



Hawaii
COMMON CAUSE
Holding Power Accountable

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House JUD Committee
Friday 1/22/10 at 2:00PM in Room 325
HB 1344

TESTIMONY

Nikki Love, Executive Director, Common Cause Hawaii

Chair Karamatsu, Vice Chair Ito, and Committee Members:

I am testifying in **support of HB 1344**.

We strongly support the concept of the citizen's right to vote as fundamental to our democracy.

We also strongly support the effort to increase voter registration by high school and college students.

It is our understanding that permanent absentee voting is already established in law (SB 156 in 2008). Permanent absentee voting is a good step to make voting more convenient, but the legislature and the Office of Elections must ensure that proper safeguards are in place.

This bill is an important step in improving Hawaii's dismal voter turnout. We urge the Judiciary Committee to continue pursuing ideas for bolstering voter participation.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony.



HAWAII GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION
AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO

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The Twenty-Fifth Legislature, State of Hawaii
Hawaii State House of Representatives
Committee on Judiciary

Testimony by
Hawaii Government Employees Association
January 21, 2010

H.B. 1344 – RELATING TO
VOTING

The Hawaii Government Employees' Association, AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO supports the purpose and intent of H.B. 1344 – Relating to Voting. Hawaii's voter turnout rate remains in the bottom half of the national voter turnout rates. This act will, among other things, establish a statutory right to vote for Hawaii citizens, establish permanent absentee voter status, require a provision for online requests for absentee ballots, and require high schools, colleges and universities to provide voter registration forms to students.

Enabling a registered voter to apply for permanent absentee voter status will eliminate the costly and inefficient need to request separate absentee ballots for each election. Requiring high schools, colleges and universities to provide voter registration forms and establishing an online request for absentee votes will increase citizens' access to the voting process.

Collectively, this proposed legislation will increase voter turnout and political participation, which creates a stronger and more active democracy.

We appreciate the opportunity to testify in support of H.B. 1344.

Respectfully submitted,

Nora A. Nomura
Deputy Executive Director