

CIVIL BEAT EDITORIAL

Monday Memo: Records Released, Trafficking Bill Veto, Love Wins

The public wins with the release of financial disclosures, Ige commits to an improved trafficking bill and marriage equality is the law, hysteria notwithstanding.

JULY 6, 2015 • By The Civil Beat Editorial Board 

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The Civil Beat Editorial Board comments briefly each Monday on multiple matters that caught our attention in the previous week's news.

PUBLIC WINS IN RECORDS RELEASE. The [Hawaii State Ethics Commission](#)'s decision last week to make public financial disclosure statements for members of certain state boards is a clear win for taxpayers.

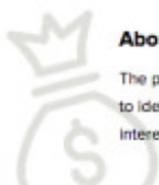
Civil Beat had sought the records consistently since Act 230 was signed into law last year, adding the members of 15 public boards to the list of elected and appointed officials required to disclose personal financial interests. Without such disclosure, spotting a financial conflict of interest can be difficult, if not impossible.

Civil Beat/Screenshot

CIVIL BEAT DATA

Hawaii Financial Disclosures

Public Official Filings for 2013 - 2014



About this tool

The purpose of both financial disclosure systems is to prevent conflicts of interest and to identify potential conflicts by providing for a systematic review of the financial interests of both current and prospective employees. [Learn more](#)

Common searches

[David Ige](#)

[Duke Aiona](#)

Refine List

Income

- More than \$1,000,000
- \$500,000 - \$1,000,000
- \$100,000 - \$500,000
- Less than \$100,000

Debt

- More than \$1,000,000
- \$500,000 - \$1,000,000
- \$100,000 - \$500,000

Public Officials

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A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Thorne Abbott

Board Member, Commissioner
Legacy Land Conservation Commission
 From Sep 29, 2014 Filing

2 Income Sources [View All](#)

1. Cardno TEC, Inc.	63,000
2. CoastalZone.com	17,787

Neil Abercrombie

Governor
 From Jul 22, 2014 Filing

7 Income Sources [View All](#)

1. Salary	\$100,000 - \$150,000
2. Federal Pension	\$50,000 - \$100,000
3. State of Hawaii	\$25,000 - \$50,000

Civil Beat has built a [searchable online database](#) for state and city financial disclosure reports.

The commission initially chose not to release the records in question, but decided more recently to make the records public, ending a lawsuit brought by the Civil Beat.

Civil Beat Law Center for the Public Interest Executive Director Brian Black noted that even though obtaining the disclosures took a year, the Ethics Commission deserved credit now for meeting “its constitutional obligation to hold the state’s public officials to the highest standards of ethical conduct.”

That’s good news for all of us and a timely reminder that in less than two years on the job, Black and the Civil Beat Law Center have become an effective force encouraging good government in Hawaii. Whether suing to release [disciplinary records related to serious police misconduct](#), fighting efforts to create new public records exemptions or pushing back against exorbitant fees for public records, Black and the Civil Beat Law Center are at the forefront of cases that matter.

TRAFFICKING BILL VETO. Gov. David Ige’s announcement that he [plans to veto Senate](#)

[Bill 265](#) — a sex trafficking bill long in the making — came as little surprise to those who had listened carefully to legal issues raised about the bill by the state attorney general and county prosecutors. Civil Beat [echoed their complaints](#) in May in an editorial advocating a veto, citing concerns the bill could make it more difficult to prosecute those who profit from sex workers.



Gov. Ige says he'll veto a sex trafficking bill and has asked the state attorney general to come back with a better version in 2016.

But, thankfully, Ige will not let it end there. Instead, he has tasked Attorney General Doug Chin “to work with local prosecutors on a new bill that Ige hopes will address sex trafficking in a comprehensive manner and allow for aggressive prosecution of traffickers,” Civil Beat’s [Nick Grube reported last week](#).

Legislators and community activists who collaborated on this year’s flawed effort should be encouraged by this development rather than deflated. Bringing the issue back in the 2016 legislative session with unified support from the offices most responsible for bringing traffickers to justice will make a major difference in improving Hawaii laws on this matter.

Chief among the needed improvements are changes that would make prosecutions less reliant on the testimony of sex workers, who often find it difficult and highly dangerous to turn on pimps. Yet, they too often face the choice of either doing so or going to jail.

Chin and all four county prosecutors should not only collaborate among themselves, but reach out to legislators and any other people interested in working productively toward a shared solution.

LAW OF THE LAND. It’s been a little more than a week since the U.S. Supreme Court, by a 5-4 margin, made marriage equality the law of the land, requiring the remaining 13

states that hadn't already done so to begin allowing gay and lesbian couples to wed. Same-sex marriages have now taken place in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and most U.S. territories.

While the decision touched off jubilant celebrations nationwide — including here in Honolulu, where hundreds of celebrants crowded Waikiki not only to cheer the historic ruling, but Hawaii's foundational role in the international marriage equality movement — the reactions of those states and leaders that oppose marriage equality were a bit surreal. Several officials showed both regrettable contempt for the Supreme Court and for the same-sex marriages that the court allowed.

Sadly, Hawaii wasn't immune to such nonsense.

State Rep. Bob McDermott [direly predicted to the Star-Advertiser](#)

that churches refusing to allow same-sex marriages “will become targets of lawsuits seeking to remove their federally approved tax-free status ...”

In a press statement, Duke Aiona, who once served as lieutenant governor and ran unsuccessfully for governor last year, saw the decision as a threat to Americans who want “to practice their deeply held beliefs about marriage without fear of being punished by the government.”



Duke Aiona saw the marriage decision as a threat to Americans who want “to practice their deeply held beliefs about marriage without fear of being punished by the government.”

But just as McDermott and Aiona were gravely prophesying a dark future, the Business Insider website released its list of the world's [12 best honeymoon destinations for gay couples](#), and Hawaii was among six U.S. travel spots included. The Supreme Court's decision will pave the way for thousands more gay and lesbian couples to make wonderful memories in the Aloha State that will last long after some leaders' hysterical reactions have been forgotten.

In the end, a phrase that became popular in the wake of the Hawaii Legislature's 2013 passage of our marriage equality law is apropos: Love wins.

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About the Author



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The members of Civil Beat's editorial board are Pierre Omidyar, Patti Epler, Bob Ortega, Richard Wiens, Chloe Fox and Todd Simmons. Opinions expressed by the editorial board reflect the group's consensus view. Contact Opinion Editor Todd Simmons at todd@civilbeat.com or 808-377-0247.

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