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## HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

URGING THE MAYOR OF THE CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU TO NOT  
DECREASE THE NUMBER OF NEIGHBORHOOD BOARDS.

1           WHEREAS, the neighborhood board system was created under  
2 the Administration of Mayor Frank Fasi to increase full citizen  
3 participation in their government by giving residents the  
4 opportunity to participate in government decision making that  
5 affects his or her community; and  
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7           WHEREAS, in 1972, Honolulu voters approved an amendment to  
8 the Revised City Charter calling for the formation of a nine-  
9 member Neighborhood Commission to develop a Neighborhood Plan to  
10 assist in implementing the formation and operation of elected  
11 neighborhood boards on Oahu; and  
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13           WHEREAS, neighborhood boards serve a key role in the  
14 democratic process in granting communities a mechanism to  
15 communicate its needs and desires in the areas of basic  
16 government services and in economic development and land use  
17 questions; and  
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19           WHEREAS, there are 33 neighborhood boards with 444 seats  
20 that are spread across all the communities in Oahu; and  
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22           WHEREAS, the Neighborhood Commission is made up of nine  
23 members appointed by the Mayor and the City Council and is  
24 responsible for the periodic review and evaluation of the  
25 neighborhood board, and has the power to call an election for  
26 the termination of a Board; and  
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28           WHEREAS, in his 2009 state of the city address, Mufi  
29 Hannemann, the Mayor of the City and County of Honolulu, stated  
30 that he asked the Neighborhood Board Commission to look into  
31 possibly decreasing the number of neighborhood boards; and  
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1 WHEREAS, in that same speech, the Mayor used low voter  
 2 turnout in Neighborhood Board elections to justify the possible  
 3 elimination of a Board; and

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 5 WHEREAS, poor voter participation is a problem that is not  
 6 limited to neighborhood board elections, and stretches across  
 7 all levels in Hawaii as demonstrated in the 2008 election when  
 8 Hawaii's voter turnout of 50.6 percent tied with West Virginia  
 9 for the lowest turnout rate in the nation; and

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 11 WHEREAS, neighborhood boards help solve this problem by  
 12 increasing voter participation through giving citizens the  
 13 ability to participate in local government without the need for  
 14 the large resources that is needed to become an elected official  
 15 in higher office; and

16  
 17 WHEREAS, the elimination of neighborhood boards would  
 18 further discourage voter participation in the democratic process  
 19 by removing an avenue to take part in government decision making  
 20 and would further distancing them from their government; now,  
 21 therefore,

22  
 23 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the  
 24 Twenty-fifth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session  
 25 of 2009, the Senate concurring, that the Legislature urges the  
 26 Mayor of the City and County of Honolulu to not decrease the  
 27 number of neighborhood boards so as to assure effective citizen  
 28 participation in the decisions of government; and

29  
 30 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this  
 31 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to Mayor Mufi Hannemann,  
 32 all members of the Honolulu City Council, all members of the  
 33 Neighborhood Board Commission, and all chairs of the  
 34 Neighborhood Boards.

OFFERED BY:

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*John M. ...*  
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