

SUNSHINE LAW MEETING
MINUTES OF THE HAWAI'I STATE ETHICS COMMISSION

STATE OF HAWAI'I

Date: April 15, 2026

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

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

Attendance: State Ethics Commission Members

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

State Ethics Commission Staff

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

Guests and Members of the Public

Candace Park, Deputy Attorney General (via Zoom)
HNN (via Zoom)
Emmittf (via Zoom, joined at 9:05 a.m.)
Greg Misakian, President of Kokua Council (in person, arrived at 9:08 a.m.)

CALL TO ORDER (0:05)

Chair Fong called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m. Chair Fong, Commissioners Thielen and Gray, attended in person; Vice Chair Hong was present via Zoom; and Commissioner Becker was excused. Executive Director Harris noted the presence of staff on Zoom and reminded participants that the meeting was being recorded for the official record and would be posted online.

Executive Director Harris asked if any members of the public attending the meeting would like to identify themselves. No guests identified themselves.

Agenda Item No. I: Consideration and Approval of the Minutes of the March 25, 2026, Meeting (2:40)

Upon a motion by Commissioner Thielen, seconded by Commissioner Hong, the Commission approved the minutes of the March 25, 2026, meeting. With the excused absence of Commissioner Becker, all Commissioners present (Fong, Hong, Thielen, and Gray) voted in the affirmative.

Agenda Item No. II: Consideration and Approval of the Minutes of the March 25, 2026, Executive Session Meeting (3:47)

Upon a motion by Commissioner Thielen, seconded by Commissioner Gray, the Commission approved the Executive Session minutes of the March 25, 2026, meeting. With the excused absence of Commissioner Becker, all Commissioners present (Fong, Hong, Thielen, and Gray) voted in the affirmative.

Agenda Item No. III: Directors' Report (4:30)

1. Education & Disclosures – Report/Updates (4:39)

Compliance Director Bonita Chang provided the following update:

- **Financial Disclosure Season**

The annual filing deadline for continuing filers is Monday, June 1, 2026. Staff members have been assisting callers with submitting their financial disclosures. After the Hawai'i State Senate's advice and consent process is completed, staff will contact new board and commission members to file their financial disclosures and complete the mandatory ethics training course.

- **Website updates**

The updated online complaint form was launched on April 1st, with a new landing page and FAQs to streamline and enhance the user experience and to make the intake process more administratively efficient.

2. Guidance and Assignment Statistics – March 2026 (6:02)

Enforcement Director Kee Campbell reported that a total of 92 of the 101 complaints received this year have been closed.

The First Quarterly enhanced statistical reporting shows that a total of 108 complaints were opened. With the newly revised online complaint form, staff anticipate a reduction in “no jurisdiction” complaints and expect to be able to direct people more appropriately and efficiently. Statistical data indicate that approximately half of the complaints received are outside the Commission’s jurisdiction, and about half are referred to other agencies. Fair Treatment complaints continue to be the most common type of issue received.

Attorney of the Day trends indicate that most questions concern gifts and fair treatment inquiries. A total of 27 written guidance summaries were emailed during the quarter, and 2 guidance letters were issued.

Director Campbell explained that “lack of jurisdiction” complaints generally involve matters related to non-state employees. Staff refers these complaints to the appropriate county or federal agency that may have jurisdiction and notifies known complainants where they can properly file their complaint.

Chair Fong noted a guest arrived: Greg Misakian introduced himself. (10:22)

Executive Director Robert Harris noted that as staff continue to develop the enhanced reporting features, future reports will include more detail on where non-jurisdictional complaints are being directed. These reports are intended to update the Commission and the public on the number of inquiries received each month for transparency purposes. Details of individual cases, which are confidential, are shared with the Commission in the non-sunshine, adjudicatory meetings.

New Assignments in March:

- 34 Complaints received
- 22 Gift/Travel requests for guidance
- 68 Attorney of the Day inquiries

Closed Assignments in March:

- 26 Complaints closed
- 27 Gift/Travel guidance letters sent
- 59 Attorney of the Day inquiries

3. Miscellaneous Office Projects/Updates (19:56)

Executive Director Harris provided the Q3 financial report, noting that most costs are fixed and the Commission is on budget for the year.

Director Harris noted that the Commission's Secretary, Lynn O'Ravitz, will be leaving the office sometime in July. She has been with the office for the past 10 years and has benefitted the Commission on multiple levels. She will be sorely missed.

Vice Chair Hong recommended that a letter of recognition be sent to Ms. O'Ravitz for her service to the Commission.

Agenda Item No. IV: Discussion of Media Reports Concerning Ethics or the Ethics Commission Since the Last Meeting (23:59)

Executive Director Harris reported on several media articles:

- March 25, 2026, Star Advertiser – Column: More to do to earn public's trust in local government <https://www.staradvertiser.com/2026/03/25/editorial/island-voices/column-more-to-do-to-earn-publics-trust-in-local-government/>
- March 29, 2026, Civil Beat – The Sunshine Blog: Budget Constraints Doom Full Public Funding of Elections <https://www.civilbeat.org/2026/03/the-sunshine-blog-budget-constraints-doom-full-public-funding-of-elections/>
- April 11, 2026, HNN – Campaign Spending Commission Investigation Lt. Gov. Luke's 2022 Accounting <https://www.hawaiinewsnow.com/2026/04/11/campaign-spending-commission-investigating-lt-gov-lukes-2022-accounting/>
- April 12, 2026, Civil Beat – The Sunshine Blog: No Rain Check For State Lawmakers (**mentions HB2246**) <https://www.civilbeat.org/2026/04/the-sunshine-blog-no-rain-check-for-state-lawmakers/>

Agenda Item No. V: 2026 Legislative Matters (25:15)

Executive Director Harris provided an overview of the ethics-related bills currently still moving through the legislative process. He specifically noted that the ethics commission package bills, SB2245, SB2246, SB2247, SB2248 will be headed to conference committees.

The Commission's nepotism bill was deferred as well as HB1873 which would have removed the public financial disclosure requirement for the UH Board of Regents.

Agenda Item No. VI: Evaluation of Executive Director & General Counsel Robert D. Harris (28:59)

Upon a motion by Commissioner Thielen, seconded by Commissioner Gray, this matter was deferred to the May 20, 2026, Commission meeting. With the excused absence of Commissioner Becker, all Commissioners present (Fong, Hong, Thielen, and Gray) voted in the affirmative.

Announcements: (30:55)

Chair Fong announced that the Governor appointed him to the newly revised commission called the Hawai'i State International Partnership Commission. This will be his last meeting serving as a Hawai'i State Ethics Commissioner.

Agenda Item No. VII: Adjournment (34:10)

At approximately 9:36 a.m., Commission Thielen moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Gray. With the excused absence of Commissioner Becker, all Commissioners present (Fong, Hong, Thielen, and Gray) voted in the affirmative.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:36 a.m.

Minutes approved on May 20, 2026.