



**STATE OF HAWAII**  
**CAMPAIGN SPENDING COMMISSION**

235 SOUTH BERETANIA STREET, ROOM 300  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

March 10, 2025

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 E. Izumi-Nitao, Executive Director  
Campaign Spending Commission

SUBJECT: **Testimony on H.B. No. 369, Relating to Campaign Contributions.**

Tuesday, March 11, 2025  
9:45 a.m., Conference Room 016 & Videoconference

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

This is a housekeeping measure. In 2023, the Legislature amended Hawaii Revised Statutes (“HRS”) §11-351(b) to prohibit the acceptance of a cash contribution more than \$100, in the aggregate, during an election period. This bill amends HRS §11-364(a) requiring the return of an excess cash contribution to the contributor within thirty days of receipt of the excess contribution. Any excess cash contribution not returned to the contributor within thirty days shall be deposited into the Hawaii Election Campaign Fund. Thus, the treatment of an excess cash contribution will be consistent with other types of excess contributions.

The Commission requests that this Committee pass this bill.

**HB-369**

Submitted on: 3/7/2025 7:03:52 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/11/2025 9:45:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Beppie Shapiro	Testifying for League of Women Voters of Hawaii	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The League of Women Voters supports HB369, which brings consistency to the handling of excess campaign contributions.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

**LATE**

**HB-369**

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 7:24:27 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/11/2025 9:45:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Master Shelby "Pikachu" Billionaire	Testifying for Ohana Unity Party & Kingdom of The Hawaiian Islands	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Dear Honorable Members of the Hawaii State Legislature

I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill No. 369, introduced as part of the Campaign Spending Commission Package, which amends Section 11-364(a) of the Hawaii Revised Statutes. This legislation strengthens oversight of campaign contributions by mandating the return of excess cash contributions over \$100 within 30 days or their escheatment to the Hawaii Election Campaign Fund. By closing loopholes that enable fraudulent or opaque financing, this bill enhances transparency and accountability in our electoral process. I urge your affirmative vote to bolster public trust and combat campaign finance fraud.

The need for this measure is evident in the following data and context:

**Rising Fraud Risk:** Nationally, the FEC reported a 20% increase in campaign finance violations from 2020-2024, with cash contributions often used to mask donor identities (FEC Enforcement Statistics, 2024). Hawaii's 2022 election cycle saw \$12.3 million in total contributions (Campaign Spending Commission, 2023), underscoring the volume at risk.

**Current Limits:** HRS §§11-351 to 11-360 cap individual contributions (e.g., \$4,000 to state candidates per election period), but excess cash over \$100—harder to trace—can skirt these limits, inviting fraud.

**Enforcement Gap:** In 2022, 15% of Hawaii campaigns reported late or incomplete contribution disclosures (CSC Annual Report, 2023), with cash excesses a noted issue, weakening oversight.

**Public Funding Precedent:** The Hawaii Election Campaign Fund disbursed \$1.2 million to candidates in 2022 (CSC), proving its viability as a safeguard—escheatment leverages this system to deter abuse.

H.B. No. 369 addresses these vulnerabilities effectively:

**Clear Deadline:** Requires candidates, candidate committees, or noncandidate committees to return excess cash contributions over \$100 within 30 days of receipt (or election period end for §11-362 violations), streamlining compliance.

**Escheat Mechanism:** Diverts unreturned excesses to the Hawaii Election Campaign Fund,

penalizing noncompliance while bolstering public financing—a deterrent to fraudulent “straw donor” schemes.

Flexibility: Allows committees to choose which contributions to return, balancing practicality with accountability.

This bill is a vital tool to check fraud:

Transparency Boost: By targeting cash—a preferred vehicle for illicit contributions (e.g., 10% of national violations involved cash, FEC, 2024)—it ensures traceable funding, reducing risks seen in states like California, where \$500,000 in laundered cash tainted a 2022 race (LA Times, 2023).

Deterrence Effect: The 30-day rule and escheat penalty incentivize prompt reporting, aligning with the CSC’s 2023 finding that 85% of compliant campaigns met deadlines, versus 60% for those with excesses.

Public Trust: Reinforcing limits protects Hawaii’s elections from the \$1.5 million in questionable contributions flagged nationally in 2024 (OpenSecrets, 2024), fostering confidence amid 68% voter concern over campaign finance (UH Poll, 2024).

H.B. No. 369 is practical and timely, taking effect upon approval to safeguard the 2026 cycle. Its simplicity integrates seamlessly into existing law, requiring no new bureaucracy—excesses simply flow to an established fund. I urge your support for this measure to uphold electoral integrity, deter fraud, and ensure Hawaii’s campaign finance system remains a model of accountability.

Thank you for your commitment to fair and transparent governance.

Sincerely,

Master Shelby "Pikachu" Billionaire, HRM  
Kingdom of The Hawaiian Islands, H.I.

Ohana Unity Party, Chairman  
[www.Ohanaunityparty.com](http://www.Ohanaunityparty.com)

**LATE**

**HB-369**

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 6:18:40 AM

Testimony for JDC on 3/11/2025 9:45:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Frank Schultz	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this initiative.

No need to build a war chest, money should be returned.