

HONOLULU

Honolulu Ethics Commission Loosens News Media Policy

The commission rescinded a policy adopted in June that prohibited its staff from talking about agency concerns.

JULY 24, 2015 • By Anita Hofschneider   

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The Honolulu Ethics Commission has rescinded its [restrictive news media policy](#), and adopted a new version that allows its executive director to speak to the press without needing permission and to comment on the potential impact of advisory opinions.

The commission adopted its first media policy in June, which blocked its executive director, Chuck Totto, from sharing concerns about the commission and commenting on advisory opinions.



Chuck Totto at Thursday's Honolulu Ethics Committee meeting.

The June news media policy passed after a city attorney criticized Totto for saying that ethics violations by two former City Council members could nullify their votes on the Honolulu rail project.

The new version adopted Thursday still bars the commission's staff from interpreting formal advisory opinions and findings in news releases, but allows the staff to comment on hypothetical situations that the opinions might impact.

The latest news media policy was drafted by Vice Chair Michael Lilly. The commission adopted the draft after deleting paragraphs 4 and 7.

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Anita Hofschneider [Twitter](#) [Email](#) [RSS](#)

Anita Hofschneider is a reporter for Civil Beat. You can reach her by email at anita@civilbeat.com or follow her on Twitter at [@ahofschneider](https://twitter.com/ahofschneider).

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Arvid Youngquist

Bravo and kudo to the Ethics Commission of the City of Honolulu. Responding to testimonial, petitions and the old American way of speaking up to power did the board credit and the people of Honolulu can now expect more over-sight and I hope the Corporation Attorney and the Mayor will lay off. Now, I hope the State Ethics Commission can do likewise beyond a \$10,000 pay raise for the senior staff person. We need a a strong Executive Director who knows he has the mandate and the backing of his Commission, too.

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Robert Manning · Church College of Hawaii

If I was him I would never speak to anyone from HNN because they will twist his story into LIES!

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