

SUNSHINE LAW MEETING



HAWAI'I STATE ETHICS COMMISSION

Komikina Ho'opono Kulekele o Hawai'i Moku'āina

NOTICE OF MEETING OF THE HAWAI'I STATE ETHICS COMMISSION

Commissioners:

Wesley Fong, Chair

Robert Hong • Cynthia Thielen • Roderick Becker

Date: November 19, 2025

Time: 9:00 a.m.

Location: Zoom Videoconference or Phone:

Videoconference: [Join Zoom Meeting](https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82833474214?pwd=T6u8MXmPbwHB6hG9oSSQVt1H95X6pR.1)
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82833474214?pwd=T6u8MXmPbwHB6hG9oSSQVt1H95X6pR.1>
Phone: +1 (719) 359-4580 or +1 (253) 205-0468
Phone passcode: 021974
Meeting ID: 828 3347 4214
Passcode: K17WQw

Public Meeting Location:

Hawai'i State Ethics Commission Conference Room
1001 Bishop Street
American Savings Bank Tower, Suite 970
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Pursuant to Hawai'i Revised Statutes section 92-3.7, the State Ethics Commission will meet remotely using interactive conference technology. The public may either attend the meeting in person, at the public meeting location above, or participate remotely by using the above Zoom meeting information. If participating remotely, please mute your phone/device except while testifying. If the Commission's videoconference connection is lost during the meeting, please visit the Commission's website (ethics.hawaii.gov) for more information, including reconnection information.

Public meeting materials for this meeting are available on the Commission's website at ethics.hawaii.gov.

A G E N D A

CALL TO ORDER

I. Consideration and Approval of the Minutes of the October 15, 2025 Meeting

Attachment 1: Sunshine Law Meeting Minutes of the October 15, 2025, Hawai'i State Ethics Commission Meeting

II. Directors' Report

1. Education & Disclosures – Report/Updates

Attachment 1: 2025 Training Schedule

Attachment 2: 2026 Training Schedule

2. Guidance and Assignment Statistics – October 2025

Attachment 3: 2025 Guidance and Assignment Statistics/Website Traffic

3. Miscellaneous Office Projects/Updates

III. Discussion of Media Reports Concerning Ethics or the Ethics Commission Since the Last Meeting

Description: The Commission will discuss recent media coverage related to ethics in government or the Hawai'i State Ethics Commission. The discussion may include consideration of potential responses, clarification of public information, or other appropriate actions.

IV. Discussion of Possible Legislative Proposals within the Commission's Jurisdiction

Description: The Commission will discuss potential legislative proposals for the upcoming legislative session, including possible amendments to the State Ethics Code (Haw. Rev. Stat. Chapter 84), the Lobbyists Law (Haw. Rev. Stat. Chapter 97), or other matters within the Commission's jurisdiction. The Commission may provide direction to staff regarding research, drafting, and consultation with stakeholders.

Attachment 1: Proposed Bill Restricting State Employees from Taking Official Action on Pre-Employment Matters & Amending the Post-Employment Law

Attachment 2: Proposed Bill Expanding the Categories of Board and Commission Members Required to File Public Financial Disclosure Statements

Attachment 3: Proposed Bill Requiring Nominees to Positions Subject to Senate Confirmation to File Financial Disclosures before their Confirmation Hearings

The Hawai'i State Ethics Commission may convene an executive session pursuant to Hawai'i Revised Statutes section 92-5(a)(4) to consult with the Commission's attorneys and/or the Department of the Attorney General on questions and issues pertaining to the Commission's powers, duties, privileges, immunities, and liabilities.

V. Proposed Fiscal Year 2026-2027 Budget

Attachment 1: Proposed Ethics Commission Budget Fiscal Year 2026-27 Budget

VI. Consideration and Adoption of Legislative Delegation Policy

Attachment 1: Proposed Legislative Delegation Policy

VII. Meeting Calendar

Discussion of proposed meeting schedule for 2026.

Attachment 1: Proposed Meeting Calendar, 2026.

VIII. Akana v. Hawai'i State Ethics Commission and Daniel Gluck, Civil No. 18-1-1019-06 (JHA); Akana v. Hawai'i State Ethics Commission, Civil No. 19-1-0379-03 (JHA); State of Hawai'i, Ethics Commission v. Rowena Akana, Civil No. 20-1-0453 (BIA)

Attachment 1: "Longtime OHA trustee was outspoken advocate for Hawaiians" (Honolulu Star-Advertiser, Nov. 9 2025) (available at

<https://www.staradvertiser.com/2025/11/09/hawaii-news/longtime-oha-trustee-was-outspoken-advocate-for-hawaiians/>)

Attachment 2: "Longtime OHA leader Rowena Akana has died" (Honolulu Civil Beat, Nov. 6 2025) (available at <https://www.civilbeat.org/2025/11/longtime-oha-leader-rowena-akana-has-died/>)

The Hawai'i State Ethics Commission may convene an executive session pursuant to Hawai'i Revised Statutes § 92-5(a)(4) to consult with the Commission's attorneys and/or the Department of the Attorney General on questions and issues pertaining to the Commission's powers, duties, privileges, immunities, and liabilities.

IX. Adjournment

Disruption of Interactive Technology:

If the Commission loses internet or Zoom connection, the meeting will be automatically recessed for up to 30 minutes to restore communication. **Audio-Only Communication:** If audio-only communication is available, all Commissioners, staff, members of the public, and other interested individuals may continue to participate in the meeting via teleconference by dialing the telephone number and Meeting ID number noted above. If communication cannot be restored within thirty minutes, the meeting will be automatically continued to a date and time to be posted on the Commission's website at ethics.hawaii.gov. Alternatively, if a decision is made to terminate the meeting, the termination will be posted on the Commission's website.

Public Testimony:

Anyone wishing to testify may do so during the meeting or may submit written testimony in advance of the meeting by email (info.ethics@hawaii.gov), facsimile (fax) (808-587-0470), or U.S. postal mail (State Ethics Commission, 1001 Bishop Street, American Savings Bank Tower, Suite 970, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813). Public testimony must be related to an item on the agenda, and the testifier must identify the item to be addressed by the testimony. Pursuant to Hawai'i Revised Statutes section 92-3 and Hawai'i Administrative Rules section 21-1-6(c), oral testimony is limited to three minutes per testifier per agenda item, subject to the reasonable discretion of the Chair.

Auxiliary Aid or Accommodation Due to a Disability:

If you require an auxiliary aid or accommodation due to a disability, please contact the Hawai'i State Ethics Commission as soon as possible. You may:

- Call (808) 587-0460 and press 1# to leave a message; or
- Email the Commission at info.ethics@hawaii.gov

We encourage requests at least 48 hours before the meeting to allow us time to assist you. We will accept requests made closer to the meeting, but please note that last-minute accommodations may be difficult to provide.

Upon request, this notice is available in alternate/accessible formats.

SUNSHINE LAW MEETING
AGENDA ITEM I

CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE
OCTOBER 15, 2025 MEETING

Attachment 1: Sunshine Law Meeting Minutes of the October 15, 2025
Hawai'i State Ethics Commission Meeting

SUNSHINE LAW MEETING
MINUTES OF THE HAWAII STATE ETHICS COMMISSION

STATE OF HAWAII

Date: October 15, 2025

Time: 9:00 a.m.

Location: Hybrid meeting held via Zoom video and audio conference

Recorded video available at

https://ethics.hawaii.gov/category/commissionmeetings/comm_videos/

Public Meeting Location

Hawaii State Ethics Commission Conference Room
1001 Bishop Street
American Savings Bank Tower, Suite 970
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Attendance: State Ethics Commission Members

Wesley F. Fong, Chair (in person)
Robert Hong, Commissioner (via Zoom)
Cynthia Thielen, Commissioner (via Zoom)
Roderick Becker, Commissioner (in person)

Excused: Beverley Tobias, Vice Chair

State Ethics Commission Staff

Robert D. Harris, Executive Director (in person)
Bonita Y.M. Chang, Compliance Director (via Zoom)
Kee Campbell, Enforcement Director (via Zoom)
Nancy C. Neuffer, Staff Attorney (via Zoom)
Jennifer M. Yamanuha, Staff Attorney (via Zoom)
Jodi L. K. Yi, Staff Attorney (via Zoom)
Jared Elster, Investigator (via Zoom)
Barbara A. Gash, Investigatory Analyst (via Zoom)
Patrick Lui, Computer Specialist (via Zoom)
Melissa Vomvoris, Administrative Assistant (in person)

Guests and Members of the Public

Lauren Akitake, Executive Director Maui Board of Ethics (via Zoom)
Candace Park, Deputy Attorney General (via Zoom - joined at 9:23 a.m.)
N. Bernal (Zoom profile name)

Peter Fritz (Zoom profile name – joined at 9:50 a.m. left at 9:52 a.m.)

CALL TO ORDER (0:02)

Chair Fong called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Chair Fong and Commissioner Becker attended in person, and Commissioners Thielen and Fong participated via Zoom. Vice Chair Tobias was excused. All Commissioners participating remotely confirmed that no one else was present at their respective locations. Executive Director Harris reminded participants that the meeting was being recorded for the official record and would be posted online.

Agenda Item No. I: Consideration and Approval of the Minutes of the August 20, 2025, Meeting (2:33)

Upon a motion by Commissioner Thielen, seconded by Commissioner Hong, the Commission unanimously approved the minutes of the August 20, 2025, meeting, with all Commissioners present (Fong, Thielen, Hong, and Becker) voting in the affirmative.

Agenda Item No. II: Consideration and Approval of the Minutes of the August 20, 2025, Executive Session Meeting (3:11)

Upon a motion by Commissioner Thielen, seconded by Commissioner Becker, the Commission unanimously approved the minutes of the August 20, 2025, Executive Session meeting, with all Commissioners present (Fong, Thielen, Hong, and Becker) voting in the affirmative.

Agenda Item III: Recognition of Vice Chair Beverley Tobias (4:17)

The Commission recognized Commissioner Beverley Tobias for her four years of distinguished service on the Hawai'i State Ethics Commission. Her term concluded on June 30, 2025, and she continued to serve as a holdover member until October 2025. Chair Fong read a resolution honoring Vice Chair Tobias for her service. Commissioners expressed appreciation for her leadership and significant contributions to the Commission.

Agenda Item IV: Introduction of the New Executive Director, Maui Board of Ethics (8:47)

Chair Fong introduced Lauren Akitake, the new Executive Director of the Maui Board of Ethics. Ms. Akitake shared her background and outlined the initiatives underway at the Maui Board of Ethics, including rule revisions, lobbyist regulations, and updates to the gift policy. Commissioners and staff welcomed Ms. Akitake and expressed their support for her ongoing efforts.

1
2
3 **Agenda Item No. V: Directors' Report (19:31)**
4

5 **1. Education & Disclosures – Report/Updates (19:41)**
6

7 Compliance Director Bonita Chang reported outreach to agencies and boards to ensure
8 training and financial disclosure compliance. She noted that further updates will be
9 provided at the December or January meeting.
10

11 **2. Guidance and Assignment Statistics – September 2025 (20:40)**
12

13 Enforcement Director Kee Campbell reported:
14

- 15 • 53 complaints were opened and 39 were closed in September.
- 16 • Year-to-date, 307 complaints have been opened, with a median of 23 days to close.
17 Most complaints involved fair treatment issues or were outside the Commission's
18 jurisdiction.
- 19 • Approximately 41% of complaints did not involve state employees.
- 20 • Attorney of the Day program issued 41 written summaries during the period. Most
21 inquiries concerned gifts, fair treatment and conflicts of interest.
22
23

24 **3. Miscellaneous Office Projects/Updates (22:41)**
25

26 Executive Director Harris emphasized the progress in improving transparency and
27 accountability through enhanced data reporting. He noted that the ability to provide
28 detailed public reports stems from last year's update to the Commission's computer
29 system, which now allows the Commission to track and share complaint statistics to the
30 public while maintaining the confidentiality of underlying investigations. The data are also
31 instrumental in shaping the Commission's training programs by identifying frequent
32 questions and topics through Attorney of the Day trends.
33

34 Mr. Harris also highlighted the quarterly financial report, noting that the Commission is on
35 track with its budget.
36
37

38 **Agenda Item No. VI: Discussion of Media Reports Concerning Ethics or the Ethics**
39 **Commission Since the Last Meeting (27:11)**
40

41 Executive Director Harris reported on several media articles:
42

- 43 • October 12, 2025, Civil Beat article regarding replacing Sen. Henry Aquino
44 [https://www.civilbeat.org/2025/10/the-sunshine-blog-the-choices-to-replace-](https://www.civilbeat.org/2025/10/the-sunshine-blog-the-choices-to-replace-sen-henry-aquino-are-interesting/)
45 [sen-henry-aquino-are-interesting/](https://www.civilbeat.org/2025/10/the-sunshine-blog-the-choices-to-replace-sen-henry-aquino-are-interesting/)

- October 9, 2025, Civil Beat article titled “Campaign Commission Will Push Again For Reforms Lawmakers Keep Rejecting” with mention to Commission salaries.
<https://www.civilbeat.org/2025/10/campaign-commission-will-push-again-for-reforms-lawmakers-keep-rejecting/>
- October 5, 2025, Civil Beat article titled “Senator Voted For Bills Backed by Lobbyists He’s Going to Work For” <https://www.civilbeat.org/2025/10/senator-voted-for-bills-backed-by-lobbyists-hes-going-to-work-for/>
- October 3, 2025, Civil Beat article titled “Investigation Clears State Utility Official in Toxic Workplace Case” <https://www.civilbeat.org/2025/10/investigation-clears-state-utility-official-in-toxic-workplace-case/>
- September 26, 2025, Citizen Portal article titled “Board of Ethics Expands Staff with New Investigator and Assistant Roles”
<https://citizenportal.ai/articles/5837005/Maui-County/Hawaii/Board-of-Ethics-Expands-Staff-with-New-Investigator-and-Assistant-Roles>
- September 17, 2025, Civil Beat coverage of on the Akana decision
<https://www.civilbeat.org/2025/09/hawaii-supreme-court-oha-trustees-bound-by-state-ethics-code/>
- August 31, 2025, Civil Beat Sunshine Blog mentions the UHERO’s detailed look at the data collected by the State Ethics Commission
<https://www.civilbeat.org/2025/08/the-sunshine-blog-state-officials-are-heading-to-new-zealand-again/>
- August 29, 2025, Maui Now article on UHERO’s published report
<https://mauinow.com/2025/08/29/uhero-data-shows-how-politics-shape-hawai%CA%BBis-legislative-agenda-from-housing-to-wildfire-recovery/>

Agenda Item No. VII: Potential Effects of a Longer Legislative Session – Discussion (29:49)

Executive Director Harris presented a draft response with a conservative estimate of a one-time cost of \$50,000 for database and rule updates should the financial and lobbyist disclosure filing requirements change. Commissioner Becker raised concerns about operational impacts related to tracking legislation. Commissioner Hong moved to approve the letter as written, with Chair Fong’s authorization to sign, seconded by Commissioner Thielen. The motion passed unanimously, with all Commissioners present (Fong, Thielen, Hong, and Becker) voting in the affirmative.

Agenda Item VIII: Discussion of Possible Legislative Proposals within the Commission’s Jurisdiction (34:05)

1. Proposed Bill Restricting an Employee from Taking Official Action on Pre-Employment Matters.

Executive Director Harris explained the intent of the legislation is to establish a “revolving door” restriction much like the existing post-employment restriction, which would prohibit individuals entering state service from working on matters in which they were previously involved on behalf of a former client or employer. Commissioners discussed broadening the definition of “matter” and extending the restriction period from one (1) to two (2) years. Staff were directed to revise the draft and return with updated language.

2. Proposed Bill Relating to Nepotism.

Executive Director Harris reiterated that this is the same bill from last year, which amends the existing nepotism law to extend its coverage to the legislative and judicial branches. Recommendation is to amend the bill by adding “legislator or employee” consistently throughout. Commissioner Hong moved to approve recommended amendment, seconded by Commissioner Becker. The motion passed unanimously with all Commissioners present (Fong, Thielen, Hong, and Becker) voting in the affirmative.

3. Proposed Bill Relating to Political Fundraising by State Employees

Executive Director Harris explained that the bill would prohibit executive branch employees appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate from actively engaging in or conducting fundraising activities. Commissioner Thielen moved to approve the proposed legislation, seconded by Commissioner Becker. The motion passed unanimously with all Commissioners present (Fong, Thielen, Hong, and Becker) voting in the affirmative.

Agenda Item No. IX: Akana v. Hawai‘i State Ethics Commission and Daniel Gluck, Civil No. 18-1-1019-06 (JHA); Akana v. Hawai‘i State Ethics Commission, Civil No. 19-1-0379-03 (JHA); State of Hawai‘i, Ethics Commission v. Rowena Akana, Civil No. 20-1-0453 (BIA) (55:18)

Executive Director Harris reported that the Hawai‘i Supreme Court issued a decision in favor of the Commission. The Attorney General’s office is proceeding with the collection of the assessed fines. The Commission agreed to remove this item from future agendas.

Agenda Item No. IX: Adjournment of Sunshine Law Meeting (58:35)

At approximately 10:00 a.m., Commissioner Hong moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Becker. The motion passed unanimously with all Commissioners present (Fong, Thielen, Hong, and Becker) voting in the affirmative.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 a.m.

Minutes approved on _____.

SUNSHINE MEETING
AGENDA ITEM II

DIRECTORS' REPORT
November 19, 2025

1. Education & Disclosures – Report/Updates

Attachment 1: 2025 Training Schedule

Attachment 2: 2026 Training Schedule

2. Guidance and Assignment Statistics – October 2025

Attachment 3: 2025 Guidance and Assignment Statistics / Website Traffic

3. Miscellaneous Office Projects / Updates

HAWAII STATE ETHICS COMMISSION 2025 EDUCATION PROGRAM (Ethics Workshops and Presentations)			
DATE	PRESENTATIONS	IN PERSON PARTICIPANTS	WEBINAR PARTICIPANTS
1/2/2025	WEBINAR: Lobbyists Law Training	0	25
1/10/2025	WEBINAR: Lobbyists Law Training	0	22
1/17/2025	IN PERSON: Ethics Refresher, Capitol House Members	46	0
1/23/2025	WEBINAR: General Ethics Training	0	18
2/10/2025	WEBINAR: Universal Access Advisory Council, Custom Advisory	0	24
3/5/2025	WEBINAR: General Ethics Training	0	3
4/17/2025	WEBINAR: General Ethics Training, Charter Schools	0	34
5/8/2025	WEBINAR: General Ethics Training	0	15
7/18/2025	WEBINAR: Ethics for State Board & Commission members	0	13
8/6/2025	WEBINAR: General Ethics Training	0	11
9/25/2025	WEBINAR: Ethics for State Board & Commission members	0	3
10/22/2025	WEBINAR: General Ethics Training	0	18
11/7/2025	WEBINAR: Ethics for State Board & Commission members (CANCELED)	0	0
12/4/2025	WEBINAR: Ethics for State Government Attorneys		
TOTAL	13 Presentations	46 participants	186 participants

HAWAII STATE ETHICS COMMISSION 2026 EDUCATION PROGRAM (Ethics Workshops and Presentations)			
DATE	PRESENTATIONS	IN PERSON PARTICIPANTS	WEBINAR PARTICIPANTS
1/8/2026	WEBINAR: Lobbyists Law Training		
1/28/2026	WEBINAR: General Ethics Training		
3/4/2026	WEBINAR: General Ethics Training		
5/7/2026	WEBINAR: General Ethics Training		
7/23/2026	WEBINAR: Ethics for State Board & Commission members		
8/26/2026	WEBINAR: General Ethics Training		
9/24/2026	WEBINAR: Ethics for State Board & Commission members		
10/28/2026	WEBINAR: General Ethics Training		
11/20/2026	WEBINAR: Ethics for State Board & Commission members		
TOTAL	9 Presentations	0 participants	0 participants

2025	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Year to date
Training statistics													
# of In-Person Trainings	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			1
# of People Trained In Person	46	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			46
# of On-Line Trainings (Self-Directed)	698	511	411	419	441	421	2,815	5,095	857	1,153			12,821
# of Lobbyists Law Trainings	180	62	117	11	8	2	3	6	14	9			412
# of Training Webinars	3	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1			11
# of Participants in Training Webinars	65	24	3	34	15	0	13	11	3	18			186
Attorney of the Day													
	97	89	87	88	87	64	75	82	81	83			833
New assignments													
Advisory Opinion	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			0
Anti-Fraud	6	2	3	6	11	7	6	2	1	9			53
Complaint	22	20	37	25	31	37	34	40	53	31			330
Gifts/Invitations/Travel	46	33	31	49	32	53	39	54	49	32			418
Guidance	2	5	0	2	1	0	0	1	0	1			12
Judicial Selection Comm'n	2	4	4	1	2	3	3	3	3	1			26
Nepotism	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			0
Training Request	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	10	2			15
Record Request	0	0	1	0	0	0	3	0	0	1			5
Project/Other	9	3	2	6	8	2	6	2	3	7			48
Total	88	67	80	89	85	102	91	102	119	84	0	0	907
Closed Assignments													
Advisory Opinion	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			0
Anti-Fraud	2	5	13	3	5	11	9	2	2	2			54
Complaint	25	26	29	28	20	29	38	39	39	26			299
Gifts/Invitations/Travel	46	35	26	43	43	52	36	55	55	31			422
Guidance	1	5	0	3	1	1	0	0	0	1			12
Judicial Selection Comm'n	2	4	4	1	2	3	3	3	3	1			26
Nepotism	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			1
Training Request	4	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	3			14
Record Request	0	0	1	0	0	0	3	0	0	1			5
Project/Other	5	3	1	1	4	1	1	1	1	3			21
Total	85	79	76	80	76	97	91	101	101	68	0	0	854

SUNSHINE LAW MEETING
AGENDA ITEM III

DISCUSSION OF MEDIA REPORTS CONCERNING ETHICS OR THE ETHICS COMMISSION
SINCE THE LAST MEETING

Description: The Commission will discuss recent media coverage related to ethics in government or the Hawai'i State Ethics Commission. The discussion may include consideration of potential responses, clarification of public information, or other appropriate actions.

No Attachments.

SUNSHINE LAW MEETING
AGENDA ITEM IV

DISCUSSION OF POSSIBLE LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS WITHIN THE COMMISSION'S
JURISDICTION

Description: The Commission will discuss potential legislative proposals for the upcoming legislative session, including possible amendments to the State Ethics Code (Haw. Rev. Stat. Chapter 84), the Lobbyists Law (Haw. Rev. Stat. Chapter 97), or other matters within the Commission's jurisdiction. The Commission may provide direction to staff regarding research, drafting, and consultation with stakeholders.

The Hawai'i State Ethics Commission may convene an executive session pursuant to Hawai'i Revised Statutes section 92-5(a)(4) to consult with the Commission's attorneys and/or the Department of the Attorney General on questions and issues pertaining to the Commission's powers, duties, privileges, immunities, and liabilities.

- Attachment 1: Proposed Bill Restricting State Employees from Taking Official Action on Pre-Employment Matters & Amending the Post-Employment Law
- Attachment 2: Proposed Bill Expanding the Categories of Board and Commission Members Required to File Public Financial Disclosure Statements
- Attachment 3: Proposed Bill Requiring Nominees to Positions Subject to Senate Confirmation to File Financial Disclosures before their Confirmation Hearings

THE SENATE
THIRTY-FOURTH LEGISLATURE, 2026
STATE OF HAWAII

S.B. NO.

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO REVOLVING DOOR RESTRICTIONS FOR STATE EMPLOYEES

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that public confidence in
2 state government depends upon the assurance that decisions are
3 made solely in the public interest. While Hawaii law restricts
4 post-employment activities of state officials, there is no
5 parallel restriction addressing matters that new state employees
6 may have worked on for private businesses or sources.
7 Establishing a two-year cooling-off period will prevent actual
8 or perceived favoritism and strengthen public trust.

9 The legislature further finds that establishing a "cooling-
10 off" period will help prevent even the appearance that a newly
11 hired state employee might favor their former private employer
12 in carrying out their official duties. Such a restriction is a
13 narrowly tailored measure to protect the integrity of government
14 decision-making and to enhance public trust.

15 The purpose of this Act is to prohibit state employees, for
16 two years after severing their relationship with a private
17 source, from taking official action on any matter they worked on

S.B. NO.

1 for that business before state employment. The Act also extends
2 the lobbying restrictions in the post-employment law, section
3 84-18, Hawaii Revised Statutes, to include employees in the
4 offices of the governor and the lieutenant governor.

5 SECTION 2. Chapter 84, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended
6 by adding a new section to be appropriately designated and to
7 read as follows:

8 **"§84- Restrictions on Matters Involving Pre-Employment.**

9 (a) For two years after entering state service, an
10 employee is prohibited from taking official action on any matter
11 in which the employee, within the five years preceding entry
12 into state service, (1) received compensation from a private
13 source and (2) personally and substantially participated.

14 (b) For purposes of this section, 'matter' means a
15 specific bill, contract, claim, application, investigation,
16 proceeding, dispute, or other transaction or proposal involving
17 a particular party or parties and does not include general
18 subject areas.

19 (c) This section shall not apply to state employees:

20 (i) who take official action required by law, court order,
21 or similar legal authority; or

22 (ii) while serving on a task force.

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1 SECTION 5. Section 84-18, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
2 amended to read as follows:

3 **§84-18 Restrictions on post employment.** (a) No former
4 legislator or employee shall disclose any information that by
5 law or practice is not available to the public and that the
6 former legislator or employee acquired in the course of the
7 former legislator's or employee's official duties or use the
8 information for the former legislator's or employee's personal
9 gain or the benefit of anyone.

10 (b) No former legislator, within twelve months after
11 termination of the former legislator's employment, shall
12 represent any person or business for a fee or other
13 consideration on:

14 (1) Matters in which the former legislator participated as
15 a legislator;

16 (2) Matters involving official action by the legislature;
17 or

18 (3) Any administrative action, as defined in section 97-1.

19 (c) No former employee, within twelve months after
20 termination of the former employee's employment, shall represent
21 any person or business for a fee or other consideration, on
22 matters in which the former employee participated as an employee
23 or on matters involving official action by the particular state

S.B. NO.

1 agency or subdivision thereof with which the former employee had
2 actually served. This section shall not apply to a former task
3 force member who, but for service as a task force member, would
4 not be considered an employee.

5 (d) This section shall not prohibit any agency from
6 contracting with a former legislator or employee to act on a
7 matter on behalf of the State within the period of limitations
8 stated herein, and shall not prevent that legislator or employee
9 from appearing before any agency in relation to that employment.

10 (e) Subject to the restrictions imposed in subsections (a)
11 through (d), the following individuals shall not represent any
12 person or business for a fee or other consideration regarding
13 any legislative action or administrative action, as defined in
14 section 97-1, for twelve months after termination from their
15 respective positions:

- 16 (1) The governor;
- 17 (2) The lieutenant governor;
- 18 (3) The administrative director of the State;
- 19 (4) The attorney general;
- 20 (5) The comptroller;
- 21 (6) The chairperson of the board of agriculture;
- 22 (7) The director of corrections and rehabilitation;
- 23 (8) The director of finance;

S.B. NO.

- 1 (9) The director of business, economic development, and
2 tourism;
- 3 (10) The director of commerce and consumer affairs;
- 4 (11) The adjutant general;
- 5 (12) The superintendent of education;
- 6 (13) The chairperson of the Hawaiian homes commission;
- 7 (14) The director of health;
- 8 (15) The director of human resources development;
- 9 (16) The director of human services;
- 10 (17) The director of labor and industrial relations;
- 11 (18) The chairperson of the board of land and natural
12 resources;
- 13 (19) The director of law enforcement;
- 14 (20) The director of taxation;
- 15 (21) The director of transportation;
- 16 (22) The president of the University of Hawaii;
- 17 (23) The executive administrator of the board of regents of
18 the University of Hawaii;
- 19 (24) The administrator of the office of Hawaiian affairs;
- 20 (25) The chief information officer;
- 21 (26) The executive director of the agribusiness development
22 corporation;

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1 (27) The executive director of the campaign spending
2 commission;

3 (28) The executive director of the Hawaii community
4 development authority;

5 (29) The executive director of the Hawaii housing finance
6 and development corporation;

7 (30) The president and chief executive officer of the
8 Hawaii tourism authority;

9 (31) The executive officer of the public utilities
10 commission;

11 (32) The state auditor;

12 (33) The director of the legislative reference bureau;

13 (34) The ombudsman;

14 (35) The permanent employees of the legislature, other than
15 persons employed in clerical, secretarial, or similar positions;

16 (36) The administrative director of the courts;

17 (37) The executive director of the state ethics commission;

18 (38) The executive officer of the state land use
19 commission;

20 (39) The executive director of the natural energy
21 laboratory of Hawaii authority;

22 (40) The executive director of the Hawaii public housing
23 authority; ~~and~~

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1 (41) The first deputy to the chairperson of the commission
2 on water resource management; and

3 (42) The permanent employees of the offices of the governor
4 and the lieutenant governor, other than persons employed in
5 clerical, secretarial, or similar positions;

6 provided that this subsection shall not apply to any person who
7 has held one of the positions listed above only on an interim or
8 acting basis and for a period of less than one hundred eighty-
9 one days.

10 (f) Subsections (b) through (e) shall not apply to any
11 person who is employed by the State for a period of less than
12 one hundred and eighty-one days.

13 (g) For the purposes of this section, "represent" means to
14 engage in direct communication on behalf of any person or
15 business with a legislator, a legislative employee, a particular
16 state agency or subdivision thereof, or their employees.

17 SECTION 4. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed
18 and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

19 SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect on June 30, 2027.

20
INTRODUCED BY: _____

THE SENATE
THIRTY-FOURTH LEGISLATURE, 2026
STATE OF HAWAII

S.B. NO.

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL DISCLOSURES

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The purpose of this Act is to strengthen public
2 trust in government by expanding the categories of boards and
3 commissions whose members are required to file public financial
4 disclosure statements under section 84-17, Hawaii Revised
5 Statutes, and by including the executive directors and executive
6 officers for those boards. Under existing law, public financial
7 disclosure is required for members of certain state boards and
8 commissions whose duties involve significant regulatory
9 authority, fiduciary responsibility, or oversight of substantial
10 public resources. However, several boards and commissions that
11 manage large sums of public funds, exercise significant
12 financial discretion, or make decisions with substantial
13 economic impact are not currently included in the statute's
14 public disclosure requirements.

15 This Act addresses that gap. It adds to the public
16 disclosure list (1) members of additional boards and commissions
17 that oversee or control substantial state monies, investments,

1 or expenditures; and (2) the executive directors or executive
2 officers of those same boards and commissions, who, as state
3 employees entrusted with day-to-day financial or operational
4 authority, should be subject to the same transparency
5 expectations.

6 By including both members and chief executive officers of
7 influential boards and commissions, this Act ensures that the
8 individuals exercising the greatest influence over high-value
9 public resources are covered by uniform disclosure standards.
10 Public financial disclosure helps identify and prevent conflicts
11 of interest, promotes accountability, and reinforces the
12 public's confidence that state decision-makers act in the public
13 interest.

14 Accordingly, this Act amends section 84-17(d), Hawaii
15 Revised Statutes, to require public financial disclosure from
16 members and executive leadership of specified boards and
17 commissions with broad budgetary, investment, or expenditure
18 authority.

19 SECTION 2. Section 84-17, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
20 amended to read as follows:

21 **§84-17 Requirements of disclosure.** (a) For the purposes
22 of this section, "disclosure period" refers to the period from
23 January 1 of the preceding calendar year to the time of the

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1 filing of the employee's or legislator's disclosure of financial
2 interests.

3 (b) The disclosure of financial interests required by this
4 section shall be filed:

5 (1) By any person enumerated in subsection (c), except a
6 member of the legislature, between January 1 and May 31 of each
7 year;

8 (2) By a member of the legislature between January 1 and
9 January 31 of each year;

10 (3) Within thirty days of a person's election or
11 appointment to a state position enumerated in subsection (c); or

12 (4) Within thirty days of separation from a state position
13 if a prior financial disclosure statement for the position was
14 not filed within [~~the one hundred eighty days~~ twelve months
15 preceding the date of separation;

16 provided that candidates for state elective offices or the
17 constitutional convention shall file the required statements no
18 later than ten days after the nomination filing deadline
19 established pursuant to section 12-6.

20 (c) The following persons shall file annually with the
21 state ethics commission a disclosure of financial interests:

22 (1) The governor, lieutenant governor, members of the
23 legislature, and delegates to the constitutional convention;

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1 provided that delegates to the constitutional convention shall
2 only be required to file initial disclosures;

3 (2) The directors and their deputies, the division chiefs,
4 the executive directors, and the executive ~~[secretaries]~~officers
5 and their deputies, the purchasing agents, and the fiscal
6 officers, regardless of the titles by which the foregoing
7 persons are designated, of every state agency and department;

8 (3) The permanent employees of the legislature and its
9 service agencies, other than persons employed in clerical,
10 secretarial, or similar positions;

11 (4) The administrative director of the State, and the
12 assistants in the office of the governor and lieutenant
13 governor, other than persons employed in clerical, secretarial,
14 or similar positions;

15 (5) The hearings officers of every state agency and
16 department;

17 (6) The president, vice presidents, assistant vice
18 presidents, chancellors, and provosts of the University of
19 Hawaii and its community colleges;

20 (7) The superintendent, deputy superintendents, assistant
21 superintendents, complex area superintendents of the department
22 of education, and the state librarian[-] and ~~[deputy state~~

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1 ~~librarian of the department of education]~~ the special assistant
2 to the state librarian of the public library system;

3 (8) The administrative director and deputy director of the
4 courts;

5 (9) The members of every state board or commission whose
6 original terms of office are for periods exceeding one year and
7 whose functions are not solely advisory;

8 (10) Candidates for state elective offices, including
9 candidates for election to the constitutional convention;
10 provided that candidates shall only be required to file initial
11 disclosures;

12 (11) The ~~[administrator and assistant administrator]~~ chief
13 executive officer and executive administrators of the office of
14 Hawaiian affairs; and

15 (12) The Hawaii unmanned aerial systems test site chief
16 operating officer~~[, and]~~.

17 ~~[(13) The members of the school facilities board appointed~~
18 ~~by the governor].~~

19 (d) The financial disclosure statements of the following
20 persons shall be public records and available for inspection and
21 duplication:

22 (1) The governor, lieutenant governor, members of the
23 legislature, candidates for and delegates to the constitutional

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1 convention, trustees of the office of Hawaiian affairs, and
2 candidates for state elective offices;

3 (2) The directors of the state departments and their
4 deputies, regardless of the titles by which the foregoing
5 persons are designated; provided that with respect to the
6 department of the attorney general, the foregoing shall apply
7 only to the attorney general and the first deputy attorney
8 general;

9 (3) The administrative director of the State;

10 (4) The president, vice presidents, assistant vice
11 presidents, chancellors, members of the board of regents, and
12 provosts of the University of Hawaii;

13 (5) The members of the board of education, superintendent,
14 deputy superintendents of the department of education, and the
15 state librarian[7] and [deputy state librarian of the department
16 of education] the special assistant to the state librarian of
17 the public library system;

18 (6) The administrative director and deputy director of the
19 courts;

20 (7) The [administrator and assistant administrator] chief
21 executive officer and executive administrators of the office of
22 Hawaiian affairs; and

1 (8) The executive directors or executive officers, if
2 applicable, and members of the following state boards,
3 commissions, and agencies:

4 (A) The [~~board of directors of the~~]agribusiness
5 development corporation established under section 163D-3;

6 (B) The board of agriculture and biosecurity
7 established under section 26-16;

8 (C) The state ethics commission established under
9 section 84-21;

10 (D) The Hawaii community development authority
11 established under section 206E-3;

12 (E) The Hawaiian homes commission established under
13 the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act of 1920, as amended, and
14 section 26-17;

15 (F) The [~~board of directors of the~~]Hawaii housing
16 finance and development corporation established under section
17 201H-3;

18 (G) The board of land and natural resources
19 established under section 171-4;

20 (H) The state land use commission established under
21 section 205-1;

22 (I) The legacy land conservation commission
23 established under section 173A-2.4;

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1 (J) The natural area reserves system commission
2 established under section 195-6;

3 (K) The ~~[board of directors of the]~~ natural energy
4 laboratory of Hawaii authority established under section 227D-2;

5 (L) The ~~[board of directors of the]~~ Hawaii public
6 housing authority established under section 356D-3;

7 (M) The public utilities commission established under
8 section 269-2;

9 (N) The commission on water resource management
10 established under section 174C-7; and

11 (O) The stadium authority established under section
12 109-1.

13 (P) The employees' retirement system;

14 (Q) The Hawaii employer-union health benefits trust
15 fund;

16 (R) The Hawaii green infrastructure authority;

17 (S) The Hawaii technology development corporation;
18 and

19 (T) The school facilities authority.

20 (e) The information on the financial disclosure statements
21 shall be confidential, except as provided in subsection

22 (d). The commission shall not release the contents of the
23 disclosures except as may be permitted pursuant to this

1 chapter. The unauthorized release of any confidential financial
2 disclosure statement information shall be a violation of this
3 chapter.

4 (f) Candidates for state elective offices, including
5 candidates for election to the constitutional convention, shall
6 only be required to disclose their own financial interests. The
7 disclosures of financial interests of all other persons
8 designated in subsection (c) shall state, in addition to the
9 financial interests of the person disclosing, the financial
10 interests of the person's spouse and dependent children. All
11 disclosures shall include:

12 (1) The source and amount of all income of \$1,000 or more
13 received, for services rendered, by the person in the person's
14 own name or by any other person for the person's use or benefit
15 during the preceding calendar year and the nature of the
16 services rendered; provided that required disclosure under this
17 paragraph for the income source of the spouse or dependent child
18 of a person subject to subsection (d) shall be limited to the
19 name of the business or other qualifying source of income, and
20 need not include the income source's address; provided further
21 that other information that may be privileged by law or
22 individual items of compensation that constitute a portion of

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1 the gross income of the business or profession from which the
2 person derives income need not be disclosed;

3 (2) The amount and identity of every ownership or
4 beneficial interest held during the disclosure period in any
5 business having a value of \$5,000 or more or equal to ten per
6 cent of the ownership of the business and, if the interest was
7 transferred during the disclosure period, the date of the
8 transfer; provided that an interest in the form of an account in
9 a federal or state regulated financial institution, an interest
10 in the form of a policy in a mutual insurance company, or
11 individual items in a mutual fund or a blind trust, if the
12 mutual fund or blind trust has been disclosed pursuant to this
13 paragraph, need not be disclosed;

14 (3) Every officership, directorship, trusteeship, or other
15 fiduciary relationship held in a business during the disclosure
16 period, the term of office and the annual compensation;

17 (4) The name of each creditor to whom the value of \$3,000
18 or more was owed during the disclosure period and the original
19 amount and amount outstanding; provided that debts arising out
20 of retail installment transactions for the purchase of consumer
21 goods need not be disclosed;

22 (5) The street address and, if available, the tax map key
23 number, and the value of any real property in which the person

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1 holds an interest whose value is \$10,000 or more, and, if the
2 interest was transferred or obtained during the disclosure
3 period, a statement of the amount and nature of the
4 consideration received or paid in exchange for such interest,
5 and the name of the person furnishing or receiving the
6 consideration; provided that disclosure shall not be required of
7 the street address and tax map key number of the person's
8 residence;

9 (6) The names of clients assisted or represented before
10 state agencies, except in ministerial matters, for a fee or
11 compensation during the disclosure period and the names of the
12 state agencies involved; and

13 (7) The amount and identity of every creditor interest in
14 an insolvent business held during the disclosure period having a
15 value of \$5,000 or more.

16 (g) In addition to the disclosures required under
17 subsection (f), each member of the legislature shall also
18 disclose the name of any person that is subject to section 97-3
19 and that is:

20 (1) A business partner of the member;

21 (2) An employer of the member;

22 (3) An officer or director of the member's employer; or

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1 (4) A client of the member, member's partner, or member's
2 employer, who is on the lobbyist list and not just a client with
3 a lobbyist, where the client provided at least \$5,000 of income
4 during the preceding calendar year.

5 As used in this subsection:

6 "Member" means a member of the legislature.

7 "Member's partner" means a member's spouse under chapter
8 572, civil union partner under chapter 572B, or reciprocal
9 beneficiary under chapter 572C.

10 (h) Where an amount is required to be reported, the person
11 disclosing may indicate whether the amount is at least \$1,000
12 but less than \$10,000; at least \$10,000 but less than \$25,000;
13 at least \$25,000 but less than \$50,000; at least \$50,000 but
14 less than \$100,000; at least \$100,000 but less than \$150,000; at
15 least \$150,000 but less than \$250,000; at least \$250,000 but
16 less than \$500,000; at least \$500,000 but less than \$750,000; at
17 least \$750,000 but less than \$1,000,000; or \$1,000,000 or
18 more. An amount of stock may be reported by number of shares.

19 (i) The state ethics commission shall provide a method for
20 filing financial disclosure statements. The commission may
21 require that financial disclosure statements be filed
22 electronically.

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(j) Failure of a legislator, a delegate to the constitutional convention, or an employee to file a disclosure of financial interests as required by this section shall be a violation of this chapter. Any legislator, delegate to a constitutional convention, or employee who fails to file a disclosure of financial interests when due may be assessed an administrative fine of \$50. The state ethics commission, upon the expiration of the time allowed for filing, may post on its website for public inspection a list of all persons who have failed to file financial disclosure statements. The state ethics commission shall notify a person, by in-person service, electronic mail to the person's state electronic mail address, or first-class mail, of the failure to file, and, if applicable, the administrative fine. If a disclosure of financial interests has not been filed within thirty days after the original deadline, in addition to any initial administrative fine that may have been assessed, an administrative fine of \$250 may be assessed.

(k) The chief election officer, upon receipt of the nomination paper of any person seeking a state elective office, including the office of delegate to the constitutional convention, shall notify the state ethics commission of the name of the candidate for state office and the date on which the

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1 person filed the nomination paper. Any candidate who fails to
2 file a disclosure of financial interests when due may be
3 assessed an administrative fine of \$50. The state ethics
4 commission, upon the expiration of the time allowed for filing,
5 may post on its website for public inspection a list of all
6 candidates who have failed to file financial disclosure
7 statements. The state ethics commission shall notify a
8 candidate, by in-person service, electronic mail to the
9 candidate's electronic mail address listed with the office of
10 elections, or first-class mail, of the failure to file and, if
11 applicable, the administrative fine. If a disclosure of
12 financial interests has not been filed within thirty days after
13 the original deadline, in addition to any initial administrative
14 fine that may have been assessed, an administrative fine of \$250
15 may be assessed.

16 (1) Administrative fines assessed pursuant to this section
17 may be enforced using the procedure provided in section 84-
18 31(g).

19 (m) All administrative fines collected under this section
20 shall be deposited into the general fund. Any administrative
21 fine for the late filing of a disclosure of financial interests
22 shall be in addition to any other action the state ethics
23 commission may take pursuant to this chapter. The state ethics

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1 commission may waive any administrative fines authorized
2 pursuant to this section for good cause shown.

3 (n) The state ethics commission may investigate, initiate,
4 or receive charges on whether a candidate's financial disclosure
5 statement discloses the financial interests required to be
6 disclosed. After proceeding in conformance with section 84-31,
7 the state ethics commission may issue a decision on whether a
8 candidate has complied with subsection (f). This decision shall
9 be a matter of public record.

10 SECTION 3. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed
11 and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

12 SECTION 4. This Act shall apply only to financial
13 disclosure statements filed on or after July 1, 2027. Financial
14 disclosure statements that were confidential at the time of
15 filing shall remain confidential notwithstanding any amendments
16 made by this Act.

17 SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2027.

18

INTRODUCED BY: _____

19

THE SENATE
THIRTY-FOURTH LEGISLATURE, 2026
STATE OF HAWAII

S . B . NO .

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL DISCLOSURES

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The purpose of this Act is to promote
2 transparency and strengthen public confidence in the State's
3 appointments process by requiring that nominees to certain state
4 positions requiring Senate confirmation file financial
5 disclosure statements prior to their confirmation hearings.

6 Under existing law, individuals appointed to certain state
7 positions must file financial disclosure statements within
8 thirty days of their appointment. However, this deadline often
9 results in disclosure statements becoming publicly available
10 only after the Senate conducts its confirmation hearings,
11 limiting the ability of Senators and the public to review
12 potential conflicts of interest in advance.

13 This Act ensures that financial disclosure statements for
14 nominees subject to Senate confirmation are filed in a timely
15 manner, facilitating meaningful public review. In addition, this
16 Act modernizes existing statutory financial disclosure

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requirements by aligning legislative disclosures with information already provided in lobbyist expenditure statements.

SECTION 2. Section 84-17, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended to read as follows:

§84-17 Requirements of disclosure. (a) For the purposes of this section, "disclosure period" refers to the period from January 1 of the preceding calendar year to the time of the filing of the employee's or legislator's disclosure of financial interests.

(b) The disclosure of financial interests required by this section shall be filed:

(1) By any person enumerated in subsection (c), except a member of the legislature, between January 1 and May 31 of each year;

(2) By a member of the legislature between January 1 and January 31 of each year;

(3) Within thirty days of a person's election or appointment to a state position enumerated in subsection (c); or

(4) Within thirty days of separation from a state position if a prior financial disclosure statement for the position was not filed within the one hundred eighty days preceding the date of separation; provided that candidates for state elective offices or the constitutional convention shall file the required

1 statements no later than ten days after the nomination filing
2 deadline established pursuant to section 12-6, and provided
3 further that persons nominated to a position subject to senate
4 confirmation, excluding state court justices and judges, shall
5 file the required statements no later than 5 days after being
6 nominated or five days before the first confirmation hearing,
7 whichever comes earlier.

8 (c) The following persons shall file annually with the
9 state ethics commission a disclosure of financial interests:

10 (1) The governor, lieutenant governor, members of the
11 legislature, and delegates to the constitutional convention;
12 provided that delegates to the constitutional convention shall
13 only be required to file initial disclosures;

14 (2) The directors and their deputies, the division chiefs,
15 the executive directors and the executive secretaries and their
16 deputies, the purchasing agents, and the fiscal officers,
17 regardless of the titles by which the foregoing persons are
18 designated, of every state agency and department;

19 (3) The permanent employees of the legislature and its
20 service agencies, other than persons employed in clerical,
21 secretarial, or similar positions;

22 (4) The administrative director of the State, and the
23 assistants in the office of the governor and lieutenant

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1 governor, other than persons employed in clerical, secretarial,
2 or similar positions;

3 (5) The hearings officers of every state agency and
4 department;

5 (6) The president, vice presidents, assistant vice
6 presidents, chancellors, and provosts of the University of
7 Hawaii and its community colleges;

8 (7) The superintendent, deputy superintendent, assistant
9 superintendents, complex area superintendents, state librarian,
10 and deputy state librarian of the department of education;

11 (8) The administrative director and deputy director of the
12 courts;

13 (9) The members of every state board or commission whose
14 original terms of office are for periods exceeding one year and
15 whose functions are not solely advisory;

16 (10) Candidates for state elective offices, including
17 candidates for election to the constitutional convention;
18 provided that candidates shall only be required to file initial
19 disclosures;

20 (11) The administrator and assistant administrator of the
21 office of Hawaiian affairs;

22 (12) The Hawaii unmanned aerial systems test site chief
23 operating officer; ~~and~~

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1 (13) The members of the school facilities board appointed
2 by the governor[-]; and

3 (14) persons nominated to a position subject to senate
4 confirmation, excluding state court justices and judges;
5 provided that nominees shall only be required to file initial
6 disclosures in advance of their confirmation hearings.

7 (d) The financial disclosure statements of the following
8 persons shall be public records and available for inspection and
9 duplication:

10 (1) The governor, lieutenant governor, members of the
11 legislature, candidates for and delegates to the constitutional
12 convention, trustees of the office of Hawaiian affairs, ~~and~~
13 candidates for state elective offices, and nominees for state
14 positions subject to senate confirmation, excluding state court
15 justices and judges;

16 (2) The directors of the state departments and their
17 deputies, regardless of the titles by which the foregoing
18 persons are designated; provided that with respect to the
19 department of the attorney general, the foregoing shall apply
20 only to the attorney general and the first deputy attorney
21 general;

22 (3) The administrative director of the State;

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1 (4) The president, vice presidents, assistant vice
2 presidents, chancellors, members of the board of regents, and
3 provosts of the University of Hawaii;

4 (5) The members of the board of education, superintendent,
5 deputy superintendent, state librarian, and deputy state
6 librarian of the department of education;

7 (6) The administrative director and deputy director of the
8 courts;

9 (7) The administrator and assistant administrator of the
10 office of Hawaiian affairs; and

11 (8) The members of the following state boards,
12 commissions, and agencies:

13 (A) The board of directors of the agribusiness
14 development corporation established under section 163D-3;

15 (B) The board of agriculture and biosecurity
16 established under section 26-16;

17 (C) The state ethics commission established under
18 section 84-21;

19 (D) The Hawaii community development authority
20 established under section 206E-3;

21 (E) The Hawaiian homes commission established under
22 the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act of 1920, as amended, and
23 section 26-17;

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1 (F) The board of directors of the Hawaii housing
2 finance and development corporation established under section
3 201H-3;

4 (G) The board of land and natural resources
5 established under section 171-4;

6 (H) The state land use commission established under
7 section 205-1;

8 (I) The legacy land conservation commission
9 established under section 173A-2.4;

10 (J) The natural area reserves system commission
11 established under section 195-6;

12 (K) The board of directors of the natural energy
13 laboratory of Hawaii authority established under section 227D-2;

14 (L) The board of directors of the Hawaii public
15 housing authority established under section 356D-3;

16 (M) The public utilities commission established under
17 section 269-2;

18 (N) The commission on water resource management
19 established under section 174C-7; and

20 (O) The stadium authority established under section
21 109-1.

22 (e) The information on the financial disclosure statements
23 shall be confidential, except as provided in subsection

1 (d). The commission shall not release the contents of the
2 disclosures except as may be permitted pursuant to this
3 chapter. The unauthorized release of any confidential financial
4 disclosure statement information shall be a violation of this
5 chapter.

6 (f) Candidates for state elective offices, including
7 candidates for election to the constitutional convention, shall
8 only be required to disclose their own financial interests. The
9 disclosures of financial interests of all other persons
10 designated in subsection (c) shall state, in addition to the
11 financial interests of the person disclosing, the financial
12 interests of the person's spouse and dependent children. All
13 disclosures shall include:

14 (1) The source and amount of all income of \$1,000 or more
15 received, for services rendered, by the person in the person's
16 own name or by any other person for the person's use or benefit
17 during the preceding calendar year and the nature of the
18 services rendered; provided that required disclosure under this
19 paragraph for the income source of the spouse or dependent child
20 of a person subject to subsection (d) shall be limited to the
21 name of the business or other qualifying source of income, and
22 need not include the income source's address; provided further
23 that other information that may be privileged by law or

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1 individual items of compensation that constitute a portion of
2 the gross income of the business or profession from which the
3 person derives income need not be disclosed;

4 (2) The amount and identity of every ownership or
5 beneficial interest held during the disclosure period in any
6 business having a value of \$5,000 or more or equal to ten per
7 cent of the ownership of the business and, if the interest was
8 transferred during the disclosure period, the date of the
9 transfer; provided that an interest in the form of an account in
10 a federal or state regulated financial institution, an interest
11 in the form of a policy in a mutual insurance company, or
12 individual items in a mutual fund or a blind trust, if the
13 mutual fund or blind trust has been disclosed pursuant to this
14 paragraph, need not be disclosed;

15 (3) Every officership, directorship, trusteeship, or other
16 fiduciary relationship held in a business during the disclosure
17 period, the term of office and the annual compensation;

18 (4) The name of each creditor to whom the value of \$3,000
19 or more was owed during the disclosure period and the original
20 amount and amount outstanding; provided that debts arising out
21 of retail installment transactions for the purchase of consumer
22 goods need not be disclosed;

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(5) The street address and, if available, the tax map key number, and the value of any real property in which the person holds an interest whose value is \$10,000 or more, and, if the interest was transferred or obtained during the disclosure period, a statement of the amount and nature of the consideration received or paid in exchange for such interest, and the name of the person furnishing or receiving the consideration; provided that disclosure shall not be required of the street address and tax map key number of the person's residence;

(6) The names of clients assisted or represented before state agencies, except in ministerial matters, for a fee or compensation during the disclosure period and the names of the state agencies involved; and

(7) The amount and identity of every creditor interest in an insolvent business held during the disclosure period having a value of \$5,000 or more.

(g) In addition to the disclosures required under subsection (f), each ~~[member of the legislature]~~ legislator shall also disclose the name of any person that is subject to section 97-3 and that is:

(1) A business partner of the legislator ~~[member]~~;

(2) An employer of the legislator ~~[member]~~;

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1 (3) An officer or director of the legislator's ~~[member's]~~
2 employer; or

3 (4) A client of the legislator~~[member]~~, the legislator's
4 spouse~~[member's partner]~~, or the legislator's~~[member's]~~
5 employer, ~~[who is on the lobbyist list and not just a client~~
6 ~~with a lobbyist, where the client]~~ who filed a statement of
7 expenditures pursuant to section 97-3 and provided at least
8 \$5,000 of income during the preceding calendar year.

9 As used in this subsection:

10 ~~["Member" means a member of the legislature.]~~

11 "Legislator's spouse~~[Member's partner]"~~ means a
12 legislator's~~[member's]~~ spouse under chapter 572, civil union
13 partner under chapter 572B, or reciprocal beneficiary under
14 chapter 572C.

15 (h) Where an amount is required to be reported, the person
16 disclosing may indicate whether the amount is at least \$1,000
17 but less than \$10,000; at least \$10,000 but less than \$25,000;
18 at least \$25,000 but less than \$50,000; at least \$50,000 but
19 less than \$100,000; at least \$100,000 but less than \$150,000; at
20 least \$150,000 but less than \$250,000; at least \$250,000 but
21 less than \$500,000; at least \$500,000 but less than \$750,000; at
22 least \$750,000 but less than \$1,000,000; or \$1,000,000 or
23 more. An amount of stock may be reported by number of shares.

S.B. NO.

1 (i) The state ethics commission shall provide a method for
2 filing financial disclosure statements. The commission may
3 require that financial disclosure statements be filed
4 electronically.

5 (j) Failure of a legislator, a delegate to the
6 constitutional convention, or an employee to file a disclosure
7 of financial interests as required by this section shall be a
8 violation of this chapter. Any legislator, delegate to a
9 constitutional convention, or employee who fails to file a
10 disclosure of financial interests when due may be assessed an
11 administrative fine of \$50. The state ethics commission, upon
12 the expiration of the time allowed for filing, may post on its
13 website for public inspection a list of all persons who have
14 failed to file financial disclosure statements. The state
15 ethics commission shall notify a person, by in-person service,
16 electronic mail to the person's state electronic mail address,
17 or first-class mail, of the failure to file, and, if applicable,
18 the administrative fine. If a disclosure of financial interests
19 has not been filed within thirty days after the original
20 deadline, in addition to any initial administrative fine that
21 may have been assessed, an administrative fine of \$250 may be
22 assessed.

S.B. NO.

1 (k) The chief election officer, upon receipt of the
2 nomination paper of any person seeking a state elective office,
3 including the office of delegate to the constitutional
4 convention, shall notify the state ethics commission of the name
5 of the candidate for state office and the date on which the
6 person filed the nomination paper. Any candidate who fails to
7 file a disclosure of financial interests when due may be
8 assessed an administrative fine of \$50. The state ethics
9 commission, upon the expiration of the time allowed for filing,
10 may post on its website for public inspection a list of all
11 candidates who have failed to file financial disclosure
12 statements. The state ethics commission shall notify a
13 candidate, by in-person service, electronic mail to the
14 candidate's electronic mail address listed with the office of
15 elections, or first-class mail, of the failure to file and, if
16 applicable, the administrative fine. If a disclosure of
17 financial interests has not been filed within thirty days after
18 the original deadline, in addition to any initial administrative
19 fine that may have been assessed, an administrative fine of \$250
20 may be assessed.

21 (l) Administrative fines assessed pursuant to this section
22 may be enforced using the procedure provided in section 84-
23 31(g).

S.B. NO.

1 (m) All administrative fines collected under this section
2 shall be deposited into the general fund. Any administrative
3 fine for the late filing of a disclosure of financial interests
4 shall be in addition to any other action the state ethics
5 commission may take pursuant to this chapter. The state ethics
6 commission may waive any administrative fines authorized
7 pursuant to this section for good cause shown.

8 (n) The state ethics commission may investigate, initiate,
9 or receive charges on whether a candidate's financial disclosure
10 statement discloses the financial interests required to be
11 disclosed. After proceeding in conformance with section 84-31,
12 the state ethics commission may issue a decision on whether a
13 candidate has complied with subsection (f). This decision shall
14 be a matter of public record.

15 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect upon approval.
16

17 INTRODUCED BY: _____
18

SUNSHINE LAW MEETING
AGENDA ITEM V

PROPOSED FISCAL YEAR 2026-2027 BUDGET

Attachment 1: Proposed Ethics Commission Budget Fiscal Year 2026-27 Budget

Hawai'i State Ethics Commission - Budget Projections for FY 2026-2027

	2025-2026 Base Budget	2026-2027 Estimated Budget	Increases/ Decreases From FY25	% Increase/ Decrease From FY25
TOTAL BUDGET (excluding vacation payouts) \$	1,744,438	\$ 1,758,108	\$ 13,670	0.8%
PERSONNEL				
Staff Salaries	1,459,710	1,459,710	-	0.0%
Cost Adjustments for staff salaries	-			
Vacation Payouts/Transfer	16,553	16,553	-	
TOTAL PERSONNEL (excluding vacation payouts)	1,459,710	1,459,710	-	0.0%
MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES				
Office Expenses:				
Office Supplies	3,500	3,500	-	0.0%
Postage	1,500	1,500	-	0.0%
Telephone & Internet	600	600	-	0.0%
Subtotal:	5,600	5,600	-	0.0%
Intrastate Transportation and Travel				
Commissioners / Staff	8,500	8,500	-	0.0%
Car Mileage and Parking	750	750	-	0.0%
Subtotal:	9,250	9,250	-	0.0%
Out-of-State Travel				
Airfare (8 @ \$1,000 ea.)	8,000	8,000	-	0.0%
Lodging and per diem for 5.5 days (8 @ \$145/day x 5.5 days)	6,380	6,380	-	0.0%
Excess Hotel and Increases in per diem/airfare	2,267	2,267	-	0.0%
Taxi/bus fare	240	240	-	0.0%
Subtotal:	16,887	16,887	-	0.0%
Equipment Rental and Maintenance				
Copier	-	-	-	0.0%
Computer Equipment Maintenance	3,500	3,500	-	0.0%
Misc. (time clock, projector, etc.)	-	-	-	0.0%
Investigation Software	2,500	2,500	-	0.0%
Software License Renewals	22,000	22,000	-	0.0%
Teams Calling and O365 licensing	7,012	7,012	-	0.0%
Videoconferencing Software	1,200	1,200	-	0.0%
Subtotal:	36,212	36,212	-	0.0%

	2025-2026 Base <u>Budget</u>	2026-2027 Estimated <u>Budget</u>	Increases/ Decreases <u>From FY25</u>	% Increase/ Decrease <u>From FY25</u>
Dues, Subscriptions, Training¹				
COGEL Membership	470	500	30	6.4%
COGEL Registration (6 x \$600)	3,600	3,600	-	0.0%
Attorney Registration Fees	3,400	4,000	600	17.6%
Training Expenses	10,000	10,000	-	0.0%
Legal Reference Publications	4,900	5,500	600	12.2%
Newspapers Subscriptions, etc.	324	384	60	18.5%
Disruptive Behavior Training	800	800	-	0.0%
Subtotal:	23,494	24,784	1,290	5.5%
Newspaper Advertisements	1,100	1,100	-	0.0%
	1,100	1,100	-	0.0%
Commission Meetings, Investigations and Hearings				
Subpoena Fees	900	900	-	0.0%
Court Reporter	7,500	7,500	-	0.0%
Witness Fees, Travel, Mileage	1,500	1,500	-	0.0%
Hearings Officer	1,500	1,500	-	0.0%
Commission Meeting Expenses	1,000	1,000	-	0.0%
Subtotal:	12,400	12,400	-	0.0%
Consulting Services				
Computer Consulting ²	25,000	45,000	20,000	80.0%
Other Services (developing training videos)	8,000	8,000	-	0.0%
Subtotal:	33,000	53,000	20,000	60.6%
Office Rent	131,785	129,165	(2,620)	-2.0%
TOTAL MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES:	269,728	288,398	18,670	6.9%
CAPITAL OUTLAY				
Office Furniture & Equipment	15,000	10,000	(5,000)	-33.3%
TOTAL CAPITAL OUTLAY:	15,000	10,000	(5,000)	-33.3%
GRAND TOTAL:	\$ 1,744,438	\$ 1,758,108	\$ 13,670	0.8%

¹ Council on Governmental Ethics Laws (COGEL) Membership dues, Hawaii State Bar Association (HSBA) attorney license dues, 3-year Westlaw renewal contract, and newspaper subscription costs increased.

² The Commission anticipates hiring a consultant for accessibility compliance and developing an AI bot to help with advice, enforcement, and trainings.

SUNSHINE LAW MEETING
AGENDA ITEM VI

CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION OF LEGISLATIVE DELEGATION POLICY

Attachment 1: Proposed Legislative Delegation Policy



HAWAI'I STATE ETHICS COMMISSION

Komikina Ho'opono Kulekele o Hawai'i Moku'āina

Proposed Legislative Advocacy Policy

I. Purpose.

The purpose of this policy is to establish a clear, timely, and accountable framework for the Commission's legislative advocacy. The policy delegates certain day-to-day and time-sensitive decisions to the Executive Director while ensuring appropriate Commission oversight on new or substantive matters.

II. General Delegation of Authority.

The Commission delegates to the Executive Director the authority to make legislative advocacy decisions that are:

1. Time-sensitive, and
2. Consistent with existing Commission policy, precedent, or publicly stated positions.

This delegation includes authority to prepare and submit testimony; communicate with legislators, legislative staff, and executive agencies; and make technical or conforming recommendations that further the Commission's previously adopted policy goals.

III. Consultation with Commission Leadership.

The Executive Director shall make reasonable efforts to consult with the Chair or Vice-Chair before taking positions that:

1. Represent a significant adjustment to prior Commission advocacy;
2. Address emerging issues closely related to, but not directly addressed in, existing Commission policy or precedent; or
3. May reasonably be viewed as affecting the Commission's institutional role or credibility.

Reasonable efforts include timely communication by phone, email, or electronic means, taking into account legislative deadlines, hearing notice periods, and other practical constraints.

IV. Matters Requiring Full Commission Approval.

The Executive Director shall seek Commission approval before advocating on:

1. Wholly new policy matters not addressed by existing Commission positions or precedent;
2. Substantive changes to previously adopted positions, including reversals or significant expansions of policy; or
3. Any matter that the Chair, Vice-Chair, or a majority of Commissioners request be brought to the full Commission.

Where time allows, the Executive Director should bring these matters to a noticed Commission meeting. When timing does not permit, the Executive Director may request guidance through an emergency meeting or other lawful mechanism.

V. Reporting.

The Executive Director shall provide regular updates to the Commission on legislative activity, including:

- Positions taken under delegated authority;
- Consultations with the Chair or Vice-Chair; and
- Any emergent issues that may warrant later Commission review.

VI. Effect.

This policy is intended to promote efficient, consistent, and transparent legislative engagement, while preserving the Commission's ultimate authority to set policy direction and approve substantive changes.

SUNSHINE LAW MEETING
AGENDA ITEM VII

MEETING CALENDAR

Attachment 1: Proposed Meeting Calendar, 2026

2026 Calendar

January						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	MTG FLDR	16	17
18	19	20	MTG	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

February						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	MTG FLDR	13	14
15	16	17	MTG	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

March						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	MTG FLDR	13	14
15	16	17	MTG	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

April						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	MTG FLDR	10	11
12	13	14	MTG	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

May						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	MTG FLDR	15	16
17	18	19	MTG	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

June						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	MTG FLDR	11	12	13
14	15	16	MTG	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

July						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	MTG FLDR	10	11
12	13	14	MTG	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

August						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	MTG FLDR	14	15
16	17	18	MTG	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

September						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	MTG FLDR	11	12
13	14	15	MTG	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

October						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	MTG FLDR	16	17
18	19	20	MTG	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

November						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	MTG FLDR	13	14
15	16	17	MTG	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

December						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	MTG FLDR	11	12
13	14	15	MTG	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

State Holidays 2026

Jan 1 New Year's Day
 Jan 19 Martin Luther King Day
 Feb 16 Presidents' Day
 Mar 26 Prince Kuhio Day
 Apr 3 Good Friday

May 25 Memorial Day
 Jun 11 King Kamehameha I Day
 Jul 3 Independence Day
 Aug 21 Statehood Day
 Sep 7 Labor Day

Nov 3 General Election Day
 Nov 11 Veterans Day
 Nov 26 Thanksgiving Day
 Dec 25 Christmas Day

SUNSHINE LAW MEETING
AGENDA ITEM VIII

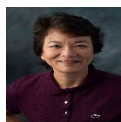
AKANA V. HAWAI'I STATE ETHICS COMMISSION AND DANIEL GLUCK, CIVIL NO. 18-1-1019-06 (JHA); AKANA V. HAWAI'I STATE ETHICS COMMISSION, CIVIL NO. 19-1-0379-03 (JHA); STATE OF HAWAI'I, ETHICS COMMISSION V. ROWENA AKANA, CIVIL NO. 20-1-0453 (BIA)

The Hawai'i State Ethics Commission may convene an executive session pursuant to Hawai'i Revised Statutes § 92-5(a)(4) to consult with the Commission's attorneys and/or the Department of the Attorney General on questions and issues pertaining to the Commission's powers, duties, privileges, immunities, and liabilities.

Attachment 1: “Longtime OHA trustee was outspoken advocate for Hawaiians”
(Honolulu Star-Advertiser, Nov. 9 2025) (available at
<https://www.staradvertiser.com/2025/11/09/hawaii-news/longtime-oha-trustee-was-outspoken-advocate-for-hawaiians/>)

Attachment 2: “Longtime OHA leader Rowena Akana has died” (Honolulu Civil Beat,
Nov. 6 2025) (available at
<https://www.civilbeat.org/2025/11/longtime-oha-leader-rowena-akana-has-died/>)

Longtime OHA trustee was outspoken advocate for Hawaiians



By Leila Fujimori

Nov. 9, 2025



STAR-ADVERTISER / 2016

Rowena Akana was chair of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs' board of trustees.

Former longtime Office of Hawaiian Affairs Trustee Rowena Akana died Thursday. She was 82.

Akana was first elected in 1990 to the OHA board of trustees, which manages the Native Hawaiian Trust Fund, and was reelected seven consecutive times. She served two stints as agency chair, from 1998 to 2000 and then briefly, from Dec. 8, 2016, to Feb. 2, 2017.

Her “fearless” tenure at OHA was somewhat marred by a state Ethics Commission ruling in 2018 charging Akana with 47 violations of the state ethics code, including using her trustee allowance for personal expenses.

Serving as an OHA trustee “was her greatest joy and heartache because she didn’t get to see what she wanted done,” her daughter, Toni Akana Nickens, said.

“Her heart was always for the betterment of our people and she stood vehemently for the rights of our people. She was very outspoken, strong-willed, wore her heart on her sleeve, but you knew exactly where she stood.”

In a written statement Thursday, OHA Chair Kaiali’i Kahele reflected on Akana’s nearly three decades of service as a trustee. “Though her tenure was marked by challenges, her commitment to community, Native Hawaiian lands, and strengthening resources for our people reflects the deep sense of ‘ohana and stewardship she carried,” he said.

“As we mourn her passing, we also acknowledge the many years she dedicated to the welfare of kupuna, Hawai‘i’s cultural legacy, and advocacy for Hawaiian self-determination. May her memory be a source of inspiration and may her spirit rest in strength and aloha.”

Native Hawaiian activist Mililani Trask, who served for a time alongside Akana on the OHA board, remembered her as “a fearless advocate.”

“Her style could be very caustic, especially when not only were you at odds but had different motivations ... ,” she said.

“I got into huge fights with Rowena, but there were many times where she corrected my misunderstandings, and eventually that became the basis of our friendship. If there was anyone who would shred my logic, it would be Rowena, and she knew the same.”

Trask recalled visiting Washington, D.C., with Akana, who wasn’t afraid to confront U.S. Sen. Daniel Inouye of Hawaii and other members of Congress

for what she saw as their failure to protect and advance Native Hawaiian interests.

She said Akana expressed particular concern for issues such as the water contamination on Oahu from U.S. military fuel storage facilities, the proposed Thirty Meter Telescope atop Mauna Kea and the impacts of Army activities at the Pohakuloa Training Area on Hawaii island.

“Rowena always believed that native people had a right to be involved directly in decision-making relating to their lands and resources,” Trask said, and was one of the first voices years ago to say that “unless the cultural values of Hawaiians are integrated into the development process in a meaningful way, you will always have strife. And she was absolutely correct.”

Former state Sen. Clayton Hee, who also was elected to the OHA board in 1990, said he both agreed and disagreed with Akana on different issues.

“As long as I’ve known her, she wore her thoughts on her sleeve,” Hee said. “I don’t think there was any question as to where she stood on issues. She was right up-front regardless of how others may have felt.”

Hee served on the board with Akana during the OHA v. Cayetano legal case in which OHA sought interest payments from the state on revenues earned on ceded lands.

“She always, in my opinion, looked for the global settlement to get Native Hawaiians out from under the shadow of the state government,” he said.

Akana’s death came less than two months after the Hawaii Supreme Court affirmed an Intermediate Court of Appeals’ decision to uphold the state Ethics Commission’s 2018 ruling against her for 47 violations of the state ethics code.

The violations originally included accepting a \$72,000 cash gift to help pay for legal fees and using her trustee allowance to pay for food and home cable television service, a Hawaiian Airlines Premier Club membership and an iTunes gift card.

Akana fought the allegations during a weeklong contested case hearing in October 2018 and lost, resulting in a \$23,107 fine.

She sued the commission in Circuit Court, claiming it lacked jurisdiction over ceded funds set aside for Native Hawaiians, and lost.

In the Supreme Court case, Akana argued the Ethics Commission lacked jurisdiction to charge OHA trustees because the agency is a political subdivision that should have its own separate ethics code and commission. The high court disagreed, ruling Sept. 17 that OHA is not a political subdivision and is subject to state Ethics Commission jurisdiction.

Akana blamed her failure to win reelection in 2018 on the negative publicity surrounding the “trumped-up charges” brought against her by the Ethics Commission and having to participate in the contested case hearing two weeks before the election when she should have been campaigning.

She claimed she was targeted by others inside OHA after trying, as board chair, to get the trustees to fire then-CEO Kamanaopono Crabbe, bringing allegations of corruption within OHA to the state Department of the Attorney General.

Akana grew up in Palolo and graduated from Roosevelt High School. She was a singer and emcee who performed in the Tavana Polynesian show in Waikiki, and in her younger years performed at the 1964 World’s Fair in New York, where she lived many years ago, Nickens said.

Her online biography says she attended the University of Hawaii, Kapiolani Community College and New York University, and was a substance abuse counselor and substitute teacher who had also worked in radio.

Funeral or other memorial plans for Akana have not been announced.

She is additionally survived by daughter Ann Marie Tomisato and three grandchildren.

Native Hawaiians

Longtime OHA Leader Rowena Akana Has Died

Her tenure as a trustee was marked by a commitment to Native Hawaiians but also ethical challenges and board power struggles.

By [Chad Blair](#) / November 6, 2025

A long-serving member of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs Board of Trustees, Rowena Akana, has died. She was 82.

OHA announced her death Thursday. Further details were not immediately available.

First elected to a seat on the OHA Board of Trustees in 1990, Akana served nearly three decades in office. She was elected [seven straight times](#) and served twice as board chair.

She believed that OHA needed to have better control of its finances. A top issue for her was the housing crisis faced by many Native Hawaiians. Akana wanted OHA to partner with developers to build housing so that more Hawaiians could begin to rent or own their own homes.

But Akana was [also often embroiled](#) in ethical conflicts and clashed publicly with others at OHA over its leadership, finances and mission.

She served as board chair from 1998 to 2000 and — briefly — from December 2016 to February 2017, after the 2016 OHA elections changed the

board's composition. A majority of members soon voted to dismiss Akana as chair.

"She has caused nothing but turmoil in this organization since being elected chair," Trustee Dan Ahuna [said at the time](#). "And just within the last 48 hours she has gone on a spree personally attacking other trustees and she unilaterally filed a lawsuit yesterday on behalf of OHA that will likely end up being found frivolous."



Rowena Akana, a long-serving OHA trustee, has died. (Cory Lum/Civil Beat/2017)

Still, Akana [lost reelection in 2018](#), blaming negative publicity from "trumped up charges" brought against her by the Hawai'i State Ethics Commission just two weeks before the election, [as she told](#) the Honolulu Star-Advertiser.

Akana was charged by the Ethics Commission [with accepting prohibited gifts](#), failure to report the acceptance of the gifts and for using her office for

personal benefit. Her attorneys at the time, Bickerton Dang, rejected the claims.

Akana herself [defended the expenses](#) as allowed under OHA policies. She questioned whether the Ethics Commission had jurisdiction over the \$600 million trust, a quasi-state agency dedicated to the well-being of Native Hawaiians.

In 2019, the Ethics Commission [levied a \\$23,000 fine](#) against Akana for 47 violations of the state ethics code. the former trustee appealed the ruling, a matter that was not settled [until this September](#), when the Hawai'i Supreme Court said in a unanimous opinion that OHA trustees are considered state employees and must abide by the code.

“OHA is not a political subdivision such that it requires a separate ethics apparatus,” then-Chief Justice Mark Recktenwald wrote.

The justices also said, however, that the Ethics Commission should defer to OHA's bylaws and internal policies. The high court said it recognized the OHA Board of Trustees' broad powers to improve the lives of Native Hawaiians.

Kai Kahele, the current OHA chair, said in a statement Thursday marking the passing of Akaka, “Though her tenure was marked by challenges, her commitment to community, Native Hawaiian lands, and strengthening resources for our people reflects the deep sense of ‘ohana and stewardship she carried. As we mourn her passing, we also acknowledge the many years she dedicated to the welfare of kūpuna, Hawai'i's cultural legacy, and advocacy for Hawaiian self-determination. May her memory be a source of inspiration and may her spirit rest in strength and aloha.”

According [to her website](#), Akana was a graduate of Roosevelt High School and attended Kapi'olani Community College, the University of Hawai'i and New York University. The website said she was a former newscaster, an abuse counselor and substitute teacher for the Department of Education.

Akana's website also said she was a member of several East Honolulu community organizations.

In [a candidate Q&A](#) for Civil Beat in 2018, Akana said she believed OHA was fulfilling its mandate to serve Hawaiians. But she said OHA was still not getting its fair share of ceded-land revenues from the state, a long-standing issue.

"I have always advocated for our beneficiaries to make sure that our trust dollars are spent on their needs," she wrote. "Housing, health, education, loans, grants and lawsuits that force authorities to live up to their responsibilities to Hawaiians."