

THE BEAT

How Transparent Is Hawaii's Lobbying Disclosure?

Our state gets a grade of B as do 14 others. Massachusetts and South Carolina rank best, Florida worst.

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The [Sunlight Foundation](#) on Wednesday released an update to its [state lobbying disclosure report card](#), which has evaluated each state on disclosure of lobbyist activity and compensation, expenditure transparency, expenditure reporting thresholds and document accessibility.

Hawaii earns a B grade, which is determined primarily from the category of Document Accessibility: *“In order to know whether the state could be making more information publicly available, it’s important to know what information they collect. Can the public access lobbyist registration and expenditure forms?”*

The answer in Hawaii’s case is, yes — and it’s viewable through the Hawaii State Ethics Commission [website](#).

Disclosure Legislation/Practices : [State Lobbying] Final Grades							
	Grade	Total	Lobbyist Activity	Expenditure Transparency	Expenditure Reporting Thresholds	Document Accessibility	Lobbyist Compensation
Alabama	D	-1	0	1*	-1	0	-1
Alaska	D	-2	0	0	-1	-1	0
Arkansas	D	-1	-1	2*	-1	0	-1
Arizona	D	-2	-1	2*	-1	-1^	-1
California	A	4	0	2	0	2	0
Colorado	C	1	2	1*	-1	-1^	0
Connecticut	B	3	0	2*	-1	2	0
Delaware	B	2	1	1*	-1	2	-1
Florida	F	-6	-1	-1	-1	-2	-1**
Georgia	B	3	0	2	0	2	-1
Hawaii	B	2	0	1*	-1	2	0
Idaho	C	1	1	1	0	0	-1
Illinois	B	2	0	2	0	1	-1
Indiana	C	1	0	1*	-1	1	0
Iowa	D	-1	0	0	0	-1^	0***
Kansas	C	0	1	1*	-1	0	-1
Kentucky	C	1	1	1	0	0	-1
Louisiana	B	3	0	2	0	2	-1**

I've used the data myself quite a lot, and it's amazing just how many people in Hawaii are lobbyists: from Duke Aiona to Bruce Coppa, from Lea Hong to John Radcliffe, from Jennifer Sabas to Deborah Zysman.

The lobbyist disclosure, by the way, is thanks to [Hawaii Revised Statutes Chapter 97](#).

Hawaii did not score so well in other criteria, however, according to Sunlight. We received a negative score for Expenditure Reporting Thresholds: *“Does the state require lobbyists to include all expenses in reports, or only those above a certain amount?”*

We also scored zeros for Lobbyist Compensation (*“Does the state mandate that lobbyists disclose how much they receive from a client?”*) and Lobbyist Activity (*“Do lobbyists have to reveal which pieces of legislation or executive actions they are seeking to influence?”*).

At least we're not Florida: They had the worst scores of any state. Massachusetts

and South Carolina had the highest marks.

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