$6,531 in the primary election and another \$6,531 in the general election. Under this bill, in the next election, the maximum amount of public funds available to a candidate in Senate District 1 would be \$10,816 in the primary election and \$10,816 in the general election. In 2022, the maximum amount of public funds available for a candidate for trustee of OHA was \$1,500 for the election year. Under this bill, the maximum amount of public funds available to a candidate for trustee of OHA would be \$17,227 in the primary election and \$17,227 in the general election.

The bill makes the downward adjustment of the minimum qualifying contributions for certain offices because it appears that publicly financed candidates for those offices were having a difficult time raising the minimum qualifying contributions.

The Commission requests that this Committee pass this bill.



Committee on Finance
Chair Kyle Yamashita, Vice Chair Lisa Kitagawa

Tuesday February 28 11:30 am Videoconference/Rm 308
HB95 HD1 — RELATING TO PARTIAL PUBLIC FUNDING OF ELECTIONS

TESTIMONY

Beppie Shapiro, Legislative Committee, League of Women Voters of Hawaii

Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Committee Members:

The League of Women Voters of Hawaii offers comments on HB95 HD1, which increases the amount of partial public financing available for all offices. Increases the minimum amount of qualifying contributions certain candidates must receive to participate in the program. Increases the matching fund payments for excess qualifying contributions.

First, while the current amounts available to qualified candidates for public funding are far below the amounts spent by privately funded candidates who won election to the same office, and thus HB95 HD1 unquestionably offers an improvement on the status quo, the 2023 Legislature has before it a dramatically better bill in SB1543/HB967, which would establish a program of full public financing of elections. SB1543 received overwhelming and broadly based testimony in support. The Campaign Spending Commission supported SB1543. SB1543/HB976 would meet the standards of the League of Women Voters of the US, viz:

“Methods of financing political campaigns should enhance political equality for all citizens; protect representative democracy from being distorted by big spending in election campaigns; ensure the public’s right to know who is using money to influence elections; enable candidates to compete equitably for public office; ensure that

League of Women Voters of Hawaii
P.O. Box 235026 ♦ Honolulu, HI 96823
Voicemail 808.377.6727 ♦ my.lwv.org/hawaii ♦ voters@lwvhi.org

candidates have sufficient funds to communicate their messages to the public; and combat corruption and undue influence in government. “

Second, if HB95 HD1 is enacted by the Legislature and signed by Governor Green, and this results in many more candidates applying and qualifying for public funding, we believe it is likely that the funds in the Hawaii Election Campaign Fund would be inadequate to fully fund all eligible candidates.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.



AMERICANS FOR DEMOCRATIC ACTION

OFFICERS

John Bickel, President
Alan Burdick, Vice President
Doug Pyle, Secretary

Melodie Aduja
Keola Akana
Juliet Begley
Stephanie Fitzpatrick

DIRECTORS

Jan Lubin
Shannon Matson
Jenny Nomura
Stephen O'Harrow

Bill South
Michael Vernon

MAILING ADDRESS

P.O. Box 23404
Honolulu
Hawaii 96823

February 26, 2023

TO: Chair Yamashita and Members of the Finance Committee

RE: HB 95 HD1 RELATING TO PARTIAL PUBLIC FINANCING OF ELECTIONS.

Comments for a hearing on Feb. 28

Americans for Democratic Action is an organization founded in 1947 by leading supporters of the New Deal and led by Patsy Mink in the 1970s. We are devoted to the promotion of progressive public policies.

We support comprehensive campaign finance reform. We would like to see a program as is now in place in Maine and Connecticut and is contained in HB967. This system would provide all candidates who gather enough \$5 donations from their constituents with 100% of the funds they need to win an election. Candidates should spend less time asking wealthy donors for money and more time listening to the people in their district.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

John Bickel, President

HB-95-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2023 8:54:12 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2023 11:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Maki Morinoue	HULI PAC	Comments	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Dear Committee Members,

We must address the issue of money in politics and its corrupting influence. Hawai'i voters consistently rank government corruption as a top concern, and it is time to take action to eliminate the pay-to-play behavior that comes with candidates relying on private donors.

HB95 acknowledges the problem of candidate dependence on private donors and special interest groups but falls short of providing an effective solution by only offering most candidates 15% of the funds they need to win an election.

Winning State House candidates spent \$40,000 on average from 2012-2020. The current partial public financing system gives House candidates up to \$3,500, but HB95 would only increase this to \$5,300, leaving candidates still highly dependent on wealthy donors and special interest groups.

The Commission to Improve Standards of Conduct stated that the improvements in HB95 are intended as a minimum, and that should the fiscal situation allow, additional resources should be used to relieve candidates from the need to rely on special interest groups or large donors. Given our historic surplus, to follow this recommendation, the state should allocate additional resources by making the following amendments:

- Increase the percentage of maximum funds available to 99% of the expenditure limit
- Limit qualifying contributions to be received from only residents in the candidate's district
- **Change the match amount from \$2 to \$100 for each \$1 of qualifying contribution**
- **Change the maximum qualifying contribution amount to \$5 per donor**
- Prohibit candidates who meet the minimum qualifying contribution threshold and enroll in the program from receiving any additional private donations

These changes have been successfully implemented before in Hawaii County Council elections, and are currently in place in Connecticut and Maine. By making these necessary changes, we can ensure that candidates have sufficient public funds to compete without having to rely on donations from large donors or special interest groups.

Let us take this opportunity to empower the people and get money out of politics! Winning publicly financed elections is the single biggest thing we could do to end pay-to-play corruption in our politics and start building a Hawai'i that puts kama'āina and kānaka maoli first — not big money interests.

Please support a fully funded Clean Elections system and we must not settle for half-measures!

Thank you for your time.

Maki Morinoue

96725

HULI PAC



Aloha no kakou,

Our legislators are accorded the authority to determine the fate of our 'aina, ocean, and the well-being of the people who reside here in Hawaii. That power is coveted by people with money who look at Hawaii as a gold mine. Their ability to influence elections and control important decisions is a well-known fact.

HB95 is an attempt to level the playing field and allow those without private donors, who have a large financial backing, to compete with other candidates and seek to be elected on their merits and not their ability to saturate the public with donor paid for publicity.

The amount of public funding for candidates who have no private donor backing is insufficient and does not create a sense of fair elections. HB95 seeks to increase public funds to \$5300, an inadequate amount of money to give that candidate a fair chance at getting their message across. The ability to inundate the media with commercials and pay people to campaign for a candidate is many the times, a result of private donors supporting a candidate for inappropriate reasons.

We request that you amend this bill to limit contribution to only from residents in the candidate's home district, increase public funds to 99% of the limit, limit qualifying contributions to five dollars per donor and stop candidates who enroll in the funding program from getting any more money from private donors. We also ask that a change be made to the match amount from \$2 to \$100 for each \$1 of contributions that qualify.

The people of Hawaii have entrusted you with the future of our keiki and mo'opuna. Please help restore our faith in our government officials and make our elections fair and appropriate.

Ke Aloha Nunui,

Damien Kenison
Kauha Kō Ohana Association



150 Hamakua Drive #341
Kailua, HI 96734

(808) 224-0644
our-hawaii.org

HB95, Requesting Amendments

Submitted to the House Finance Committee
by Evan Weber, Managing Director, Our Hawai'i, 2/27/223

Committee members,

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify. On behalf of the 8,000+ supporters of Our Hawai'i, I request amendments to HB95, relating to partial public financing of elections. Our supporters are local people — kama'āina and kānaka maoli, keiki and kūpuna, from Kailua to Kapolei to Kaua'i, Kohala, and every corner of our islands. They have joined our movement to fight for a Hawai'i that puts local people — not big money interests — first, because they are deeply worried about the direction of our islands and believe now is the time for change.

Hawai'i voters consistently rank government corruption as a top concern, and it is time to take action to eliminate the pay-to-play behavior that comes with candidates relying on private donors. HB95 acknowledges the problem of candidate dependence on private donors and special interest groups, but falls short in providing an effective solution by only offering most candidates 15% of the funds they need to win an election, or limiting the influence of private donations on our political process.

Winning State House candidates spent \$40,000 on average from 2012-2020. The current partial public financing system gives House candidates up to \$3,500, but HB95 would only increase this to \$5,300, leaving candidates still highly dependent on wealthy donors and special interest groups. The Commission to Improve Standards of Conduct stated that the improvements in HB95 are intended as a minimum, and that should the fiscal situation allow, additional resources should be used to relieve candidates from the need to rely on special interest groups or large donors. Given our historic surplus, to follow this recommendation, the state should allocate additional resource by making the following amendments:

- Increase the percentage of maximum funds available to 99% of the expenditure limit
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- Change the maximum qualifying contribution amount to \$5 per donor
- Prohibit candidates who meet the minimum qualifying contribution threshold and enroll in the program from receiving any additional private donations

These changes have been successfully implemented before in Hawai'i County Council elections, and similar programs are currently in place in Connecticut and Maine. By making these necessary changes, we can ensure that candidates have sufficient public funds to compete without having to rely on donations from large donors or special interest groups.

Our corruption and public trust in government crisis has reached a tipping point, too. After years of the FBI putting our officials in handcuffs, resignations, and scandals, [Hawai'i voters as a whole in this past election ranked government corruption as their number 3 top issue, only behind inflation and affordable housing, and 74% favor the adoption of a policy like SB1543 which would provide](#)



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[full public financing of elections and ban corporate and private donations.](#) Public trust is at an all time low. It's not time for band-aids, it's time for real solutions.

Don't settle for half measures. Take this opportunity to get big money out of our politics where it begins, in our elections, allow every day people an equal voice with the rich and powerful, and allow candidates to be beholden only to their voters, their constituents, their values, and their conscience.



House Committee on Finance

Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action (HAPA) Comments: HB95 HD1

Tuesday, February 28, 2023 11:30 a.m. Conference Room 308

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa and Members of the Committee,

We submit comments and requested amendments for HB95 HD1 which increases the amount of partial public financing available for all offices. The measure also increases the minimum amount of qualifying contributions certain candidates must receive to participate in the program and increases the matching fund payments for excess qualifying contributions.

Please take this opportunity to get money out of politics and give political power to the people! It's crucially important that the legislature does everything in its power to remove the influence money has on politics. Candidates work for donations that create relationships that can cause corruption or the perception of it.

HB95 acknowledges the problem of candidate dependence on private donors and special interest groups, but falls short in providing an effective solution by only offering most candidates 15% of the funds they need to win an election.

Winning State House candidates spent \$40,000 on average from 2012-2020. The current partial public financing system gives House candidates up to \$3,500, but HB95 would only increase this to \$5,300, leaving candidates still highly dependent on wealthy donors and special interest groups.

The Commission to Improve Standards of Conduct stated that the improvements in HB95 are intended as a minimum, and that should the fiscal situation allow, additional resources should be used to relieve candidates from the need to rely on special interest groups or large donors. Given our historic surplus, to follow this recommendation, the state should allocate additional resource by making the following amendments:

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- Prohibit candidates who meet the minimum qualifying contribution threshold and enroll in the program from receiving any additional private donations



These changes have been successfully implemented before in Hawaii County Council elections, and are currently in place in Connecticut and Maine. By making these necessary changes, we can ensure that candidates have sufficient public funds to compete without having to rely on donations from large donors or special interest groups.

Publicly financed elections will allow candidates to get support from their constituents rather than wealthy donors. As a result, elections will become more competitive with a more diverse set of candidates. Legislators will be free to act on behalf of voters without being concerned about what their donors think. Candidates will also be able to spend more time with constituents rather than fundraising. Furthermore, a system of fully publicly financed elections is supported by 74% of Hawai'i voters.

Winning publicly financed elections is the single biggest thing we could do to end pay-to-play corruption in our politics and start building a Hawai'i that puts Hawai'i's land and people first — not big money interests.

Mahalo for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anne Frederick', is positioned above the typed name.

Anne Frederick
Executive Director

HB-95-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2023 5:05:05 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2023 11:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Will Caron	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

While I support this bill, I do not think it goes far enough. We should have a fully-publicly funded system of elections, as proposed in SB1543 SD2.

HB-95-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2023 11:05:04 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2023 11:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Caroline Azelski	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Oppose if the people voting on this bill can directly benefit if running again. Good grief, of course it will pass.

This is unethical. Put in on a ballot instrad.

HB-95-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2023 8:28:54 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2023 11:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jane E Arnold	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Committee Members,

We must address the issue of money in politics and its corrupting influence. Hawai'i voters consistently rank government corruption as a top concern, and it is time to take action to eliminate the pay-to-play behavior that comes with candidates relying on private donors.

HB95 acknowledges the problem of candidate dependence on private donors and special interest groups, but falls short in providing an effective solution by only offering most candidates 15% of the funds they need to win an election.

Winning State House candidates spent \$40,000 on average from 2012-2020. The current partial public financing system gives House candidates up to \$3,500, but HB95 would only increase this to \$5,300, leaving candidates still highly dependent on wealthy donors and special interest groups.

The Commission to Improve Standards of Conduct stated that the improvements in HB95 are intended as a minimum, and that should the fiscal situation allow, additional resources should be used to relieve candidates from the need to rely on special interest groups or large donors. Given our historic surplus, to follow this recommendation, the state should allocate additional resource by making the following amendments:

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public funds to compete without having to rely on donations from large donors or special interest groups.

Let us take this opportunity to empower the people and get money out of politics! Winning publicly financed elections is the single biggest thing we could do to end pay-to-play corruption in our politics and start building a Hawai‘i that puts kama‘āina and kānaka maoli first — not big money interests.

HB-95-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2023 8:32:49 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2023 11:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nanea Lo	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Committee Members,

We must address the issue of money in politics and its corrupting influence. Hawai'i voters consistently rank government corruption as a top concern, and it is time to take action to eliminate the pay-to-play behavior that comes with candidates relying on private donors.

HB95 acknowledges the problem of candidate dependence on private donors and special interest groups, but falls short in providing an effective solution by only offering most candidates 15% of the funds they need to win an election.

Winning State House candidates spent \$40,000 on average from 2012-2020. The current partial public financing system gives House candidates up to \$3,500, but HB95 would only increase this to \$5,300, leaving candidates still highly dependent on wealthy donors and special interest groups.

The Commission to Improve Standards of Conduct stated that the improvements in HB95 are intended as a minimum, and that should the fiscal situation allow, additional resources should be used to relieve candidates from the need to rely on special interest groups or large donors. Given our historic surplus, to follow this recommendation, the state should allocate additional resource by making the following amendments:

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me ke aloha 'āina,

Nanea Lo, Mō'ili'ili

HB-95-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2023 8:39:02 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2023 11:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
R A Culbertson	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Representatives,

HB95 Doesn't Go Far Enough!

Although this bill identifies the problem with candidates being dependent on private donors to win elections, it fails to accurately solve it.

We should ACCEPT NO SUBSTITUTES for higher and more practical funding levels. By making some necessary changes, we can ensure that candidates have sufficient public funds to compete without having to rely on donations from large donors or special interest groups.

Mahalo!

R A Culbertson,

Big Island

HB-95-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2023 8:54:50 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2023 11:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Candice Applegate	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Committee Members,

We must address the issue of money in politics and its corrupting influence. Hawai'i voters consistently rank government corruption as a top concern, and it is time to take action to eliminate the pay-to-play behavior that comes with candidates relying on private donors.

HB95 acknowledges the problem of candidate dependence on private donors and special interest groups, but falls short in providing an effective solution by only offering most candidates 15% of the funds they need to win an election.

Winning State House candidates spent \$40,000 on average from 2012-2020. The current partial public financing system gives House candidates up to \$3,500, but HB95 would only increase this to \$5,300, leaving candidates still highly dependent on wealthy donors and special interest groups.

The Commission to Improve Standards of Conduct stated that the improvements in HB95 are intended as a minimum, and that should the fiscal situation allow, additional resources should be used to relieve candidates from the need to rely on special interest groups or large donors. Given our historic surplus, to follow this recommendation, the state should allocate additional resource by making the following amendments:

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These changes have been successfully implemented before in Hawaii County Council elections, and are currently in place in Connecticut and Maine. By making these necessary changes, we can ensure that candidates have sufficient

public funds to compete without having to rely on donations from large donors or special interest groups.

Let us take this opportunity to empower the people and get money out of politics! Winning publicly financed elections is the single biggest thing we could do to end pay-to-play corruption in our politics and start building a Hawai‘i that puts kama‘āina and kānaka maoli first — not big money interests.

HB-95-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2023 9:12:06 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2023 11:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joan Heartfield PhD	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Committee Members,

We must address the issue of money in politics and its corrupting influence. Hawai'i voters consistently rank government corruption as a top concern, and it is time to take action to eliminate the pay-to-play behavior that comes with candidates relying on private donors.

HB95 acknowledges the problem of candidate dependence on private donors and special interest groups, but falls short in providing an effective solution by only offering most candidates 15% of the funds they need to win an election.

Winning State House candidates spent \$40,000 on average from 2012-2020. The current partial public financing system gives House candidates up to \$3,500, but HB95 would only increase this to \$5,300, leaving candidates still highly dependent on wealthy donors and special interest groups.

The Commission to Improve Standards of Conduct stated that the improvements in HB95 are intended as a minimum, and that should the fiscal situation allow, additional resources should be used to relieve candidates from the need to rely on special interest groups or large donors. Given our historic surplus, to follow this recommendation, the state should allocate additional resource by making the following amendments:

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These changes have been successfully implemented before in Hawaii County Council elections, and are currently in place in Connecticut and Maine. By making these necessary changes, we can ensure that candidates have sufficient

public funds to compete without having to rely on donations from large donors or special interest groups.

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HB-95-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2023 9:41:26 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2023 11:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Scott Sutherland	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Committee Members,

We must address the issue of money in politics and its corrupting influence. Hawai'i voters consistently rank government corruption as a top concern, and it is time to take action to eliminate the pay-to-play behavior that comes with candidates relying on private donors.

HB95 acknowledges the problem of candidate dependence on private donors and special interest groups, but falls short in providing an effective solution by only offering most candidates 15% of the funds they need to win an election.

Winning State House candidates spent \$40,000 on average from 2012-2020. The current partial public financing system gives House candidates up to \$3,500, but HB95 would only increase this to \$5,300, leaving candidates still highly dependent on wealthy donors and special interest groups.

The Commission to Improve Standards of Conduct stated that the improvements in HB95 are intended as a minimum, and that should the fiscal situation allow, additional resources should be used to relieve candidates from the need to rely on special interest groups or large donors. Given our historic surplus, to follow this recommendation, the state should allocate additional resource by making the following amendments:

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- Change the maximum qualifying contribution amount to \$5 per donor**
- Prohibit candidates who meet the minimum qualifying contribution threshold and enroll in the program from receiving any additional private donations**

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HB-95-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2023 9:52:09 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2023 11:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Keith Neal	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support HB95 HD1 with amendments.

HB95 acknowledges the problem of candidate dependence on private donors and special interest groups, but falls short in providing an effective solution by only offering most candidates 15% of the funds they need to win an election.

Winning State House candidates spent \$40,000 on average from 2012-2020. The current partial public financing system gives House candidates up to \$3,500, but HB95 would only increase this to \$5,300, leaving candidates still highly dependent on wealthy donors and special interest groups. The Commission to Improve Standards of Conduct stated that the improvements in HB95 are intended as a minimum. They are as follows:

- Increase the percentage of maximum funds available to 99% of the expenditure limit
- Limit qualifying contributions to be received from only residents in the candidate’s district
- Change the match amount from \$2 to \$100 for each \$1 of qualifying contribution
- Change the maximum qualifying contribution amount to \$5 per donor
- Prohibit candidates who meet the minimum qualifying contribution threshold and enroll in the program from receiving any additional private donations

These changes have been successfully implemented before in Hawaii County Council elections, and are currently in place in Connecticut and Maine. By making these necessary changes, we can ensure that candidates have sufficient public funds to compete without having to rely on donations from large donors or special interest groups.

Alternately, implement a Democracy Voucher program working in Seattle Washington.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Democracy_voucher

<https://www.seattle.gov/democracyvoucher/about-the-program>

Respectfully,

Keith Neal

Waimea

HB-95-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2023 10:03:38 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2023 11:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sherry Pollack	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

If we continue to force candidates to raise campaign funds from private donors, the pay to play behavior will remain. Although this bill identifies the problem with candidates being dependent on private donors to win elections, it fails to accurately solve it. This proposal will provide most candidates with less than 15% of the funds that they need to win elections, and would still allow them to raise and spend private funds. Requiring candidates to raise the other 85% from private interests is not a solution to our problem.

Establishing a comprehensive system of public financing for all candidates seeking election to state and county public offices in Hawaii, as **SB1543 SD1** does, is the correct strategy to address this serious issue that Hawaii voters have ranked as a top concern.

HB-95-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2023 10:21:37 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2023 11:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ilana Waxman	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Committee Members,

We must address the issue of money in politics and its corrupting influence. Hawai'i voters consistently rank government corruption as a top concern, and it is time to take action to eliminate the pay-to-play behavior that comes with candidates relying on private donors.

HB95 acknowledges the problem of candidate dependence on private donors and special interest groups, but falls short in providing an effective solution by only offering most candidates 15% of the funds they need to win an election.

Winning State House candidates spent \$40,000 on average from 2012-2020. The current partial public financing system gives House candidates up to \$3,500, but HB95 would only increase this to \$5,300, leaving candidates still highly dependent on wealthy donors and special interest groups.

The Commission to Improve Standards of Conduct stated that the improvements in HB95 are intended as a minimum, and that should the fiscal situation allow, additional resources should be used to relieve candidates from the need to rely on special interest groups or large donors. Given our historic surplus, to follow this recommendation, the state should allocate additional resource by making the following amendments:

- Increase the percentage of maximum funds available to 99% of the expenditure limit
- Limit qualifying contributions to be received from only residents in the candidate's district
- Change the match amount from \$2 to \$100 for each \$1 of qualifying contribution
- Change the maximum qualifying contribution amount to \$5 per donor
- Prohibit candidates who meet the minimum qualifying contribution threshold and enroll in the program from receiving any additional private donations

These changes have been successfully implemented before in Hawaii County Council elections, and are currently in place in Connecticut and Maine. By making these necessary changes, we can ensure that candidates have sufficient public funds to compete without having to rely on donations from large donors or special interest groups.

Let us take this opportunity to empower the people and get money out of politics! Winning publicly financed elections is the single biggest thing we could do to end pay-to-play corruption in our politics and start building a Hawai‘i that puts kama‘āina and kānaka maoli first — not big money interests.

HB-95-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2023 10:22:58 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2023 11:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
janice palma-glennie	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

aloha,

there is not more important way to promote and protect our democracy than by getting money out of the election process. HB95 will take necessary steps in that direction.

HB 95 doesn't address the need to provide public funds for candidates to succeed in an election, but, again, this is a solid, first step to getting to where we need to be: candidates not beholden to special interest money or the groups and individuals who give it to them.

though it's understandably difficult for legislators feeding from this trough to want to help get rid of it, you must if you care about our state, our people, our constitution. Please use your integrity to vote "YES" on HB95 *with amendment that provides a solution and proper funding for candidates to get their message out in their campaigns.*

mahalo and sincerely,

janice palma-glennie

kailua-kona

**Testimony to the House Committee on Finance
Tuesday, February 28th, 2023 at 11:30am**

**Conference Room 308, State Capitol
RE: HB95 Relating to Partial Public Financing of Elections**

Position: Comments

Members of the Finance Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important issue. I ask that you amend this bill and increase the amount of funds available to candidates per the request of the Commission to Improve Standards and Conduct. It's crucially important that we remove the impact money has on our elections, but unfortunately HB95 currently doesn't go far enough.

We Need Money Out Of Politics Now

The influence that money has on our elections needs to end. A system that requires candidates to raise private funds is ripe for corruption. If we want our government officials to act on behalf of its residents rather than those who fund their campaigns, we need to end the system as it stands.

Too many candidates are reliant on their donors to stay in office and an even larger number of potential candidates don't have the wealthy donor connections that are needed to win. This is a formula for uncompetitive elections and elected officials that respond to a few private interests rather than the public at large.

HB95 Is Too Weak

This proposal does not go far enough. The low funding amounts proposed in this bill would barely make a dent in the large amounts candidates need to win. Even if a candidate for State Representative received the maximum \$5,300 in public funds, they would still need to raise an additional \$34,000 in private funds to spend what the average House winner spends. This would not remove the connection or influence private donors have on our election cycle.

Even the Commission to Improve Standards of Conduct says HB95 doesn't go far enough:

“[The] increased amounts of partial public funding of elections proposed in this bill are intended as a floor, or minimum level. If fiscal resources are or become available, the Commission encourages the Legislature to be bold and devote additional fiscal resources to further the purpose of this bill and to seek additional permanent funding sources for future elections.”

With a budget surplus of over \$2 billion, Hawaii has the fiscal resources to be bold and increase the amount available for public financing of candidates.

It's Well Past Time for Clean Elections

To get money out of politics, we need to provide a pathway for candidates to win without private campaign donations. We can provide such a system if we increase the funds available to candidates who participate. Please amend HB95 by making the following changes:

- Increase the percentage of maximum funds available to 99% of the expenditure limit
- Limit qualifying contributions to be received from only residents in the candidate's district
- Change the match amount from \$2 to \$100 for each \$1 of qualifying contributions
- Change the maximum qualifying contribution amount to \$5 per donor
- Prohibit candidates who meet the minimum qualifying contribution threshold and enroll in the program from receiving any additional private donations

Hawai'i County Council races had a very successful clean elections program in 2010 and 2012. Both Connecticut and Maine have statewide clean elections programs that are hugely popular. Over 60% of all legislators in Maine participate in their clean elections program and receive no private donations. Connecticut's system was established as a response to their huge corruption scandals.

The opportunity to bring more democracy to our elections is now. Please make these changes to provide a better election system for Hawai'i residents.

Mahalo,

Nate Hix
808.469.8740

Seat	Average Spent by Winners (2012-2020 Elections)	Proposed Public Funding in HB95	Funding Gap in HB95
Governor	\$2,529,656	\$323,010	\$2,206,646
LG	\$1,171,535	\$180,885	\$990,650
State Senator	\$93,209	\$10,853	\$82,356
State Representative	\$39,529	\$5,320	\$34,209
Hawai'i Mayor	\$355,669	\$39,345	\$316,324
Hawai'i Council	\$17,577	\$4,591	\$12,987
Honolulu Mayor	\$2,323,732	\$170,063	\$2,153,670
Honolulu Council	\$139,278	\$19,841	\$119,438
Kauai Mayor	\$375,692	\$15,276	\$360,416
Kauai Council	\$33,708	\$15,276	\$18,432
Maui Mayor	\$591,461	\$34,452	\$557,009
Maui Council	\$35,449	\$36,176	-\$727
OHA	\$30,633	\$17,227	\$13,406

HB-95-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2023 11:03:12 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2023 11:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Greg Crawford	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Committee Members,

We must address the issue of money in politics and its corrupting influence. Hawai'i voters consistently rank government corruption as a top concern, and it is time to take action to eliminate the pay-to-play behavior that comes with candidates relying on private donors.

HB95 acknowledges the problem of candidate dependence on private donors and special interest groups, but falls short in providing an effective solution by only offering most candidates 15% of the funds they need to win an election.

Winning State House candidates spent \$40,000 on average from 2012-2020. The current partial public financing system gives House candidates up to \$3,500, but HB95 would only increase this to \$5,300, leaving candidates still highly dependent on wealthy donors and special interest groups.

The Commission to Improve Standards of Conduct stated that the improvements in HB95 are intended as a minimum, and that should the fiscal situation allow, additional resources should be used to relieve candidates from the need to rely on special interest groups or large donors. Given our historic surplus, to follow this recommendation, the state should allocate additional resource by making the following amendments:

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Mahalo,

Greg Crawford

HB-95-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2023 11:03:31 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2023 11:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
noriko donna	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Committee Members,

We must address the issue of money in politics and its corrupting influence. Hawai'i voters consistently rank government corruption as a top concern, and it is time to take action to eliminate the pay-to-play behavior that comes with candidates relying on private donors.

HB95 acknowledges the problem of candidate dependence on private donors and special interest groups, but falls short in providing an effective solution by only offering most candidates 15% of the funds they need to win an election.

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Mahalo,

Noriko Donna

HB-95-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2023 11:16:39 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2023 11:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shannon Rudolph	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUPPORT

HB-95-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2023 11:25:24 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2023 11:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Louise Johnson	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

ere is a sample testimony you can use as a template, or submit as is:

Dear Committee Members,

I urge you to strengthen this attempt to limit the outsized influence of big-money donors to our political races. The current bill does not provide sufficient funds to allow candidates to be truly reponsive to the people and not have to rely on rich people and special interests.

Please do the right thing for Hawaii and increase the public funding available to candidates.

Thank you.

HB-95-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2023 11:35:49 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2023 11:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Paul Palmer	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Great candidates simply cannot compete with big money and special interest groups that demands voting their interests, thus encouraging corruption by buying speech.

Funds should be increased from 15% to 99% of the expenditure limit and the match amount from \$2 to \$100 for each \$1 of qualifying contribution. It also makes sense to change the maximum qualifying contribution amount to \$5 per donor.

Publicly financed elections is the biggest step you can do to end pay-to-play corruption in politics.

HB-95-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2023 11:38:38 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2023 11:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mary L. Sautter	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Committee Members,

I, like many of Hawaii's citizens, rank government corruption as a top concern. The evidence of the reliance of candidates on private donors and special interest groups for their campaign funding is widespread. While HB95 acknowledges this problem it falls short of providing an effective solution by only offering most candidates 15% of the funds they need to win an election. The Commission to Improve Standards of Conduct stated that improvements in HB95 are intended as a minimum, and that, should the fiscal situation allow, additional resources should be used to relieve candidates' reliance on special interest groups and large donors. We are in the position of having a historic surplus, making us able to execute the Commission's recommendation. I believe the state should make the following amendments:

Increase the percentage of maximum funds available to 99% of the expenditure limit.

Limit qualifying contributions to be received from only residents in the candidate's district.

Change the match amount from \$2 to \$100 for each \$1 of qualifying contribution.

Change the maximum qualifying contribution amount to \$5 per donor.

Prohibit candidates who meet the minimum qualifying contribution threshold and enroll in the program from receiving any additional private donations.

These changes have been implemented previously in Hawaii County Council elections and are in place in Maine and Connecticut. This is the time to add Hawai'i to that list and to minimize the influence of money on politics so that the voice of ALL of Hawaii's people -- not just those with money and privileged connections within and outside of the island -- can be heard.

DO WHAT'S RIGHT AND RIGHTEOUS and live up to the state motto.

HB-95-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2023 11:40:19 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2023 11:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Frank DeGiacomo	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Committee Members,

We must address the issue of money in politics and its corrupting influence. Hawai'i voters consistently rank government corruption as a top concern, and it is time to take action to eliminate the pay-to-play behavior that comes with candidates relying on private donors.

HB95 acknowledges the problem of candidate dependence on private donors and special interest groups, but falls short in providing an effective solution by only offering most candidates 15% of the funds they need to win an election.

Winning State House candidates spent \$40,000 on average from 2012-2020. The current partial public financing system gives House candidates up to \$3,500, but HB95 would only increase this to \$5,300, leaving candidates still highly dependent on wealthy donors and special interest groups.

The Commission to Improve Standards of Conduct stated that the improvements in HB95 are intended as a minimum, and that should the fiscal situation allow, additional resources should be used to relieve candidates from the need to rely on special interest groups or large donors. Given our historic surplus, to follow this recommendation, the state should allocate additional resource by making the following amendments:

- Increase the percentage of maximum funds available to 99% of the expenditure limit
- Limit qualifying contributions to be received from only residents in the candidate's district
- Change the match amount from \$2 to \$100 for each \$1 of qualifying contribution
- Change the maximum qualifying contribution amount to \$5 per donor
- Prohibit candidates who meet the minimum qualifying contribution threshold and enroll in the program from receiving any additional private donations

These changes have been successfully implemented before in Hawaii County Council elections, and are currently in place in Connecticut and Maine. By making these necessary changes, we can ensure that candidates have sufficient public funds to compete without having to rely on donations from large donors or special interest groups.

Let us take this opportunity to empower the people and get money out of politics! Winning publicly financed elections is the single biggest thing we could do to end pay-to-play corruption in our politics and start building a Hawai'i that puts kama'āina and kānaka maoli first — not big money interests.

Frank DeGiacomo

HB-95-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2023 1:03:21 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2023 11:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Zack Stoddard	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

HB95 will not meaningfully reduce the influence of money in politics, which is so essential to realizing social, economic, and environmental justice reforms. This bill does not provide sufficient funds for candidates, does not sufficiently limit the maximum qualifying contribution amount, and does not prohibit candidates receiving public funding from receiving additional private donations. These elements work together to prevent the disproportionate influence of money interests, which lies at the very heart of Hawaii's wide-ranging systemic problems, where half the population is currently struggling to make ends meet.

Our elected representatives need to be courageous on this issue and establish a true clean election system! Unjust influence in politics has long contributed to the stark economic and social inequalities that are so pervasive today. Please do what's right and amend this bill to increase the maximum available funds, limit qualifying contributions to be received from residents in the candidate's district and establish a \$5 maximum per donor, and prohibit participating candidates from receiving any additional private donations. Thank you!

HB-95-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2023 1:18:14 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2023 11:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
ANDREW ISODA	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Committee Members,

We must address the issue of money in politics and its corrupting influence. Hawai'i voters consistently rank government corruption as a top concern, and it is time to take action to eliminate the pay-to-play behavior that comes with candidates relying on private donors.

HB95 acknowledges the problem of candidate dependence on private donors and special interest groups, but falls short in providing an effective solution by only offering most candidates 15% of the funds they need to win an election.

Winning State House candidates spent \$40,000 on average from 2012-2020. The current partial public financing system gives House candidates up to \$3,500, but HB95 would only increase this to \$5,300, leaving candidates still highly dependent on wealthy donors and special interest groups.

The Commission to Improve Standards of Conduct stated that the improvements in HB95 are intended as a minimum, and that should the fiscal situation allow, additional resources should be used to relieve candidates from the need to rely on special interest groups or large donors. Given our historic surplus, to follow this recommendation, the state should allocate additional resource by making the following amendments:

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public funds to compete without having to rely on donations from large donors or special interest groups.

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Andrew Isoda (Lahaina Maui)

HB-95-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2023 1:20:38 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2023 11:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dylan Ramos	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

We must address the issue of money in politics and its corrupting influence. Hawai‘i voters consistently rank government corruption as a top concern, and it is time to take action to eliminate the pay-to-play behavior that comes with candidates relying on private donors.

HB95 acknowledges the problem of candidate dependence on private donors and special interest groups, but falls short in providing an effective solution by only offering most candidates 15% of the funds they need to win an election.

Winning State House candidates spent \$40,000 on average from 2012-2020. The current partial public financing system gives House candidates up to \$3,500, but HB95 would only increase this to \$5,300, leaving candidates still highly dependent on wealthy donors and special interest groups.

The Commission to Improve Standards of Conduct stated that the improvements in HB95 are intended as a minimum, and that should the fiscal situation allow, additional resources should be used to relieve candidates from the need to rely on special interest groups or large donors. Given our historic surplus, to follow this recommendation, the state should allocate additional resource by making the following amendments:

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- Prohibit candidates who meet the minimum qualifying contribution threshold and enroll in the program from receiving any additional private donations

These changes have been successfully implemented before in Hawaii County Council elections, and are currently in place in Connecticut and Maine. By making these necessary changes, we can

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Let us take this opportunity to empower the people and get money out of politics! Winning publicly financed elections is the single biggest thing we could do to end pay-to-play corruption in our politics and start building a Hawai‘i that puts kama‘āina and kānaka maoli first — not big money interests.

Mahalo,

Dylan Ramos

96816

HB-95-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2023 1:25:48 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2023 11:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dawn Morais Webster Ph.D.	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Get Money Out of Politics

Government Corruption really irks Hawai'i voters. If we continue to force candidates to raise campaign funds from private donors, the pay-to-play behavior will remain.

HB95 Doesn't Go Far Enough

This proposal will provide most candidates with less than 15% of the funds that they need to win elections, and would still allow them to raise and spend private funds. Requiring candidates to raise the other 85% from private interests does NOT get the pernicious influence of money out of politics.

1. Make These Necessary Changes

The CISC stated that the improvements in HB95 are intended as a minimum, and that additional resources should be used to relieve candidates from the need to rely on special interest groups or large donors. To devote additional resources the state should do the following:

- Increase the percentage of maximum funds available to 99% of the expenditure limit
- Limit qualifying contributions to be received from only residents in the candidate's district
- Change the match amount from \$2 to \$100 for each \$1 of qualifying contribution
- Change the maximum qualifying contribution amount to \$5 per donor
- Prohibit candidates who meet the minimum qualifying contribution threshold and enroll in the program from receiving any additional private donations

These changes will ensure that candidates will be able to compete with sufficient public funds after proving they have sufficient support from within their community and they won't need to rely on donations from large donors or private interest groups.

We have examples of success: Connecticut, Maine and Big Island Programs

Hawai'i County Council had a program that used the above changes and it was very successful. Connecticut and Maine use the above system and have found widespread success.

Please amend this bill to demonstrate that you are serious about getting money out of politics.

HB-95-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2023 3:21:13 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2023 11:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elaine Wender	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This bill is far too weak and will not in reality take money out of politics. Please amend to strengthen it by increasing percentage of maximum funds available to 99% of expenditure limit; limiting qualifying contributions to be received from only residents in the candidate's district; increasing the match amount from \$2 to \$100 for each \$1 of qualifying contribution; changing the maximum qualifying contribution amount to \$5 per donor; and prohibiting candidates who meet the minimum qualifying contribution threshold and enroll in the program from receiving any additional private donations.

Elaine Wender

Wailuku

HB-95-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2023 7:25:06 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2023 11:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joyce Baker	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Committee Members,

We must address the issue of money in politics and its corrupting influence. Hawai'i voters consistently rank government corruption as a top concern, and it is time to take action to eliminate the pay-to-play behavior that comes with candidates relying on private donors.

HB95 acknowledges the problem of candidate dependence on private donors and special interest groups, but falls short in providing an effective solution by only offering most candidates 15% of the funds they need to win an election.

Winning State House candidates spent \$40,000 on average from 2012-2020. The current partial public financing system gives House candidates up to \$3,500, but HB95 would only increase this to \$5,300, leaving candidates still highly dependent on wealthy donors and special interest groups.

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