



STATE OF HAWAII
CAMPAIGN SPENDING COMMISSION

235 SOUTH BERETANIA STREET, ROOM 300
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

February 6, 2023

TO: The Honorable Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary

The Honorable Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary

Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary

FROM: Kristin Izumi-Nitao, Executive Director
Campaign Spending Commission KEI

SUBJECT: **Testimony on S.B. No. 1543, Relating to Public Financing for Candidates to Elected Office.**

Tuesday, February 7, 2023
9:30 a.m., Conference Room 16 & Videoconference

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill. The Campaign Spending Commission (“Commission”) supports the intent of this bill.

This bill establishes a comprehensive system of public financing for all candidates seeking election to state and county public offices to beginning with the 2024 general election year, appropriates funds to the Hawaii Election Campaign Fund, and appropriates funds to the Commission.

The bill establishes the maximum amount of comprehensive public funds (“CPF Max”) for each office. The CPF Max ranges from a low of \$20,000 for candidates for the Board of Trustees for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (“OHA”) to a high of \$2,500,000 for candidates for Governor. However, as a percentage of the amounts spent by winners, or an average spent by winners, for office in recent elections, these amounts range from a very low of 49% (\$20,000/\$41,013.45) for candidates for OHA to a high of 133% (\$20,000/\$15,062.42) for candidates for Hawaii County Council. The Commission urges this Committee to increase the CPF Max for candidates for OHA to \$40,000 (97.5%).¹

¹ This will require a change in the minimum number of qualifying contributions for participating OHA candidates from 50 to 100 on page 13, lines 11-12. The Committee may also want to consider a slight upward adjustment for the CPF Max of \$2,300,000 (87%) for candidates for

In order to qualify for comprehensive public funding, the bill establishes the minimum number of qualifying contributions each candidate must receive from registered voters residing within the respective district from which the candidate seeks nomination or election to office. It appears that the minimum number of qualifying contributions is equal to .25 percent of the CPF Max for each office, except for the Senate and House of Representatives, where the minimum number of qualifying contributions is .20 % of the CPF Max for those offices. Although the Commission is still considering whether the minimum number of qualifying contributions for all offices is sufficient, the Commission urges this Committee to at least raise the minimum number of qualifying contributions for candidates for the Senate from 200 to 250 and the minimum number of qualifying contributions for candidates for the House of Representatives from 100 to 125.

Finally, section 4 of this measure requires the Commission to submit a report to the Legislature in the 2024 session of the Commission's findings and recommendations, including any proposed statutory amendments that may be necessary to implement the comprehensive public funding program. Because of this mandate and because the Commission will have to work on forms, make modifications of its electronic filing system, and train candidates, the Commission urges this Committee to begin the comprehensive public funding program with the 2026 general election.

The Commission requests that this committee pass this measure with the described amendments.

Honolulu Mayor and a slight downward adjustment for the CPF Max of \$25,000 (123%) for candidates for Kauai Prosecuting Attorney, \$20,000 (133%) for candidates for Hawaii County Council, \$30,000 (122%) for candidates for Kauai County Council, \$50,000 (124%) for candidates for House of Representatives, where the deviation from the average amount spent by winners of recent elections is more than ten percent.

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/4/2023 9:15:35 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
daniel foley	Testifying for Commission to Improve Standards of Conduct	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chairman Rhoads and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

As Chair of the Commission to Improve Standards of Conduct (Commission), I support SB1543 for the reasons stated in the Commission's December 1, 2022 Final Report to the House of Representatives, specifically: Although the Commission proposed a bill to increase public financing of election, the Commission noted "that 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 resource to further the purpose of this bill and to seek additional permanent funding sources for future elections. Implementation of this proposal would assist in diminishing the impact and influence resulting from Citizens United." Report at 32.

Mahalo, Judge Daniel Foley (ret.)

**Testimony to the Senate Committee on Judiciary
Tuesday, February 7th, 2023 at 9:30am**

**Conference Room 016, State Capitol
RE: HB1543 Relating to Partial Public Financing for Candidates to Elected Office**

Position: Strong Support

Members of the Judiciary Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important issue. It's crucially important that we remove the impact money has on our elections. We instead need a robust clean elections system that HB967 would provide.

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 simply legal bribery. 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 current system.

Money is incredibly crucial in our elections, as candidates who outspend their opponents win at a 91% rate. Of all campaign donations candidates received in the 2022 election cycle, over half of the money was given by just 980 donors who gave at least \$6,000 each. This massive political power by a small group is not democratic.

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.

It's Well Past Time for Clean Elections

In order to get money out of politics, we need to provide a pathway for candidates to win without private campaign donations. HB967 would do just that. HB967 would establish a clean elections program that would allow participating candidates to receive enough public funds to win their elections and ban them from receiving any 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.

If we are serious about ending the corruptive practices that plague our state we need to establish a clean elections program now.

Mahalo,

Nate Hix
808.469.8740

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/5/2023 3:52:07 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Margaret Wille	Testifying for Democratic Party District 8	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass SB1543.



Testimony in Support by the Democratic Party of Hawai'i
Prepared by Legislative Committee Co-Chair William C. Bagasol

SB1543 – Relating to Public Financing For Candidates To Elected Office
Senate Committee on Judiciary
Tuesday, February 7, 2023, at 9:30 AM, Conference Room 016 & Videoconference

Dear Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and members of the Committee:

The Legislative Committee of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i supports passage of SB1543.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB1543, which would establish a comprehensive system of public financing for all candidates seeking election to state and county public offices in the State of Hawai'i.

SB1543 would create such a system of fully-publicly funded elections and is thus directly in-line with the Democratic Platform ("Government" plank of the Platform) and specifically Resolution 2022-32, which were both adopted at the Democratic Party 2022 State Convention. As such, the Legislative Committee of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i, by consensus, firmly supports this Bill.

The Democratic Party of Hawai'i therefore respectfully encourages support this measure. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/5/2023 5:31:56 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gary Hooser	Testifying for Pono Hawaii Initiative	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Committee Members,

Testimony in strong support:

SB1543 is in my opinion, one of the most important bills of the 2023 session. If passed into law it would provide much-needed systemic change to our electoral/political environment, greatly reduce the influence of money in elections, and go a long way toward revitalizing faith and confidence in government. SB1543 is based on proven programs now working in several other states. Please pass SB1543.

Gary Hooser



HAWAII WORKERS CENTER

Defending and Respecting the workers of
Hawai'i

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February 6, 2023

Hawaii State Senate
Committee on Judiciary
Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair

Executive
Committee of the
Board

Rev. Sam Domingo
Board Chair

Mary Ochs
Vice President

Dr. Arcelita Imasa
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Justin Jansen

Marites Uy

Leyton Torda

Robyn Conboy

Co-Executive
Directors

Tony Doroño

Sergio Alcubilla III,
Esq.

RE: Strong Support for S.B. 1543 RELATING TO PUBLIC FINANCING FOR
CANDIDATES TO ELECTED OFFICE

Dear Chair Sen. Rhoads, Vice-Chair Mike Gabbard, and Members of the Committee on
Judiciary:

The Hawaii Workers Center envisions a Hawaii in which all workers are empowered to
exercise their right to organize for their social, economic and political well-being.
It is a resource of information, education, training and organizing for Hawaii's low-wage and
immigrant workers.

The Hawaii Workers Center stands in strong support for S.B. 1543 to set up a system of fully
publicly financed "clean" elections.

We need to get money out of politics. The influence of money in politics puts our working
class communities at a disadvantage when it comes to ensuring their voices are heard. More
often than not, the interests of large donors connected to corporate interests drown out the
voices of our working class.

Candidates and elected officials who represent the voices of workers and not corporate
interests are often at a disadvantage when supporters do not have the large financial
resources needed to support their candidate. S.B. 1543 will create a much fairer system and
helps level the playing field for our working class residents. Big money in politics and the
appearances of impropriety in government are major issues for Hawaii's residents. The
impact is truly felt by our working class families, whose interests are often overshadowed by
corporate interests and those with the deep financial pockets to substantially donate to
candidates.

If we are serious about cleaning up the undue influence of money in politics. S.B. 1543 takes
the bold step we need for a 100% fully funded campaign finance system. It is a major step in
the right direction to ensure that democracy works for all of us, not just those at the top.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in strong support of S.B. 1543 to finally give
workers a chance against anti-worker, big-money interests in politics.

Sincerely,

Sergio J. Alcubilla
Executive Director



Hawaii
Holding Power Accountable

To: Judiciary Chair Rhoads and Council Members
From: Brodie Lockard, Common Cause Hawaii Board Member
Date: Tuesday, February 7, 2023

In strong support of SB1543

A reform like public financing has been due in Hawaii for many years. With last year's convictions of Senator J. Kalani English and Representative Ty Cullen for cash bribes, ethics in our state government has leapt to the front of the public's collective mind.

Some incumbents dislike public financing because they see it as a threat to their reelection. This is not necessarily the case. The 2012 Maine Policy Review found that "challengers are only more likely to win if they participate in MCEA [the 1996 Maine Clean Elections Act] and the incumbent does not. When incumbents accept public funding, they are actually more likely to win reelection" [1].

SB1543 is a fair bill. It includes every major state and county office, not singling out any one group for a trial, as some previous bills have done. After qualifying, candidates are "barred from soliciting, accepting, or using contributions from" anyone but voters in their districts. Violating the rules brings appropriate penalties, and thorough, regular reporting requirements should prevent abuse.

Publicly-funded elections will make you and future elected officials better at your jobs. You can spend your time meeting with many constituents, not just a few large donors. Owning only your voters lets you take a principled stand on every issue. You can work on the needs of all voters, not just a few moneyed interests. And you can spend more time doing your real job.

To qualify for public financing, candidates must show a broad base of support in their community (something incumbents already have). That makes any lawmaker more effective and more respected.

Public financing will make your campaign easier. No one likes asking individuals for large sums of money. Public financing will free you from fundraisers and countless phone calls. And the steps required to qualify will help you get to know your constituents better, so you can better speak to their concerns.

It will improve the state legislature overall. Public financing has been shown to increase the diversity of candidates, including women and people of color, and to encourage interaction between candidates and low- and moderate-income communities. Our elected officials will no longer be just career politicians or people who know the right people, but regular folks from all walks of life—nurses, veterans, small business owners, teachers. Candidates can spend more time on ideas and less time

raising money that tends to commit them to special interests.

SB1543 will serve the people who elected you far better than the current system. One of the primary reasons for public funding is to avoid situations like Oahu's rail boondoggle, and the myriad more subtle ways voters' money is wasted. The role of special interests in government decision making will be greatly reduced; the voices of regular people amplified. This is one reason that rates of participation in Clean Election systems are high. They decrease real or apparent conflicts of interest for elected officials.

Public financing will restore faith in our elections and political system. After six years of questions about the integrity of our elections, Americans' confidence in voting needs a boost. Fraud in elections has always been extremely rare, but the corrupting influence of money in politics—real and perceived—continues to erode our confidence in the system.

It will improve Hawaii's political reputation. Thirteen states use some form of publicly-funded elections, as do 20 local governments [2]. Hawaii's partial public funding program is woefully out of date and underused. With Supreme Court decisions like *Citizens United* deforming our campaigns, a robust public funding system is long overdue. Following our recent passage of reforms like Vote by Mail and Automatic Voter Registration, passing public funding will arguably make Hawaii the most forward-looking state in the union in terms of elections.

Finally, SB1543 is fiscally responsible. This year the state has plenty of money to fund the 2024 general election cycle. In the future, if funds are insufficient, the program will not be run for that cycle. Amounts will be adjusted with any change in the consumer price index.

SB1543 is a thorough, well-conceived bill with an array of benefits. Common Cause Hawaii strongly urges the Judiciary Committee to pass it. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Brodie Lockard
Common Cause Hawaii Board Member

[1] <https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1081&context=mpr>

[2] <https://www.commoncause.org/resource/the-for-the-people-act-in-the-states/>



Craig V. Hickman
Senator, District 14

THE MAINE SENATE
130th Legislature

3 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333

Testimony of Senator Craig V. Hickman in Support of
SB 1543 Relating to Public Financing for Candidates to Elected Office
Before the Senate Committee on Judiciary

Tuesday, February 7, 2023

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and distinguished members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary, good morning. My name is Craig Hickman. I represent Senate District 14, 11 towns in Southern Kennebec County, in the Maine Senate. I ZOOM before you today to testify in support of SB 1543 Relating to Public Financing for Candidates to Elected Office.

History

Last year Maine celebrated twenty-two years of Clean Elections, a law that exists because Maine people wanted it. On Election Day, 1995, a diverse array of 1,100 volunteers stationed themselves at polling places around the state. Fourteen hours later they had more than enough signatures to qualify the question for the ballot. The question was, “Do you want Maine to adopt new campaign finance laws and give public funding to candidates for state office who agree to spending limits?”

One year later, 56% of voters approved the new law. The victory was statewide, in 15 of 16 counties. Exit polls showed that majorities of women and men, Republicans, Democrats and unenrolled voters supported new campaign finance laws including the public financing of campaigns for state office. It was the first full public funding system for state offices in the country.

Naysayers challenged the Clean Election Act in federal court, and it was found to be constitutional in both the District and the 1st Circuit Court of Appeals. Critics thought that, for a host of reasons, it would never work: no one would use it; only Democrats would use it; candidates would not ask voters for five dollars; candidates foolish enough to use it would be drastically outspent.

None of that happened. Much to many peoples’ surprise, it worked. It has been used now in eleven election cycles, with several hundred candidates participating in each of those cycles – a total of around 1,600 Clean Election candidate campaigns in general elections. Scores, maybe

Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee, Chair * Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
Committee * Government Oversight Committee, Chair

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hundreds, of candidates and legislators have never run any other way. It works because Maine people keep coming forward to participate in it. Eighty percent of the 125th Legislature successfully used Clean Election funding to win their seats. Every one of the senators who won their seats for the first time last year used Clean Elections. Candidates in all parties and unenrolled candidates use Clean Elections. Many legislators say that without Clean Elections they would not have run for state office.

How it Works

Qualified candidates for State Senate and House have used it since 2000; candidates for governor have used it since 2002. In 22 years – 11 electoral cycles with Clean Elections – it's been used by a majority of candidates – and a majority of winning candidates. Today Clean Elections is a well-established part of Maine's elections and is popular with candidates and voters alike. It's used by candidates in every part of the state, all parties, incumbents, challengers and open seat candidates, first-timers and veterans, all genders. In a typical legislative cycle, over 50,000 Maine voters participate by making Qualifying Contributions of \$5 to candidates they support in order to help them qualify for public funds. The law has kept up with the times, and now many Qualifying Contributions are made online.

Successes

Clean Elections removes a significant barrier to running for state office. It's proven to be an excellent tool for recruiting good candidates to run — both major parties have used Clean Elections with great success.

It's been particularly helpful for women. They use it more, like it more, win more with it, and more frequently cite Clean Elections as a key factor in their decision to run.

Clean elections changes the relationship between lobbyists and legislators. No checks change hands at election time; no threat of a withheld contribution sways legislators who know they can rely on Clean Elections in their next campaign.

It has allowed Maine to rebuff well-financed industries, for example Maine was first state to outlaw DECA, a flame-retardant chemical and known carcinogen, after passionate advocacy by citizens countered the millions spent in opposition by the chemical industry.

In 2000, the Maine Legislature approved a daring new pharmaceutical program which gives Maine families the chance to buy drugs at a deep discount. The law was upheld by the Supreme Court and went into effect in January 2004.

It has been well administered and enforced by our Ethics Commission, with very high rates of compliance by candidates. The small number of serious violations have been ably handled by the Attorney General.

Candidates are happy to say that running with public funding gives them the freedom to spend more time with our constituents discussing important issues. They are no longer stuck “dialing for dollars” – spending long hours on the phone asking special interest donors and lobbyists to contribute to their campaigns.

Maine has seen no influx of frivolous candidates. The qualifying requirements are high enough that the great majority of candidates are serious, capable people. As in any system, there will be some candidates who stretch and break the rules. However, a strong enforcement system protects the Maine Clean Elections program from abuse.

Clean Elections is popular among legislators in Maine. A full majority of our State Senate and House ran “clean.” Each year the proportion of lawmakers elected using the system has increased from the previous election.

Challenges

Twenty-two years after it went into effect, we are the envy of states around the country because the Maine Clean Election Act works. Opponents have not given up, and we continue to face challenges in the courts and in the legislature. But with each challenge, Maine people come forward to defend their law.

Right to Life groups, the ACLU, and others challenged the constitutionality of our Law almost as soon as it passed. It survived those challenges. It’s constitutional because it is voluntary. That’s important because the law includes spending limits — only possible in a voluntary system.

Those challenges never made it to the U.S. Supreme Court... but then came the Roberts Court which has steadily rolled back established campaign finance precedents, totally changing the legal landscape. The Court overturned a provision in Arizona’s Clean Elections law, and since that law was modeled on Maine’s, we also lost an important element of our System.

Maine responded by reinventing our system, creating a workable new model that would repair the damage done by the Court. When the legislature failed to pass it, citizens went back to the ballot for a second successful Clean Election initiative in 2015. Its mandate was renewed by Maine people.

Another challenge is that we have no gubernatorial winner yet, although party candidates have won the nomination with Clean Elections, and independent candidates have qualified. But so far no Clean Election candidate has won the general election. This was not true in Arizona, where under a similar system, a Clean Elections governor was elected in the first cycle and many times since.

The gubernatorial system had its worst setback in 2014 when the then-current governor, an opponent of public funding, suspended funding for gubernatorial candidates in that cycle (his reelection). Some feel that the jury is still out as to whether Clean Elections “works” in the gubernatorial race, but every attempt to eliminate that part of the system has been met with strong, even overwhelming, opposition from citizens. (See Arizona above.)

Maine citizens have never let us forget that it is their law, and they want it to work. Maine is not immune to the flood of outside spending unleashed by another Roberts Court decision — Citizens United. We managed to get most of the big money out of candidate coffers, but the rollbacks at the federal level have added this significant and unwelcome dimension to our

elections, just as it has in every other state.

Conclusion

Thanks to the 1996 reforms, there are no large contributions going to candidates for state office. Private money plays a diminished role in elections. Candidates compete on a level playing field. Voters have more choices, with more first-time candidates, more women, and more contested races. Clean Election campaigns are different, with more time for voter contact and a strictly limited budget. Legislators have a more straightforward relationship with lobbyists than did their predecessors.

The Maine Clean Election Act is a success thanks to the sound principles on which it is based, the continued enthusiasm of Maine people, and the careful attention of successive legislatures. In each cycle since 2000, led by the legislative committee that I now chair, our Legislature has sorted through many bills, consulted with staff at the Ethics Commission, the Attorney General's office and with the legal analysts, listened to citizens and elected leaders, and made the necessary small adjustments to make a good system better.

The Clean Election model is a constitutional, workable, voluntary public funding system that is good for democracy. It engages more citizens in candidate campaigns than private financing does: citizens are invested in the Clean Elections candidates. It enlarges the pool of potential candidates, providing resources and creating opportunity for civic-minded people who lack personal wealth and have no desire to court private donors. For countless Maine legislators from a great variety of backgrounds, Clean Elections is what made it possible for them to run, win, and serve.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today, and I will gladly take any questions you may have.

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/7/2023 7:24:29 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
David McCluskey	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

Good morning, my name is David McCluskey, a former 6 term Connecticut State Representative and one of the members of then-Governor Rell’s Campaign Finance Reform Working Group. I am honored to testify in support of your Senate Bill 1543 concerning Public Financing For Candidates To Elected Office.

In 2005, Connecticut became the first state in the nation where legislative incumbents passed a full public financing law that applies to their own political campaigns. Every state has unique legislative and political environments and I am not here to tell you to simply adopt Connecticut’s Public Financing law. However, I am testifying that our system works. It has significantly reduced the influence of large moneyed interests in our legislative deliberations and it has made our elections more democratic by having more competition in our primaries and elections.

Since the 1800s, Connecticut has been called the land of steady habits. Change continues to be very hard in my state and asking legislators who know how to get reelected under the existing rules to adopt new campaign financing rules was particularly tough. But we were successful after a lot of struggle both inside and outside our State Capitol. Hawai’i can and should enact public financing of elections to improve the credibility of the legislative process for your state residents and to free legislators from the increasingly chaotic and escalating rush to raise funds.

In Connecticut, candidates must raise small to moderate amounts from residents in the towns they represent. Once they reach the necessary number of in-district contributions and the necessary dollar amount, the state provides them with a reasonable amount to campaign. This process is heavily regulated by the State Elections Enforcement Commission to prevent fraud and abuse. Asking your family, friends and neighbors for reasonable contributions is actually very liberating. I am not burdening them multiple times in a campaign for more and more money. Instead of spending an enormous amount of time raising dollars, I can spend it talking to voters.

Since Public Financing has been adopted, there has not been wholesale ouster of incumbents as was feared. Yes, some incumbents do lose in primaries and general elections, but mostly because they are no longer in touch with their voters, a policy issue or an economic situation, NOT because their opponent was publically funded. Yes, our system can punish incumbent complacency, but their opponent is equally funded, no more, no less. Incumbents still have the advantage in elections if they are doing their job and are talking to their constituents.

In terms of legislative deliberations, incumbents can now vote their convictions and without having to worry about being punished in re-election campaigns by well-healed lobbyists and interest groups who used to provide the lion's share of campaign dollars. Again, this is very liberating to most incumbents and has, in my opinion, significantly improved policy outcomes for Connecticut residents.

In conclusion, I strongly urge Hawai'i to adopt public financing for its state legislative races. I would be happy to answer your questions.

Support SB 1543

Sen. Rhoads and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee:

I am writing to strongly support for SB 1543. I am delighted that a program for comprehensive public funding--Clean Elections--is finally back for consideration. Starting in 2009, a group of my advanced students at UH-Hilo agreed that getting big money out of politics was critical. They joined the Global HOPE association to petition and lobby to get the State to fund the popular Clean Elections Pilot Program on the Big Island's 2010 and 2012 County Council elections. It was a stunning success. Even the candidates who were initially against the pilot program – but used it after it had passed -- acknowledged that it was better to spend their time meeting with their constituents about community issues rather than fund-raising.

The 2010 *Citizens United* Supreme Court decision legalized political bribery, using the absurd legal fictions that “corporations are people” and that “money is speech.” And unfortunately, the Big Island pilot program was not continued. But I see that the Maine and Connecticut Clean Elections Programs still thrive. On the Big Island in 2010-2012 we saw a new crop of younger and working class candidates who were more representative of the Big Island community. That's democracy.

Without Clean Elections, democracy declines. The rich and big corporations can tilt the playing field. Historically, bribing politicians was illegal – and punishable by prison time. But 3 Republican-supported Supreme Court decisions in 1976, 1978 and 2010 re-opened the way for the rich to contribute vast sums to (control) candidates and government officials.

The Big Island's Clean Elections Pilot Program of 2010 and 2012 was very popular and a great success. Let's get something like it statewide for all elections—as proposed in SB1543-- and begin the restoration of a more democratic government.

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/6/2023 8:45:32 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carys Potter	Testifying for Global HOPE	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I'm writing to express my fervent support for SB 1543. I'm happy to see that Clean Elections, a program for extensive public funding, is once again being considered. Democracy suffers from the absence of fair elections. Large corporations and the wealthy can slant the playing field. Bribing politicians was once prohibited and carried a prison sentence. However, three Supreme Court decisions supported by the Republican Party in 1976, 1978, and 2010 reopened the door for the wealthy to make significant contributions to (control) politicians and public officials.

The 2010 and 2012 Clean Elections Pilot Program on the Big Island was well-liked and a great success. Let's implement a similar system statewide for all elections, as suggested in SB1543, and start the process of restoring a more democratic system of governance.

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/5/2023 12:47:30 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Maki Morinoue	Testifying for HULI PAC	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members,

It's crucially important that this body does everything in its power to remove the influence money has on politics. Corruption is far too rampant in Hawai'i. 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.

SB1543 would set up a system of fully publicly financed elections, aka clean elections. It would provide participating candidates with competitive amounts of funding they need to run an effective campaign, and would ban them from receiving any private donations at all. This system worked very well for Hawai'i County Council races in 2010 and 2012 and currently works very well statewide in places like Connecticut and Maine.

I am asking you to take this opportunity to get money out of politics and give political power to the people!

Mahalo for your time and consideration,

Maki Morinoue

96725

HULI PAC

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/5/2023 7:45:52 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
R A Culbertson	Testifying for HULI PAC	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Senators!

HULI PAC was formed on the Big Island to '*Help Uplift Leaders of Integrity*'. We strongly support the intention of SB1543 and its companion HB967 in the House.

A few years back, Hawaii County had the privilege of trying out a publicly funded election cycle. The immediate benefit was the greater availability of new and energetic candidates as well as greater campaign participation. More participation generally is healthy for our "body politic"!

We urge passage and ongoing support for this refreshment of democracy!

Mahalo nui loa!

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/4/2023 10:04:02 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nikos Leverenz	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, & Members of the Committee:

I served on the Speaker's Commission to Improve Standards of Conduct last year, which supported an expansion of public financing of elections.

The Final Report states, "The Commission finds that publicly funded elections can help counter the repercussions of *Citizens United* because public financing expands the reach of many small donors and can relieve candidates of the need to rely on the support of special interest groups or large donors."

Further, "the Commission encourages the Legislature to be bold and devote additional fiscal resources to further the purposes" of its proposed bill forwarded by the state Campaign Spending Commission.

This measure would do just that and foreseeably reduce the influence of moneyed special interest groups and large donors in electoral contests.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Testimony to the Thirty-Second Legislature, 2023 Regular Session
Senate Committee on Judiciary

By
Colin D. Moore, Ph.D.

Senate Bill No. 1543, Relating to Public Financing for Candidates to Elected Office

Position: STRONG SUPPORT

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Committee Members:

I am Colin Moore, a political scientist and professor at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. I strongly support SB 1543. It follows the successful “clean elections” model of public campaign financing currently used in the states of Arizona, Maine, and Connecticut.

In the United States, politics costs money. To raise sufficient funds, candidates rely on wealthy donors and organized interests for support – and this can invite corruption and distort public policy. Challengers often struggle to raise funds because they lack the name recognition and access to networks that benefit incumbents. Over the past decade, an average of 90% of incumbents were reelected during each election cycle in Hawai'i.

Public financing can solve this problem by providing challengers with sufficient resources to run competitive campaigns. More competitive elections often lead to stronger voter mobilization and communication efforts – and this reduces ballot “roll off,” which is the tendency of voters to leave ballots blank for less-visible legislative and municipal races. Furthermore, public financing eliminates the need to raise private funds, allowing candidates to spend more time connecting with voters and discussing public policy. This is good for candidates and good for citizens.

A large body of research in political science indicates that generous public campaign financing programs can increase electoral competition, contribute to greater diversity among candidates and donors, and encourage more contact between office-seekers and voters.

For these reasons, I urge you to support SB 1543.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/3/2023 8:05:14 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Andrew Crossland	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this Bill.

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/4/2023 8:24:49 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Denise E Antolini	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha JDC Chair, Vice Chair, Committee members,

I write in strong support.

Time to shift from private-interest pay-to-play to the public-interest-servant model for our elected officials.

Mahalo!

Denise Antolini

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/4/2023 8:39:43 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bianca Isaki	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support publicly funded elections.

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/4/2023 9:06:53 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bradford Baang	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As the saying goes, "There is nothing money can't buy." We urgently need to dump Citizens United and install Elections by Public Financing and level the playing field for all candidates. Until then, we'll continually be prisoners of corporate biggies and the wealthy that destroyed the middle class that Made American Great.

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/4/2023 9:09:07 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Noel Kent	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Among the leading dangers to our democracy today is the massive infusion of money into our election campaigns. This trend has been reinforced by the polarization of our political parties and the emergence of a class of super-wealthy corporate barons who finance their handpicked candidates. Our system needs a place for excellent candidates of modest means to be competitive. Public financing would level the playing field somewhat and give our working class and lower middle political contenders a chance to present their candidacies and platforms.

Mahalo. Noel Kent

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/4/2023 9:22:11 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Valerie Weiss	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill. We need to get money out of our politics. This will help immensely.

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/4/2023 9:26:53 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
TOM DIGRAZIA	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Very Strong support for this bill.

Public financing of campaigns is extremely necessary for our democracy to thrive, especially in these days of "dark money."

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/4/2023 9:39:38 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Teresa Landreau	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Let's get serious about ending corruption in Hawai'ian politics and get this bill passed. Other states have done it, why not us? We must change the status quo.

Mahalo.

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/4/2023 9:40:24 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Norris Thomlinson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The influence of corporate money in politics is a root problem in effective governance for the benefit of all citizens. This bill is a vital step towards addressing that. It wisely uses public money to allow serious candidates to pursue election to multiple offices, un beholden to special interests and thus better able to work for public good. This bill is a leveraged intervention for many of our social and environmental problems, so I strongly support it. Please vote in favor of SB1543.

Mahalo,
Norris Thomlinson
Puna, Big Island

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/4/2023 9:44:24 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lorna Holmes	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This bill is just what we have needed for so long to reduce corruption and the influence of big money on our government. Please pass, and see that it becomes law.

Mahalo, Lorna Holmes Honolulu 96817

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/4/2023 9:45:57 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Robin Worley	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I believe publicly funded elections are essential to a democratic government. I support this bill.

Mahalo,

Robin Worley

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/4/2023 10:06:10 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Susan Stayton	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Senators,

Public funding of elections is a great way to get dark money out of politics. It has been successfully implemented in other states. Let's have Hawaii be the next great example of how to keep elections fair and honest. Please support this bill.

Regards,

Susan Stayton, Lawai, HI

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/4/2023 10:34:53 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
William R. Higa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this bill that strengthens our democratic traditions in Hawaii! Mahalo & Aloha!

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/4/2023 10:35:59 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Laurel McGraw	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dark money to buy elections BAD

limit to spending for elections of any kind essential to honest elections

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/4/2023 10:41:30 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christopher Boscole	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support SB 1543. Our political system has been taken over by large special interests that fund elections to the point that common people's voice in election process are overshadowed. Lets make elections more fair and equal by public funding.

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/4/2023 12:44:28 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair and Committee members,

As a candidate who has run for State office twice now through the partial public funding program I write you in **STRONG** support of this bill. Publicly funded elections are the single biggest and most impactful reform I can imagine to help restore trust in government, encourage voter participation and level the playing field for all candidates. As someone who witnessed the success of the partial public funding program for Hawai'i County, I am excited to see efforts being made to strengthen and support expansion of this program. Please pass this bill.

Mahalo,

Shannon Matson

Hawaii Island Resident

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/4/2023 3:19:19 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dave Kisor	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The way the system works now, if you donate to one candidate, all of those in the party come begging for funds. It was like how Mom described during the depression if you gave one hobo food, they marked your house and all of the hobos within miles came begging for food. If we went to public funding, the whole dialog might change, as instead of saying bad things about their opponents, they may actually have to develop a platform. This could also reduce the cost of elections. When asked why elections cost so much, the usual BS answer is elections are expensive.

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/4/2023 6:06:25 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stephanie Sachs	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Maui is suddenly being innodated with large sums of money for our local elections. Please pass this bill for public financing of elections, which has been successful in Maine and Connecticut, and will help keep the voice of the community the most important part of our elections.

Thank you, Stephanie Sachs

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/4/2023 8:37:28 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elizabeth Hansen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this bill. Mahalo

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/4/2023 9:08:30 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rodger Hansen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, Please support this bill. Mahalo, Rodger Hansen, Hakalau HI 96710

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/4/2023 11:57:21 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
kenneth choi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello Sentaors,

As a member of the public, it is utmost important to have fair and honest elections. Having untraceable money funding our publically serving legislature is the antithesis to a functioning democracy. Please support SB 1543. Thank you.

Kenneth

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/5/2023 2:46:18 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Leimomi Khan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Appreciate Senator Rhoads' initiative to introduce this bill. Urge support with amendment to raise the funding for OHA candidates.

OHA's Board of Trustees (BOT) is composed of nine trustees who are elected in public elections **open to all State of Hawai'i voters**, whereas, the state of Hawaii has 25 state Senate districts. **Each district elects one senator**. The proposed funding for OHA is imbalanced. The cost to run a statewide campaign is significantly more than a district campaign.

Minimally, the funding for OHA Trustee candidates should be comparable to, if not more than, state senators.

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/5/2023 11:31:54 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Russell Ruderman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Legislators, please support this bill for public financing of elections.

Please pass the strongest, most robust public financing option. This will help with public trust in our legislature, which is so needed at this time.

Please do not water it down or pass weaker bills instead. This is the most important reform, and in light of recent corruption scandals, will begin restore actual democracy to the current undemocratic 'pay-to-play' situation.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Russell Ruderman

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/5/2023 11:55:54 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lunsford Phillips	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Campaigns take money. Naturally recipients appreciate contributions. It is contrary to basic human nature to not expect the recipients of campaign contributions to be favorably inclined toward contributors. Therefore contributors receive considerations non-contributors are not as likely to receive. That's the crux of the matter.

Yet legislative work should always conform to furthering the general good-a principle contradicted by affording contributors the favorable consideration not afforded non-contributors. Public funding comes from all of us; so no one receives consideration not given another one. Consideration is based solely on the impact on the general good. That's proper legislating.

Pass SB1543. Clean up campaign funding.

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/5/2023 11:56:07 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

Please pass SB1543. Hawaii desperately needs clean elections so that special interests cannot buy votes.

Thank you

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/5/2023 1:31:54 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Larry Alfrey	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support the bill.... However, something needs to be done re:

The new bill would not ban candidates from accepting private donations, so many would likely still opt for private fundraising. And some of that private donation is coming from outside the STATE of Hawaii... which leads me to believe there is cronyism within the state as in past recent elections... Candidates should not be allowed accepts donations from their cronies in other states as that has a tendency to lead to favoritism that is hidden from the Hawaiian taxpayers who would be footing the bill from tax monies. Other than that, I support the bill.

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/5/2023 1:49:01 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

SB1543 would set up a system of fully publicly financed elections. It would provide participating candidates with competitive amounts of funding they need to run an effective campaign, and would ban them from receiving any private donations at all. This system worked very well for the Hawai'i County Council races in 2010 and 2012, and currently works very well statewide in places like Connecticut and Maine.

It's crucially important that this body does everything in its power to remove the influence money has on politics. Corruption is growing problem that won't simply go away on its own. Please take this opportunity to get money out of politics and help get our democracy back on track. Mahalo!

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/5/2023 1:54:50 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Greg Puppione	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The sooner we get here, the faster special interests will stop dominating our elections, policies, and future of our community.

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/5/2023 1:55:41 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Miho Aoki	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members,

It's crucially important that this body does everything in its power to remove the influence money has on politics. Corruption is far too rampant in Hawai'i. 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.

SB1543 would set up a system of fully publicly financed elections, aka clean elections. It would provide participating candidates with competitive amounts of funding they need to run an effective campaign, and would ban them from receiving any private donations at all. This system worked very well for Hawai'i County Council races in 2010 and 2012 and currently works very well statewide in places like Connecticut and Maine.

I am asking you to take this opportunity to get money out of politics and give political power to the people!

Mahalo for your time and consideration,

Miho Aoki

96725

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/5/2023 2:31:13 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Chris Yuen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Sen. Rhoads and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee:

Please pass SB1543. We have to find a way for candidates to run competitive races for public office without relying on big donors who have their own agendas. A comprehensive public funding option worked well on the Big Island for county council elections in 2010-2012. Let's give this a try statewide. It has to be combined with aggressive enforcement of the no-coordination rules for "independent" campaign committees.

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/5/2023 2:34:57 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
sherry fisher	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/5/2023 2:38:26 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Maria Walker	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I writet today to express by strong support for SB1543, and ask you to vote in support of this measure. I believe public financing of elections is one of the most important ways to free our state political system from undue influence from corporations, businesses, and special interest groups. We are suffering many problems here in Hawaii that are related to campaign finance and gifts to legislators, and public funding for elections, with no monies allowed from personal or business donors, is a great way to level the playing field and make sure that our legislators are acting in the voters' best interests instead of a donor. Similar programs have been successful, with Maine and Connecticut, and I encourage you to vote to support SB1543 and help make our state political system more clean, fair, and transparent.

Mahalo for hearing my testimony.

Maria Walker

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/5/2023 2:40:15 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
karolle t. bidgood	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this bill and ask that you do the same.

Thank you.

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/5/2023 2:44:35 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shae Clark	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support SB 1543. Mahalo nui loa.

Shae

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/5/2023 3:02:38 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

support

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/5/2023 4:09:28 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Henri Etta Schmitz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support SB1543. Clean elections are critical for a functioning democracy. Respectfully,
Henri Etta Schmitz, Paauilo, 96776

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/5/2023 4:14:12 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mary Marvin Porter	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha

I strongly support SB 1543 (Relating To Public Financing For Candidates To Elected Office.). This program was done on Hawai'i Island as the Big Island's Clean Elections Pilot Program of 2010 and 2012. It was an excellent program and a great success. It is a much healthier democracy to give citizens the opportunity to run for office without having to be obligated to the moneyed interests and working constantly to raise funds. I support this statewide for all elections—as proposed in SB1543.

Please vote for SB 1543, Public Financing For Candidates To Elected Office

Mahalo,

Mary Marvin Porter

Island Eyes Video

Kea'au, Hawai'i 96749

808-982-9100

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/5/2023 4:21:03 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

We desperately need the next generation to step up to positions of leadership. But they cannot, and will not, as long as BIG money figures as prominently as it does in whether or not a candidate wins. Three quarters of Hawaii voters support a system of fully publicly financed elections. Clearly that would level the playing field and would attract more candidates willing to serve.

- Over half of all campaign donations in 2022 came from under 1000 donors who each gave at least \$6,000.
- Too many seats go uncontested because of the high cost of running--winners spend \$40K versus losers who spend \$16K.
- It will improve how the public views elected officials and diminish the stain of corruption.
- It has been done and it has worked. Locally the Hawaii island County Council has done it in 2010 and 2012. Nationally, Connecticut and Maine have done it. The only thing keeping Hawaii from having clean elections is the lack of political will.
- **Thank you Senator Rhoads for leading the way on this. Its time has come.**
- Let's not wait for the next wave of corruption scandals to get serious about clean elections. Our democracy depends on it. Please move this bill forward. Mahalo

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/5/2023 4:52:23 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Robert Douglas	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members,

It's crucially important that this body does everything in its power to remove the influence money has on politics. Corruption is far too rampant in Hawai'i. 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.

SB1543 would set up a system of fully publicly financed elections, aka clean elections. It would provide participating candidates with competitive amounts of funding they need to run an effective campaign, and would ban them from receiving any private donations at all. This system worked very well for Hawai'i County Council races in 2010 and 2012 and currently works very well statewide in places like Connecticut and Maine.

I am asking you to take this opportunity to get money out of politics and give political power to the people!

Mahalo for your time and consideration,
Bob Douglas

96720

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/5/2023 4:54:02 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Eileen Walko, MD	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I have been a practicing pediatrician in Hilo for the past 27 years. Hawaii has consistently led the way for much of the Mainland. We had the lowest per capita death rate by Covid under our local government's leadership and our people's willingness to adhere and keep safe. We must lead at least on the local level the path to fair elections whereas money funds (both Hawaiian and Mainland) do not dictate the slate of candidates.

Citizens United won in a narrow victory 5 v 4, and Justice Anthony Kennedy wrote that " limiting independent political spending" from corporations and other groups violated the 1st Amendment. The 5 justices who voted in favor assumed that independent spending was NOT corrupted and would be TRANSPARENT, AS we all know, both assumptions have proven FALSE. These special interest groups have essentially voided " equal time" campaigning statutes without accountability and in many cases traceability.

Please VOTE IN FAVOR of SB 1534 to get elections back to the correct pathway. AS a legislator, I am also sure you do not want to spend endless hours raising money vs. governing. Let Hawaii be one of the 3 states that lead the way in fair election financing.

MAHALO, Dr. Eileen Walko

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/5/2023 5:43:57 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kwailan Barsotti	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dark money has no place in public service. Those with the most money must not be able to influence policies through the ownership of public service officers. All funding must be transparent to allow citizens to know who is funding the politician and who has the most significant benefit from introducing laws. This model has seen great success in Main and Connecticut, and Hawaii can benefit from this by incorporating the framework into the foundational system of the electoral process. Many citizens are wary of politicians backed by dark money, which further erodes civic engagement. If the government is to run effectively, trust must be a vital component in the Hawaiian electoral system that is mutual for politicians and constituents. Imbalancing this relationship will have dire consequences for our society. Please support publicly funded elections.

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/5/2023 5:59:19 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha,

this is one of the easiest, most effective way to insure that our government is run for and by the People.

Rampant, secret campaign financing is creating a plutocracy in our nation despite our country being meant to lead the world in democratic ideals and process. This is where Hawai`i can step up. And step up it must.

if our state -- a fully blue, Democratic-controlled state -- can't muster the votes to easily pass this bill, then we might as well throw in the towell and declare ourselves part of a banana republic run by corporate and other special-interest controlled leaders. Seriously.

This is the time to give the power back and to insure that we have a One Person, One Vote rule of law.

mahalo for doing the right thing by supporting this bill.

sincerely

janice palma-glennie

kailau-kona

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/5/2023 6:04:15 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cynthia Punihaole Kennedy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

RE: SB 1543 Relating to Public Financing for Candidates to Elected Office

Description: Establishes a comprehensive system of public financing for all candidates seeking election to state and county public offices in the State of Hawai'i, to begin with, the 2024 general election year. Requires the Campaign Spending Commission to submit a report to the Legislature. Appropriates funds.

Hearing Date: Tuesday, Feb. 7, 2023, 9:30 AM; Conference Room 016 & Videoconference.

Position: Strong Support of SB 1543

Aloha, Honorable Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair; Honorable Senator Mike Gabbard Vice-Chair; and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary

SB 1543 establishes a comprehensive system of public financing for all candidates seeking election to state and county public offices in the State of Hawai'i. This would be the single biggest thing we could do to end corruption in our politics and start building a Hawai'i that puts our communities first, not big money interests.

I ask for your strong support for SB 1543 and return the political power to the people of Hawai'i nei.

Mahalo nui loa

Cynthia Punihaole Kennedy

96740

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/5/2023 6:56:16 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

I am in strongly support for SB1543.

The Big Island's Clean Elections Program of 2010 and 2012 was very popular and a great success. Even initial detractors of the program acknowledged that it was better to meet with their constituents about issues rather than time spent fund-raising.

SB1543 as proposed establishes a more citizen concentric elections and a more citizen focused government SB1543.

Respectfully submitted,

Keith Neal

Waimea

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/5/2023 6:56:58 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Millicent Cox	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This bill is an excellent way to bring publicly funded elections to Hawaii and reduce the role of private contributions.

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/5/2023 7:09:28 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Timothy Vandever	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This bill helps to stop the rapid movement in our state toward government owned and controlled by a handful of wealthy donors. It will make elections more competetve and allow candidates to spend more time discussing issues and less time raising money.

Democrats OFFICIALLY support government reforms that limit the influence of money on the creation or execution of policy. We support campaign finance reform that limits the amount of money organizations, corporations or individuals can donate to political campaigns. We support full public-financing of elections.

The people are watching.

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/5/2023 7:30:25 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Brendan Loring	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I would like to express strong support for SB 1543. This is an issue which many people care about deeply and which significantly effects the existence of true democracy. Consider the statements made regarding this bill and the implications it holds for the wishes of the people.

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/5/2023 7:58:22 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cliff & Mary DeVries	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Karl Rhoads has introduced an excellent bill modeled after the successful programs of both Maine and Connecticut.

The legislature members have a habit of receiving funds from lobbyist to support their bills. To keep legislature members working only for the people of Hawaii this bill needs to be passed.;

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/5/2023 8:38:33 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kristine Kubat	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Mahalo to Senator Karl Rhoads for taking leadership on this critical issue.

I urge all committee members to vote in support of this bill which will establish a system of fully publicly financed elections. It's time to end the corrupting influence money has on politics. This measure is a critical first step.

Mahalo for your time and consideration,

Kristine Kubat 96720

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/6/2023 2:07:00 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Robin Miyajima	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill. I think that the cost of publically funding a candidate's campaign would be small compared to the state's overall budget, and I think that it would allow for more transparency and less worry about where the money for a specific candidate is coming from.

I don't want our elections to be a contest of who gets the richest donor to line their pockets. If our elected officials work for us, they should be paid by us, but only by us. Not by whatever rich company wants to buy a seat in the legislature.

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/6/2023 4:49:04 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Chloe Maxmin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To Esteemed Members of the Hawi'i Legislature:

My name is Chloe Maxmin. I am a former legislator for Maine, In 2018, I ran and won for my hometown House seat. In 2020, I ran for the Maine Senate and won. Both times, I ran as a Clean Elections Candidate. I write today in strong support of this program for your state.

The main reason why I love CE is that it evens the playing field and allows citizens of all identities and backgrounds to run for office, whether or not they know rich folks who can finance their campaigns. We need elected bodies that represent the diversity of our communities, and CE enables anyone to run for office and finance their campaigns.

An extended consequence of this is that candidates can spend their time talking to constituents instead of constantly raising money. The low barrier for a \$5 contribution also allows many more citizens to invest in a candidate and feel like they have a stake in their success.

Second, it keeps big money out of politics. It is a point of pride in Maine to "run clean," as we say. If you don't, people will scour through campaign finance reports to see which PAC is funding you, who they're connected to, and how that impacts your legislative work. It truly enables big money to stay out of local races. As a result, budgets for races are fixed and small, forcing candidates to do the work instead of relying on big ad buys or expensive media outlets.

This program works so well in Maine. It is easy to collect \$5 contributions online or in-person. There is meticulous oversight and rigorous enforcement of the program, ensuring its integrity. We all love it here, and I am very excited that Hawi'i is consiering such a program.

If I can be of servie to you in this process, please reach out.

Sincerely and with respect,

Sen. Chloe Maxmin

207 841 9342

Maine

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/6/2023 5:05:10 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Robert P Thomas Jr	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members,

It's crucially important that this body does everything in its power to remove the influence money has on politics. Corruption is far too rampant in Hawai'i. 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.

SB1543 would set up a system of fully publicly financed elections, aka clean elections. It would provide participating candidates with competitive amounts of funding they need to run an effective campaign, and would ban them from receiving any private donations at all. This system worked very well for Hawai'i County Council races in 2010 and 2012 and currently works very well statewide in places like Connecticut and Maine.

I am asking you to take this opportunity to get money out of politics and give political power to the people!

Mahalo for your time and consideration,

Ele and Robert Thomas

11650 N. Europa Place

Tucson, AZ. 85737

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/6/2023 7:12:04 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jill Mulholland	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SB1543 directly supports fair and equal campaign funding vital to the preservation of the democratic process.

There has been a noticeable and alarming increase in the practice of profit motivated campaign contributions that directly oppose and outspend the preservation of local values.

SB1543 would help to support local interests. It is also complex enough to deter underqualified candidates.

Passing this bill wil give the opportunity for voters to support candidates that they can feel truly represent them.

The next step will be to design spending caps for special interest and outside PAC groups motivated by profits over local values and lifestyle.

Thank you

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/6/2023 8:14:18 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
RONALD R RIESS	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please vote no on SB1543. Congress is there to meet the needs of the people not out raising funds to stay in office. The more that can be raised in the shortest amount of time is to be encouraged. It does not make it a bribe, etc. unless strings are attached which can be prosecuted. Better idea: Congress provide equal amount of funds to each candidate which must be strictly accounted for and no outside sources may be solicited in kind or cash.

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/6/2023 8:40:59 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members,

It's crucially important that this body does everything in its power to remove the influence money has on politics. Corruption is far too rampant in Hawai'i. 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.

SB1543 would set up a system of fully publicly financed elections, aka clean elections. It would provide participating candidates with competitive amounts of funding they need to run an effective campaign, and would ban them from receiving any private donations at all. This system worked very well for Hawai'i County Council races in 2010 and 2012 and currently works very well statewide in places like Connecticut and Maine.

I am asking you to take this opportunity to get money out of politics and give political power to the people!

Mahalo for your time and consideration,

Noriko Donna

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/6/2023 9:22:24 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Anne ('Antu') Harvey	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members,

It's crucially important that this body does everything in its power to remove the influence money has on politics, overwhelming the voices and influence of individual community members and residents. Winning publicly financed elections is the single biggest thing we could do to end pay-to-play manipulation in our politics and start building a Hawai'i that puts kama'āina and kānaka maoli first, not big money interests.

SB1543 would set up a system of fully publicly financed elections, aka clean elections. It would provide participating candidates with competitive amounts of funding they need to run an effective campaign, and would ban them from receiving any private donations at all. This system worked very well for Hawai'i County Council races in 2010 and 2012 and currently works very well statewide in places like Connecticut and Maine.

I am asking you to take this opportunity to get money out of politics and give political power to the people!

Mahalo for your time and consideration,

Anne ('Antu') Harvey

96725

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/6/2023 9:25:10 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

I support SB1543 that establishes a system of fully publicly financed elections, aka clean elections. We must remove the influence money has on politics. Corruption is far too rampant in Hawaii and the pay to play behavior needs to end now.

SB1543 would provide participating candidates with competitive amounts of funding they need to run an effective campaign, and would ban them from receiving any private donations at all. This system worked very well for Hawaii County Council races in 2010 and 2012, and currently works very well statewide in places like Connecticut and Maine.

Please take this opportunity to get money out of politics and give political power to the people!
Pass SB1543. Mahalo.

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/6/2023 9:40:11 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Merle Hayward	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support SB1543 to create clean elections that ban corporations/organizations from bribing politicians, in order for elected officials to work to produce society safe and supportive for citizens.

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/6/2023 9:53:52 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Megan Deets	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support publicly funded elections.

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/6/2023 11:10:21 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jordan Loudon	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Greetings,

I am writing in support of SB1543.

This bill is a step in the right direction to try and address the extreme level of corruption that has been unviold over the last years in the government of this state. By allowing campagins to be funded publicly, we lessen the chances that those with ill intentions can influence policy decisions. This gives those that want to make a real positive difference in their community the chance to do so without feeling the need to play paws to those with monetary wealth. Hawai‘i desperately needs a chance to wash its hands of dirty players in politics and positions of leadership.

I strongly urge that those in the position to do so, allow this bill to pass.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Jordan Loudon

Resident of Wailuanuiāho‘ano

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/6/2023 11:29:16 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

Hello ommittee Members,

My name is Nanea Lo. I'm born and raised in the Hawaiian Kingdom a Kanaka Maoli.

I'm writing in FULL SUPPORT of SB1543.

It's crucially important that this body does everything in its power to remove the influence money has on politics. Corruption is far too rampant in Hawai'i and the pay to play behavior of our politicians needs to end now. Money in politics holds back progress on all the issues important to local working families: from affordable housing, to cost of living, to protecting our environment, and more.

SB1543 would set up a system of fully publicly financed elections, a.k.a. clean elections. It would provide participating candidates with competitive amounts of funding they need to run an effective campaign, and would ban them from receiving any private donations at all. This system worked very well for Hawai'i County Council races in 2010 and 2012, and currently works very well statewide in places like Connecticut and Maine.

Please take this opportunity to get money out of politics and give political power to the people! 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.

SUPPORZT SB1543.

me ke aloha 'āina,

Nanea Lo, Mō'ili'ili

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/6/2023 11:30:35 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
jeanne wheeler	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this bill - we absolutely need 'clean elections' in HI... please pass it! Mahalo,
JW

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/6/2023 11:37:26 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cory Harden	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please help get big money out of elections! Publicly funded elections have been called "the reform that makes all other reforms possible". The corruption in Hawai'i is a national embarrassment.

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/6/2023 11:59:46 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Monica Stone	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Mahalo Committee Members for receiving my testimony in support of SB1543.

Getting big money out of local politics will make room for the views of the people to be heard and allow space for the ideals of democracy to be practiced. As Legislators we are counting on you to create pathways to healing of the land and it's people! Mahalo,

Monica Rott Stone

Kailua-Kona, HI 96740

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/6/2023 12:58:52 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Manahel Al-hozail	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Absolutely oppose using tax payer dollars for political companies. If a politician wants to be elected they should have to raise their own support to do so.

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/6/2023 1:07:15 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Emerson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Protect the keiki, this shouldnt even be a question. Increase the punishment for even officials involved. In August 2021, 63 kids went missing in Big Island. Let that sink in. They say slavery is dead but child trafficking and pedophillia are alive and well. Dont sweep it under the carpet. Everyone is watching.

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/6/2023 1:10:26 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members,

It's crucially important that this body does everything in its power to remove the influence money has on politics. Corruption is far too rampant in Hawai'i and the pay to play behavior of our politicians needs to end now. Money in politics holds back progress on all the issues important to local working families: from affordable housing, to cost of living, to protecting our environment, and more.

SB1543 would set up a system of fully publicly financed elections, a.k.a. clean elections. It would provide participating candidates with competitive amounts of funding they need to run an effective campaign, and would ban them from receiving any private donations at all. This system worked very well for Hawai'i County Council races in 2010 and 2012, and currently works very well statewide in places like Connecticut and Maine.

Please take this opportunity to get money out of politics and give political power to the people!

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.

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/6/2023 1:51:27 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kirk Caldwell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Karl Rhodes and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, I am testifying in support of SB 1543 pertaining to publically funded elections. Attempts have been made through out the years to regulate the time, place and manner of political contributions in local races in Hawaii. When I was member of the Hawaii State House we attempted to do so on more than one occason. One effort resulted in a pilot project to publically fund County Council races on Hawaii Island. The only way to elimnate the private funding of elections in Hawaii is to provide a mechanism that publically funds the campaigns of those qualified candidates running for state office in Hawaii. Time, place and manner legislation, such as that passed last year by the legislature and those bills introduced in the 2023 Legislature are a good start, but they do not eliminate the potential for abuse of the campaign finance system. Only the elimination of privately funding campaigns will accomplish this goal. An added benefit is that it will level the playing field for all candidates so that in similar races all qualified candidates will have the same amount of funds to run on. Everyone starts on the same yard line. Those candidates who work the hardest and are best able to deliver a message to their voters with the same amount of funds wins. This is a goal we should all aspire to. I hope this year the legislature passes such legislation. Sincerely, Kirk Caldwell

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/6/2023 3:34:48 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

Removing the influence of big money in politics is so essential to enacting reform that will help those most in need across the state. Elections must be fully publicly financed, as they are in Maine. I urge you to do what's right and ensure that power is spread evenly among the people of Hawaii, not just concentrated with the wealthy few. If we want to address widespread corruption - which we see all too often and has left citizens weary of local politics - publicly financed elections is absolutely essential. Please do the right thing. Mahalo!

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/6/2023 3:51:01 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Eris Dela Cruz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a local resident of Hawaii, I support SB 1543.

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/6/2023 3:52:11 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Andrea Nandoskar	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strongly support!

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/6/2023 3:53:05 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mark Van Horne	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support publicly funded elections as a way to reduce the undue influence of private campaign contributions to candidates.

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/6/2023 3:54:26 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
John NAYLOR	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

Let's even the playing field & get the \$\$\$ out of our elections.

Mahalo, JN Makawao

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/6/2023 4:05:54 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
chris j cannon	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

With respect,

The fact that we are even discussing the "why" behind limiting private donations to political campaigns is laughable. We live in a world, country, and state with absurdly large wealth gaps and our systems in place (especially political systems) need to safeguard--not enable further--those with limited funds by not allowing those with unlimited funds to donate to campaigns for the benefit of their own agendas.

I fully support this bill.

Christopher Cannon

Kaua'i resident

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/6/2023 4:08:46 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Laa Poepoe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

supportive of a fair and equitable election process based on merit rather than funding.

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/6/2023 4:09:38 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marion McHenry	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This is an excellent bill modeled after the successful of both Maine and Conneticut. I strongly support this bill. I urge you to please support this bill. Publicly funding our elections is a crucial step in keeping our elections fair and our elected offices honest.

Sincerely,

Marion McHenry

Kauai

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/6/2023 4:10:52 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jonathan Cender	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Let's have elections by and for the people. One aspect to make this happen is public funding of elections. SB1534 is a great beginning for elections that reflect people and not corporations.

Mahalo,

Jonathan Cender, Koloa, Kauai

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/6/2023 4:32:48 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Eileen McKee	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I write in support of SB1543. Publicly funded elections would level the playing field for all candidates. Money has corrupted our elections nationwide. It would be great to see our state step up and do the right thing. As I recall, this came up as early as 2004-ish at the legislature and it died. Let's fix it this time.

Mahalo for considering my testimony.

Eileen McKee, Kihei

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/6/2023 4:34:43 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Thomas Brandt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strong support

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/6/2023 4:36:38 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Frank Latinis	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We need Public Funded Financing for Elected Officials.

Frank Latinis

Kona Palisades

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/6/2023 4:38:04 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Barbara Penn	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We must stop this insanity of buying elections! Public funding would solve this issue.

Mahalo,

Barbara Penn, Wailua

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/6/2023 5:01:58 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Anjani Thomas	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I fully support publicly funded elections.

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/6/2023 5:13:44 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
len pepper	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I supp[ort public financing of elections in Hawaii

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/6/2023 5:25:15 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
John & Rita Shockley	Testifying for FREE ACCESS COALITION	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha!

The Free Access Coalition supports SB1543. Let's make our elections about the people's wishes rather than money.

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/6/2023 5:38:47 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
irene kloepfer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha. This bill is the beginning of getting corruption out of politics by getting big money out of politics. We all have a choice at every moment, pono or pilikia. We must choose pono. This bill must pass if we are to save our democracy. Mahalo

February 6, 2023

Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair
Committee on Judiciary
Tuesday, February 7, 2023
9:30 am
via Video Conference



RE: SB1543 Relating to Public Financing for Candidates to Elected Office (SUPPORT)

Dear Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard & Committee Members,

Chamber of Sustainable Commerce testifies in STRONG SUPPORT of SB1543, which establishes a comprehensive system of public financing for all candidates seeking election to state and county public offices in the State of Hawai'i and appropriates funds.

As small business owners who believe we can strengthen our economy without hurting employees, consumers, communities or the environment, we urge this committee to vote in favor of passing SB1543, which will bring Hawaii closer to a democracy, and away from the corporatocracy currently influencing outcomes in our elections in favor of those candidates who pander to big money supporters over the interests and concerns of the majority of working families and small business owners.

Luxury developers, agri-chemical corporations and defense contractors donate the max to candidates who do their bidding; then they hire local lobbyists who write max contributions to these same candidates; and then some of those unchallenged candidates buy tickets to campaign fundraisers for candidates who have contested races. These maximum contributions quickly add up to a campaign war chest that is hard to

Publicly financing campaigns, rooted in minimum number of qualified small dollar contributions, gives candidates, who do not pander to monied interests, an opportunity to educate voters in their district that they are a viable candidate. In addition, the legislature should make the following changes: cap the maximum contribution allowable down to \$100 per donor per candidate, prohibit professional lobbyists from making campaign contributions to candidates, and prohibit candidate campaigns from making contributions to other candidates' campaigns.

**Hawaii
Legislative
Council**

Maile Meyer
Na Mea Hawaii
Honolulu

Russel Rudderman
Island Naturals
Hilo / Kona

Tina Wildberger
Kihei Ice
Maui

Joell Edwards
Wainiha Country Market
Kauai

Kim Coco Iwamoto
AQuA Rentals, LLC
Honolulu

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/6/2023 6:13:13 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jonathan Fern	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Senator DelaCruz:

Please support SB1543, to provide financial support for candidates for office. I think that this is an important thing to do, to support grass roots politics here in Hawaii.

Thank you so much.

Jonathan "Jef" Fern

Retired Wahiawa teacher

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/6/2023 6:31:18 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ruta Jordans	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Back when I lived in Maine public financing of elections had just begun. A good friend who could not have afforded the cost of running for state representative was able to garner sufficient \$5 donations to qualify, ran for office and won. That is how it should be - not making money be a deciding factor in an election. Please support this bill as a beginning to getting money out of Hawaii politics!

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/6/2023 6:46:05 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mary Lu Kelley	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Ali ,

Please pass this bill which is based on research done by Senator Karl Rhoads who has introduced this excellent bill modeled after the successful programs of both Maine and Connecticut.. I grew up in CT and I approve of this bill.

Vey important bill to pass!!

Thank you..

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/6/2023 7:02:16 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Georgia L Hoopes	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support publicly funded elections

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/6/2023 7:04:36 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
John Fitzpatrick	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Kakou,

I support SB 1543 because publically funded elections is how we make the voice of the people more powerful than the voice of wealthy campaign contributions. Let's take the power back after the disastrous citizens united decision and put power in the peoples hands.

Please pass SB 1543 and get out from under the thumb of powerful campaign contributors.

Mahalo,
Fitz

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/6/2023 7:13:21 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Amos Zollo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Why not have publicly funded elections? We are in fact the people that live, work, pay taxes here in Hawaii. We as the people do not approve of big corporations influencing our elections and coercing our politicians to act a certain way. Therefore, I am in support of this bill, and please take into account that I would like to live here for the rest of my life and do not want handouts. I will do my part.

Feb 6, 2023

Sen. Rhoads and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

I am writing on behalf of Global HOPE (Hawaii Organization for Peace and the Environment), a registered independent student organization at UH Hilo, in favor of comprehensive public funding for candidates for political office (SB 1453). Global HOPE students supported Hawaii County's Clean Elections Pilot Program of 2010-2012. Based on the experience of the pilot program, we believe that if SB 1453 becomes law, elected officials who may be skeptical of publicly funded elections will realize that they would rather spend their time meeting with their constituents and discussing community issues than hustling for donations.

By passing SB 1453, not only will the playing field for political candidates be leveled, but a more secure trust between voters and representatives can be fostered. There is a responsibility for candidates to abide by the terms set by the people, which is often muddled by the interests of wealthy lobbyists who shift priorities from creating effective policies to having their favors granted. If Hawaii transitioned to public funding, which would alleviate this issue, candidates would no longer have to rely on or act according to outside, greedy influences.

As college students, it often feels as if we are not heard or taken seriously. A recent statistical analysis of US government policy by political scientists Martin Gilens and Benjamin Page confirmed that while the policy preferences of economics and organized groups representing business interests have a substantial impact on what bills become law, the policy preferences of ordinary American citizens have no measurable influence. We hope that our political participation can push the collective voice, but the privatization of elections makes this nearly impossible. The youth's faith in the current political system has eroded and measures need to be taken to reach a state of true democratic process. Gilens and Page have argued that public funding is an excellent way to reduce the corrupting effect of private money. We believe that the cost of clean elections is a small price to pay for the larger humanitarian, environmental, and social problems that result when candidates are sold to the highest bidder. It is necessary for the protection of our planet and the next generation that are forced to live in the less than favorable conditions set by lawmakers.

Sincerely,
Adelie el Rosario
President, Global HOPE



150 Hamakua Drive #341
Kailua, HI 96734

(808) 224-0644
our-hawaii.org

Testimony in Support of SB1543

Committee members,

Mahalo for the opportunity to speak before you today. On behalf of the 8,000+ supporters of Our Hawai'i, I stand in strong support for Senate Bill 1543, relating to public financing of candidates to elected office. Our supporters are local people — kama'aina and kânaka maoli, keiki and kûpuna, 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.

I, too, am worried. At 31, growing up here I was told that things would change if young people “just voted.” My whole life I have voted. The first opportunity I got. I have seen new governors, new legislators, new council-members, and what has happened in those 31 years? Median home prices are now over \$1 million, our rent is the highest in the nation, our water is poisoned, our islands are sinking, we are still dangerously dependent on imports of food and other goods, many of my friends can't afford to live here anymore, our teachers and schools are chronically under-funded, and there are more Native Hawaiians now living outside of Hawai'i than in our islands. As crisis after crisis mounts up, transformational action, frankly, fails to come from these halls. Why would my peers and people younger than me believe voting would make things change? We haven't seen it. Not in my lifetime.

Young people and working people aren't voting at higher rates because we're apathetic or don't care. It's because we're akamai; we're actually paying attention. We know that for too long, big money interests: luxury developers, big tourism, big agriculture, energy monopolies, military contractors, and the who's who of the wealthy and well-connected have held a stranglehold over our politics, drowning out the voices, values, and desires of the maka'ainana — the every day working people. Over half of all campaign donations in 2022 came from just 980 donors who gave at least \$6,000. This is a small group of people, maxing out to candidates and committee chairs during elections, to cash in on favors during legislative session and determine what bills live or die.

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 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.

SB1543 is that. It's a historic 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. We know it works, we've seen it in places like Connecticut, Maine, and now Seattle. We know it's popular. In addition to the strong public support, the bill has the backing already of the state Democratic Party, current and former legislators from both the Republican and Democratic Parties, and was introduced by a historic 40% of legislators in both chambers. We know we have the resources: the



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program would cost around %.2 of the general budget and with our current surplus alone, could be funded for 100 years.

We have the policy. We have the resources. We have the public desire for change. The only question is do we have the political will? That will be up to you to make it so. As you deliberate, know the public is watching.

Lastly, on a technical policy point, I'd like to attach for the record the request for an amendment to increase the amount of funding allotted in the legislation for Maui County Council Races. This past cycle on Maui County saw out of control spending by corporate, out of county, and even out of Hawai'i interests. Due to the [now very competitive nature](#) of the Maui County Council races, the costs of campaigning has increased in recent cycles. This cycle (see attached chart), the average winning amount was over \$58,000, with some candidates spending north of \$100,000. This, of course, does not even include the very robust and expensive [independent expenditures](#).

For all of these reasons, I want to advocate strongly for increasing the Maui Council allocation to at least \$50,000, if not more, for these county-wide races. In addition to the below chart, I've also attached a report conducted by Our Hawai'i on big money spending and influence in Maui County.

2022 Maui Council Winners

<i>Candidate name</i>	<i>Total expenditures</i>
Thomas Cook	\$138,105.55
Gabe Johnson	\$16,913.52
Tasha Kama	\$37,734.69
Tamara Paltin	\$13,037.14
Keani Rawlins-Fernandez	\$34,187.71
Shane Sinenci	\$18,602.79
Yuki Sugimura	\$69,186.32
Nohelani U'u-Hodgins	\$137,635.56
<i>Total</i>	\$465,403.28
<i>Average</i>	\$58,175.41
<i>Median</i>	\$35,961.20



MAUI MONEY 2022

Exposing the Big Money Influencing Maui Nui Elections

Report by:

Our Hawai'i Action

07-28-2022



Overview

In the last 4 years, the Maui County Council has finally begun to put the needs of working families and the protection of our natural resources over corporate interests, in the backdrop of rapidly changing conditions for the people of our Maui Nui islands and our way of life. Money was shifted from promoting tourism towards local agriculture, a moratorium was placed on hotel construction, our water control and crises were taken more seriously, and out-of-state renters and investors and property owners were cracked down in order to address the housing crisis.

Now, with all the Council seats and the Mayor's office up for grabs, big money development, hospitality and tourism, and other interests that stand to lose from further cracking down on overdevelopment, environmental exploitation, and more are intervening in the elections to try to hand-pick their candidates. Meanwhile, [new polling from Our Hawai'i and Data for Progress](#) released this month shows that Hawai'i voters are more likely to support candidates who do reject campaign contributions from out-of-state developers, hotel conglomerates, energy companies (74%) and corporate PACS and lobbyists (70%) and support moving to ban corporate contributions and enact publicly financed elections (74%).

This report aims to shine a light on what's at play, what's at stake, and who's behind it all by educating voters about the campaign finances and contributions of major candidates for Maui County Council and Mayor this August and November. We also take a look at and connect the dots between contributions to candidates and County Contracts awarded in the past two years.

We find a consistent pattern of key interests, largely in the real estate, development, and tourist industries, but also others, intervening in key contests to try to support candidates they hope might be favorable to their interests. We hope this timely report can serve as an educational resource for voters as they prepare to cast their ballots this election.

A note on our data:

The data for this report is sourced entirely from public documents, including Hawai'i Campaign Spending Commission public financing and contains only up to the most recent July 15th candidate campaign filings.

You can view our grouping of the Campaign Spending Commission data [here](#) and the data for County contracts [here](#), or view the raw data yourself at the [Campaign Spending Commission's database](#) and the [Maui County Current Awards website](#).

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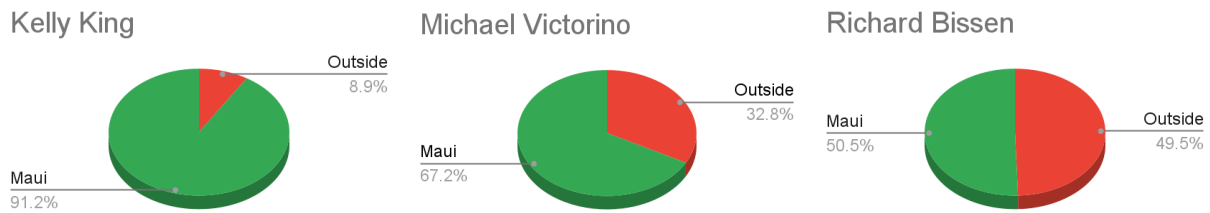
- [The Race for Mayor](#)
- [County Council Races](#)
- [Connecting the Dots: Contributions and County Contracts](#)
- [Conclusion and Policy Recommendations](#)

The Race for Mayor

The race for Mayor has three major competitive candidates: Incumbent Mayor Michael Victorino, Judge Richard Bissen, and Councilmember Kelly King. Here we look at the campaign finance of these candidates.

Support from Maui County locals vs. Outside Donors

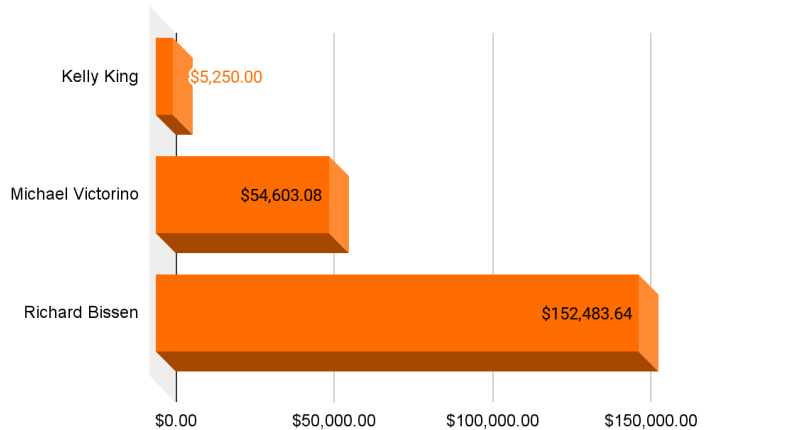
There's a stark difference between the three major candidates when looking at the geographic sources of their donors, with Judge Bissen receiving almost half of his contributions from outside Maui and one third of Incumbent Mayor Victorino's donors coming from outside. Meanwhile 91% of Councilmember King's donors come from Maui County.



Developer influence

Another notable area of contrast between the three major candidates is in their financing from Real Estate & Development interests, which heavily participate in elections and lobbying of the Mayor council in order to get their sometimes controversial projects approved. Bissen has received over \$150,000 from these interests to date, almost 40% of his overall contributions, while Victorino has received a smaller but still significant \$54,600. Kelly King has received only just over \$5,000 from any real estate interests on the islands.

Contributions from Real Estate & Development



BUNDLING: At least \$40,500 of Richard Bissen's donors can be traced back to a legal, but ethically questionable, practice called "bundling" which is essentially a way of skirting caps on donations from individual and corporate donors, put in place to limit corrupting influence in our campaign finance system and governments. Fundraisers, or agents of the corporation, gather large donations from multiple sources

*within a company or interest group (usually senior business leaders and their spouses or other family members) and present them together to the campaign. Most observers believe this is with the goal of buying access to or influence over a potential representative once they are elected. In Bissen’s case, our investigation uncovered apparent bundling from the **Kobayashi Group and Black Sand, two development and hotel companies run by the powerful Kobayashi family amounting to \$20,500, including 7 donations from leaders in the Kobayashi Group which added up to \$16,500 all on the same day (June 7th).** Similarly, known for their predatory landlord practices in Kihei and their retail centers, **the MW group bundled \$20,000 from 11 donors across a 19 day period to the Bissen campaign.***

County Council Races

In August voters will narrow the field for four competitive seats for County Council: South Maui, Kahului, Makawao/Pā‘ia/Ha‘ikū, and Upcountry. In November, they’ll elect the full council. For now, this report focuses on these top competitive races. We pull out notable topline for each candidate and provide summary breakdowns. Candidates are listed alphabetically by first name.

South Maui

Dennis O’Shea

According to campaign finance reports, Dennis O’Shea has raised \$0 and spent \$1,557.48 of his own funds.

Robin Knox

Robin Knox is 93% funded by Maui County residents, and received no money from PACs, developers, or hotels.

Summary

<i>Real estate</i>	\$1,000	7.48%
<i>Environmental Advocates & Philanthropists</i>	\$11,500.00	85.98%
<i>\$100 and under</i>	\$875	6.54%
Total	\$13,375	100.00%

Location

<i>Maui County</i>	\$12,375	92.53%
<i>Outside Maui County</i>	\$1,000	7.47%

Tom Cook

Almost 3 out of 4 of every dollar raised (74.93%) by Tom Cook comes from Real Estate and Development interests, and 43% of his campaign's total funding comes from outside of Maui County.

Summary

<i>Real Estate & Development</i>	\$21,215.76	68.65%
<i>PACs</i>	\$5,5000	17.8%
<i>Miscellaneous large donors</i>	\$3,633.99	11.75%
<i>\$100 and under</i>	\$555.84	1.80%
Total	\$30,905.59	100.00%

Location

<i>Maui County</i>	\$15,478.82	50.08%
<i>Outside Maui County</i>	\$15,426.77	49.92%

Kahului

Buddy Nobriga

Over a third of Buddy Nobriga's contributions come from Political Action Committees and about a quarter come from the Real Estate & Development industry, for a total of ~60% of funds coming from these two sources. Moreover, ~40% of contributions come from outside of Maui County.

Summary

<i>PACs</i>	\$8,124	35.55%
<i>Real estate & Development</i>	\$5,500.00	24.07%
<i>Miscellaneous large donors</i>	\$7,650.00	33.47%
<i>\$100 and under</i>	\$1,580	6.91%
Total	\$22,854.20	100.00%

Location

<i>Maui County</i>	\$13,730.00	60.08%
<i>Outside Maui County</i>	\$9,124.20	39.92%

Cara Flores

The majority of Cara Flores' campaign funds to date come from a loan she took out, but of the funds she has directly raised from donors, 80.67% are from small donors, under \$100, and 75% are from Maui County.

Summary

<i>Loan</i>	\$5,000.00
<i>\$100 and under</i>	\$2,316.87
<i>Other</i>	\$554.99
Total	7,871.86

Location

<i>Maui County</i>	\$2,171.87	75.63%
<i>Outside Maui County</i>	\$699.99	24.37%

Carol Lee Kamekona

Though Carol Lee Kamekona has \$2,396.51 on hand from her last election, she has only raised \$649.88 so far this cycle. 100% of her donations come from small donors.

Tasha Kama

Of Tasha Kama's total contributions, she received a combined 99.59% from Political Action Committees and Real Estate and Development interests, and 42.24% of her funds come from outside the county.

Summary

<i>PACs</i>	\$6,000.00	44.44%
<i>Real estate & development</i>	\$6,500.00	48.15%
<i>Miscellaneous large donors</i>	\$900	6.66%
<i>\$100 or under</i>	\$100	0.75%
Total	\$13,500.00	100.00%

Location

<i>Maui County</i>	\$7800	57.76%
<i>Outside Maui County</i>	\$5,700.00	42.24%

Makawao, Pā'ia, Ha'ikū

Dave DeLeon

About half of Dave DeLeon's campaign contributions have come from the real estate and development industry.

Summary

<i>PACs & Lobbyists</i>	\$2,700	15.12%
<i>Real Estate, Development, Construction</i>	\$8,623.37	48.27%
<i>Miscellaneous large donors</i>	\$5,310.44	29.73%
<i>\$100 and under</i>	\$1,229.73	6.88%
Total	\$17,863.54	100.00%

Location

<i>Maui County</i>	\$15,156.58	84.85%
<i>Outside Maui County</i>	\$2,706.96	15.15%

Nara Boone

Though she hasn't raised much, 100% of Nara Boone's donations are from Maui County and she's accepted no donations from PACs, real estate developers, hotel conglomerates, etc.

Summary

<i>Over \$100</i>	\$2,000	71%
<i>\$100 and under</i>	\$816	29%
Total	\$2,816	100%

Nohelani U'u-Hodgins

Nohelani's donors constitute a "who's who" of developers across Maui and Hawai'i more broadly, with real estate, development, and construction making up over 65% of contributions so far. About a third of contributions are from out of the county.

Summary

<i>PACs and lobbyists</i>	\$10,000.00	15.84%
<i>Real Estate, Development, Construction</i>	\$41,500.00	65.73%
<i>Miscellaneous large donors</i>	\$9,245.54	14.64%
<i>\$100 and under</i>	\$2,392.21	3.79%

Total	\$63,137.75	100.00%
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Location

<i>Maui County</i>	\$41,887.75	66.33%
<i>Outside Maui County</i>	\$21,250.00	33.67%

Upcountry

Jordan Hocker

~60% of Hocker’s donations are from small donors giving under \$100.

Summary

<i>Over \$100</i>	\$1,000	41.46%
<i>\$100 or under</i>	\$1,412.00	58.54%
Total	\$2,412.00	100%

Renee Cruz

Self-funded. Only \$100 was raised outside of the candidate's own money.

Yuki Sugimura

According to records, Yuki Sugimura has received a combined 66.5% of her campaign contributions from PACs, lobbyists, and the Real Estate and Development industry to date, and over 37% of her donations have come from outside the county.

Summary

<i>PACs & Lobbyists</i>	\$11,500.00	28.04%
<i>Real Estate & Development</i>	\$13,525.00	32.96%
<i>Miscellaneous large donors</i>	\$6,653.52	16.22%
<i>\$100 and under</i>	\$9,345.00	22.78%
Total	\$41,023.52	100.00%

Location

<i>Maui County</i>	\$25,773.52	62.83%
<i>Outside Maui County</i>	\$15,250.00	37.17%

Connecting the Dots: Contributions and County Contracts

Hawai'i State law dictates that it *"shall be unlawful for any person who enters into any contract with the State [or] any of the counties" to "make any contribution to any candidate committee...or to any candidate...for any political purpose."*

Our review of current government contracts awarded during this election cycle would, on surface, make it appear that there are dozens of companies currently in violation of this law in Maui County, as our chart shows below. But upon further investigation, the current way that the law is interpreted is that it only regulates direct contributions from corporations and their PACs – not from the owners, President, Vice President, Chairman, Executives, their spouses, or others who stand to directly profit from the contract. This is a major loophole in State and County law, and our review demonstrates it is being exploited.

We cross-referenced Maui County Contracts awarded in 2021 and 2022 with campaign contributions from owners, decisionmakers, senior staff, directors, and family members associated with those same interests in the 2021-2022 election cycle.

Pay-to-Play: Contracts and Contributions

Company	Total value of Maui County contracts awarded 2021-2022	Maui Campaign contributions 2021-2022
Pacific Pipe Co.	\$727,632.60	\$10,500
Goodfellow Bros.	\$4,623,750.00	\$48,000
Jim Falk Valley Isle Motors	\$485,846.17	\$7,000
Bowers & Kubota	\$2,447,332.00	\$4,250
SSFm	\$1,775,808.00	\$1,750
Hawaiian Dredging	\$11,860,300.00	\$6,040
ALPHA Inc.	\$18,616,060.00	\$6,000
Munekiyo & Hiraga	\$112,040.12	\$2,250
Jobline Xpress	\$175,000.00	\$500
F&H construction	\$9,577,339.71	\$1,000
Nishikawa Architects	\$176,686.00	\$800
ECM	\$192,354.00	\$1,450
TJ Gomes Trucking	\$2,096,575.00	\$1,000
Fukumoto Engineering	\$1,507,664.00	\$950
Soderholm Sales	\$284,161.00	\$540
RT Tanaka Engineers	\$376,110.48	\$1,250
Lahaina Int'l Marketplace	\$55,000.00	\$3,000
Total	\$55,089,659.08	\$96,280

As you can see, there are 17 companies with Maui County Contracts whose senior staff, owners, directors, other decision makers, or their close family have also made significant contributions to Maui County campaigns this cycle. In total this represents about \$100,000 contributed for a total of \$55 million in contracts awarded. If you thought of these campaign contributions as business investments, they'd collectively yield about a 550% "return on investment." Not bad!

And if that feels like a stretch, if you look underneath the patterns of donations, you can see that many of these people do view their campaign contributions as "costs of doing business." Why else would you donate significant sums of money to multiple candidates in a race if you were not trying to "play both sides" and curry favor with multiple candidates who you think you can later extract concessions or business from. Some examples:

- Jim Falk Valley Isle Motors associates, who sells vehicles to the county, donated \$4,000 to Mayoral candidate Michael Victorino, and 3,000 to Richard Bissen.
- Bowers & Kubota, with \$2.5 million in contracts, kept it even with \$2,000 each to Victorino and Bissen
- Munekiyo & Hiraga leadership's \$2250 they contributed this cycle includes contributions to both Victorino and Bissen, and last but not least,
- SSFM's former President Michael Mastumoto, who was involved in [pay-to-play political money laundering scandals](#) in the early 2,000s, is still at it at a lower level, with high level donors from his company including him, making sure that they contribute to both Bissen and Victorino as well.

Of all the contributions Goodfellows Bros. through the "bundling" practice described in the Mayoral section of the report, has made \$48,000 in campaign contributions this cycle – \$30,000 to County level candidates for council and mayor, and \$18,000 for state representatives and senators in Maui County – and was awarded an over \$4.5 million contract for the Moloka'i Landfill Phase V Disposal Cell.

Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

Voters have big choices, and there are major differences between the candidates. Certain industries see the council and mayor race as critical to their interests. In almost every race, major real estate and development interests are largely aligned as to where their contributions are going. It would be fair for voters to observe and draw their own conclusions from those observations.

It's also clear that there remain problems in our campaign finance laws, and loopholes like bundling and rules on government contracts, that make it easy for big money interests to continue to engage in legal but unethical pay-to-play practices as part of their normal operations and "costs of doing business."

These problems are bigger than any one race or candidate. Grassroots candidates that aim to reject these donors have clear disadvantages in this system, and are sometimes even disadvantaged by otherwise well intentioned efforts at campaign finance reform that create onerous reporting or compliance requirements that are harder for less experienced campaigns with less resources to comply with. So yes, we should make more reforms around the edges, like banning bundling, and fixing the contract loophole, but we need to ultimately pursue more systemic reforms that will create a better, fairer, more democratic system overall, like putting disclosure requirements on big donors rather than candidates, and ultimately moving to fully publicly financed elections.

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/6/2023 7:29:54 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Annette Schmidt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We need publically funded elections. Support this legislation.

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/6/2023 7:42:07 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
David Dinner	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Nothing will do more to create fairness in our elections, aside from cunning Cirizens United , than this bill. Please make it a dream come true for voters.

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/6/2023 9:02:50 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lindsey Fritz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Publicly funded elections are so incredibly important! All politicians will work for those who support them and if they are supported by big money then that's who's interest they'll have in mind while at work. They need to be thinking about everyone not just who will help them get elected. The whole election process takes away from the actual job itself. So many people can barely afford to live in Hawaii - how can they give anything away and why should they be expected to? Why should anyone have to donate to elections. It's a public position with a paycheck that's publicly funded. The process of getting there should also be publicly funded and not rely on trying to get money from the private sector whether it's \$5 or \$5000. This would also allow more people to get involved and help create a government that works for everyone. The fact that this is even a thing tells you the current system is not working. Mahalo nui.

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/6/2023 9:10:31 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Celle Galarza	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support SB1543.

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/6/2023 9:41:53 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kristen Alice	Testifying for HOPE Services Hawai'i	Support	In Person

Comments:

HOPE Services Hawai'i strongly supports this bill.

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/6/2023 9:57:22 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
John Webster	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Mr Chairman and Members - it is my pleasure to submit my support for SB 1543 - a much needed bill to restore integrity to the election process and to place Hawaii among the earliest states to implement such clean election bills. This is an area on which Hawaii should take the lead.

I have had a career in government relations with two major businesses - IBM and KPMG. At IBM, I managed various aspects of government relations in Washington DC and in Europe. At KPMG, I led the firm's Government Relations team in Washington DC. I was a lobbyist and managed lobbyists for both businesses. I was also a Special Assistant to the Secretary of the Treasury, William Simon.

Through these positions, I saw first-hand the abusive nature of money politics. Legislative members spend as much as 50% of their time trying to raise funds while trying to remain free of inappropriate influence expected by many from whom they receive contributions.

I appreciate your interest in this type of reform and strongly endorse this bill.

Sincerely,

John Webster

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/6/2023 10:36:21 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
james pirtle	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose public financiing of politicians.

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/6/2023 10:36:25 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jeffrey Mermel	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Senators:

I stand IN SUPPORT of SB1543 for publicly supported elections. It's time that big interest money stop having such a big influence on our elections.

Let's model our state's publicly funded elections after the successful models in Connecticut and Maine.

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/6/2023 11:19:56 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shanna Dean	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support publicly funded elections in Hawaii

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/6/2023 11:53:40 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
j Williams	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

[Publicly Fund Campaigns In Hawai'i](#). This is so important the Governor's Campaigns this latest year was a disgrace! Not because some hard questions were ask of Josh Green but because He Didn't answer them, for me that makes it a disgrace that he was elected. Please put everyone on Equal Ground so maybe they will be less elections bought in Hawaii

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/7/2023 12:29:10 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Katherine Martines	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Everyone!

My family moved to Hawaii during the days of the sugar cane fields. They worked extremely hard to be able to provide a good life for themselves and their families. They eventually made their way to Oahu where they continued to grow. I am lucky enough to have been born and raised on the island of Oahu and to be able to have a life here. We all work extremely hard to live here and to have a voice in this state, and it's extremely hard to have a voice when so many of our choices are fueled by money and corruption. It saddens me to see people similar to families like mine having to move away because they can no longer afford to live here after many generations and years of hard work, but to also have their voices deminished and made feel not important.

The power needs to be put back into the peoples hands, and SB1543 would be the step in the right direction to do so! With a clean election with no money power, we could start to get our voices and our hawaii back!

Mahalo for your time.

Testimony re SB 1543
Before the Senate Committee on the Judiciary
By JoAnn A. Yukimura
February 7, 2023

RE SB 1543

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Judiciary:

My name is JoAnn Yukimura. I served as an elected official on Kaua'i for 28 years, 22 years as a councilmember and 6 years as mayor.

I strongly support SB 1543. It is a game-changer that will level the playing field for serious candidates for public office and remove the unfair advantage that candidates with access to large sources of money presently have in elections.

In the Himalayan country of Bhutan, the policy of "Gross National Happiness" stands upon four public policy pillars: The first three pillars are: 1. a balanced economy, 2. protection of the environment, and 3. perpetuation of culture. The fourth pillar, upon which the three aforementioned pillars depend, is **good governance**, which insures that decisions implementing the first three priorities are made on behalf of the public good. It is impossible to have good public policies without good governance.

SB 1543 addresses good governance at its core. Providing sufficient public monies to candidates will enable them to conduct viable campaigns without being dependent on private monies that are often tied to special interests. It will change the nature of elections by removing money as an obstacle for those who want to run for office and by minimizing the influence of money in subsequent decisionmaking.

Please approve this bill.

Mahalo to you, Chair Rhoads, and to your co-introducers, for your leadership in introducing SB1543.

06 February 2023

Aloha Kakahiaka Senators,

My name is Ikaika Olds, and I support SB1543.

While I certainly don't have the seasoned experience and expertise on the subject as many of you, I do have some limited political experience in an area that SB1543 is setting out to change. Last year, I ran for a House of Representatives seat. It was my first time running for any political office and I chose to run a grassroots campaign focused on my constituents and the needs of our district. Despite me being a political nobody, but due to my credentials and my political platform, I was quickly approached by legislators, politicians and special interest groups. While my run last year was unsuccessful, it taught me many valuable lessons about Hawaii politics, the politicians, the politics within the legislature, and what it takes to run a good political campaign.

The most powerful lesson I learned was money, as you all know by now. Campaign time is all about money. Simply put: whoever has or raises the most money during an election, is generally going to win that election. As someone who ran a grassroots campaign, I was proud to say that I raised nearly \$20k, most of which came from my family and friends. Of that amount, I am also proud that only 5% of my contributions came from special interest groups. But as they say, there are no moral victories for the losers. Such as it was, the incumbent I was challenging **started** the 2022 election year with more campaign money than I was able to raise. Such is the inherent benefits of incumbency for Hawaii legislators and of politicians with strong connections to special interest groups.

So, what does this say about our system? Well, many voters already postulate that Hawaii politics is ruled by money and not the people. Unsurprisingly, based on the current zeitgeist of Hawaii voters in the last few years, most have already succumbed to ideas that special interest groups have a firm grip over Hawaii's politicians and government. This sentiment has only been exacerbated and inflamed by the numerous examples of government corruption that were exposed just in the last year. A bill like SB1543 would show the people that our politicians are serious about ending government corruption, that they are seeking to rebuild public trust, and that they are sending a clear message that special interest groups do not own our elected officials or our government.

So, I challenge you all, as this bill could and should challenge your future as senators, to prove to the people of Hawaii that special interest group do not own you and that you are champions against corruption in our government. Do so by voting yes for this bill in your committee. Afterwards, influence your colleagues to do the same and bring about REAL CHANGE in our government. Show us all who you really are and that you have the fortitude to do what you know is right.

Mahalo for your time and your service,
Ikaika Olds

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/7/2023 1:17:39 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
jaerick medeiros-garcia	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I'm in opposition of SB1543, it's not fair nor a secure for new citizens that really what to truly make a change. Maybe if the new candidate is the one to get the funding instead of the sitting candidate.

Chair Karl Rhoads
Vice Chair Mike Gabbard

Senate Committee on Judiciary

Tuesday, February 7, 2023
9:30AM

**TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF SB1543 RELATING TO PUBLIC
FINANCING FOR CANDIDATES TO ELECTED OFFICE**

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary,

My name is Jun Shin. I am a graduate of the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa and a member of the Hawai‘i State Youth Commission, testifying as an individual in **STRONG SUPPORT** of **SB1543**, Relating to Public Financing for Candidates to Elected Office.

This bill is crucial because it would set up a system of fully publicly financed elections. It would provide participating candidates with competitive amounts of funding that they would need to run an effective campaign, and would ban them from receiving any private donations at all. Money shouldn't be a barrier to stepping up to serve and money should not have even the potential to cloud your decision-making while doing the work of the people.

It's already difficult to participate in politics as a working person since daily survival is your main priority. But even if you aren't directly participating in politics, working people can see its impacts in their working conditions, pay, whether their kids' school has a lot of teachers and supplies, whether you can actually find a place to live, whether you can retire, etc. When you don't see life getting better despite who you vote for or go the extra mile to even give some money or put up signs for, and you see the wealthy and multinational profiteers use their money to have their way, you give up on politics.

By taking the need for major fundraising out of commission, SB1543 both encourages and pressures candidates to bring it back to their constituencies and actually get buy-in/support from regular people, which includes going to meetings and events in order to share why they are running for office and what their plans are if elected. So in conclusion, **PASS Senate Bill 1543** out of your committee. Take this opportunity to get money out of politics and give political power back to the people!

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Jun Shin,
State House District 23 | State Senate District 12
Cell: 808-255-6663
Email: junshinbusiness729@gmail.com

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/7/2023 3:46:35 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Luis Ma	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Opposite

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/7/2023 4:51:21 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tony Radmilovich	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

If not perfect, this is step in right direction....

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/7/2023 5:04:57 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bruce L Hultgren	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Pleas support this bill.

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/7/2023 6:04:24 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Raelyn Reyno Yeomans	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strong support of SB1543

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/7/2023 6:54:34 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
bill parker	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

It's nonsensical to allow funding to come from deep pocketed corporate entities who have the clout and connections to get what they want for themselves every time. Where's the democracy in that kind of self serving system?

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/7/2023 7:29:17 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
cheryl B.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I SUPPORT this bill which establishes a comprehensive system of public financing for all candidates seeking election to state and county public offices in the State of Hawaii, to begin with the 2024 general election year. Requires the Campaign Spending Commission to submit a report to the Legislature. Appropriates funds.

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/7/2023 7:34:19 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jr Tupai	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Mahalo Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard and members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary for the opportunity to testify in opposition to SB1543.

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/7/2023 8:30:11 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dale A. Head	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SB1543: "Establishes a comprehensive system of public financing for all candidates seeking election to state and county public offices in the State of Hawai'i, to begin with the 2024 general election year. Requires the Campaign Spending Commission to submit a report to the Legislature. Appropriates funds."

Aloha: *Yes, I suport this measure, because the 'culture' of Legislators accepting donations from the business community throughout the state is a corrupting influence. Let me explain. When there was a recent scandal involving a fellow relied upon by the FBI to entrap a House Representative and retired state Senator for accepted cash stuffed envelopes to do his bidding at our Legislature, once the pubicity became well known, about **3 dozen Legislators** returned donations to him. As the fellow resides in ony one District, why is was it 'legal' for him to 'donate' monies to lawmakers outside of his own District? Obviously this was done to influence them.*

As for a Bill to pass both chambers, to block it, a lobbyists need only bribe one Committee Chair to get a Bill killed by not scheduleing it for a Hearing, deferring the measure at a Hearing, or, playing the still common game of 'Gut & Replace'. [Note - Although the Hawaii Supreme Court on 4 Nov 2021 ruled that 'Gut & Replace' must stop, it is still being done as our State Attorney General does not or will not enforce the decision. So, corruptiojn continues.

Moving to Public Funding is one way to impose honesty on recalcitrant Legislators.

Respectfully, Dale Arthur Head. (dale.head@aol.com)

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/7/2023 8:31:54 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
robin knox	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Money from special interests currently has huge influence and impact on the outcome of our elections. Maui County has had undue influence on our elections from Political Action Committees and large donors with a significant amount of money coming from outside of the County and state.

When I decided to run for office a wealthy builder tried to talk me out of it saying, " You can't afford to run for office, I can" it made me angry but it is true. Clean elections will create a fairer election system where a more diverse set of candidates can run and financial support can come from constituents, as opposed to the current system where wealthy candidates with wealthy donors are favored.

My opponent in the County Council race for South Maui, a builder backed by off-island interests raised significantly more money and benefitted from the more than \$300,000 spent by the Be Change Now SUPER PAC to influence Maui County races. Be Change Now sponsored extensive radio ads and campaign mailers that were delivered to voters daily in the weeks before the election. Maui County elections are for a 3 island district with 9 residency areas. One mailer cost more than \$30,000. My campaign could not afford even one mailer, while off island interests paid for dozens of mailers for my opponent.

Elections are largely won by name recognition, and I found my time, funding and efforts focused on fundraising for advertising in lieu of spending time meeting voters.

Big money funding of elections discourages many people from running for office because it is an intimidating. Sometimes the less well funded candidate wins, but more often the candidate backed by big money fails to win the election. Those big money donors have had undue influence in decisionmaking in Hawaii, leading to overdevelopment and exploitive stress on our natural resources and infrastructure. Having legislators who were elected with support of wealthy donors leaves voters wondering if their lawmakers can be trusted to vote in the best interest of residents as opposed to their wealthy donors.

Please show your constituents that you choose their best interests over that of big money by voting yes on SB 1543

For voters there is a huge concern about whether legislators support

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/7/2023 10:01:18 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kenia Peregrino	Testifying for Washington for Equitable Representation	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members, My name is Kenia Peregrino and I am the statewide coordinator for Washington for Equitable Representation. I urge you to support SB1543 which would set up a system of fully publicly financed elections as is supported by 74% of Hawai'i voters.

It is crucially important that this body does everything in its power to remove the influence money has on politics. Currently, candidates have no other choice than to create relationships with and work for donations that can cause corruption or perception of corruption because legislators have to be responsive to the donors that fund their campaigns.

SB1543 would bring the change that Hawai'i voters want to see. It would provide participating candidates with competitive amounts of funding they need to run effective campaigns, and would ban them from receiving any private donations at all.

This system worked very well for Hawai'i County Council races in 2010 and 2012, and currently works very well statewide in places like Connecticut and Maine.

I hope you will take this opportunity to get big money out of politics and give political power back to the people who deserve to be equally represented. Thank you.

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/7/2023 9:27:01 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Keani Rawlins-Fernandez	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Will provide comment via oral testimony. Mahalo!

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/7/2023 9:31:11 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jordan Hocker	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

I want to whole heartedly support sb1543 for some reasons I'll outline in my testimony. My name is Jordan Hocker and I live on the island of Maui. I recently ran for a Maui County Council seat in the residency area referred to as Upcountry. I'm a mother and community advocate. I never saw running for public office on my horizon but I've always had a passion for people and community. Due to the pandemic and remote access to County council proceedings, I was able to begin to participate as a private citizen. After about a year I was asked to run for office. Partly because my main advocacy was for our families, the environment and a diversified economy that served the people. The other reason was likely because no one wanted to touch the incumbent. This person was well known as a formidable opponent mainly in their connections to the dominant industries here in Hawaii and name recognition. In the previous election, this person had \$60,000 in their campaign coffers while running unopposed. As a grassroots candidate, it was a David and Goliath situation when it came to funding.

As you may have noticed, Maui County has been in the news recently due to a number of corrupt officials. It would appear that Milton Choi allegedly was able to buy a number of our council members votes which awarded him government contracts. I believe the publicly funded elections would level the playing field and allow candidates to focus on our issues and combat the government corruption that we have known to exist here. We have the opportunity to restore the public's trust in our governing bodies because right now that faith in our system is dismal.

Thank you,

Jordan Hocker

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/7/2023 10:00:49 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Emily Olson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha to whom it may concern,

I am submitting my testimonial in support of SB1543. I would like to see a diverse group representing us in public office. The baseline of public funding would help more individuals invest in a campaign and keep the power of corporate special interests from having too much power over our elections.

Thank you,

-Emily Olson

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/7/2023 11:05:39 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sam Small	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

It is so necessary to level the playing field and remove big-monied special interests from the people's process. Thank you.

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/7/2023 9:19:35 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marsha Hee	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I humbly and firmly urge your leadership & commitment to SUPPORT SB 1543 that establishes a comprehensive system of public financing for all candidates seeking election to state and county public offices in the State of Hawai‘i and requires the Campaign Spending Commission to submit a report to the Legislature.

I SUPPORT SB1543 because I want to see more transparency with campaign spending, to encourage and support newcomers and incumbents with limited campaign funding to run for office and to increase and engage broader public involvement and active votership in our democratic process.

Thank you for the opportunity to voice my strong support of SB1543.

Sincerely & respectfully,

Marsha Hee

(808) 985-8725

- hulahee@gmail.com
- Life-long resident of Hawaii
- Born and raised in Pauoa, O'ahu
- Current resident of Sen. District 2; Volcano, Hawaii Island

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/7/2023 11:35:09 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
gordon b peterson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support publicly funded. We need to do all be can to get big money out of politics. The rich get richer and the common man suffers. We live in a society that is controlled by people and companies with great wealth - a plutarchy. This needs to stop.

Mahalo

SB-1543

Submitted on: 2/7/2023 1:22:18 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
mary drayer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

submitting Strong support for this measure. Way too many candidates benefit unfairly from corporate money (some from out of their community) campaign money. Maui seen it election 2022:(Please level the playing field for all candidates! i will be fine to see my tax dollars support ALL candidates equally (be a better use than some other ways my tax \$\$ is spent) Plus the ones w/ money bombard us with flyers, tv ads, etc. total waste of money that could be spent on helping less fortunate - homeless; food bank; foster care etc..mahalo