

BEFORE THE BOARD OF ETHICS

COUNTY OF HAWAI'I

In the Matter of the Petition by

ROYLEN VALERA,

Petitioner.

PETITION NO. 2025-10

INFORMAL ADVISORY OPINION

Initial Review: April 23, 2025

INFORMAL ADVISORY OPINION

By Petition dated February 28, 2025, with the Hawai'i County Board of Ethics (hereinafter "the Board"), Petitioner ROYLEN VALERA (hereinafter referred to as "Petitioner") who is employed at the Hawai'i Police Department. In his private capacity, Petitioner currently serves as the president of a state-wide non-profit organization, D.A.R.E. Hawai'i. Petitioner requested an Informal Advisory Opinion from the Board regarding application of section 2-83, Fair Treatment, of the Hawai'i County Code. Petitioner sought guidance and clearance regarding the non-profit organization, D.A.R.E. Hawai'i, seeking a grant of Contingency Relief Funds from the Hawaii County Council in light of Petitioner's public and private positions.

At its duly noticed meeting on April 23, 2025, in an open hearing, the Board reviewed and considered the above-captioned Petition pursuant to Rule 4 of the *Rules of Practice and Procedure of the Board of Ethics*. Petitioner identified that he is employed full-time by the Hawai'i Police Department. Petitioner is also the president, serving as a volunteer, of the state-wide non-profit organization, D.A.R.E. Hawai'i, which supports D.A.R.E. certified police officers throughout the State of Hawai'i doing outside of the classroom activities with students.

Petitioner stated that all of the funds sought go directly to programs, with no financial benefit to any participating officer.

The Board, having deliberated and considered and giving appropriate weight to the testimony and evidence submitted by the Petitioner, and having considered the arguments presented, hereby renders the following Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law, and Order.

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. To the extent that any of these Findings of Fact are Conclusions of Law, they are to be so construed.

A. The Petition

2. Petitioner is employed as a Police Officer with the Hawai'i Police Department..

3. Petitioner currently serves as the president of a state-wide non-profit organization, D.A.R.E. Hawai'i. Petitioner's position is that of a volunteer, un-paid.

4. D.A.R.E. Hawai'i supports police officers throughout the State of Hawai'i, including the Honolulu Police Department, Kauai'i Police Department, and Hawai'i Police Department. Each department holds different activities outside of the classroom. For example, Kauai holds D.A.R.E rallies or D.A.R.E graduation on the Big Island which includes a celebration at the end of the year to honor students who graduate from the D.A.R.E. program and the officers that instruct.

5. Petitioner does not have any financial interest in funds sought by D.A.R.E. Hawai'i.

6. When Petitioner represents D.A.R.E Hawai'i as its president, he appears typically in a polo shirt that says D.A.R.E. on it, not in county uniform, and does so on personal time.

7. If awarded Contingency Relief Funds, all funds would be used to benefit the D.A.R.E. Hawai'i program activities.

B. Board's Ruling

8. Based on the evidence and testimony presented, the Board finds that there is no conflict of interest for the Petitioner, in his personal capacity as president for D.A.R.E. Hawai'i, to apply for and receive Contingency Relief Funds for D.A.R.E. Hawai'i because there is no financial interest on the part of the county employee.

9. Board Member Christopher Ho moved that the Board find that there is no conflict of interest under the Hawai'i County Code of Ethics for Petitioner, as the president of D.A.R.E. Hawai'i, to apply for and receive Contingency Relief Funds.

10. Board Member Lisa Fukumitsu seconded the motion. The motion passed 5 in favor, 0 against.

CONCLUSION OF LAW

Based upon the evidence presented and the Board's review of the Hawai'i County Charter, Hawai'i County Code of Ethics and the *Rules of Practice and Procedure of the Board of Ethics*, the Board finds and concludes that there is no conflict of interest under the Hawai'i County Code of Ethics for the Petitioner, president of D.A.R.E. Hawai'i, to apply for and receive Contingency Relief Funds.

ORDER

Pursuant to Rule 4.9 of the *Rules of Practice and Procedure of the Board of Ethics*, this Informal Advisory Opinion shall be filed and a copy shall be sent to the Petitioner.

Dated: Hilo, Hawai'i, May 14th, 2025.

BOARD OF ETHICS, COUNTY OF HAWAI'I

By: 

RACHEL SHORT
Chair

APPROVED AS TO FORM
AND LEGALITY:



SYLVIA A. WAN
Deputy Corporation Counsel

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