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January 21, 2020

Re: County Communication 19-478 from the Mayor Amending Chapter 2.41, Maui County Code, Relating to Attendance at Board, Commission and Committee Meetings by Appointed Members (GT-40)

Good Morning Honorable Michael Molina, Chair and Committee members of the Governance, Ethics, and Transparency Committee. My name is Barbara Potopowitz. I am Chair of the Affirmative Action Advisory Council for the County however testifying today on behalf of myself and not representing the Affirmative Action Advisory Council as we did not have time for a meeting to discuss this proposal. I am testifying regarding amending Chapter 2.41, Maui County Code, Relating to Attendance at Board, Commission and Committee meetings by Appointed Members (GRT-40)

I moved here over 12 years ago from the state of Connecticut where I worked for the Connecticut State Legislature. Appointment to State Boards and Commissions was one of my projects. I prepared reports, conducted research, kept a database of potential members and conducted seminars around the state on how to get appointed and the responsibilities that go along with that responsibility. Our goal was to recruit interested and committed people representative of the population of the state to participate in state government through these Boards and Commissions.

Upon moving to Maui, and having public policy withdrawal, I pursued membership on County Boards. At first I served on the Mayors Committee on the Status of Women for many years first as a member, then as Chair. I then became a member, and now chair of the Affirmative Action Advisory Council.

I believe the county is enriched with its many citizens serving on County boards, commissions and committees. When made aware of Amendment 2.41 regarding attendance on these appointments I wondered why this would be necessary since if one is interested enough to be appointed why would someone not attend meetings.

However if this opens opportunities for others who may be interested over others who are not or cannot serve anymore, I would be in favor of this new amendment with one comment. Section F states that if a member has not attended 50% or more meetings in a twelve-month period, that member will be removed. I feel this threshold is too low. If you miss 50% of the meetings it may be time to move on to something else and allow another member of the public the chance to participate. I believe 75% would be a more viable number. In order to conduct proper business a commission, council or committee needs all the opinions of its members representing different perspectives as much as possible so just a few are not making important decisions.

Also, Section E of the proposed Amendment that requires a 48-hour notice of attendance in my opinion is not burdensome and is essential for quorum purposes. There is even a provision for a last minute emergency that may arise for a member.

As far as the issue of reporting, my observation over the years is that we already record members present and those not attending for the official minutes. So in my opinion, it would not be a burden to record this on an attendance spreadsheet after each meeting. This may even prompt a courtesy follow up phone call from the Chair to the absent member before they even reach the attendance threshold to gauge interest or any obstacle that member may be having that limits them from attending.

And finally, it is essential this information be communicated to potential members before appointment.

Thank you for allowing me to express my opinion today.