



Senate Committee on Government Operations
Honorable Angus L.K. McKelvey, Chair
Honorable Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair

Senate Committee on Energy and Intergovernmental Affairs
Honorable Glenn Wakai, Chair
Honorable Stanley Chang, Vice Chair

RE: Testimony with Comments on S.B. 869, Relating to Community Outreach Boards
Hearing: February 30, 2025 at 3:00 p.m.

Dear Chairs and Members of the Committees:

My name is Ben Creps. I am a staff attorney at the Public First Law Center, a nonprofit organization that promotes government transparency.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony with **comments** on S.B. 869. We support the intent of increasing opportunities for public participation in government. We offer two amendments to better effectuate the intent of this measure and curb potential abuse.

First, section 2 cuts against the overall intent of this measure by authorizing *commissions* to create community outreach boards. Commission members may already attend informational meetings organized by community groups and others under HRS § 92-2.5(e). **We thus recommend deletion of the “county commission or” language at line 6 of page 2.**

Second, section 5 creates a loophole by allowing part VII boards to “organize” meetings “on matters relating to official board business” without following the open meeting requirements of the Sunshine Law. The intent behind HRS § 92-82 is to allow board members to attend informational meetings organized by *other* groups. If a meeting about board business is organized by a board, it should be a regular meeting, not a permitted interaction as proposed here. **We thus recommend deletion of the “or organize” language at line 5 of page 4, and conforming the preamble consistently.**

We further note that this measure does not provide a process or framework for the creation of a community outreach board, nor does it set any parameters or guidance on board composition.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify with comments on S.B. 869.

