
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO ELECTIONS.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that citizen
2 participation in elections is vital to the health and well-being
3 of a democracy and representative form of government. When the
4 citizenry opts out of their responsibility to vote, public
5 confidence and support of government is undermined, as is the
6 government's effectiveness in serving the people of the State.

7 In 2004, Hawaii had the lowest voter turnout in the United
8 States, with a showing of 48.9 per cent of eligible voters
9 actually voting. To combat voter apathy, community-based
10 efforts aimed at: increasing the percentage of voting age
11 citizens who are registered; educating voters on the candidates
12 and ballot questions; and informing voters of their polling
13 locations and methods of voting must be implemented. The
14 legislature further finds that the low voter turnout is a
15 significant concern that must be addressed.

16 The purpose of this Act is to establish a task force to
17 study reasons for low voter turnout in the State and make



1 recommendations to improve the rate of voter registration and
2 voting.

3 SECTION 2. There is established within the office of
4 elections a voter registration and participation task force that
5 shall be comprised of members including:

- 6 (1) The chief election officer;
- 7 (2) A representative of the governor;
- 8 (3) A representative of the mayor of each county;
- 9 (4) The county clerk of each county;
- 10 (5) A representative from each political party as defined
11 pursuant to section 11-61;
- 12 (6) An individual representing labor unions;
- 13 (7) An individual representing at least two of the
14 following organizations: League of Women Voters;
15 Common Cause; Chamber of Commerce; and the Hawaii
16 Media Council; and
- 17 (8) Four individuals representing the majority and
18 minority members of each house of the Hawaii state
19 legislature, respectively.

20 SECTION 3. The voter registration and participation task
21 force shall review issues that include:

- 22 (1) Identification of voter trends in Hawaii;



1 (2) The evaluation of methods and "best practices"
2 demonstrated to be effective in other states to
3 increase voter registration, including: same day
4 voter registration; voter registration drives; mail in
5 ballots; extension of voting days; and other methods
6 of increasing voter participation;

7 (3) A review of public education and awareness campaigns
8 in other states aimed at educating citizens about
9 voting opportunities and rights;

10 (4) The conducting of focus groups and surveys on the
11 perceptions of Hawaii residents on voting and voter
12 turnout in the State; and

13 (5) Development of a three-year strategic plan to increase
14 Hawaii's voter registration and turnout, including a
15 recommended budget and outreach programs.

16 SECTION 4. The voter registration and participation task
17 force shall submit a report on the task force's actions and
18 recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the
19 legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of
20 the regular session of 2007.

21 SECTION 5. The voter registration and participation task
22 force shall cease to exist on June 1, 2008.



H.B. NO. 2600

1 SECTION 6. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

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INTRODUCED BY:

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JAN 24 2006



HB 2608

Report Title:

Elections; Low Voter Turnout; Task Force

Description:

Establishes a voter registration and participation task force within the office of elections to study Hawaii's low voter turnout and make recommendations to increase the voter registration and turnout rate.

