HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL

KE KANIHELA O KE KALANA O HONOLULU

CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

ORDINANCE _____

BILL 76 (2025)

A BILL FOR AN ORDINANCE

RELATING TO GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY.

BE IT ORDAINED by the People of the City and County of Honolulu:

SECTION 1. Purpose and findings. The purpose of this ordinance is to enhance governmental transparency in the City and County of Honolulu ("City").

The City Council ("Council") finds that:

1. Transparency and openness in government are fundamental principles of good governance that help drive and sustain civic accountability and promote public trust;

2. Nowhere are these principles more critical than in the management of the public treasury, a vital responsibility of government, where open access to information is essential to ensure that government spending aligns with important public priorities;

3. Each year, the City collects and expends more than a billion dollars for various programs and services, such as the maintenance of public roadways and the development of affordable housing, and the citizens of O'ahu have a right to know how the City is spending its funds;

4. While the public can generally avail themselves of the generous amount of information that is published during the annual budget cycle and through other regularly-produced City financial reports—a testament to the City's firm commitment to fiscal transparency—the Council finds that the creation of new, user-friendly digital tools that expand public access to the City's financial information can help augment public oversight, reduce waste, and improve the overall efficiency of government;

5. "Open checkbook"-style web-based systems are easy-to-use, online platforms created by state and local governments for the purpose of making detailed government spending data available to the public; and

A BILL FOR AN ORDINANCE

6. Providing the people of O'ahu with an "open checkbook"-style web-based system that is user-friendly, comprehensive, and updated at least monthly would align with the good governance principles of transparency and openness in government, make use of available technology, and expand upon the City's commitment to providing its citizens with timely and comprehensive information pertaining to the financial affairs of the City.

SECTION 2. Chapter 2, Article 4, Revised Ordinances of Honolulu 2021 ("Department of Budget and Fiscal Services"), is amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated by the Revisor of Ordinances and to read as follows:

"**§ 2-4. Honolulu open checkbook accessible database.**

(a) No later than January 1, 2027, the director of budget and fiscal services shall develop, maintain, and make publicly available a searchable, online database of city expenditures that is free, open to the public, updated at least monthly, and accessible through an open checkbook–style, web-based system, termed the "open checkbook."

(b) For each city expenditure, the open checkbook must include, at a minimum, the following information:

(1) The amount, the character of expenditure, and the source of funding of the expenditure;

(2) The date of the expenditure;

(3) The vendor or entity recipient of the expenditure;

(4) The agency responsible for the expenditure; and

(5) Any other information deemed appropriate by the director of budget and fiscal services.

For the purposes of this subsection, "character of expenditure" has the same meaning as defined in § 2-18.1.

A BILL FOR AN ORDINANCE

(c) The open checkbook must safeguard confidential information pursuant to State and federal law, and protect and respect citizen and vendor privacy, safety, and security.

(d) Nothing in this section requires disclosure of information that is confidential under State or federal law. However, the open checkbook may provide aggregated or summarized confidential information; provided the open checkbook continues to protect the confidentiality of the information."

SECTION 3. New ordinance material is underscored. When revising, compiling, or printing this ordinance for inclusion in the Revised Ordinances of Honolulu, the Revisor of Ordinances need not include the underscoring.

A BILL FOR AN ORDINANCE

SECTION 4. This ordinance takes effect upon its approval.

INTRODUCED BY:

Tony Weaver

Val A. Okimoto

DATE OF INTRODUCTION:

NOV 26 2025
Honolulu, Hawai'i

Councilmembers

APPROVED AS TO FORM AND LEGALITY:

Deputy Corporation Counsel

APPROVED this _____day of _____, 20 ___.

RICK BLANGIARDI, Mayor
City and County of Honolulu

Report Title:
Department of Budget and Fiscal Services ("BFS"); Open Checkbook; Web-based System; City Expenditures; Accessible Data; Budget Database; Confidential Information; Transparency and Accountability

Description:
Requires the BFS Director, no later than January 1, 2027, to develop, maintain, and make publicly available a searchable, online database of City revenues and expenditures that is free, open to the public, updated at least monthly, and accessible through an open checkbook-style, web-based system. Requires the database to include specified expenditure information and protect confidential information.

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