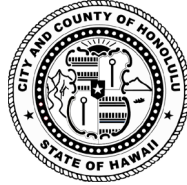


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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Honolulu Ethics Commission's Long-Awaited Gift Bill Signed into Law

HONOLULU – In a significant move to bolster government accountability and ethics, Mayor Rick Blangiardi signed the city's revised gift bill into law on Tuesday. The updated law, championed by the Honolulu Ethics Commission, introduces measures aimed at curbing undue influence on public officials through gift giving.

In April 2024, Honolulu City Council Chair Tommy Waters and Vice Chair Esther Kia'āina reintroduced the measure as Bill 23 (2024) after a prior version of the bill expired. True to her commitment, Kia'āina ensured the City Council adopted the measure before the fiscal year's end on June 30, 2024.

David Monk, Chair of the Ethics Commission, said, "This act provides much-needed updates and clarity to the City and County's gift law. Ethics commissioners and staff worked long and hard to make this a reality, but it wouldn't have been possible without the full support of the City Council and Mayor Blangiardi. The Ethics Commission stands ready to offer advice to city officials and staff who have questions about particular situations, and our mandatory training for all will emphasize the tight restrictions on accepting gifts. The public can rest assured that this is an important advance in promoting clean local government."

The new law categorizes lobbyists, grant recipients, contractors, concessionaires, vendors, consultants, and others who receive city funds as a "prohibited source" and automatically prevents city officers and employees from soliciting or receiving gifts from them. Additionally, the annual gift cap for prohibited sources has been reduced from \$200 to \$50, further limiting the potential for undue influence through gift giving.

The Ethics Commission will deploy specialized training on the new gift law to ensure broad scale compliance by city officers and employees. In the future, the Commission plans to introduce additional ethics reforms on financial disclosure, conflicts of interest, and lobbying laws. These measures are essential for creating a more transparent and accountable city government, as well as building public trust in its integrity.

The full text of Ordinance 24-21 is available at <https://hnlldoc.ehawaii.gov/hnlldoc/document-download?id=21726>

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The Honolulu Ethics Commission advances the standards of ethical conduct in government as expressed in the Revised Charter and the Revised Ordinances of Honolulu. The purpose of these laws and the Commission's work is to improve and maintain public confidence in government officials and employees. Visit us at: <https://www8.honolulu.gov/ethics/>