

CORPORATE CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTION LIMIT – CHRONOLOGY

2005 Legislative Session	Act 203 limited corporations to making no more than \$1,000 per election in campaign donations to non-candidate committees and candidates by deleting a clause in HRS §11-204(b) that had exempted corporations from a \$1,000 donation limit to non-candidate committees.
December 8, 2005	Campaign Spending Commission posted a "Frequently Asked Questions" section with answers regarding Act 203, including the \$1000 total corporate donation limit per election.
January 1, 2006	Act 203 provision on corporation campaign donation limit takes effect.
January 25, 2006	SB 2922 was introduced to repeal the Act 203 provision that placed a \$1,000 aggregate limit in the amount of campaign contributions a corporation can be make to candidates and non-candidate committees in one election period.
February 6, 2006	CSC issued a written opinion to the Attorney General stating its interpretation of Act 203.
March 21, 2006	Honolulu Advertiser published an article alerting readers that lawmakers were attempting to repeal a campaign finance laws that severely restricted corporate contributions.
April 28, 2006	Citizen groups launched a lobbying campaign to defeat SB 2922.
May 2, 2006	Senate adopted SB 2922 on final reading. House recommitted SB 2922, which withdrew the bill from a floor vote.
May 4, 2006	Citizen Voice submitted to House members a report that listed lobbyists donations to legislators, including those made during the legislative session; then the legislative adjourned.
Court Review	<i>March–May 2006:</i> Three corporations donated \$2,000 each to the Charmaine Tavares campaign. <i>August–November:</i> CSC and Tavares campaign engaged in dispute over alleged excessive corporate campaign contributions. <i>November 28:</i> Tavares campaign asks a court to determine how the corporate donation limit law should be interpreted, and to require CSC to use only the court's interpretation. <i>July 23, 2007:</i> Maui Circuit Court rules that the corporations could contribute \$4,000 each to the Tavares campaign, and CSC appeals. Case is pending in the Intermediate Court of Appeals.
January 23, 2008	Bills to repeal the \$1,000 corporate campaign donation limit are moving in the house and senate: HB 2455 and SB 2204.

Sample Impact of Corporate Donation Limitation:

Governor Lingle's 2006 re-election campaign received \$1,064,064 in 941 corporate donations; 90% raised before the \$1,000 corporate donation limit took effect, and 10% after in the last 11 months before the November 2006 election. [in 2004 & 2005, 644 corporate donations totaling \$960,629; in 2006, 297 corporate donations totaling \$103,435]

For more information, go to www.commoncausehawaii.org/stopthetsunami.html