



## HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

STATE OF HAWAII  
STATE CAPITOL  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

October 29, 2015

2015-2016 Charter Commission  
City and County of Honolulu  
530 South King Street, Room 501  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813


### **PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO HONOLULU CITY CHARTER, CHAPTER 16, REGARDING HONOLULU POLICE COMMISSION**

Dear Chair Souki and Charter Commission Members:

The purpose of these proposed amendments is to improve the functioning of the Honolulu Police Department (HPD) and help restore the public's trust in the Department. We are fortunate to have many fine police officers and administrators who, not without significant personal sacrifice, have dedicated themselves to keeping Oahu safe. However, several recent high-profile incidents involving HPD officers<sup>i</sup> have emphasized the need for more accountability from, and oversight of, the Department. Yet, the Honolulu Police Commission's ability to adequately oversee the Department and take corrective action is severely hampered by the current charter's provisions. Local criminal justice scholars, as well as elected officials and even some Charter Commission members, have called for significant changes to be made.<sup>ii</sup>

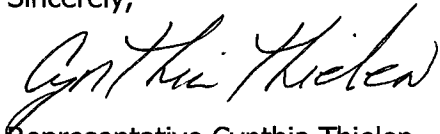
#### **PROPOSED AMENDMENT #1**

- Issue: The Honolulu Police Commission needs to be made of up members who possess the right qualifications and experience, in order to properly understand and oversee the Department. Increasing the number of members, as well as term limits, would also be beneficial.
- Section affected: 6-1605.
- Proposed amendments:
  - Increase the number of members from seven (7) to ten (10).
  - Limit each member to a four (4) year term, with a maximum of three (3) consecutive terms.
  - Require that at least three (3) members possess qualifications and experience such as: a master's degree related to criminal justice; a law degree and experience practicing in Hawaii as a deputy attorney general, deputy prosecutor, deputy public defender, or private criminal defense attorney; a law degree and experience litigating constitutional law issues in Hawaii; recognition as an expert in the field of criminal justice, policing, or security; work experience in a law enforcement capacity other than with HPD.



Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Representative Cynthia Thielen  
50<sup>th</sup> House District (Kailua, Kaneohe Bay)

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<sup>i</sup> See, for example: Nick Grube, "Honolulu Police Commission 'Knows Nothing' About HPD Chief Probe", Civil Beat, October 21, 2015, available at <http://www.civilbeat.com/2015/10/honolulu-police-commission-knows-nothing-about-hpd-chief-probe/>; "Former Honolulu Police Department Officer Sentenced for Violating the Civil Rights of Two Men", U.S. Department of Justice Office of Public Affairs news release, October 16, 2015, available at <http://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/former-honolulu-police-department-officer-sentenced-violating-civil-rights-two-men>; Keoki Kerr, "HPD wants to fire sergeant caught fighting on video", Hawaii News Now, October 9, 2015, available at <http://www.hawaiinewsnow.com/story/30229714/exclusive-hpd-wants-to-fire-sergeant-caught-fighting-on-video>.

<sup>ii</sup> See, for example: Nick Grube, "Calls Grow For Reforms To Boost Police Accountability", Civil Beat, October 28, 2015, available at <http://www.civilbeat.com/2015/10/calls-grow-for-reforms-to-boost-police-accountability/>; Hunger, Aaron (2015) "Honolulu Police Commission Revisions: Three key points for review by the County Charter Revision Commission", Unpublished raw data, University of Hawaii at Manoa, Honolulu, Hawaii.