



Hawaii Campaign Signage Laws and Recommendations of The Outdoor Circle

Thank you for running for elected office! We applaud your civic-mindedness and desire to serve the community.

Every election period (and even after) we receive many complaints from the public about political campaign signage and we have created the following guidelines for candidates on the usage of campaign signage.

While political signs fall under different regulations than commercial and other signs because the courts have given them special protection as political expression, The Outdoor Circle asks all candidates to limit the size of their signs and the length of time they will be displayed. We hope candidates will voluntarily comply with the common-sense request and truly respect Hawaii's special sense of place.

That said, *The Outdoor Circle urges candidates to avoid using campaign signs and banners as much as possible.*

We offer some excellent alternatives to campaign signage where candidates can create more effective and engaging campaigns that resonate with voters. Using some of the following strategies will also help to authentically connect with voters on things that actually matter to them, rather than irritating them and cluttering the visual environment with campaign signage and banners.

We also share below when signage is expressly illegal, whether campaign or any other types of signage, as well as places for the public to call when they see illegal signage for its removal.

We thank you for your consideration of this issue. As always, The Outdoor Circle looks forward to working with all candidates and elected officials to keep Hawaii clean, green, beautiful, sustainable and livable as we have since 1912.

First, the law, safety, and common courtesy to the public:

- Hawai'i law prohibits the placement of political signs or banners, etc (or *any* signs) on any public property, parks, freeway entrances, including median strips, sidewalks, fences and rights of way. Officials will issue citations for and/or remove any signs posted on public property.
- While there are no laws regulating campaign signs placed on private properties, we would urge candidates to not place signs more than 45 days before an election and to remove them within 10 days after an election.
- If used, any signage should minimize or eliminate distractions to motorists. We recommend against sign waiving events which are *expressly designed to distract* the attention of motorists. You would not want your campaign signage to be a source of accidents!
- If used, *always* receive express permission to place a sign on private property. Owners may feel intimidated or fearful if they do not allow campaign signage placement! Ensure that any signage is authentically welcomed. Please keep specific track of sign placements and ensure that the owner has your contact information to call to remove signs if you fail to remove them after the election. Recycle whenever possible.

Now to the reasons to NOT use campaign signs, banners, etc:

- **Ineffectiveness:**
 - **Low Impact on Voting Decisions:** Research shows that campaign signs have minimal influence on voters' decisions.
 - **Voter Fatigue:** Excessive signage can lead to voter desensitization, reducing their overall impact.
 - **Message Dilution:** Simple signs often fail to convey meaningful or substantial information about the candidate's platform or policies.
- **Visual Pollution:**
 - **Cluttered Streets:** Campaign signs can create a cluttered and unattractive streetscape, leading to negative perceptions of both the candidate and the campaign.
 - **Environmental Impact:** Signs often end up as litter, contributing to environmental degradation.
 - **Obstruction of Views:** They can obstruct views and distract drivers, potentially causing safety hazards.
- **Turning Off Voters:**
 - **Annoyance:** Overwhelming numbers of signs can irritate voters, causing a backlash against the candidate.
 - **Perceived Insincerity:** Heavy reliance on signs might be seen as a substitute for genuine engagement with the community.
 - **Negative Association:** Voters may associate a cluttered environment with a lack of respect for public spaces and community well-being.

Finally, Better Ways to Connect with Voters:

- **Digital Engagement:**
 - **Social Media:** Use platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to engage with voters through regular updates, live Q&A sessions, and targeted ads.
 - **Email Campaigns:** Send personalized emails that provide in-depth information about your policies, events, and ways to get involved.
 - **Website:** Maintain an up-to-date, user-friendly website that provides detailed information about your policies, events, and ways to get involved.
 - **SEO and Online Advertising:** Optimize your online presence for search engines and use targeted online ads to reach a broader audience.
- **Community Involvement:**
 - **Town Hall Meetings:** Host virtual and in-person town hall meetings to discuss issues directly with constituents and gather feedback.
 - **Volunteer Activities:** Participate in or organize community service events to demonstrate commitment to local issues.
 - **Neighborhood Groups:** Engage with neighborhood associations and local groups to foster community support and build a grassroots network.
- **Content Marketing:**
 - **Blog Posts and Articles:** Write detailed pieces about your stance on various issues, providing voters with comprehensive insights into your policies.
 - **Podcasts and Videos:** Create engaging multimedia content that explains your platform and highlights your campaign's goals and achievements.
 - **Visual Storytelling:** Use infographics and videos to simplify complex issues and make your platform more accessible and engaging.
- **Direct Voter Contact:**
 - **Door-to-Door Canvassing:** Personalized interactions through canvassing can build stronger connections and trust with voters.
 - **Phone Banking:** Reach out to voters directly to discuss their concerns and explain your positions.

- **Public Debates and Forums:**
 - **Debates:** Participate in public debates to showcase your ideas and contrast them with those of your opponents.
 - **Community Forums:** Attend or organize forums to discuss specific issues relevant to your constituency.
- **Leveraging Data and Analytics:**
 - **Targeted Campaigning:** Use voter data to identify key demographics and tailor your messages to resonate with specific voter groups.
 - **Survey Tools:** Utilize online surveys and feedback forms to gauge voter priorities and concerns, allowing you to address them more effectively.
- **Storytelling:**
 - **Personal Stories:** Share personal stories and testimonials that highlight your connection to the community and your commitment to its improvement.
 - **Positive Messaging:** Emphasize positive solutions and plans rather than just criticizing opponents.
 - **Inspiration and Hope:** Craft messages that inspire and give hope, fostering a sense of community and shared purpose.
- **Partnerships and Coalitions:**
 - **Alliances:** Form alliances with other candidates or groups that share your values and objectives to broaden your support base.
 - **Cross-Promotions:** Collaborate with local businesses and organizations for mutual promotion and to demonstrate your support for the community.
- **Transparency and Accountability:**
 - **Regular Updates:** Keep voters informed with regular updates on your campaign progress and how their support is making a difference.
 - **Financial Transparency:** Be transparent about campaign finances to build trust and demonstrate ethical campaign practices.
- **Inclusive Campaigning:**
 - **Accessibility:** Ensure all campaign materials and events are accessible to people with disabilities.
 - **Diverse Representation:** Reflect the diversity of your constituency in your campaign team and outreach efforts to ensure all voices are heard.
- **Feedback Mechanisms:**
 - **Open Channels:** Maintain open channels for feedback through social media, your website, and direct contact methods.
 - **Respond Promptly:** Respond to voter inquiries and concerns promptly to show that you value their input and are actively listening.

Again, we applaud your desire to serve the public by running for elected office and hope that this guide will help you in conveying your positive message to voters more effectively without the negatives associated with campaign signage listed above. Regardless of this election outcome, we look forward to your continued help with issues related to The Outdoor Circle's mission since 1912 of keeping Hawaii clean, green, beautiful, sustainable and livable.

Numbers for the public to call for all illegal signage:

Oahu

Oahu Signage Enforcement Department of Planning and Permitting Code Enforcement
—email descriptions and addresses with photos if available:

sroland@honolulu.gov

808-768-8152

Oahu Mayor's Office:

mayor@honolulu.gov

808-768-4141

Kauai

Kauai County Building Division Office of Code Enforcement:

Email photos, descriptions and addresses or call:

808-241-4858

lescalona@kauai.gov

Kauai Mayor's Office:

mayor@kauai.gov

808-241-4900

Hawai'i

Hawaii County Department Public Works Building Division:

<https://www.hawaiicounty.gov/our-county/mayor/comments-and-concerns>

add photos, descriptions and addresses with any comments:

cohbuild@hawaiicounty.gov

808-961-8331

Hawaii County Mayor's Office:

808-961-8211

Maui

Maui County Zoning Enforcement Division:

Submit information directly to: <https://www.mauicounty.gov/2024/COM-Connect>

and select "Zoning, SMA, and Shoreline Questions" to add photos, descriptions and addresses.

gail.davis@mauicounty.gov

808-270-8244

Maui Mayor's Office:

Mayors.Office@co.maui.hi.us

808-270-7855

Our Enduring Mission since 1912 at The Outdoor Circle is simple:

To keep Hawai'i clean, green, and beautiful by preserving, protecting, and enhancing our environment.

For more information and resources visit: www.outdoorcircle.org

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