

August 5, 2009

To: Charter Commission Hawaii County Council

Dear Chairman Ed Haitzuka:

This letter supersedes all previous communication. I would like to ask a few questions regarding County Council Members, and attendance at County Council Meetings.

- Are all County Council Members elected?
- Are there any rules/regulations/guidelines governing their attendance? I read in the Tribune Herald an article that I found very disturbing.
  1. A certain member had to be off island for 43 days due to obligations, and family commitments. Were his constituents made aware of these obligations?
  2. Was the Charter Commission aware?
  3. He also stated that he had some really good “people” who kept him apprised of events taking place in his absence. I’d like to know what he is being paid \$48,000.00 a year to do if he is gone for over 6 weeks, and also, who are these people who are doing his job.
  4. Another member stated that he had business in Maui and the Big Island which took up much of his time. The Maui section of the business has now been dissolved to NOW 8/9 months into his term he can concentrate on County affairs.
  5. I also read that frequently, members leave the meeting room to answer personal calls, and private business. Am I to assume that they are counted as present, and signed in, because the article gave the impression that this was indeed a common occurrence?
  6. I also understand that these positions are voluntary, but an annual income of \$48,000.00 with no overall regulatory accountability is nonsense.
  7. Last term one official had to be absent much of the time because of a family members sports activities! Question, were these people not aware of their busy lives prior to seeking election and an easy \$48,000.00 year tax people’s monies?

I have lived in Hawaii for over 11 years, and I am so grieved at the irresponsibility of our elected officials. I have served on many for profit and non-profit committees, and boards, and I have never in my life, and I am a senior citizen; seen such happenings. Lack of thought during these hard times for the voters, as well as bad behavior when in attendance, according to The Tribune Herald is not acceptable. Most of the boards I’ve served on have By-Laws stating that if a member is absent for 3 sessions in a row, or 5 in a term, and are not available to make up a quorum twice in a term are simply terminated from membership.

I thank you, and appreciate the opportunity to “speak” to this commission.

Sincerely,

Frances Wong

COMM. 26