

# HAWAI'I STATE ETHICS COMMISSION

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## THE STATE ETHICS CODE - A QUICK GUIDE ON SOCIAL MEDIA

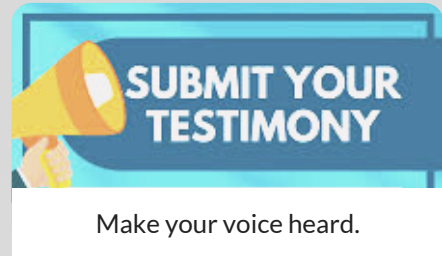
Social media provides a convenient and useful way of communicating with constituents and other members of the public. The rise of social media may also create unique questions under the Ethics Code. This brief overview is meant to give guidance on common social media posts that may give rise to ethics concerns.

The Ethics Code prohibits the use of one's state office to bestow an unwarranted benefit or advantage upon oneself or anyone else. Accordingly, legislators may not use legislative resources for private activities such as business work or political campaigning. Official state social media accounts should be used for official business.

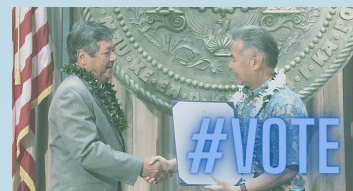
**DO NOT** post campaign or candidate information on an official account. Similarly, do not link to candidate sites or private sites that include campaign material.



**YOU MAY** post material advocating or otherwise concerning policies, bills or resolutions, or events such as marches or rallies.



State officials and employees cannot use state facilities for a campaign purpose. For example, don't take a photo in a state office that is not otherwise freely accessible by the public and then post that photo on a private campaign account.



The occasional reposting to a private social media account of content that was originally posted to a state account is generally permissible. However, posting an item to a state account should be done for a legitimate state purpose and not with the purpose of later reposting the item in order to benefit a campaign or some other private endeavor.



Problematic examples might include a campaign account consistently and automatically reposting from an official account or a campaign mailer using state social media posts that appear to have been timed so that they may be used in the mailer.



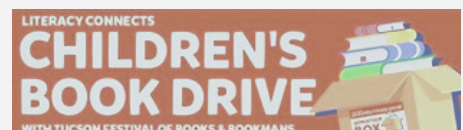
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**TAKE CARE** when posting about non-profit organizations or projects or events sponsored by non-profits. Non-profits compete for dollars just as for-profit businesses do. If you post about a non-profit, the post should relate to your official duties or serve a public purpose. Otherwise, other non-profits may question why they do not get a similar promotion.

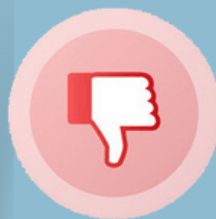


YOU MAY post about an event that is sponsored by a non-profit and that provides a community benefit.

YOU MAY praise a particular non-profit but it is advisable to focus your post on the public benefit provided by the non-profit and not on the non-profit itself.



I support children's literacy and appreciate the support and contributions of partners like Literacy Connects



DO NOT promote a fundraiser for a particular non-profit. Again, non-profits compete for funds. Other non-profits may rightly object to the use of state resources to promote one organization over others.

*\*Note, fundraising is permissible for specific State-authorized campaigns such as Aloha United Way, Hawaii Foodbank, and Blood Bank of Hawaii.*

rephealthyeating



@tastefornourish is hosting its 5th annual event this Friday. They are holding a huli huli chicken fundraiser to raise funds for a new van. Please support this organization and enjoy some tasty tofu and farm fresh veggies!

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Do not use state resources to advertise, promote, or endorse private businesses (including nonprofits).



**DO NOT** advertise or promote private businesses.

senfoodie



This morning on the way in, I stopped at Starbucks for a latte. Starbucks has the best coffee!



YOU MAY support a cause without specifying a business.

repsmokie



Attended the Hawai'i Cannabis Expo  
#BuyLocal #HawaiiExpo  
#SupportSmallBusinesses



**DO NOT** endorse any product, service, company, or non-profit organization.

@kimosfoodtruck has the best food trays for office gatherings. Mention you saw my post and get 10% off.

Vote for bill 999 to allow food trucks to operate outside the Capitol!  
#food #foodtruck #kimosfoodtruck #supportlocal



## Contact Us

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