

Honolulu, Hawaii

**FEB 18 2025**

RE: S.B. No. 283  
S.D. 1

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi  
President of the Senate  
Thirty-Third State Legislature  
Regular Session of 2025  
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Judiciary, to which was referred S.B.  
No. 283 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO BRIBERY,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to establish  
heightened penalties for the offense of bribery, under certain  
circumstances.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure  
from the Department of the Prosecuting Attorney of the City and  
County of Honolulu and one individual.

Your Committee received testimony in opposition to this  
measure from the Office of the Public Defender.

Your Committee finds that federal prosecutors have  
historically taken the lead in prosecuting state and county  
officials involved in bribery, largely because federal laws are  
more effective in use and consequence. Given numerous recent  
scandals that have shaken local communities' trust in state and  
county government, your Committee believes that the State should  
send a strong message to would-be offenders that engaging in  
bribery will not be tolerated. Accordingly, this measure will  
better equip county prosecutors with the tools to prosecute public



corruption and deter offenders from engaging in bribery in the first place.

Your Committee notes that, under existing law, the sentence for a class A felony is an indeterminate term of imprisonment of twenty years without the possibility of suspension of sentence or probation. Given the significant potential sentence of incarceration for class A felonies, your Committee believes that the heightened penalties for bribery under this measure should be commensurate with the criminal act committed.

Accordingly, your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Requiring the person committing the act of bribery be an elected or appointed official for the heightened penalties to apply;
- (2) Increasing the minimum threshold for the heightened penalties established by this measure to either:
  - (A) An act constituting the offense of bribery with a value of the pecuniary benefit that exceeds \$50,000; or
  - (B) Three or more acts of bribery within a three-year period with a value, or aggregate value, of the pecuniary benefit of the acts that exceeds \$50,000; and
- (3) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity and consistency.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Judiciary that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of S.B. No. 283, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 283, S.D. 1, and be placed on the calendar for Third Reading.



Respectfully submitted on  
behalf of the members of the  
Committee on Judiciary,

*Karl Rhoads*

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KARL RHOADS, Chair



**Record of Votes**  
**Committee on Judiciary**  
**JDC**

\*Only one measure per Record of Votes