

JAN 25 2006

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO ELECTIONS.

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

1 SECTION 1. Citizen participation in elections is vital to
2 the health and well-being of a democracy and representative form
3 of government. When the citizenry opts out of their
4 responsibility to vote, democracy declines and public confidence
5 and support of government is thus undermined. Government can no
6 longer effectively serve the people.

7 It has been reported that in the 2004 elections, Hawaii had
8 the lowest turnout in the United States at about 48.9 per cent
9 of eligible voters. To combat voter apathy and indifference,
10 measures must be implemented to increase the number of
11 registered voters, to increase the voting turnout of those
12 registered voters, and to educate the public on the candidates
13 and ballot questions. In addition, voters need to be informed
14 in advance of their polling locations and of the actual voting
15 procedures in the booth.

16 The legislature finds that the office of elections is
17 well-suited to assist the legislature in analyzing the issue and
18 recommending plausible solutions to the problem of apparent



1 voter apathy and indifference. Accordingly, the purpose of this
2 Act is to create an elections task force under the office of
3 elections to study and make recommendations to the legislature
4 on increasing voter participation.

5 SECTION 2. (a) The office of elections shall convene an
6 elections task force to study and to make recommendations to the
7 legislature on improving low voter registration and low turnout
8 to vote. The task force shall be composed of:

- 9 (1) The chief election officer, as chair;
- 10 (2) One representative of the governor's office, to be
11 designated by the governor;
- 12 (3) One representative from each of the county mayor's
13 office, to be designated by the respective mayor;
- 14 (4) The county clerk of each county or designee;
- 15 (5) One representative of each political party having a
16 candidate in at least one of the two most recent
17 general elections, to be designated by that party; and
- 18 (6) One representative of the League of Women Voters, to
19 be designated by the league.

20 (b) Meetings of the task force be open to the public, and
21 quorum requirements shall not apply to conduct a meeting.

1 (c) Members of the task force shall serve without
2 compensation; provided that members who reside on the neighbor
3 islands shall be reimbursed for travel expenses.

4 (d) The task force shall analyze the problem of apparent
5 voter apathy and indifference, and the following matters:

- 6 (1) Voter trends in Hawaii;
- 7 (2) Methods and best practices from other jurisdictions to
8 increase voter registration, including same day voter
9 registration, voter registration drives, mail-in
10 ballots, extension of voting days, an earlier primary
11 election, public education and awareness programs to
12 educate citizens about voting opportunities and
13 rights, and other methods to increase voter
14 registration and turnout; and
- 15 (3) Methods and best practices from other jurisdictions to
16 increase voter confidence in the integrity of the
17 electoral process and the privacy of voter data.

18 SECTION 3. The elections task force shall conduct not less
19 than one meeting on Oahu, Maui, Molokai, Kauai, and Hawaii, for
20 the purpose of obtaining public input on any voting matter of
21 concern to the public.

22 SECTION 4. The elections task force shall:

1 (1) Report to the legislature on findings and
 2 recommendations, including proposed legislation, no
 3 later than twenty days prior to the convening of the
 4 regular session of 2007; and

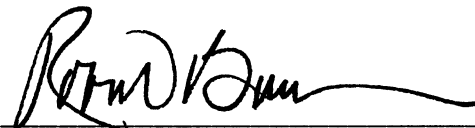
5 (2) Develop a three-year strategic plan to increase
 6 Hawaii's voter registration and turnout, including
 7 outreach programs and a budget. The plan shall be
 8 included in the report to the legislature.

9 SECTION 5. There is appropriated out of the general
 10 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$, or so
 11 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2006-2007, for
 12 the elections task force.

13 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the office of
 14 elections for the purposes of this Act.

15 SECTION 6. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2006.

16

INTRODUCED BY: 

Report Title:

Elections; Task Force

SB. NO. 3125

Description:

Creates an elections task force to study voter registration and participation and the integrity of the electoral process, and make recommendations to the legislature. Makes appropriation.

