

Approved 08/15/11

COUNTY OF MAUI, STATE OF HAWAII

CHARTER COMMISSION
PUBLIC HEARING

Held at the Kihei Community Center, 303 East Lipoa Street, Kihei, Maui, Hawaii, commencing at 6:31 p.m., on Monday, July 25, 2011.

Reported by: Tonya McDade, CSR, CRR
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1 (Monday, July 25, 2011, 6:31 p.m.)

2 * * *

3 CHAIR STONE: Aloha, everyone. Thank you for
4 attending this public meeting of the Charter Commission.
5 My name is Josh Stone, and I am the Chairman of the
6 Commission.

7 If you need, there are copies of the Maui
8 County Charter available here with Lisa Kahuhu as well
9 as copies of this evening's agenda. And as per our
10 rules, all discussions tonight shall be pertaining to
11 the Maui County Charter.

12 Before beginning public testimony, we have a
13 few items of business to address. Firstly, I would like
14 to call this meeting to order as of 6:32 p.m., and
15 introduce our Commissioners that are present. If
16 possible, Commissioners, I would like to run down the
17 table, please introduce yourself, starting on right with
18 Commissioner Crivello, and where you're from.

19 MEMBER CRIVELLO: Aloha. Stacy Crivello,
20 Molokai.

21 MEMBER BAXA: I'm Artemio Baxa, from Makawao.

22 CHAIR STONE: And I am Josh Stone, from Paia.

23 MEMBER DE REGO: Frank De Rego, Jr., from
24 Kahului.

25 MEMBER HASHIMOTO: Clifford Hashimoto, from

1 ATTENDANCE

2 BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

- 3 Joshua A. Stone, Chair
- 4 Artemio C. Baxa, Member
- 5 Stephanie S. Crivello, Member
- 6 David P. DeLeon, Member
- 7 Frank R. De Rego, Jr., Member
- 8 Clifford P. Hashimoto, Member
- 9 Wayne N. Hedani, Member
- 10 Susan A. Moikeha, Member
- 11 Linda Kay Okamoto, Member
- 12 Yuki Lei Sugimura, Member
- 13 Flo V. Wiger, Member

14 BOARD MEMBERS EXCUSED:

- 15 Wayne N. Hedani, Vice-Chair

16 STAFF PRESENT:

- 17 Edward S. Kushi, Jr., First Deputy Corporation Counsel
- 18 Lisa Kahuhu, Supervising Law Technician

19 ADMINISTRATION PRESENT:

- 20 John Buck, Executive Assistant to the Mayor

21 OTHERS PRESENT:

- 22 Mike Moran
- 23 Jimmy Conniff
- 24 Netra Halperin

1 the big city of Hana.

2 MEMBER SUGIMURA: Yuki Lei Sugimura, from
3 Kula.

4 MEMBER DELEON: Dave DeLeon, Haiku.

5 MEMBER WIGER: Flo Wiger, Lahaina.

6 MEMBER OKAMOTO: Kay Okamoto from the island
7 of Lanai.

8 CHAIR STONE: Thank you very much. And
9 Vice-Chair Hedani has been excused for this evening.

10 Also, I would like to present our staff. Here
11 tonight we have Edward Kushi, Jr., Deputy Corporation
12 Counsel. Ed, thank you. Lisa Kahuhu, Supervising Law
13 Technician. Tonya McDade, our court reporter. And
14 Executive Assistant to the Mayor, John Buck. Thank you
15 very much for being here.

16 I would like to thank Akaku for being here
17 this evening and filming these proceedings.

18 It's important to understand that the Maui
19 County Charter is the blueprint of how government
20 functions here in Maui, and as has been referred to as
21 Maui County Constitution. It is the document that
22 governs our government and, among other things, its
23 structures, powers, efficiency and accountability. It
24 is, therefore, very important that the citizens of Maui
25 County have the opportunity to address concerns and

1 rectify problems with the Charter as perceived today.
2 This Charter Commission is a unique opportunity to
3 achieve those changes. And the public's input is a
4 vital part of the amendment proposal process.

5 As a matter of understanding, the Charter
6 Commission may propose amendments to the Charter, but
7 these amendments must be approved by a majority of Maui
8 County voters during an election.

9 Again, before we get started, the Maui County
10 Charter and amendments are available for the public
11 tonight with Lisa Kahuhu, if you need. And, also, if
12 you would like to sign in for oral testimony, please see
13 Lisa Kahuhu over there.

14 I would like to begin with oral testimony.
15 And before I begin, I would like to go over our oral
16 testimony rules. We'll call up each public testifier in
17 the order that they registered to testify. Each person
18 will have three minutes to testify on items concerning
19 our Maui County Charter. If the testifier requires more
20 time, I will grant them an additional minute to complete
21 their testimony. At the end of this additional minute,
22 the testifier will be asked to stop their testimony.
23 And if more time is required on an item, the testifier
24 will be allowed an additional three minutes to complete
25 their testimony following the testimony of all

1 first time I'm looking at the Charter. I did look for
2 it online, saw it, saw how big it was, and said, oh,
3 yeah, I'll get back to that later. But I will look at
4 it. And then I understand you'll be coming back when
5 you have some kind of a plan. And then, hopefully, more
6 people from the area, like myself, will then say, well,
7 this is what they're looking at, and then have some
8 comments and considerations.

9 It's, obviously, a very important thing for
10 the community, something that happens only every 10
11 years.

12 And I'm certainly not speaking for them, but
13 I'm on the board of the KCA. And, honestly, I couldn't
14 even get interest in -- in board members, community
15 members. It's like, well, what is that all about, nah,
16 nah, not interested. So I try and ask you guys not to
17 be discouraged and think that we'll get more people
18 coming out later. Some are watching on Akaku. That's
19 kind of a lazy, easy way if you don't have much to say.

20 So, again, thank you for coming out. And
21 we'll be paying attention to what's proceeding. Aloha.

22 CHAIR STONE: Aloha, Mr. Moran. Thank you
23 very much. One second.

24 Commissioners, any questions or clarifications
25 for Mr. Moran? Commissioner De Rego.

1 registered testifiers. Following a testifier's
2 testimony, I will ask the Commissioners if they need
3 clarification of the presented testimony.

4 With that, Lisa, please introduce our first
5 testifier for the evening.

6 MS. KAHUHU: Mike Moran.

7 CHAIR STONE: Mr. Moran, thank you very much
8 for coming this evening. If you can go to the podium.

9 ...BEGIN PUBLIC TESTIMONY...

10 MR. MORAN: Aloha Commissioners. My name
11 is --

12 CHAIR STONE: Aloha.

13 MR. MORAN: Okay. My name is Mike Moran.
14 I'll be very brief. I won't need the three minutes.

15 The first thing I wanted to say was of my
16 personal admiration to all of you for giving up your own
17 time for -- I know, like today, this is the second
18 meeting of your day -- and coming out to the community.
19 I certainly wanted to come and -- and show that
20 appreciation and hope that South Maui would return the
21 favor. But I -- I don't know how you guys feel, but I'm
22 certainly disappointed when I see more Commissioners
23 than I see citizens out here this evening.

24 I'm not really asking for something because I
25 don't have enough knowledge yet. Honestly, this is the

1 MEMBER DE REGO: Thank you very much for
2 coming out this evening, Mr. Moran. We've been
3 searching ourselves for suggestions and ways of trying
4 to get more community participation. We realize that
5 life is hectic for a lot of people. A lot of people
6 hold down two, three jobs. The economy isn't helping an
7 awful lot in that regard. But do you have any
8 suggestions on how the Commission could actually
9 engender much more participation and input?

10 MR. MORAN: One thing you might try is because
11 you're trying to reach, you know, the whole segment --
12 all the segments of the population, and I found in doing
13 that, it's like some people say, well, it was in the
14 newspaper. But there's a lot of people that don't --
15 especially young people that don't even look at the
16 newspaper. So trying to attack it from -- you know, on
17 a very wide spectrum of media. And I know you -- I've
18 listened to parts of some of your meetings and you've
19 discussed that. And it's just a tough nut to crack.
20 But some of it's generational. As I said, when I -- I
21 work with a lot of young people. And I look at The Maui
22 News every day. And they said, well, you must be really
23 bored, you're looking at the newspaper. And I said, no,
24 I'm interested. No, they -- and go to radio, there's a
25 whole spectrum of radio stations. You can't be on all

1 stations at all times, but using Akaku does reach
 2 another spectrum. It's -- it's a tough nut to crack. I
 3 don't have much more suggestion than that. I think we
 4 all struggle at that at times in how to reach the
 5 community.
 6 MEMBER DE REGO: Thank you very much.
 7 MR. MORAN: You're welcome.
 8 CHAIR STONE: Commissioner Hashimoto.
 9 MEMBER HASHIMOTO: Thank you, Mr. Moran. I've
 10 watched you on Akaku a number of occasion. And perhaps
 11 you can give us a plug there next time.
 12 MR. MORAN: I certainly will. Yeah. I
 13 have -- I participate in one program that's not on for a
 14 few more weeks, but you guys will be on for a long time.
 15 And that's a good thought. I'm always thinking what
 16 else can I mention while I have that microphone. And
 17 that's a very good suggestion which I'll take up.
 18 MEMBER HASHIMOTO: Thank you.
 19 MR. MORAN: You're welcome.
 20 CHAIR STONE: Thank you, Commissioners.
 21 Commissioner Baxa.
 22 MEMBER BAXA: Mr. Moran, since you're already
 23 here, may I ask you, because I don't think you have
 24 mentioned anything yet as to any suggestion of what you
 25 feel about what had been circulating as to some of the

1 issues before the Commission. Do you have any
 2 suggestion, do you have any recommendation?
 3 MR. MORAN: The only thing that -- I've
 4 probably heard what most people do here, if you hear
 5 something about it, what I call the hot button issues.
 6 And the most I could say is, on the redistricting or,
 7 you know, a different system for voting, I personally
 8 think that the system we have is not good, it's not
 9 fair.
 10 But then the next logical thing is, well,
 11 what's a better system. And I haven't developed a -- a
 12 concrete plan on that. So I do think that you're
 13 looking at something that needs to be looked at. And
 14 it's kind of a challenge for -- I can say, well, I don't
 15 really think the people on the two less populated
 16 islands are getting fair representation. Well, who am I
 17 to speak for them? But when I look at it, I think
 18 you're not really getting it because your representative
 19 is really voted in by the -- the whole population.
 20 You're a small population that doesn't determine your
 21 own voice. So, to me, that doesn't seem fair. But,
 22 again, if the people there are happy with it, then who
 23 am I to challenge it?
 24 As South Maui is growing and growing, do we
 25 get a fair shake? Well, I think we're getting a fairer

1 shake than we did before because we have more people
 2 here now and more candidates pay more attention to South
 3 Maui than they had before when the population was small.
 4 So I know that's not much to offer, but that's -- that's
 5 as far as my thought process has gotten.
 6 MEMBER BAXA: Okay. So you still don't have
 7 any opinion as to what you want at this time?
 8 MR. MORAN: Correct, sir. I think what's in
 9 place could be improved, but I don't have a concrete
 10 plan to offer. If it was a choice of here's four
 11 suggestions, which of the four, well, I could probably
 12 go that far. But when it's wide open at this point, no,
 13 sir, unfortunately, not yet.
 14 MEMBER BAXA: Thank you.
 15 CHAIR STONE: Thank you, Commissioners. Any
 16 further questions or clarification for Mr. Moran?
 17 (Silence.)
 18 CHAIR STONE: No. Great. Thank you so much
 19 for your testimony. And, Mr. Moran, just so you know,
 20 we do have another round of public testimony upcoming
 21 starting in December of this year. And at that time
 22 there will be -- there will be actual proposals on the
 23 table, at which time, to me, that's when people really
 24 start to get interested.
 25 As a point of interest, on the outer islands,

1 Molokai and Lanai, there was a huge turnout, mainly
 2 because they are so passionate about the district voting
 3 issue. So I think, as we move along in this process, we
 4 should see people interested when they realize it may
 5 affect their lives.
 6 MR. MORAN: I agree, Chair. Thank you.
 7 Aloha.
 8 CHAIR STONE: Aloha. Thank you very much.
 9 Lisa, next testifier, please.
 10 MS. KAHUHU: Chair, there's no further
 11 testifiers signed up.
 12 CHAIR STONE: General Members of the Public,
 13 you're welcome to come up at this time. I would hate to
 14 close public testimony. Please, sir, just for the
 15 record, state your name, and, afterwards, please sign in
 16 with Lisa Kahuhu. Thank you.
 17 MR. CONNIF: Thank you. Hi. My name is
 18 Jimmy Conniff. Aloha. I live here in Kihei. I've just
 19 been working around the yard, and I kind of remembered
 20 it today that you guys had a meeting in Wailuku and then
 21 one out here. And I was over at Safeway, I said, oh,
 22 God, I forgot about it. So forgive me for looking the
 23 way I am. And I'm not really that organized.
 24 What I wanted to express is my -- I need to
 25 share the -- the feeling that I get about the -- I don't

1 know the exact words to use, but -- technical words, the
2 single-district voting and the proportion of the one
3 person, one vote.

4 I testified in front of the County during the
5 670 discussions, we'll call them. And that was really
6 about the last time except when they brought up the --
7 the measure, or whatever you want to call it, that they
8 were going to do what -- what's in front of you today or
9 -- or in these days about the single member voting, I'll
10 call it.

11 And, you know, it was really funny, I -- I
12 really felt left out because I live in a populated area,
13 and I didn't want to really take away from the folks
14 that live in Lanai or Molokai. I'd like to know how --
15 I haven't seen anything on TV about how they -- if -- if
16 you did have testimony from them yet. But I could see
17 the arguments of the -- of the councilmembers, they
18 liked it the way it was.

19 And then I did the mathematician type things
20 of the population and saw Lanai had about -- I hope I'm
21 right -- about two percent of our County's population,
22 and Molokai maybe five or seven. And then there are
23 nine councilmembers. You divide the nine into 100
24 percent, that means they're getting 11 percent
25 representation for two percent of the population here.

1 And after the last time it came up in front of
2 the Council, I spoke to Mr. Kaho`ohalahala. And he --
3 he also -- you know, I cannot speak for him, but he was
4 concerned about it, too.

5 CHAIR STONE: Mr. Conyer [sic], thank you very
6 much.

7 MR. CONNIFF: Conniff.

8 CHAIR STONE: Thank you.

9 MR. CONNIFF: I'll sign --

10 CHAIR STONE: How about I just call you Jimmy?

11 MR. CONNIFF: Sounds better, yeah.

12 CHAIR STONE: Okay, Jimmy. First of all,
13 clarification or questions from Commissioners on Jimmy's
14 testimony? Commissioner DeLeon.

15 MEMBER DELEON: Thank you for coming tonight
16 Jimmy.

17 MR. CONNIFF: Uh-huh.

18 MEMBER DELEON: Just to help you out with the
19 math. Lanai, Molokai and Hana are our three small
20 districts. All their population taken together is seven
21 percent of the -- of the Maui County population. And
22 under our current Council arrangement, they get 33
23 percent of the Council.

24 MR. CONNIFF: You're including Hana, too?

25 MEMBER DELEON: Hana's the same size --

1 And another 11 percent for whatever it was I said, five
2 or seven percent there. Didn't seem fair. So I felt
3 left out. But I see how they could feel left out
4 because they don't feel that they belong to any one of
5 our portions on the Maui Island.

6 Yet, when the -- when the councilmen speak up,
7 they say they speak for all the island. Yet, I hear
8 them, time after time, the ones from Lanai and, also,
9 Molokai, say, hey, these are my -- when they're talking
10 about their area -- these are my constituents. They
11 don't -- they don't include me then. And I get a
12 feeling of (inaudible) left out.

13 I just hope something can be done. Not for
14 me, I'll be 71, I'll vote a few more times, but I have a
15 grandson that's 10, you know. And -- and, today, I'm
16 getting the benefit of things when I was his age that
17 people before me, my grandfather and so on, took part
18 in.

19 So I don't know how to wrap this up, but I am
20 concerned about that. And I think you all are, too.

21 I heard a lot of -- I know Mr. Collins had
22 some views on it. I've spoken to him. You might ask me
23 a question, well, who's got the answer. I don't know.

24 I don't know Mr. DeLeon, but I heard about his
25 solutions. There's got to be something in there.

1 MR. CONNIFF: I see what you mean, yeah.

2 MEMBER DELEON: -- as Lanai in population. So
3 they have their own councilmember.

4 MR. CONNIFF: What I thought, though, or what
5 I believed, that they didn't want to be what they call
6 canoed to the main part of Maui, this island.

7 MEMBER DELEON: That's correct.

8 MR. CONNIFF: Yet, Hana is part of it. And it
9 could probably be a -- I don't think they would feel
10 that, you know, disenfranchised, I guess is the word.
11 And so I -- you know, I don't know -- I know only one or
12 two people in Molokai and nobody in Lanai. But the ones
13 that I spoke to in the two, they were -- they have no
14 objections, you know, to joining the part of -- you
15 know, what's been proposed, canoeing.

16 MEMBER DELEON: Can I take that as an official
17 poll?

18 CHAIR STONE: As long as you don't say "we,"
19 Commissioner DeLeon.

20 MEMBER DELEON: I said "I."

21 CHAIR STONE: Commissioners, any further
22 questions or clarifications for Jimmy? Commissioner
23 Baxa.

24 MEMBER BAXA: Sir, I just wanted to have it
25 clear on my mind. You feel that the people of Lanai and

1 Molokai have, also, a valid concern against district
 2 voting, is that correct?
 3 MR. CONNIFF: No, but I -- I got -- I try to
 4 --
 5 MEMBER BAXA: Let me continue. But you also
 6 feel that there is, also, a valid concern on the other
 7 side, concerning the one man, one vote?
 8 MR. CONNIFF: I would rather see the one man,
 9 one vote, but I'm not from another island, so I really
 10 cannot speak for how they feel.
 11 MEMBER BAXA: I see.
 12 MR. CONNIFF: I only understand from what
 13 their representatives are telling me, like the ones --
 14 their names are Mr. Mateo and the one from Lanai, Riki.
 15 MEMBER BAXA: Oh, okay.
 16 MR. CONNIFF: They don't talk to me, but what
 17 they express in the news. And -- and the -- their body
 18 English when they're on TV. When it's brought up, they
 19 get all upset.
 20 MEMBER BAXA: I know that you're not from
 21 Lanai or Molokai, but may I ask you, if I may, which do
 22 you prefer, the one that Molokai or Lanai favors or the
 23 one that the other side favors?
 24 MR. CONNIFF: Well, explain to me what is the
 25 other side? You mean --

1 MEMBER BAXA: I mean the one man, one vote.
 2 MR. CONNIFF: I would -- well, what I'm
 3 expressing is I would rather have it one man, one vote.
 4 And please, you know, I pray to Akua, God, whoever's in
 5 charge of everything, that there will be some kind of a
 6 compromise and a solution that be made that's better
 7 than the way it is now.
 8 MEMBER BAXA: Thank you.
 9 CHAIR STONE: Thank you very much.
 10 Commissioner Hashimoto.
 11 MEMBER HASHIMOTO: Thank you, Mr. Conniff.
 12 You know, I -- I was born and raised on this island.
 13 And I can remember when Kihei had nothing here, it was
 14 nothing but bushes. So I've been here quite a while.
 15 But, you know, just looking at this building right here
 16 that we're sitting in, this is quite an accomplishment
 17 over here. In Hana, Hana was one of the biggest
 18 communities when I grew up. We had over 10,000 people
 19 in Hana. So things change. As the economics change,
 20 the population changes as well.
 21 So since that time, of course, we haven't had
 22 too many new buildings built in Hana, since the
 23 plantations closed back after World War II. As a matter
 24 of fact, up until recently, we were going to school in a
 25 well-over-100-year-old building. That building is still

1 standing today, and it's called our community center.
 2 So the point I'm trying to make is, even
 3 though we have a unfair system, as some people call it,
 4 of voting for representatives, you -- you can see right
 5 away that Kihei isn't left out. And Hana still doesn't
 6 have a new building. You have a new swimming pool here
 7 in Kihei, and you're right next to the ocean. We're
 8 next to the ocean in Hana, but there's no swimming pool
 9 in Hana. Okay.
 10 So for those folks who live in the large --
 11 large populated areas, such as Kihei or Pukalani or
 12 Makawao or Wailuku, you have all the services that are
 13 provided, you know, for the community, which -- which
 14 places like Hana does not have.
 15 So I don't know what -- whether Molokai has a
 16 public swimming pool or not, or Lanai, for that matter,
 17 but there isn't one in Hana. And I really don't think
 18 the community wants one, to begin with. They -- they
 19 love their ocean. So -- so I don't think that makes
 20 much difference.
 21 So what I'm saying, the point I'm trying to
 22 make is, it doesn't really matter what the voting system
 23 is. Those places on Maui that have the largest
 24 population --
 25 MR. CONNIFF: It does matter.

1 MEMBER HASHIMOTO: -- always get --
 2 MR. CONNIFF: It does matter.
 3 MEMBER HASHIMOTO: -- always get what they
 4 want. Thank you.
 5 CHAIR STONE: Thank you, Commissioner
 6 Hashimoto.
 7 Commissioner Crivello.
 8 MEMBER CRIVELLO: Mr. Connor [sic], thank you
 9 for participating tonight. So it matters to you that
 10 representation for the Kihei area increases to -- what
 11 number would you say would be --
 12 MR. CONNIFF: Just a -- just to be fair for
 13 all, all of our county, all the islands.
 14 MEMBER CRIVELLO: I appreciate that when --
 15 MR. CONNIFF: That's all. That's what I mean
 16 it matters. Especially it matters -- you know, if I can
 17 get on one subject, I -- I'll sound -- you know, I won't
 18 sound right. If there's something that is happening in
 19 my area, whether it be here or in Hana, if it was my
 20 area, the -- I don't have a represent -- I have a
 21 representative, but he or she could be outvoted by
 22 someone else who is afraid of not being elected.
 23 MEMBER CRIVELLO: I understand what you're
 24 saying. And I'm also trying to understand the fairness
 25 to -- I can -- I can sense that you have a feel for the

1 people on Molokai, Lanai, as well as Hana, for the small
2 districts.

3 For your information, on Molokai, we had over
4 50 people in attendance. And they denounced the
5 district voting. So the testifiers that stood up before
6 the more than 50 people that attended did not want to
7 lose the opportunity of having representation. I just
8 share that with you because you said it wasn't on TV.

9 MR. CONNIFF: I didn't know that.

10 MEMBER CRIVELLO: Yeah.

11 MR. CONNIFF: Thank you.

12 MEMBER CRIVELLO: Yeah. And, likewise, I
13 believe, on Lanai. So I guess for -- for Lanai and
14 Molokai, at this stage, it's -- you know, it's -- it
15 works for them. And they feel, too, that, I guess,
16 Kihei or Wailuku, or the more populated areas, are not
17 deprived of representation.

18 So my question to you, do you see Kihei
19 increasing their representation? And if -- if so, is
20 there an answer for the smaller districts?

21 MR. CONNIFF: You know --

22 MEMBER CRIVELLO: Your thoughts.

23 MR. CONNIFF: -- I'm really not prepared to
24 answer that question. It's just that I -- you know, in
25 my gut, my inside feeling, the way it is, it's not -- it

1 State House Representative. So I wanted to give you my
2 perspective.

3 When I was running for Council, I didn't even
4 try to go door to door because I knew that for me to go
5 to 40,000 households was just not possible. And so I
6 put out brochures and, you know, sent out flyers, et
7 cetera. But it's extremely expensive to send out flyers
8 to the whole district.

9 And the thing to remember is a County Council
10 seat is an entry level political position. You can't
11 expect somebody to build on prior name recognition and
12 exposure of a previous position. So for people to get
13 that much exposure without having any position at all,
14 or without having anything to -- to get their name out
15 there, it, basically, takes money.

16 And I could go into that in great detail, but,
17 basically, in my opinion, it's the money in politics
18 that's making it corrupt. And that, really, a
19 representative should be representing the people; not
20 whoever gives them the most money.

21 When I ran for State House Representative, I
22 did go door to door. I spent maybe five months going
23 door to door to door, because I could walk to every
24 single door in South Maui. That was just possible. It
25 takes time, but there's -- it's just doable. And so

1 just doesn't feel right the way it is now. There's got
2 to be a way. I don't know what it is. I don't know.
3 And some people say ask a computer, but I don't think
4 that's right, either. I don't know what the computer
5 would say.

6 MEMBER CRIVELLO: Thank you.

7 CHAIR STONE: Thank you very much, Jimmy.
8 Commissioners, any further questions or
9 clarifications?

10 (Silence.)

11 CHAIR STONE: No. Thank you so much for
12 coming out this evening. We really do appreciate your
13 testimony. Thank you.

14 Lisa, do we have another testifier?

15 MS. KAHUHU: Yes. Netra Halperin.

16 CHAIR STONE: Hello, Ms. Halperin. How are
17 you?

18 MS. HALPERIN: Good.

19 CHAIR STONE: Very good. Thank you for coming
20 this evening.

21 MS. HALPERIN: Nice to see you all. Nice to
22 see you as Chair of the Committee, Commissioner Stone.

23 Okay. So my name is Netra Halperin, and I was
24 a candidate. I ran for both County Council and for --
25 out of the Kahului area, and then out of Kihei area for

1 then people could meet me in person. And then, to me,
2 that's really the point. You want to know that whoever
3 you're electing, you can trust. You want to look them
4 in the eye and say, this is my important issue, what do
5 you think about that, or you want to hear what they say,
6 or you just want to feel their presence, you want to
7 know them.

8 And so I think it's really important that,
9 especially for entry level position such as a County
10 councilmember, that the people that they are
11 representing get to meet them because, otherwise, it's
12 just based on, well, somebody said this or somebody said
13 that or they had this car, they looked like this, just
14 very superficial things, as opposed to really knowing
15 them.

16 And many people have told me, even a friend I
17 met the other day, who said -- considered herself a
18 sophisticated voter, sophisticated political person.
19 She moved here from the mainland. And she was confused.
20 She got into the voting booth and is like, what, I have
21 to vote for these people and they're not in my district,
22 and I didn't even bother to research them because it
23 never occurred to me that they were going to be
24 representing me.

25 So I absolutely think that we should go with

1 Commissioner DeLeon's idea of district elections because
 2 that's the only way we're going to get people that the
 3 voters get to know and that can really focus on that
 4 issue and that they have access to, you know, that they
 5 can just say, hey, there's this issue, there's that
 6 issue. It's just too big. The whole county is just too
 7 big.
 8 CHAIR STONE: Thank you very much, Ms.
 9 Halperin, for your testimony.
 10 Commissioners, clarifications, questions for
 11 Ms. Halperin? Commissioner DeLeon.
 12 MEMBER DELEON: Thank you for coming tonight,
 13 Netra.
 14 Did you try to go to Lanai or Molokai when you
 15 were running for Council?
 16 MS. HALPERIN: I did actually go to Lanai.
 17 They had a one-day event that was -- everybody was
 18 invited. And so we all went and we gave our, I don't
 19 know, three-minute speech. And, also, a friend of mine,
 20 Alberta De Jetley, who was actually also running, she
 21 gave me a tour of Lanai, so I got some kind of
 22 understanding of that. And then I also went on my own
 23 to Molokai -- yes, I went to Molokai and I -- oh, yes,
 24 there was an event, another representative was running
 25 there and they allowed me to come to their event. And I

1 think it was Gladys Baisa. And then she said, oh, and
 2 this is Netra Halperin. And so I did. But I very
 3 strongly, in Molokai, felt -- like I even put up a
 4 banner there and they took it down and they said, we
 5 don't know you. So there's a real strong feeling, I
 6 felt, on Molokai that they want to know the person. And
 7 who was I? They don't know me. So it was quite
 8 difficult to even be given -- to get trust from people
 9 there.
 10 MEMBER DELEON: Netra, in your opinion, does
 11 newcomers, challengers, have any chance against an
 12 incumbent in Maui County in County Council races?
 13 MS. HALPERIN: No, no, not. I mean, Elle
 14 Cochran -- well, that was an open seat. And, basically,
 15 she got in because she was, you know, well known within
 16 the public and because Jo Anne Johnson endorsed her. I
 17 mean, that's, basically, why she got in. And then Mike
 18 White got into that seat because he was well known
 19 within the business community. But I'd say -- I don't
 20 think there was any -- I haven't heard of any upsets --
 21 oh, no. No. There was one last race, but that was due
 22 to -- I won't go into it, but we all know it was a
 23 scandal. So, basically, if there's a scandal, if the
 24 incumbent does something that really makes people angry
 25 to the point where they even think of kicking him out

1 midterm, yes, a newcomer can get in. But aside from
 2 that, if they're just lazy or don't really do much,
 3 they'll just stay there.
 4 MEMBER DELEON: Mahalo.
 5 CHAIR STONE: Thank you. Netra, Chair has a
 6 -- has a quick question for you. So you're against
 7 voting at-large, obviously?
 8 MS. HALPERIN: Yes.
 9 CHAIR STONE: And that means you're for
 10 district voting?
 11 MS. HALPERIN: Yes.
 12 CHAIR STONE: So the issue that keeps popping
 13 up for this present Commission at the moment is the
 14 district voting issue brings into question how do you
 15 deal with the smaller communities --
 16 MS. HALPERIN: Right.
 17 CHAIR STONE: -- such as Lanai, Molokai and
 18 Hana.
 19 MS. HALPERIN: Right.
 20 CHAIR STONE: Do you have any suggestions on
 21 how you would propose to deal with that issue?
 22 MS. HALPERIN: Well, I know Representative
 23 Mele Carroll in the State Legislature has that canoe
 24 district. And I know she's, you know, running around a
 25 lot. But I think she does a good job. But I think I

1 read somewhere that the idea was to not like lump them
 2 together. Like maybe put Lanai with Lahaina, you know,
 3 put Molokai with South Maui, you know, to spread them so
 4 that one councilmember isn't responsible for all three
 5 of those outlying districts. But I would say, yeah, put
 6 them with their closest contiguous or, you know,
 7 whatever is easy, ferry ride or whatever, people that
 8 usually live in one connect with people that live in
 9 another. So whatever the most sensible way of
 10 connecting those.
 11 CHAIR STONE: Thank you. Commissioner De
 12 Rego.
 13 MEMBER DE REGO: Based on your own testimony,
 14 and what you've said about districts, would you have
 15 made any effort, if you were just in your district, to
 16 learn anything about Molokai or Lanai? Would there have
 17 been any motivation for you to learn anything about
 18 those outlying islands, or even Hana, for that matter?
 19 MS. HALPERIN: Well, I mean, and I did go to
 20 Hana. They had an event for the candidates in Hana. So
 21 I did learn -- I learned as much as I could. I mean,
 22 basically, that's all I did is learn stuff.
 23 MEMBER DE REGO: You're not hearing my
 24 question.
 25 MS. HALPERIN: Okay.

1 MEMBER DE REGO: The question is, if we did
2 have district voting, would there have been any
3 motivation for you to learn about Hana, Lanai or
4 Molokai?

5 MS. HALPERIN: Oh, I see your point. So
6 you're saying if I were a County Council candidate and I
7 was running for Kihei and I wasn't running for Hana,
8 Lanai and Molokai, would I have had any motivation to
9 learn about those. Well, if my time and my money were
10 limited, I guess your point is well-taken.

11 CHAIR STONE: Thank you. Thank you.
12 Commissioner Baxa.

13 MEMBER BAXA: Ma'am, let me ask you this
14 question: Assuming that we have the district voting and
15 you were a councilman in a particular district, would
16 you be mainly motivated to work for the particular
17 district that you were voted from rather than the whole
18 County as a whole?

19 MS. HALPERIN: Well, let me -- I ran for State
20 House Representative the next election. And then I
21 actually worked in the State House this last session.
22 So I'm kind of more oriented toward the State. But,
23 basically, many of the issues that I'm personally
24 interested in are statewide or, I guess, in the -- like,
25 for instance, I'm interested in prison reform and, you

1 one out -- to be able to put an absolute limit on the
2 number of terms that a person can serve on the Council?

3 MS. HALPERIN: I don't have a definite answer
4 on that. And I know that's been -- that issue comes up
5 a lot. And whenever, generally, the issue of term
6 limits come up, I think the issue is more -- they're
7 saying it's because of people being in office, and
8 that's all the way up to Congress, for a huge amount of
9 time, that that's where their corruption and the good
10 old boy club comes in. And I would say, well, no, it's
11 more the money in politics. But that's not -- that's
12 the Campaign Spending Commission, so even that's not
13 your kuleana.

14 I don't know. I don't have a definite answer
15 on that one. I mean, I think it just depends. I mean,
16 I know -- okay. One time when I was running for
17 Council, I went to a retirement home in Kahului. And
18 the lady said, oh, we vote for Joseph Pontanilla. And I
19 said, well, why, because he's done a good job. And she
20 said, well, he's been in there a long time, I don't know
21 that -- he must be doing a good job because he's been
22 there long. So I think that mindset is prevalent, is --
23 is the point you're making. So it's just, once in a
24 while, there's somebody I think, you know, really gets
25 the hang of it and is really good and should be allowed,

1 know, foreclosure amelioration and stuff like that. So
2 that's not just district. So I guess to shift it back
3 into the county level, yeah, I guess it just depends on
4 the individual. But I personally am into issues, and
5 they kind of cross the whole gamut. So the answer is,
6 yes, I'm not just interested -- like I -- you know, I
7 also did a video on flood amelioration in Kihei, that's
8 a very specific issue, but I personally am also
9 interested in broad issues.

10 Does that answer?

11 MEMBER BAXA: Yeah. Thank you.

12 CHAIR STONE: Thank you.

13 Commissioner De Rego.

14 MEMBER DE REGO: Let me ask you a question.
15 In terms of term limits, because there is this concern
16 about people who run for office, reach their 10-year
17 limit, take time off and then come back again. Would
18 you be in favor of a absolute limit on the number of
19 years any individual would be able to serve on the
20 Council? Let me give you an example. Let's say there
21 were three four-year terms. No matter whether they were
22 consecutive or, you know, spaced in between, but an
23 individual has the ability to serve 12 years and that's
24 it. Would you be in favor of putting -- if it's
25 possible -- constitutionally, we'll have to figure that

1 but I think your point is that, often, they just get in
2 a rut, they don't have to do any work. Many voters just
3 vote on name recognition, they don't have to, you know,
4 get any projects done or help the people, they just
5 slide through. So I -- I see your point.

6 CHAIR STONE: Thank you. Commissioner
7 Sugimura.

8 MEMBER SUGIMURA: Hi, Netra.

9 MS. HALPERIN: Hi.

10 MEMBER SUGIMURA: I just wanted to share with
11 you some information that we received by going to Hana,
12 Molokai and Lanai and talking about representation and
13 for -- to canoe these districts with other locations,
14 that we heard time and time again from those areas -- I
15 just want to, you know, see what you think, but that
16 they didn't see their representative or senator often
17 enough. And so that's one of the problems that they
18 brought up from their communities on canoeing the small
19 communities with other areas. Any opinion?

20 MS. HALPERIN: I mean, I know it's difficult.
21 And like I said, I'm -- I'm, you know, in communication
22 with Representative Carroll. And I know she, you know,
23 does her best. And I guess Kalani English would be the
24 senator representing the canoe district. I think -- I
25 mean, most of the representatives, most of the council

1 people that are on those districts, to be honest, they
2 have residence within Kahului. I mean, who is going to,
3 you know, come over every morning? That's -- I know Bob
4 Carroll does, but he's unusual. But most people have a
5 residence right there near the -- the County building so
6 that they can, you know, sleep over. I'm sure they go
7 home on the weekend.

8 I think there's certain things you just can't
9 -- I don't think that they would have more -- you're
10 saying that the people complained that they already now
11 didn't see their representative enough. So I think
12 if -- it wouldn't make it more that they would see them.
13 I mean, whoever had those districts, that would be part
14 of their kuleana. They would have, let's say, you know,
15 Kihei and Lanai, and they would just need to, if they
16 wanted to keep the people happy, keep going back and
17 forth. I mean, there's expediency and then there's
18 doing a good job, a good job as a representative. You
19 know, there's always the temptation to, okay, how am I
20 going to get the most votes, what about this position
21 will get the most votes. And then there's what's best
22 for the people, what's really doing my job deep from my
23 heart, deep from my gut, what do I know is the most
24 important. And you can't make someone be that kind of
25 representative. You can only make it so that the --

1 the -- it's possible for them to do that. And sometimes
2 the laws now make it they can't even be a good
3 representative.

4 There's flies here.
5 So I would say that -- that if we had district
6 voting, it would make it -- it wouldn't make it that
7 there was less representation than there is now, you
8 know. The -- the kuleana is there now and the kuleana
9 will be there then, that's their people, their
10 constituents.

11 CHAIR STONE: Thank you.
12 Commissioner Crivello.

13 MEMBER CRIVELLO: Thank you. Would you say
14 Maui County is geographically unique, or is it -- would
15 you say it's like the rest of the islands?

16 MS. HALPERIN: Well, yeah. I mean, the fact
17 that we have Lanai and Molokai is -- is very -- I
18 don't -- yeah, there's Kauai and then there's Big Island
19 as far as districts. So, yeah, we are the only place.
20 And absolutely. And I don't know Lanai, what the
21 population is -- Commissioner DeLeon -- 3,000, and, you
22 know, Molokai --

23 MEMBER CRIVELLO: But geographically --

24 MS. HALPERIN: Yeah. Geographically,
25 absolutely.

1 MEMBER CRIVELLO: -- would you say, we're
2 separated by waters?

3 MS. HALPERIN: Absolutely, yeah.

4 MEMBER CRIVELLO: Okay. So in our Charter, it
5 says that every voter in the county, it's Maui County,
6 have the right to vote for each and every Council seat.
7 And, of course, we need -- it also states it has to be
8 resident, a resident of each of this --

9 MS. HALPERIN: Yes. And that issue has come
10 up.

11 MEMBER CRIVELLO: Right. So would you --
12 would you say Maui, as well as Lanai, would have the
13 opportunity to have access to someone who is not a
14 resident of the island, as well as Hana, if we should go
15 with district voting?

16 MS. HALPERIN: Oh, I see your point. Because
17 you're saying, right now, the councilmember for Lanai
18 has to live in Lanai and the councilmember for Hana has
19 to live in Hana.

20 MEMBER CRIVELLO: Likewise Molokai.

21 MS. HALPERIN: Right. Right. You know, I --
22 I see your point, that they're a resident and they
23 probably go home on the weekends. But, again, I
24 think -- in the balance of everything else, I -- I still
25 think they're going to get -- I mean, they actually vote

1 for them. I mean, who -- the gentleman I think --
2 somebody over here said, you know, let's face it, right
3 now, the population centers, which is Central, and, I
4 guess, now Kihei has got a lot of voters, too, decide
5 all of the representatives. And so, you know, access is
6 one thing and, you know, voting for them is another
7 thing. But I -- I -- I don't think, you know, what -- I
8 mean, there's many representatives -- sorry --
9 councilmembers who were not elected in their home
10 district, but, because they were elected at-large, they
11 are the councilmember for that district. And so they're
12 not pleasing their supposed constituents.

13 So, I mean, nothing's going to be perfect.
14 Like you said, this is a geographically unique location.
15 It's not going to be simple, perfect and easy. But I
16 think, you know, weighing the -- the various parameters.

17 MEMBER CRIVELLO: You also mentioned concern
18 with the at-large voting process we have today for our
19 Council, that it seems like the incumbents cannot be
20 unseated. Is that a -- if I understood you right. Do
21 you see that also with the statewide single-member
22 districts? Is it easy to unseat the incumbents with
23 that kind of voting?

24 MS. HALPERIN: I mean, until people start -- I
25 mean, you see the turnout here. I mean, until people

1 start paying more attention to politics, it's going to
2 be hard. But I -- again, like when I ran for State
3 House, a year ago, I went door to door to door to door.
4 And so people got a chance to meet me. And, you know,
5 it's going to be hard until -- I mean, it goes back to
6 education, teaching critical thinking, et cetera, et
7 cetera, but --

8 MEMBER CRIVELLO: Either way, though, it's
9 difficult to unseat?

10 MS. HALPERIN: It's hard.

11 MEMBER CRIVELLO: Yeah.

12 MS. HALPERIN: And it's true because thinking
13 of single voter, that would be the State House, because
14 they do -- that's how the House of Representatives is
15 set up, or the Senate, with the bigger ones. It's still
16 hard.

17 MEMBER CRIVELLO: Okay.

18 MS. HALPERIN: It's -- it's hard either way.

19 MEMBER CRIVELLO: So that issue as far as
20 Council being unable to replace the incumbent, it's,
21 basically, no matter what office, is that --

22 MS. HALPERIN: I would --

23 MEMBER CRIVELLO: Are you just labeling it
24 just for the Council?

25 MS. HALPERIN: I would say the setup of the

1 they're part of Maui County, or how you would say Maui
2 Nui, how would they have the representation that they
3 also deserve. Thank you.

4 CHAIR STONE: Thank you.

5 Commissioner De Rego.

6 MEMBER DE REGO: This is, actually, a totally
7 different question. And I would like to get your
8 reaction to this. You've run both for Council and for
9 the State House. What did you feel about running in a
10 nonpartisan election as versus running in a partisan
11 election? What -- give me your reaction on the
12 experience or the difference between those two.

13 MS. HALPERIN: You know, I was just thinking
14 about that yesterday. I kind of like the partisan
15 because, when I talk to people -- I mean, there really
16 is kind of almost two ways of viewing the world. I
17 mean, there's -- and I don't want to go into detail
18 about what the republican view is and what the democrat
19 view is, but it kind of is different viewpoints that
20 really come and look at the world. And so with the
21 Council, because most people don't spend the time to
22 truly research all the candidates and their viewpoints,
23 it gives a simple way. Oh, they're a democrat, oh,
24 they're a republican, okay, I can assume this about them
25 and I can assume this about them.

1 Council makes it harder just because it's more about
2 money than time well spent because you can't -- there
3 isn't enough time to do it. So I think it gives it more
4 of a possibility of being able to get new people in.

5 MEMBER CRIVELLO: Okay. I would just ask that
6 if you will stop and think -- and you don't have to --
7 you know, maybe the next round -- how does every voter
8 in this county have the right to vote for each and every
9 Council seat should we change from the at-large to
10 district voting.

11 MS. HALPERIN: Oh, I can answer that. I think
12 we should change it because I think you can make a law,
13 you can make a rule, but, if it doesn't make sense to
14 people, they won't do it. And, I mean, I looked at all
15 the voting turnouts and there's a whole lot of blank
16 votes on the Council races because people just either
17 don't understand or don't feel properly entitled. So it
18 may be people's right, but they're not using that right.
19 So then it's kind of not an appropriate right if people
20 don't think it's -- they don't feel right about it.

21 MEMBER CRIVELLO: Okay. And, also -- also,
22 you don't have to answer this now -- take into
23 consideration how we're separated by waters, and how you
24 can come back again and share with us how -- how the
25 islands that are part of this county, regardless,

1 Now, whether people are following exactly what
2 their party says or not is another story.

3 But I actually do think it's -- it's useful to
4 have the -- to have the partisan because it kind of --
5 for those that don't have the time. And then, of
6 course, in Maui, there's a lot of people that really
7 just look at the candidates. And that's fine. You
8 know, there's the serious hardcore democrats, the
9 hardcore republicans and then the people in between that
10 just look at each candidate. But I do think it is
11 helpful to many.

12 CHAIR STONE: Thank you.

13 Commissioner DeLeon.

14 MEMBER DELEON: Thank you for being our expert
15 witness tonight.

16 MS. HALPERIN: Just happened.

17 MEMBER DELEON: Got two questions for you.
18 You ran for the State House. Could you imagine
19 representing the 13th Representative District with Lanai
20 and Molokai, Hana and Haiku? Could you imagine the --
21 that type of difficulty that would be to try to actually
22 represent, be on the ground in that district?

23 MS. HALPERIN: And that's what Rep. Carroll
24 does. Yeah. I ran for Kihei, it's just like, chh, chh,
25 chh, you know, all clear where it is except in case they

1 put Ulumalu -- I'm sorry --
 2 MEMBER DELEON: Ulupalakua.
 3 MS. HALPERIN: -- Ulupalakua back in it.
 4 Yeah, she says she's got a lot of frequent flyer miles,
 5 and, you know, she's running around all the time. I
 6 mean, each -- you know, Lanai and Molokai and Hana
 7 are -- each have their own special character, but the
 8 rural and the isolated aspect of all of them is the
 9 same. So there is something distinctly -- there's a
 10 thread flowing through all three of those districts --
 11 sorry -- for Haiku, Hana, Lanai, Molokai. So it is a
 12 challenge. But that's why I think, in one of your
 13 suggestions, you said that, you know, Lanai would go
 14 here, Hana would go to here, you know, Molokai would go
 15 to here, to spread it so it's not like all three in --
 16 all four in one.
 17 MEMBER DELEON: That's the point of that.
 18 Second question: What do you think of
 19 four-year terms for the Council?
 20 MS. HALPERIN: I don't -- I mean, my first
 21 thought is, well, we want to keep them on a tight leash,
 22 so that would be two-year terms. And then the other
 23 side of that would be that if you have to run every two
 24 years, then you get distracted from doing your job and
 25 you start campaigning instead of actually digging in and

1 doing your job. So those are kind -- I mean, I -- you
 2 know, I know the Mayor and the Governor are both
 3 four-year terms and senators -- State Senators are
 4 four-year terms, but then the State House and Council
 5 are two years. So it's kind of like those are more
 6 entry level positions. I guess that's the idea. So,
 7 you know, we want to watch people, see what they're up
 8 to. So --
 9 MEMBER DELEON: Okay. Thank you.
 10 CHAIR STONE: Thank you. Commissioners?
 11 Commissioner Baxa.
 12 MEMBER BAXA: Ms. Halperin, one last question
 13 from me. You said that a partisan election might be
 14 helpful. But I do not get it from you that that is a
 15 full endorsement, or is a full endorsement of the
 16 partisan way of electing public officials?
 17 MS. HALPERIN: So that's a -- that's an issue
 18 on the table?
 19 MEMBER BAXA: It is. I mean, everything is
 20 before the Commission. Partisan or nonpartisan?
 21 MS. HALPERIN: I'll tell you the difference.
 22 The County Council mostly deals with land use. And land
 23 use isn't -- like, for instance, in the State House,
 24 there's -- there's the religious issues, the social
 25 issues, and then there's the, you know, should the

1 people -- corporations get the money, should the people
 2 get -- it's much more clearly about the issues that the
 3 republicans have taken this side and the democrats have
 4 taken this side. The State issues are -- more fall into
 5 that. The County issues are should we develop -- build
 6 that development, should we -- you know, it's more about
 7 lands use. And that doesn't fall like strongly into the
 8 democrat or republican camp. And so that's why I would
 9 not immediately fully endorse it because it's -- they're
 10 different issues.
 11 MEMBER BAXA: Let me ask you, is it your
 12 feeling that most of the things that are being taken by
 13 the Council are about land use? Is that your
 14 perception?
 15 MS. HALPERIN: Let's see. There's the --
 16 there's also the nonprofits, giving money to nonprofits,
 17 and those are, you know, helping the people, mostly many
 18 social services and then the environmental ones. Let's
 19 see. The Land Use Committee. Water, so that's --
 20 that's a physical thing, you know. That's not really
 21 democrat or republican, it's just, you know, how are we
 22 going to develop the water sources. What are the other
 23 committees? Water, land, you know. I guess housing.
 24 You know, that's -- so, yeah, I would say it's mostly --
 25 it's mostly the concrete levels of life, water, housing.

1 I guess agriculture, but a lot of that falls under the
 2 zoning. So that would be land use. So, yes, it is.
 3 MEMBER BAXA: Okay. Have you had a chance to
 4 read the County Charter?
 5 MS. HALPERIN: I think I did. Not recently,
 6 but I did glance through it. When I was running, I
 7 looked at it.
 8 MEMBER BAXA: Thank you.
 9 CHAIR STONE: Thank you. Commissioner
 10 Moikeha.
 11 MEMBER MOIKEHA: Thank you for your testimony
 12 In listening to you speak tonight, I heard a
 13 lot of emphasis on the one-on-one personal meeting and
 14 greeting the people and getting to know them,
 15 particularly in your area that you ran. I'm going to
 16 assume that, because you were running, you lived in that
 17 area?
 18 MS. HALPERIN: Yeah, live here.
 19 MEMBER MOIKEHA: And this is some of what
 20 we've heard from the outer islands as well, the
 21 importance of that, being able to have a one-on-one with
 22 your representative. I think, personally, there's a lot
 23 of trade-off no matter where you're going to go with any
 24 issue. In your opinion, would you be okay with, say,
 25 Lanai joining Kihei and having their representative live

1 and be elected from Lanai, but represent you here in
2 South Maui?

3 MS. HALPERIN: Yeah. I guess I'd have to know
4 the ferry, does -- I guess there's -- I would look at
5 where does the ferry go. The ferry from Maalaea goes to
6 Lanai. I mean, I would look at the convenience for that
7 representative to actually go.

8 MEMBER MOIKEHA: Well, it wouldn't be any
9 different than it is today.

10 MS. HALPERIN: Yeah.

11 MEMBER MOIKEHA: I mean, the transportation
12 can be resolved somewhat how. But my question to you
13 is, then wouldn't you be giving up the fact that you
14 don't have that one-on-one personal personalness with
15 that person as your representative because that person
16 lives in Lanai?

17 MS. HALPERIN: Well, I mean, I'm here in
18 Kihei, but, you know, I'm not having a personal
19 connection with every single person in the district.
20 That's just not possible. So, you know, the districts
21 aren't that small, you know. They're not like a, you
22 know, neighborhood association where, you know, you all
23 work together. I mean, so I -- I -- yeah. I just -- I
24 think it's still incumbent upon that person to just get
25 to know and -- and visit and be kind of alert to what's

1 to us and what we will not trade off for is that this
2 person lives here, understands me, understands my
3 culture, understands my work issues, the economy, and
4 how I'm impacted by it. And to me, that's what I've
5 learned thus far from these outlying communities.

6 I don't think any process at this point in
7 time has shown me yet that I've heard a complete
8 fairness and equity.

9 MS. HALPERIN: Yeah.

10 MEMBER MOIKEHA: Because if we were to join
11 one of these islands to Lahaina, say, or, you know,
12 South Maui or west side, they're still going to be
13 outpopulated and they're still not going to have -- they
14 may run the risk of losing their representative that
15 lives in their area.

16 So maybe as we get through this whole
17 conversation and we're learning to see what we deem to
18 be equitable or fair, that we need to take into those
19 things, too. Because to these people, it's more
20 important that even though Maui, heavily populated, can
21 elect their representative, they still feel that they
22 need to have someone there. And they can live with
23 that.

24 And point of interest, too, they're not very
25 happy with their State elected officials who do not come

1 going on, you know, phone contact, you know, emails, et
2 cetera.

3 MEMBER MOIKEHA: So the way it is right now,
4 whoever is the representative, you know, here would have
5 to do the same thing, or if that representative was on
6 the outer island.

7 I think the people that I've heard speak in
8 these rural areas, such as Hana, and the other two outer
9 islands, Lanai and Molokai, understand the system the
10 way it is, especially when there's districting at the
11 state level. And their concern is lack of
12 representation, just because that person's not there.
13 They also understand that their elected representatives
14 on the Council are being elected at-large, that they're
15 not coming necessarily from the votes of that small
16 populated area. But they're willing to give that up and
17 adapt to that knowing in their hearts that the most
18 important thing is that those representatives live in
19 their district. And when you have -- and what I'm
20 learning -- and this is a learning process. What I'm
21 learning is that these individual outlying communities
22 on these islands, surrounded by water, separated from
23 the island of Maui, that the most important thing to
24 them is you can vote for a representative and you might
25 be the decision-maker here on Maui, but what's important

1 there; only when it's time for voting and an election is
2 being held. Other than that, they don't see them.

3 Now I'm not saying -- I would also say in what
4 I heard, too, lack of a budget to be able to travel,
5 expense of rising costs of travel for representatives is
6 -- are issues, they're real. But they still do not want
7 to give up the fact that they now have representatives
8 that live on -- in their areas. And that's most
9 important to them.

10 And I don't know where this is all going to
11 play out in the end. And this is the last community
12 meeting we'll be to at this point in time. And we will
13 come back. But I still have not heard the -- the
14 question of equity resolved. I see people on both side
15 of the issues. But this is one issue and it's not fair
16 to these people, and this is the other issue and it's
17 not fair to them.

18 So I don't know where this is all going to
19 going to fall out but I thank you for your testimony and
20 for answering the questions.

21 CHAIR STONE: Thank you. Any further
22 clarification or questions of Ms. Halperin?

23 MS. HALPERIN: Oh, no. The lady at the end.

24 CHAIR STONE: Oh, I'm sorry.

25 MEMBER OKAMOTO: I'm way down here at the end

1 CHAIR STONE: Commissioner Okamoto, way down
 2 there, please go ahead.
 3 MEMBER OKAMOTO: I am the representative here
 4 from Lanai. And we heard on Molokai, and I know it is
 5 true on Lanai, because you have mentioned Mele Carroll,
 6 I don't think you would find hardly any people on Lanai
 7 and Molokai that feel that they represent them. They
 8 may try, but it just doesn't happen. And so the canoe
 9 districts, I think you would find totally Lanai and
 10 Molokai would say they don't work. And I agree with
 11 Susan, I'm not sure what the answer is, but the canoe
 12 districts do not work for the outlying areas regardless
 13 of the intention of the person elected.
 14 I'm sorry. That wasn't a question; that was a
 15 statement. This is supposed to be a question.
 16 CHAIR STONE: Thank you very much,
 17 Commissioner Okamoto.
 18 Commissioners, any further clarification or
 19 questions for the testifier?
 20 MEMBER DELEON: Point of order, Mr. Chair.
 21 That was the third personal opinion offered in a row.
 22 CHAIR STONE: Thank you, Commissioner DeLeon.
 23 Thank you very much for being here tonight.
 24 It's much appreciated.
 25 MS. HALPERIN: Thank you for listening.

1 CHAIR STONE: Very much appreciate your
 2 testimony, Ms. Halperin.
 3 Lisa, any other testifiers?
 4 MS. KAHUHU: No, Chair, no other testifiers
 5 have signed up.
 6 CHAIR STONE: I'll put out to the public. If
 7 anybody here would like to testify who has not
 8 testified, you are welcome to come forward.
 9 (Silence.)
 10 CHAIR STONE: No. Okay. Thank you very much.
 11 If there are no objections, I will close the oral
 12 testimony at this time.
 13 ...END OF PUBLIC TESTIMONY...
 14 CHAIR STONE: Without objection, the Chair
 15 will accept and file all public communication into
 16 record.
 17 We have a little bit of extra time before we
 18 need to adjourn this meeting tonight. I would like to
 19 open the floor to the Commissioners to discuss the
 20 evening's public testimony, if there is any discussion
 21 amongst the Commissioners. Commissioners, any
 22 discussion? Commissioner DeLeon.
 23 MEMBER DELEON: I know the Commission has been
 24 very taken by the testimony received on Lanai and
 25 Molokai. And the question that Commissioner Moikeha was

1 raising was, what's fair for those guys and that they're
 2 not signing on. But I don't think that the -- most of
 3 the voters, Maui, will sign on to our current system,
 4 either. And that's why I think, eventually, this is
 5 going to have to be a decision made by the voters.
 6 CHAIR STONE: Thank you. Commissioners, no
 7 more discussion?
 8 (Silence.)
 9 CHAIR STONE: Okay. Thank you very much.
 10 Well, I would like to point out that our next
 11 Commission meeting is scheduled for Monday, August 15th,
 12 at 12:00 p.m., to be held at the Planning Conference
 13 Room in Wailuku.
 14 I would like to thank everyone for being here
 15 this evening. All of your time and input is extremely
 16 valuable to us. And this process will have an impact on
 17 Maui's future.
 18 With that, I would like to adjourn this
 19 meeting as of 7:37 this evening. Thanks very much for
 20 being here. Aloha. Thank you.
 21 (Meeting adjourned at 7:37 p.m.)

1 CERTIFICATE
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 3
 4 I, TONYA MCDADE, Certified Court Reporter of
 5 the State of Hawaii, do hereby certify that the
 6 proceedings contained herein were taken by me in machine
 7 shorthand and thereafter was reduced to print by means
 8 of computer-aided transcription; and that the foregoing
 9 represents, to the best of my ability, a true and
 10 accurate transcript of the proceedings had in the
 11 foregoing matter.
 12 I further certify that I am not an attorney
 13 nor an employee of any of the parties hereto, nor in any
 14 way concerned with the cause.
 15 DATED this 6th day of August, 2011.
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