

SB664



**STATE OF HAWAII
OFFICE OF ELECTIONS**

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**TESTIMONY OF THE
CHIEF ELECTION OFFICER, OFFICE OF ELECTIONS
TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS
ON SENATE BILL NO. 664
RELATING TO ABSENTEE VOTING**

February 11, 2009

Chair Taniguchi and members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Government Operations, thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill No. 664. The purpose of this bill is to require that absentee ballots to be mailed no earlier than thirty days prior to the election, if the voter is overseas, and ten days if the voter is in state.

This issue is a policy issue for the Legislature to determine. The Office of Elections points out that the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP), the program responsible for educating U.S. citizens worldwide of their right to vote, increasing participation, and enhancing the electoral process at the federal, state and local levels, recommends a minimum of 45 days between the date the ballot is mailed to the voter and the voted ballot return deadline. This is especially beneficial for citizens voting from overseas and APO/FPO addresses. The FVAP is implemented by the U.S. Department of Defense and enforced by the U.S. Department of Justice.

Because the state of Hawaii allows for only 45 days between the primary and general elections under current law, we adhere to the FVAP's previous recommendation of 35 days. Failure to meet this requirement may result in a lawsuit by the Department of Justice.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill No. 664.

Respectfully Submitted

Kevin B. Cronin