



House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs
Honorable David A. Tarnas, Chair
Honorable Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair

RE: Testimony in Support of S.B. 2151 S.D. 2 H.D. 1, Relating to Emergency Management
Hearing: April 8, 2026 at 2:00 p.m.

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee:

My name is Ben Creps. I am a staff attorney at the Public First Law Center, a nonprofit organization that promotes open government in Hawai`i. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in **support** of S.B. 2151 S.D. 2 H.D. 1.

Public records laws are a critical mechanism to ensure government transparency. This bill seeks to safeguard that promise of openness for the public during government declared emergencies, when transparency is especially crucial.

We strongly support the language of this draft clarifying that *all* of chapter 92F is shielded from suspension, as prior drafts only shielded one part of the law. Section 2 now ensures that members of the public are able to access their personal records under part III of chapter 92F. It also ensures that the Office of Information Practices (OIP) remains empowered, under part IV of chapter 92F, to administer the law, which addresses the operational challenges faced by OIP when former Governor David Ige suspended the entirety of chapter 92F during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Concerns raised by opposition testimony are already addressed by existing disclosure exemptions under section 92F-13 and the provision of section 2 allowing reasonable response delays if extenuating circumstances exist.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify in support of S.B. 2151 S.D. 2 H.D. 1.

