



Hawaii Chapter, MOAA
P.O. Box 1185
Kailua, Hawaii 96734-1185

Testimony of

Thomas Smyth, President

Military Officers Association of America, Hawaii Chapter

Before the

Committee on Economic Revitalization, and Military Affairs

Tuesday, March 9, 2010, 8:00 am, Room 312

SB 2335 SD 2 Relating Military And Overseas Absentee Voters

Chair McKelvey, Vice Chair Choy and Members of the Committee:

Our association of 500 retired and currently serving officers of the Uniformed Services supports SB 2335, SD2, as amended, which will conform, as closely as possible, the Hawaii elections law and procedures to the recently enacted federal legislation regarding voting by military personnel, their family members and others who are overseas in Hawaii.

We understand the difficulty our Elections Office will have this year in trying to meet new federal criteria, given that Hawaii's Primary and General Election dates are so close together that they do not allow the 45 days needed for ballot receipt.

It should be noted that according to the study of state election systems and their handling of overseas military voters, by the Pew Center on the States in July 2009, Hawaii was considered to have allowed military voters time to vote. But the study did have concerns for Hawaii and 5 other states while finding that 21 states did not provide adequate time to vote.

This study shows Hawaii has not done as badly as some believe, but certainly the changes proposed in this bill will help us become a state that encourages our overseas military voters.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.



Committee: Committee on Economic Revitalization, Business & Military Affairs
Hearing Date/Time: Tuesday, March 9, 2010, 8:00 a.m.
Place: Room 312
Re: Testimony of the ACLU of Hawaii in Support of S.B. 2335, S.D.2, Relating to Military and Overseas Civilian Absentee Voters

Dear Chair McKelvey and Members of the Committee on Economic Revitalization, Business & Military Affairs:

The American Civil Liberties Union of Hawaii ("ACLU of Hawaii") writes in support of S.B. 2335, SD2, which seeks to implement voting provisions for uniformed services and overseas absentee voters, as recommended by the Federal Voting Assistance Program.

The ACLU of Hawaii applauds this Committee for hearing this bill and recognizing the importance of ensuring that all Hawaii's citizens are able to vote. Ensuring that military members are able to vote will strengthen our democracy by ensuring that every citizen has a voice in the electoral process.

Increasing absentee voting will go far towards ensuring the integrity of Hawaii's electoral system and increasing voter access and turnout. Absentee voting is an efficient and economical electoral system that has seen great success in a number of states.

The mission of the ACLU of Hawaii is to protect the fundamental freedoms enshrined in the U.S. and State Constitutions. The ACLU of Hawaii fulfills this through legislative, litigation, and public education programs statewide. The ACLU of Hawaii is a non-partisan and private non-profit organization that provides its services at no cost to the public and does not accept government funds. The ACLU of Hawaii has been serving Hawaii for over 40 years.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Laurie A. Temple
Staff Attorney
ACLU of Hawaii

American Civil Liberties Union of Hawaii
P.O. Box 3410
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96801
T: 808.522-5900
F: 808.522-5909
E: office@acluhawaii.org
www.acluhawaii.org