



March 12, 2026

Dawn Szewczyk, Chair
Honolulu Charter Commission

Testimony on Proposal P023 (Acceptance of Electronic Signatures)

My name is Brian Black. I am Executive Director of Public First Law Center, a nonprofit that promotes government transparency. I write in **support** of proposal P023, concerning the acceptance of electronic signatures.

Under this proposal, voters would have the choice on whether the City should modernize. Yes, this change can occur through ordinance or policy. The issue is that the City **repeatedly refuses to do so**.

In testimony, the City's Department of Customer Services agreed that standards for electronic signatures will improve efficiency, accelerate business, and enhance security. *See* Testimony No. 379. Notarized wet-ink signatures should **not** be the only way to do business with a City of one million people in the second quarter of the 21st Century. Under this proposal, the City decides what standards it will use to accept electronic signatures. The only requirement is that it implement standards.

Electronic signatures are here to stay. Federal and state law have permitted electronic signatures since 2000. Electronic Signatures in Global and National Commerce Act, Pub. L. No. 106-229; Hawai'i Uniform Electronic Transactions Act, 2000 Haw. Sess. Laws Act 282. The technology behind them – using mathematical algorithms to create “a virtual fingerprint that is unique to a person or entity” – will continue to grow and improve. *See* Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, *Understanding Digital Signatures* (Feb. 1, 2021), www.cisa.gov/news-events/news/understanding-digital-signatures.

We therefore respectfully urge the Commission to advance proposal P023. At a minimum, the Commission should not discard this proposal without an express commitment from the City Administration to set standards for electronic signatures before the next Charter Commission in ten years.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of proposal P023.