
HOUSE 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
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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,
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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, that the Legislature urges the Mayor of the City and
26 County of Honolulu to not decrease the number of neighborhood
27 boards so as to assure effective citizen participation in the
28 decisions of government; and
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30 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
31 Resolution be transmitted to Mayor Mufi Hannemann, all members
32 of the Honolulu City Council, all members of the Neighborhood
33 Board Commission, and all chairs of the Neighborhood Boards.
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OFFERED BY:

