



**STATE OF HAWAII
OFFICE OF ELECTIONS**

802 LEHUA AVENUE
PEARL CITY, HAWAII 96782
www.hawaii.gov/elections

KEVIN B. CRONIN
CHIEF ELECTION OFFICER

TESTIMONY OF THE
CHIEF ELECTION OFFICER, OFFICE OF ELECTIONS
TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY
ON SENATE BILL NO. 2562, SD1
RELATING TO VOTING

March 11, 2008

Chair Waters and members of the House Committee on Judiciary, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill No. 2562, SD1. The purpose of this bill is to allow eligible voters to apply for absentee voter status.

The Office of Elections supports the intent of Senate Bill No. 2562, SD1, and has introduced similar legislation in the form of Senate Bill No. 1555.

Over the years, we have seen an increase in the number of voters who cannot go to the polls and vote on election day for a variety of reasons, e.g. age, physical infirmity, and various disabilities. This bill enables an increase in participation in the electoral process by making voting more convenient and accessible by allowing all voters who can not vote on election day, for various reasons, the opportunity to apply for permanent absentee status. The Office of Elections has always strived to make voting more convenient and accessible to all citizens, statewide.

While the office supports this bill, the office does not implement absentee voting. That responsibility is tasked to the various county clerks pursuant to statute, and they may have operational concerns that need to be addressed in order to facilitate implementation of this bill.

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Testimony for SB No. 2562, SD1
March 11, 2008
Page 2

Finally, we estimate the cost to implement permanent absentee voting would be \$200,000. This would include the following:

Printing of New AB Applications	\$15,000
Redesign of AB Applications	10,000
Voter Registration System Upgrade	75,000
Voter Education	<u>100,000</u>
TOTAL:	\$200,000

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on Senate Bill No. 2562, SD1.

Respectfully Submitted:

By Kevin Cronin

000271

PETER A. NAKAMURA
County Clerk

Telephone: (808) 241-6350



ERNESTO G. PASION
Deputy County Clerk

Facsimile: (808) 241-6207
E-mail: elections@kauai.gov

**ELECTIONS DIVISION
OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CLERK**
4396 RICE STREET, SUITE 106
LĪHU'E, KAUA'I, HAWAII 96766-1371

TESTIMONY OF THE
COUNTY CLERK, COUNTY OF KAUA'I
TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

ON SENATE BILL NO. 2562, S.D. 1
RELATING TO VOTING

March 11, 2008

Chair Waters and Committee Members, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on Senate Bill No. 2562, S.D. 1. The purpose of this bill is to authorize permanent absentee voting.

The Office of the County Clerk has no position on this bill but offers technical comments to strengthen the permanent absentee voting process.

We recommend that the bill be amended to include ballot replacement provisions specifying that the voter shall be responsible for requesting a replacement ballot prior to Election Day if the requested absentee ballot is spoiled or not received.

Additionally, we suggest including language in section 15-4(f) which allows for the termination of permanent absentee voter status if a voter chooses to cast a ballot at any early voting (absentee walk) site or at the polls on election day.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on Senate Bill No. 2562, S.D. 1.

PETER A. NAKAMURA
County Clerk

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**To: House Committee on Judiciary
Rep. Tommy Waters, Chair
Rep. Blake K. Oshiro, Vice-Chair**

**Date: March 11, 2008
Conference Room 325
2:00 pm**

Re: SB 2562, SD1 Relating to Voting

Chair Waters and Members of the Committee:

My name is Ed Thompson, Associate State Director of Advocacy for AARP Hawaii. We are a membership organization for people 50 and older with 156,000 members in Hawaii. AARP provides access to services and information, meaningful volunteer opportunities, and the opportunity for our members to create positive change in their lives.

AARP supports SB 2562, SD1, which authorizes permanent absentee voting in Hawaii.

As our population ages, there will be more people who will have difficulty in going to the polls on Election Day. This bill will greatly assist those who have accessibility problems and allow them to continue to participate in the electoral process.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before your committee.

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JUDtestimony

From: Al Beeman [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, March 10, 2008 4:31 PM
To: JUDtestimony
Subject: In Favor of SB2562 SD1 JUD hearing Tuesday, 03-11-08 at 2:00 pm Conf Room 325

TO: Chairman Tommy Waters, Vice Chairman Blake Oshiro
and all House JUD Committee Members

FROM: Albert E. Beeman
[REDACTED] Hilo, HI 96720

SUBJECT: Support for SB2562, Permanent Absentee Ballots

Aloha Committee Members!

I urge you to vote in favor of SB2562 SD1. Seniors all over Hawaii were greatly disappointed when SB156 failed to make it out of Conference last year after people testified from all of the inhabited islands but Niihau.

Most of our Kupuna and others with physical disabilities prefer to vote by mail. Waiting in lines and the pressure of "rushing" at the voting booth makes voting hard for many of us.

The requirement that a voter must re-request an Absentee Ballot every election cycle is discriminatory towards elder voters and people with disabilities.

The Counties waste a lot of clerical time processing thousands of unnecessary Absentee Ballots applications every election cycle that would be eliminated by this measure.

I urge each and every Member of JUD to not only vote in favor of this measure but to also work to get the bill finally enacted. Our Kupuna have waited long enough for this simple change.

I am also certain that SB2562 will dramatically increase voter turnout in out state where voter turnout is so often embarrassingly low.

Thank you for your kokua.

Me ka mahalo, (Respectfully,)

Al Beeman
AARP-Volunteer
Hilo

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JUDtestimony

From: leona costa [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, March 10, 2008 4:55 PM
To: JUDtestimony
Subject: LATE TESTIMONY in favor of SB2562 SD1 Permanent Absentee Ballots

TO: Chairman Tommy Waters, Vice Chairman Blake Oshiro and all House JUD Committee Members

FROM: Leona A. Costa
[REDACTED]

SUBJECT: LATE TESTIMONY Requesting your support for SB2562 SD1, Permanent Absentee Ballots.

Aloha Committee Members!

This is to urge you to vote in favor SB2562 SD1. I'm sure many seniors, like me, were greatly disappointed when SB156 failed to make it out of Convergence last year.

I am a Disabled Senior Citizen in my 80's and feel that I am being discriminated against by having to re-request an Absentee Ballot every election cycle.

Therefore, I am urging you to PLEASE vote in favor of SB2562 SD1, thus allowing citizens like me, not having to request an Absentee Ballot, for each election or forgo voting.

Mahalo,

Leona A. Costa

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000275

JUDtestimony

From: Barbara Ekno [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, March 10, 2008 5:46 PM
To: JUDtestimony
Subject: LATE URGENT Testimony SB2562 SD

URGENT: LATE TESTIMONY

March 10, 2008

Barbara H. Ekno
[REDACTED]
Pahoa, HI 96778

Chairman Tommy Waters, Vice Chairman Blake Oshiro and all House JUD Committee Members

SUBJECT: Support for SB2562, Permanent Absentee Ballots

Dear Committee Members:

Please vote in favor of SB2562 SD1!!!

As an individual who is disabled, I prefer to vote by mail. Waiting in line and transportation to go and vote is nearly impossible. I have days when I do feel really badly and cannot leave the house. It should be my right to have equal access to vote and to participate in what I consider to be my civic duty.

The requirement that a voter must re-request an Absentee Ballot every election cycle is discriminatory towards people with disabilities under the ADA

Aside from being discriminatory, the Counties waste a lot of clerical time, paper and postage to process thousands of unnecessary Absentee Ballots applications every election cycle. This is money that could be spent on much better things. Passing this bill that would eliminate this waste.

I urge each and every Member of JUD to not only vote in favor of this measure but to also work to get the bill finally enacted. We have waited long enough for this simple change. Do the right thing. Various forms of this bill have come up in the past. These past attempts have died because of people who are opposed to any kind of change in this state. This really is a no-brainer.

SB2562 might also increase voter turnout in out state where voter turnout is one of the lowest in the nation.

Thank you-

Barbara H. Ekno

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JUDtestimony

From: Rachel Fordyce [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, March 10, 2008 4:39 PM
To: JUDtestimony
Subject: Testimony

TO: Chairman Tommy Waters, Vice Chairman Blake Oshiro
and all House JUD Committee Members

FROM: Rachel Fordyce
[REDACTED] Hilo, HI 96720

SUBJECT: Late Support for SB2562, Permanent Absentee Ballots
I am sorry this is late; sent to the wrong address originally.

Aloha Committee Members:

I urge you to please vote in favor of SB2562 SD1. As a senior citizen I was greatly disappointed when SB156 failed to make it out of Conference last year after people testified from all of the inhabited islands but Niihau.

Most of our Kupuna and others with physical disabilities prefer to vote by mail. Waiting in lines and the pressure of "rushing" at the voting booth makes voting hard for many of us.

I believe that the requirement that a voter must re-request an Absentee Ballot every election cycle is discriminatory towards elder voters and people with disabilities.

The Counties waste a lot of clerical time processing thousands of unnecessary Absentee Ballots applications every election cycle that would be eliminated by this measure.

I urge each and every Member of JUD to not only vote in favor of this measure but to also work to get the bill finally enacted. Our Kupuna have waited long enough for this simple change.

I am also certain that SB2562 will dramatically increase voter turnout in our state where voter turnout is so often embarrassingly low.

Thank you for your kokua.

Me ka mahalo, (Respectfully,)

Rachel Fordyce

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JUDtestimony

From: Bert Schifferling [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, March 10, 2008 5:30 PM
To: JUDtestimony
Subject: SB 2562

Testimony in support of SB 2562
To: House Judiciary Committee
Subject: Support for SB 2562

Aloha Chair Waters, Vice Chair Oshiro and members of the House Judiciary Committee:

Tomorrow, 3/11/08, your committee will hear SB 2562. The purpose of this measure is to authorize permanent absentee voting by allowing a registered voter to request a permanent absentee ballot.

My wife and I are both senior citizens and this would help us tremendously. The result of course would be greater voter participation which in turn would benefit the state. In addition, because of reduced human interaction, there would be fewer voting errors if any.

The additional implementation cost would thus be offset by the consequent gains.

I thank you for your support.

Bert Schifferling
Kihei, HI
Email: [REDACTED]

No virus found in this outgoing message.
Checked by AVG Free Edition.
Version: 7.5.516 / Virus Database: 269.21.7/1319 - Release Date: 3/8/2008 10:14 AM

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JUDtestimony

From: Jennifer Tsuji [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, March 10, 2008 6:42 PM
To: JUDtestimony
Subject: FW: In Favor of SB2562 SD1 JUD hearing Tuesday, 03-11-08 at 2:00 pm Conf Room 325

From: jelhart [REDACTED]
To: judtestimony@capital.hawaii.gov
Subject: FW: In Favor of SB2562 SD1 JUD hearing Tuesday, 03-11-08 at 2:00 pm Conf Room 325
Date: Mon, 10 Mar 2008 18:38:46 -1000

Aloha Chairman Waters and Vice Chair Oshiro

I am writing to you today to express my deep concern for elderly voters, and disabled voters not being able to vote due to unnecessary regulations and beaurocracy. It seems to me that to have a standing absentee voter registration form for this group of people seems more than reasonable.

As a member of the democratic party, I plan to bring these concerns up with regards to the most recent presidential preference poll. Not only was an absentee ballot not available for these people, but shift workers also were left out of the process.

People need to be encouraged to participate in our political process and we need to support them in any way necessary to make sure their voices are heard.

I appreciate your attention to this matter and I am grateful for your vote in favor of SB2562 SD1, Permenant Absentee Ballots.

Mahalo Nui Loa,
Jennifer Lienhart Tsuji

Date: Mon, 10 Mar 2008 20:04:46 -0700
From: [REDACTED]
Subject: Fwd: In Favor of SB2562 SD1 JUD hearing Tuesday, 03-11-08 at 2:00 pm Conf Room 325
To: [REDACTED]

Aloha Justin and Jennifer,

If you are in favor of Permanent Absentee Ballots could you please submit testimony today for the hearing tomorrow.

Our Kupuna really want this bill and after what I saw at the Dem Caucus I am certain the we need this law change, older people just have a hard time dealing with the

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polls, even on a good day, same goes for people with physical challenges.

Me ka mahalo,

al

Note: forwarded message attached.

--Forwarded Message Attachment--

Date: Mon, 10 Mar 2008 19:30:43 -0700

From: [REDACTED]

Subject: In Favor of SB2562 SD1 JUD hearing Tuesday, 03-11-08 at 2:00 pm Conf Room 325

To: JUDtestimony@Capitol.hawaii.gov

TO: Chairman Tommy Waters, Vice Chairman Blake Oshiro and all House JUD Committee Members

FROM: Albert E. Beeman

[REDACTED] HI 96720

SUBJECT: Support for SB2562, Permanent Absentee Ballots

Aloha Committee Members!

I urge you to vote in favor of SB2562 SD1. Seniors all over Hawaii were greatly disappointed when SB156 failed to make it out of Conference last year after people testified from all of the inhabited islands but Niihau.

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The Counties waste a lot of clerical time processing thousands of unnecessary Absentee Ballots applications every election cycle that would be eliminated by this measure.

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I am also certain that SB2562 will dramatically increase voter turnout in out state where voter turnout is so often embarrassingly low.

Thank you for your kokua.

Me ka mahalo, (Respectfully,)

Al Beeman
AARP-Volunteer
Hilo

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