



September 25, 2025

Dawn Szewczyk, Chair
Charter Commission
530 South King Street, Room 202
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

RE: Charter Proposal Concerning Electronic Signatures

Dear Chair and Members of the Commission:

I am Executive Director at Public First Law Center, a nonprofit organization that promotes government transparency. We offer the attached proposal on the Honolulu City Charter to require that City agencies develop standards for accepting electronic signatures.

Issue or Concern

This proposal seeks to bring the City into a modern age of government efficiency and public administration by requiring agencies to develop standards for accepting electronic signatures.

Relevant Charter Sections

Section 13-108

Current Charter Language

Section 13-108. Facsimile Signatures --

Whenever any person is required to sign negotiable instruments or multiple bonds, the signature may be a facsimile.

Proposed Change

Section 13-108. Facsimile and Electronic Signatures --

1. Facsimile Signatures. Whenever any person is required to sign negotiable instruments or multiple bonds, the signature may be a facsimile.

2. Electronic signatures. Agencies shall adopt rules to govern the manner and format in which an electronic signature shall be accepted.

Rationale and Intended Impact

Electronic signatures benefit government and citizens by streamlining public administration with faster, more reliable civic processes. This speed enhances public



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satisfaction and boosts government productivity while cutting substantial costs associated with paper, postage, and storage.

Advancements in electronic signature security – such as encryption and tamper-evident audit trails – put electronic signatures at or above the level of trustworthiness afforded by wet-ink signatures. Electronic signatures can also reduce the subjective and manual errors associated with wet-ink signature comparisons, *e.g.*, Nicole Napuunoa, 2,500+ ballots may not be counted due to signature issues, KHON 2 (Oct. 31, 2024).

This proposal requires City agencies to adopt rules proscribing the manner and form in which electronic signatures will be accepted. This modest technological update would help level access to government and provide more power to the people.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Brian Black', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

R. Brian Black
Executive Director