



The Senate

STATE CAPITOL
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

October 15, 2015

**Charter Commission
Honolulu Hale
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813**

Aloha Chair Souki & Members of the Charter Commission,

I look forward to engaging with you in the coming months regarding ways to improve our City government. In particular, I would like you to consider police reforms for voters to consider. The first reform would allow the Police Commission to punish or penalize police officers for misconduct or bad behavior. A case in the news recently involved brutality charges against officers who roughed up two hikers they thought were burglars. It was a case of mis-identification, and the City ending up paying a settlement to the hikers. What was unfortunate was the fact the Police Commission sustained the complaints against the officers, but could not punish the officers. The police department overruled the Police Commission and no one was punished for the excessive use of force. No civilian oversight.

The second issue has to do with hiring and firing the police chief. Currently, the chief is hired and can be fired by the Police Commission. It is unclear if the Mayor can fire the chief. I believe he cannot. My suggestion is to allow the Mayor to fire the chief with a majority support from the Police Commission. Thus, the Commission can make a change on its own or the Mayor can step in with the Police Commission concurrence. The Police Commission is not allowed to get involved in the day to day operations of the police department. The Mayor as the CEO of the city and county of Honolulu oversees all department heads. It is logical that he would have the authority to fire the Police chief just as he is able to terminate other department heads.

I look forward to discussing these proposals with you at your convenience.

A final suggestion is to add to your agenda an item to allow public testimony. It could be limited to two minutes and allow anyone to share their thoughts or ideas.

Feel free to contact me anytime at 586-6360.

Respectfully,

Will Espero, Vice-President

Hawaii State Senate

Vice-Chair: Public Safety, Intergovernmental & Military Affairs Committee