



January 22, 2026

Dawn Szewczyk, Chair  
Honolulu Charter Commission

**Re: Testimony on Proposal \*P004 (Concerning the Honolulu Police Department)**

My name is Dévi Chung. I am a legal fellow at the Public First Law Center, a nonprofit organization that promotes government transparency.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in **strong support** of proposal \*P004, concerning the Honolulu Police Department (“HPD”). This proposal includes five main changes to strengthen independent civilian oversight of the HPD:

- 1) The Police Chief is appointed by the Mayor, while maintaining critical safeguards—e.g., the Chief's five-year term and the requirement that the Mayor may only remove the Chief with approval from the Police Commission. This allows the Police Commission to focus on its core mission of accountability rather than protecting the reputation of a Chief it itself selected.
- 2) The City Council appoints Police Commission members. The Police Commission body also expands to nine members appointed by the City Council, with one representative from each Council district.
- 3) The purpose of the Police Commission is made explicit in the Charter, clarifying its role as an oversight body of the HPD.
- 4) Removes restrictive language that has historically limited Police Commission investigations.
- 5) The Chief is required to publicly address serious use of force incidents in a timely manner, increasing transparency through timely public communication.

We emphasize that this proposal is just one framework within a broader discussion. There are eight charter proposals, including this one, advocating for changes within the Police Commission.

Given the widespread interest in reform, we respectfully urge the Charter Commission to advance this proposal for further discussion and look forward to submitting more substantive testimony as it moves through the process.