



STATE OF HAWAII
CAMPAIGN SPENDING COMMISSION


235 SOUTH BERETANIA STREET, ROOM 300
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

February 6, 2024

TO: The Honorable David A. Tarnas, Chair
House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs

The Honorable Gregg Takayama, Vice Chair
House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs

Members of the House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs

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

SUBJECT: **Testimony on H.B. No. 1845, Relating to Partial Public Financing of Elections.**

Wednesday, February 7, 2024
2:00 p.m., Conference Room 325 & Videoconference

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

The purpose of this bill is to enhance Hawaii’s partial public financing program by increasing the maximum amount of public funds available for all offices by 50% (except for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (“OHA”) which will be significantly enhanced by over 1,000%) to qualified candidates. It also makes a downward adjustment of the minimum qualifying contributions for certain offices because it appears that publicly financed candidates for those offices were having a difficult time raising the minimum qualifying contributions. Respectfully, the Commission is submitting this bill as an attempt to boost an existing program that is mandated by the State Constitution which has not changed and whose maximum dollar amounts have not changed since 1995.

This bill amends Hawaii Revised Statutes (“HRS”) sections as follows:

- 1) HRS §11-425 by increasing the maximum amount of public funds available for all offices (except for an OHA trustee) by 50% and increasing the maximum amount of public funds available for a candidate for trustee of OHA from \$1,500 for the election

¹ The companion bill is S.B. No. 2210.

period to 10% of the expenditure limit for each election established in HRS §11-423(d).

- 2) HRS §11-429(a) by increasing the amount of qualifying contributions required for a candidate for trustee of OHA from more than \$1,500 in the aggregate to more than \$5,000 in the aggregate.
- 3) HRS §11-429(b) by increasing matching fund payments from \$1 for each \$1 of qualifying contributions in excess of the minimum qualifying contribution amounts to \$2 for each \$1 of excess qualifying contributions.

The bill also provides a downward adjustment of the minimum amounts of qualifying contributions for the office of prosecuting attorney for the city and county of Honolulu, and counties of Hawaii and Kauai, and for the office of county council for the county of Maui. Lastly, the bill establishes two full-time equivalent (2.0 FTE) positions in the Commission and appropriates funds.

For illustration, here is a comparison of the present partial public funding program in contrast to the enhanced partial public funding program set forth in this bill. For a qualified Senate candidate running in District 1 in the 2024 election, the maximum amount of public funds available is \$7,211 in the primary election and another \$7,211 in the general election. In contrast, under this bill, this same candidate would receive \$10,816 in the primary election and another \$10,816 in the general election. For a qualified House candidate running in District 1 in the 2024 election, the maximum amount of public funds available is \$3,485 in the primary election and another \$3,485 in the general election. In contrast, under this bill, this same candidate would receive \$5,227 in the primary election and \$5,227 in the general election. Lastly, for a qualified OHA candidate, the maximum amount of public funds available is \$1,500 for the election year. In contrast, under this bill, this same candidate would receive \$17,227 in the primary election and \$17,227 in the general election.

The Commission requests that this committee pass this bill.

HB-1845

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 2:28:59 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/7/2024 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I **oppose** this Bill.

HB-1845

Submitted on: 2/6/2024 4:58:07 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/7/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ralph Hasegawa	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, I oppose HB1845 because the State should not increase its size to redistribute that increase to individuals that will administer that distribution or to candidates. The proposed money for candidates can be better used for essential government functions. Helping select winners and losers in a election is not a essential government fuction.

HB-1845

Submitted on: 2/6/2024 6:06:46 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/7/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lu Ann Mahiki Lankford-Faborito	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

strongly oppose, candidates should raise their own funding.

HB-1845

Submitted on: 2/6/2024 9:04:57 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/7/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Judge Daniel Foley (ret.)	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Mr. Chairman and members of the Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs Committee,

I submit this testimony in support of HB 1845 which would increase public financing of elections.

As you know, I chaired the Commission to Improve Standards of Conduct which recommended an increase in the public funding of elections. Commission's December 1, 2022 Final Report at page 37. The Commission found "that publicly funded elections help counter the repercussions of Citizens United because public funding 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." Id.

Respectfully submitted,

Judge Daniel Foley (ret.)