

## POLITICS

# Some Hawaii House Members

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## Some Hawaii House Members Are Awash In Campaign Cash

But others aren't doing so well as the 2016 election season starts to pick up speed.

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With six months to go before the Aug. 13 primary, two high-profile lawmakers seem to be having trouble raising money for their re-election bids.

But while Reps. Calvin Say and Tom Brower may be cash poor, two of their colleagues — Romy Cachola and Sylvia Luke — have been raking in the cash, despite easy wins in the 2014 election.

All 51 members of the Hawaii House of Representatives are up for re-election this year.

Cachola has \$156,000 in cash on hand, a heck of a lot of money for the Kalihi Kai Democrat who ran unopposed two years ago.

Luke is not far behind Cachola with \$150,000 in cash. The Makiki-Nuuanu-Pauoa Democrat faced no primary challenger two years ago and defeated the Republican candidate in the general by a 2-to-1 margin.

The latest filings with the state [Campaign Spending Commission](#), which cover the last six months of 2015, illustrate the power of having lots of money in races for the Hawaii Legislature.

Year after year, longtime incumbents like Cachola and Luke rarely lose re-election. Those that do have usually been featured unfavorably in recent headlines, like Faye Hanohano, Karen Awana and Rida Cabinilla, who were all thrown out of office in 2014.



*House Finance Chair Sylvia Luke has raised more money for the 2016 election than her 50 colleagues.*

An examination of the latest filings show that the top people who reported having the most cash are already holding office, and a good many are in leadership positions.

The one exception is David Tarnas, a former state legislator and recent Hawaii County chair of the Democratic Party of Hawaii. He is [running for the](#) House District 7 seat for North Kohala, South Kohala and North Kona, which is currently held by Rep. Cindy Evans, who reported having \$20,000 in cash, about \$5,000 less than Tarnas. He has also raised five times the amount of money that Evans raised in the last reporting period.

The amount of money Cachola, Luke and others have raised is also put in context when one looks at winners and losers in 2014. On average, [the commission reports](#), winners

raised more than \$48,000 and spent \$44,000. Losers raised an average of just over \$15,000 and spent \$13,700.



*Rep. Romy Cachola has more money in his campaign war chest than any other representative.*

There is more than money to winning elections. Incumbency and name recognition matter a great deal, too. But campaign donations invariably go to those very same people.

For example, Luke is the incumbent who raised the most money in the July-December period — \$113,500. It no doubt helps that Luke chairs the House Finance Committee and is one of the three or four most powerful members in that chamber.

House Speaker Joe Souki was second behind Luke in fundraising, bringing in \$48,800. Majority Leader Scott Saiki ranked 4th, just behind Higher Education Chair Isaac Choy.

Big donations for Luke, Souki and company are usually from a list of the usual suspects — unions and political action committees. In this case, the Iron Workers Stabilization Fund, the HMSA PAC and the Plumbers & Pipefitters PAC to Luke, and Anheuser Busch Companies Altria Client Services Inc. to Souki.



*Rep. Tom Brower, who says he was assaulted by homeless teens in 2015, reports a campaign deficit of \$26,493.*

(Note to voters: Beer companies and the tobacco lobby give a lot of money to your legislators every year.)

Luke and Souki also spent little of their financial reserves. Luke spent \$15,000 for typical campaign expenses such as food and beverages for fundraisers, and for mailers, brochures and postage. Souki paid for a campaign media consultant and donated to the Wailuku Hongwanji preschool daycare center.

(Note to voters: Legislators can spend campaign money on charity, within limits. Choy, for example, reimbursed someone \$178 for candy canes purchased on [Amazon](#) and used in the Manoa Christmas Parade. Choy's district includes Manoa.)

A representative's position in the House can help explain certain donations. Clift Tsuji, for example, the Democrat who chairs House Agriculture, received money from [Monsanto Co.](#) George "Red" Morris and John Radcliffe, lobbying partners, also gave to Tsuji. One of their many clients is Monsanto.



*Rep. Calvin Say has spent tens of thousands of campaign dollars on legal fees.*

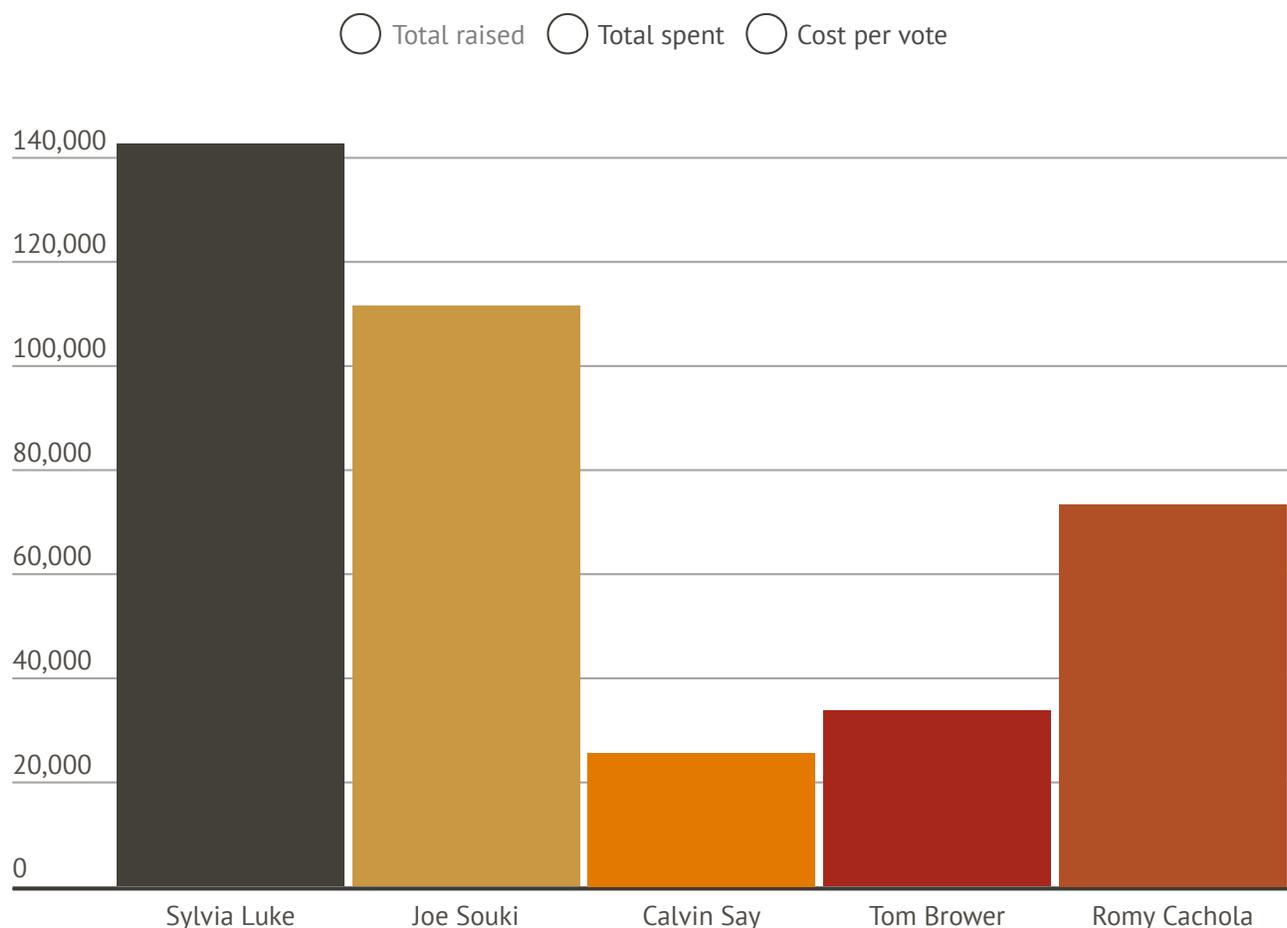
The full list of cash on hand and the latest tally of donations is posted below. But here's something that you won't understand unless you look at the filings themselves.

Speaker Emeritus Calvin Say is listed as having raised \$34,000 and having \$8,000 in cash. But Say's [disclosure report](#) reveals that he has a campaign deficit of nearly \$36,000 and that he is relying on \$44,000 that Say loaned to himself.

Why does Rep. Say need the loan?

In no small part it is because he has been paying legal fees to Kobayashi, Sugita & Goda, who received more than \$75,000 from Say in 2015. The law firm represented Say in a lengthy (and thus far unsuccessful) [legal challenge](#) from residents of Say's Palolo-St. Louis Heights-Kaimuki district who say he does not actually live there.

# How Much Did A Vote Cost In 2014?



Source: Hawaii Campaign Spending Commission

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Here’s another Campaign Spending report that reveals more than a surface glance provides: Rep. Tom Brower is the only House incumbent to report having [a negative cash flow](#)— almost \$11,000 in the red.

In fact, Brower reported having a campaign deficit of more than \$26,000. And while he

reports having raised \$6,600 in the last election cycle, Brower also loaned his own campaign \$15,600.

Brower's filings from 2014 to the present suggest that the loans are to make up for modest contributions from donors and the need to pay for campaign expenses like mailers, brochures and postage.

Brower has made headlines recently, primarily for his aggressive approach to homelessness in his Waikiki-Ala Moana district.

The constituents of Reps. Brower and Say have returned them to office again and again, despite spirited opponents. But it comes at an expense.

According to Campaign Spending, Brower spent \$20.31 per vote in 2014 while Say spent \$30.50 — far more than other lawmakers and clearly higher than the \$17.75 Luke spent and \$15.39 Souki spent.

The incumbent who spent the most per vote (\$38.97) was Rep. Cachola ... even though he was unopposed.

Three people have already pulled papers to challenge Brower again this year (Brower, too, has pulled papers), while one candidate has pulled papers to run against Say.

The filing deadline is June 7.

(Note to voters: Civil Beat will report on the state Senate filings next week.)

<b>Representative/Candidate</b>	<b>Contributions received (Nov. 5, 2014-Dec. 31, 2015)</b>	<b>Cash on hand</b>
Cachola, Romy	\$2,450.00	\$156,399.82
Luke, Sylvia	\$113,534.81	\$150,216.40
Tsuji, Clifton	\$10,050.00	\$97,939.60
Johanson, Aaron	\$16,050.00	\$82,111.48
Yamashita, Kyle	\$11,100.00	\$71,549.10

Souki, Joseph	\$48,853.00	\$67,640.63
Rhoads, Karl	\$12,660.00	\$66,526.04
Nishimoto, Scott	\$15,550.00	\$61,900.37
Oshiro, Marcus	\$3,350.00	\$60,039.15
Yamane, Ryan	\$12,550.00	\$55,805.33
Har, Sharon	\$10,050.00	\$50,227.59
Ward, Gene	\$15,426.00	\$48,353.36
Takayama, Gregg	\$11,650.00	\$43,781.49
Saiki, Scott	\$16,320.00	\$43,705.85
Cullen, Ty	\$15,900.00	\$41,147.36
Choy, Isaac	\$16,600.00	\$38,030.86
Ito, Ken	\$10,150.00	\$36,206.97
Lee, Christopher	\$8,645.84	\$34,719.67
Aquino, Henry	\$12,050.00	\$33,999.44
Kawakami, Derek	\$13,800.00	\$31,925.28
Tokioka, James	\$11,000.00	\$30,099.97
Hashem, Mark	\$10,750.00	\$22,661.40
Thielen, Cynthia	\$11,400.00	\$21,342.17
Evans, Cindy	\$5,100.00	\$20,934.35
Fukumoto, Beth	\$7,050.00	\$20,065.49
Onishi, Richard	\$4,200.00	\$17,656.40
Jordan, Jo	\$6,750.00	\$17,639.95
Ichiyama, Linda	\$9,950.00	\$17,401.09
Matsumoto, Lauren	\$11,215.00	\$16,137.26
Ohno, Takashi	\$7,677.48	\$14,694.39

Woodson, Justin	\$13,300.00	\$14,447.01
Ing, Kaniela	\$5,100.00	\$13,746.72
Lowen, Nicole	\$6,400.00	\$12,547.74
Belatti, Della	\$6,700.00	\$12,083.53
San Buenaventura, Joy	\$2,850.00	\$11,766.51
Takumi, Roy	\$7,370.00	\$11,119.67
DeCoite, Lynn	\$15,509.50	\$11,077.54
LoPresti, Matthew	\$4,750.00	\$9,031.11
Say, Calvin	\$34,200.00	\$8,013.88
Kobayashi, Bertrand	\$2,950.00	\$7,713.49
Morikawa, Daynette	\$7,550.00	\$7,073.65
Tupola, Andria	\$5,008.00	\$6,702.84
Creagan, Richard	\$5,000.00	\$6,421.13
Pouha, Feki	\$0.00	\$6,331.83
Nakashima, Mark	\$8,100.00	\$5,065.79
Mizuno, John	\$8,500.00	\$4,998.51
Keohokalole, Jarrett	\$6,000.00	\$4,863.26
McDermott, Bob	\$12,621.97	\$4,021.92
McKelvey, Angus	\$12,492.34	\$3,656.17
Kong, Sam	\$0.00	\$0.00
Brower, Tom	\$6,600.00	-\$10,819.43

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