



*VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL*

July 13, 2025

Esther Lim, Chair  
Youth Commission  
530 South King Street, Room 301  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Chair Lim:

My name is Brian Black. I am the Executive Director of the Public First Law Center, a nonprofit organization that promotes government transparency. We write to offer an idea for consideration.

As you may be aware, the Honolulu Charter Commission has started meeting and will soon start taking proposals. Recognizing that the Youth Commission represents an critical voice for the future of the City, Public First considered how to responsibly give the Youth Commission a way to direct public debate toward the next generation's priorities. Our attached proposal would provide the Youth Commission an opportunity to require City agencies to substantively engage in discussion of an issue that the Commission considers important.

We offer this idea only as a catalyst for thinking about how the Youth Commission may serve a more active function within the City and County of Honolulu.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Brian Black". The signature is fluid and stylized, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

R. Brian Black  
Executive Director

Enclosure: Proposal



This proposal provides the Youth Commission with an opportunity to proactively require that City agencies respond to priority matters identified by the Commission. The current Commission powers allow the Commission to identify priorities, but the City can ignore those priorities. While the proposal would not require agencies to take specific action in response to Commission priorities, it would require an agency to respond in detail to the substance of the Commission's concern.

#### **Section 6-108. Youth Commission –**

1. There shall be a youth commission consisting of fifteen members, each of whom shall be between the ages of fourteen to twenty-four years at the time of appointment and shall serve for staggered terms of two years. The commission and its members shall not be subject to Section 13-103; provided that members who have attained the age of majority at the time of appointment must be duly registered voters of the city. Any member who has not attained the age of majority at the time of appointment shall be exempt from filing any financial disclosures required by ordinance until attaining the age of majority. Each councilmember shall appoint one member and the mayor shall appoint six members. The initial appointments shall commence no later than August 1, 2021, and shall be as follows:

- (a) One year term: Eight members, three appointed by the mayor and one each appointed by the council members representing districts 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9.
- (b) Two year term: Seven members, three appointed by the mayor and one each appointed by the councilmembers representing districts 2, 4, 6, and 8.

Each succeeding appointment shall be for a term ending two years from the date of the expiration of each term for which the predecessor had been appointed. The commission shall annually elect a chair from among its members and the commission shall act by majority vote of its membership. Any vacancy shall be filled in the same manner as for an original appointment.

2. The commission shall advise the council and mayor on the effects of policies, needs, assessments, priorities, programs and budgets concerning the children and youth of the city. The commission shall also express the policy priorities of the children and youth of the city. The commission shall respond to requests for comment and recommendation on matters referred to the commission by the council, the mayor, and any officers, agencies including semi-autonomous agencies, and executive and legislative branch advisory committees of the city.

3. The commission may require that any agency substantively respond in writing to a concern identified as a priority by the commission. The commission shall identify a priority concern by adopting a resolution at three successive meetings. The commission may require an agency response only twice during a calendar year.

4. The commission shall establish its rules of procedure and adopt rules pursuant to law. The council may enact ordinances, not inconsistent with this section, affecting the commission.

54. The commission may employ staff as is necessary to assist it in the performance of its duties.