



THE HIGH ROAD

The High Road is a publication of the Hawai'i State Ethics Commission

State Ethics Commission and Staff Bid Aloha to Chair Melinda Wood



Melinda Wood will be leaving the State Ethics Commission in June, after eight years of service as a Commissioner. Chair Wood was first appointed to a four-year term on the Commission in 2014 and was reappointed to a second term in 2018. She has served as the Commission's Chair since July 2021.

The State Ethics Commission and its staff thank Chair Wood for her many years of public service and leadership, and send her their very best wishes and aloha!

Mandatory Ethics Training Bill Awaits Governor's Signature

A bill requiring ethics training for all state legislators, employees, and board and commission members is close to becoming state law. The bill, [HB 1475 HD1 SD1 CD1](#), was passed by the Legislature and is currently before the Governor for signature.

The Commission strongly supports the bill as a critical component to meeting the high bar established by the Hawai'i Constitution that all public officers and employees must exhibit the highest standards of ethical conduct. Under the bill, all elected and other high-level officials must complete a live ethics training course. All other officials and employees must complete either a live or self-directed online ethics course.

The bill requires all new employees to complete an ethics course within ninety days of becoming an employee and at least once every four years afterwards. Employees already in active service will be required to complete the course within twelve months and at least once every four years afterwards.

“The people of Hawai'i believe that public officers and employees must exhibit the highest standards of ethical conduct and that these standards come from the personal integrity of each individual in government.”

— Hawai'i State Constitution Article XIV

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Campaign Ethics Reminder for State Officials and Employees

As campaign activities ramp up in this important election year, we remind state officials and employees that the State Ethics Code prohibits the use of state resources for political campaign activities.

Here are some important reminders:

State Time. Do not conduct campaign activities during state work hours. Do not use state personnel to perform campaign activities during state work hours.

State Facilities. Do not solicit campaign donations or conduct campaign business in state facilities, including state offices and meeting rooms. State premises or facilities that are available for public use, such as a school cafeteria, may be used for campaign activities on the same terms that apply to the public.

State Equipment and Supplies. Do not use state equipment (such as computers, laptops, tablets, printers, or copy machines) or state supplies for campaign-related tasks or activities.

State Email Server. Do not use state email accounts to send campaign-related emails or respond to campaign emails (other than to ask the sender to stop sending campaign emails to a state email address). Do not use a state email address for campaign business.

State Website or Social Media Pages. Do not use state websites or official state social media pages for campaign-related information. For example, do not post links to campaign websites or campaign social media pages on a state website.

For more information, read our [Quick Guide on Campaign Activities for State Officials and Employees](#). And don't hesitate to contact our office if you have any questions.



QUESTION: Which state commission's members are prohibited from participating in political campaigns?

- A. Campaign Spending Commission
- B. Elections Commission
- C. State Ethics Commission
- D. All of the above

Answer: D. The members of all three commissions are prohibited by law from participating in political campaigns. HRS §§ 11-316 (Campaign Spending Commission); 11-8 (Elections Commission); and 84-35.5 (State Ethics Commission).

Commission on Improving Standards of Conduct Issues Interim Report

What would you do to improve the standards of conduct for government officials? A special commission is working to address this question.

On February 17, 2022, the State House of Representatives established a Commission on Improving Standards of Conduct (“Standards Commission”) to, among other things, provide recommendations on how to further the goals of the Code of Ethics, lobbying laws, and campaign finance laws. An impressive panel of appointees included our own Executive Director, Robert D. Harris; Judge Daniel R. Foley (retired); Kristin E. Izumi-Nitao (Executive Director of the Campaign Spending Commission); Sandy Ma (Executive Director of Common Cause Hawai‘i); Barbara C. Marumoto (Former State Representative); Janet Mason (League of Women Voters of Hawai‘i); and Florence T. Nakakuni (Former U.S. Attorney for the District of Hawai‘i).

Over a five-week period, the Standards Commission met and drafted an interim report that was issued on March 31, 2022. This report can be found [here](#). The Standards Commission noted Hawai‘i residents deserve “honest government on the state and county level.”

Since the adoption of the House Resolution, the Commission met weekly

and engaged in robust discussions on each of the topics identified in the House Resolution. A vital part of the discussions centered on legislation proceeding through the current legislative session relating to ethics, campaign finance, the Sunshine Law, transparency, lobbying, and fraud and criminal prosecution. The Commission's recommendations in this Interim Report is based on legislation still advancing through the legislative process, recognizing the implausibility of introducing new bills this far along in the legislative session.

The interim report, however, is only the beginning of the Standards Commission’s efforts. Starting on June 1, 2022, the Standards Commission will meet every two weeks to deliver a final report to the Legislature with broader recommendations (no longer bound simply by bills already before the Legislature). Each meeting will focus on a particular topic, such as ethics, with a goal of quickly moving towards implementable solutions. The public is invited to participate. Input can be emailed to StandardsofConduct@capitol.hawaii.gov or the public can testify at one of the publicly noticed hearings (click [here](#) or look on the capitol.hawaii.gov website for upcoming hearings).

Filing Deadlines Reminder!

May 31, 2022

- 2022 Financial Disclosure Statements for State Officials
- Lobbying Expenditures and Contributions Report for March 1 – April 30, 2022

June 30, 2022

- 2022 Gifts Disclosure Statements for June 1, 2021 – May 31, 2022

Visit our website for more information about the filing requirements: <https://ethics.hawaii.gov/>



“The purpose of this chapter is to ... establish an ethics commission which will ... render advisory opinions and enforce the provisions of this law so that public confidence in public servants will be preserved.”

Preamble, Hawai‘i Revised Statutes Chapter 84 (State Ethics Code)