



The Judiciary, State of Hawai'i

Testimony to the Thirty-Third State Legislature, 2025 Regular Session

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

Tuesday, January 28, 2025 at 9:15 a.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 016 & Videoconference

by:
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WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY

Bill No. and Title: Senate Bill No. 121 – Proposing an Amendment to Article VI, Section 3 of the Hawai'i State Constitution to Allow the Senate More Time to Confirm Judicial Appointments.

Purpose: Proposes an amendment to the Hawai'i State Constitution to extend the amount of time allowed the Senate to consider and act on the appointments of justices and judges from thirty to sixty days for appointments made between April 1 and December 31 when the Senate is not in Regular Session or is about to adjourn the Regular Session.

Judiciary's Position:

The Judiciary takes no position on this measure but offers the following comments. If the constitutional amendment proposed by this measure passes and is approved by voters, it could leave judicial vacancies unfilled for an extended period of time, depending on when a vacancy occurs. We would note that the current process of filling judicial vacancies is already time-intensive, with the posting of notice of the vacancy, application deadlines, candidate interviews, and the determination of qualified applicants in some cases taking more than a year after a vacancy occurs. This proposed change would prolong the period of vacancy for certain appointments thus delaying the onboarding of new justices and judges.

Thank you for allowing us to testify on Senate Bill No. 121.