



February 5, 2026

Dawn Szewczyk, Chair
Honolulu Charter Commission

Re: Testimony on Proposal *P022 (Concerning Citizen Action)

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 *P022, concerning the threshold for citizen action.

The City Charter provides the basis for direct citizen action. In the 1990s, the Charter changed to the current signature threshold based on “registered voters.” Shortly after that change, voter registration efforts ramped up, and “registered voters” grew significantly without a corresponding substantial increase in voter turnout. As a result, the signature threshold became a greater obstacle to direct citizen action than historically intended. Fixing this issue requires a change to the charter language.

Replacing “registered” voters with “total” voters makes the threshold achievable, but reasonable, and reflective of actual civic engagement. Also, the proposal adds reasonable cure provisions to prevent procedural errors from derailing otherwise valid petitions.

The increasing gap between registered voters and actual voter turnout has vastly disconnected the citizen action requirements from its original intent. This proposal would restore this invaluable pathway for public participation and direct democracy.

We respectfully urge the Charter Commission to advance this proposal and look forward to submitting more substantive testimony as it moves through the process.

