

**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>

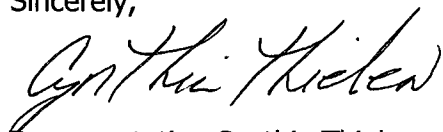
**PROPOSED AMENDMENT #2**

- Issue: The Commission needs to have direct, meaningful authority over the Department.
- Section affected: 6-1606.
- Proposed amendments:

- Add language to subsection (d) that authorizes the Commission to override a disciplinary decision of the police chief against a police officer, in the event the chief's decision has the effect of compromising public safety.
- Add language to subsection (g) that authorizes the Commission to make recommendations regarding the hiring and dismissal of the police chief directly to the Mayor, and to actively participate in the process of selecting a police chief.
- Additionally, delete language from end of section that states "neither the commission nor its members shall interfere in any way with the administrative affairs of the department".

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.