



Top News

Court upholds Hawaii ban on political donations by contractors

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A federal appeals court panel on Wednesday upheld Hawaii's ban on political donations by state and county contractors.

The three-judge panel of the Ninth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco also upheld the state's transparency laws allowing the public to "follow the money" in campaign contributions.

The panel's decision upheld a March 2012 ruling by U.S. District Judge Michael Seabright in a case brought by A-1 A-Lectrician Inc., a local electrical construction firm that had challenged the ban and the disclosure requirements for political action committees that spend over \$1,000 on an election.

A telephone message left after hours with James Hochberg, a Honolulu attorney who represented the firm, was not immediately returned.

Hawaii Attorney General Doug Chin lauded the ruling.

"Campaign finance laws exist to inform the public and protect the democratic process," Chin said in a news release. "The Ninth Circuit's ruling reaffirms these values and I am very pleased with the result."

The case was filed in the federal district court in 2010. Most of the challenged laws were upheld in proceedings before that court that ended in 2012. Plaintiffs appealed to the Ninth Circuit, which heard oral arguments in October 2013.

