



**STATE OF HAWAII
OFFICE OF ELECTIONS**

802 LEHUA AVENUE
PEARL CITY, HAWAII 96782
www.hawaii.gov/elections

SCOTT T. NAGO
CHIEF ELECTION OFFICER

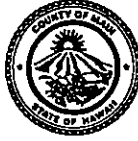
**TESTIMONY OF THE
CHIEF ELECTION OFFICER, OFFICE OF ELECTIONS
TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
ON HOUSE BILL NO. 1613, HD 1
RELATING TO VOTING**

March 1, 2011

Chair Oshiro and members of the House Committee on Finance, thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill No. 1613, HD 1. The purpose of this bill is to provide for the application to register to vote to include a space to request a permanent absentee ballot. Additionally, the bill provides that a voter may request an absentee or permanent absentee ballot at any time but not later than 4:30 p.m. on the seventh day prior to an election.

Given that the bill would require the creation of a new form, the Office of Elections requests that it include appropriation language in the amount of \$57,000. This amount would cover the design, minority language translations required by federal law, and printing costs associated with the new form.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill No. 1613, HD 1.



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CLERK

COUNTY OF MAUI
200 S. HIGH STREET
WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAII 96793
www.mauicounty.gov/county/clerk

TESTIMONY OF

JEFFREY T. KUWADA, COUNTY CLERK, COUNTY OF MAUI

TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

ON HOUSE BILL NO. 1613, HD 1

RELATING TO VOTING

March 1, 2011

Chair Oshiro and members of the House Committee on Finance, thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill No. 1613, HD1. The bill requires that an application to register to vote include a request for permanent absentee ballot. Additionally, the bill provides that a voter may request an absentee or permanent absentee ballot at any time but not later than 4:30 p.m. on the seventh day prior to an election.

The Office of the County Clerk, County of Maui ("Clerk's Office") provides the following comment.

The bill will require the creation of a new form. The Clerk's Office is not in a position to presently estimate the cost of creating the new form. The cost will include, but not be limited to, design of the new form, translation of the form into minority languages required by federal law, and printing costs.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill No. 1613, HD 1.

Hawai'i Alliance for Retired Americans

An affiliate of the Alliance for Retired Americans
c/o AFSCME · 888 Mililani Street, Suite 101 · Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

*AFT Hawaii Retirees
HGEA Retirees
HSTA – Retired
ILWU Retirees
Kokua Council
Machinists Union Retirees
UPW Retirees
ADA/Hawaii
Hawaii Family Caregivers Coalition*

(Submitted by email to: <http://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/emailtestimony>.)

Statement of Al Hamai, President, in Support of HB1613, HD1, Relating to
Permanent Absentee Voting

Hearing of House Finance Committee

March 1, 2011 12:00 p.m. Conference Room 308

Chair Marcus R. Oshiro, Vice Chair Marilyn B. Lee and Members of
the Committee,

I'm submitting this testimony on behalf of HARA, urging your
Committee to approve HB1613, HD1, relating to permanent absentee
voting.

The purpose of this bill is to require that the form for an application for
voting include a request for a permanent absentee ballot, and also to
expand the short window period that a citizen may apply for a
permanent absentee ballot. That period is too short and restrictive.

Back in 2008 you and the other members of our state Legislature
voted, overriding a veto by Governor Lingle, to authorize permanent
absentee voting, a very forward-looking effort to encourage greater
voting by making voting easier for seniors and other citizens.
Consequently, more and more citizens are taking advantage of this
law, as attested by the increasing number of absentee votes cast.
Yet our election turnout is still low and adoption of this HB1613, HD1
will encourage greater participation.

We need to make it easier for citizens to register for permanent absentee voting by including on the application for voting, language where an applicant may indicate that he wants to also apply for permanent absentee voting, making it a simpler process. And if approved, could eliminate or reduce the paperwork by staff in the voter application process.

The state Elections Office and the various counties have attractive websites on voting and include the forms for Voter Registration, Absentee Voting and Permanent Absentee Voting that can be downloaded on-line. These forms are easily accessible.

We believe that the cost of changing the form online is surely not prohibitive, requiring a huge budgetary allocation. Routinely, we revise our own personal and organizational forms with simple additions and deletions, taking a few seconds to a couple of minutes. So a simple form revision should be easy for the existing staff.

Later, the new revised forms could be reprinted when current supplies run out and reprinting is a normal expense.

We believe that akamai election administrators, with the plodding of this legislature, can find a way to revise the Voter Registration form to include a request for a permanent absentee ballot, and also to expand the short window period that a citizen may apply for a permanent absentee ballot, without incurring expenses that require the approval of this Committee and the Legislature.

We concur with the purpose of HB1613, HD1, which seeks to make the application for permanent absentee voting a much easier process, and which could encourage more of our electorate to vote in the comfort of their homes. We urge your Committee to approve this bill.

Mahalo.

HARA is a strong voice for Hawaii's retirees and seniors; a diverse community-based organization with national roots; a grassroots organizer, educator, and communicator; and a trusted source of information for decision-makers.



P.O. Box 22703 • Honolulu, Hawaii 96823 • (808) 275-6275
Web: www.commoncausehawaii.org • Email: info@commoncausehawaii.org

House FIN Committee
Chair Marcus Oshiro, Vice Chair Marilyn Lee

Wednesday 3/1/11 at 12:00 PM in Room 308
HB 1613 HD 1 – Voting / Permanent Absentee Ballots

TESTIMONY

Nikki Love, Executive Director, Common Cause Hawaii

Chair Oshiro, Vice Chair Lee, and Committee Members:

Common Cause Hawaii supports HB 1613 HD 1, which requires an application to register to vote to include a request for permanent absentee ballot and eases the time limitations on requesting an absentee or permanent absentee ballot.

These changes would make it easier for voters to choose permanent absentee voting. Given the persistent low voter participation in our state, we support this bill and other efforts to make voting more convenient for the public.

Please note that as more people choose to vote via absentee ballots, we must continue to ensure the integrity of voting by mail. National Common Cause prepared a report in 2008 titled, “What We Know About Vote By Mail Elections and How To Conduct Them Well.” We would be happy to provide a copy to interested legislators. It is also available online at <http://www.commoncause.org/elections>.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Testimony on: **HB1613, HD1 - Permanent Absentee Voting**

Hearing Date: **Tuesday, March 1st, 2011 12 NOON**

Room: **House Conference Room 308**

To: **Chairman Marcus Oshiro, Vice Chair Marilyn B. Lee
and all House Financial Committee Members**

From: **Albert E. Beeman**
Private Citizen
908 Kumukoa Street, Hilo, HI 96720

Subject: **In Favor of HB1613, HD1**

Aloha House Financial Committee Members,

I urge you to vote in favor HB1613, HD1 in order to eliminate the annoying roadblocks the current law places in the way of citizens who wish to vote by Permanent Absentee Ballot.

From an implementation cost perspective, I strongly believe that the changes needed to implement this bill can be done without any additional cost or budget impact by making the website and software changes as part of normal maintenance and only printing new updated forms as the old forms run out and new forms need printing.

Just a couple of years ago the Legislature granted us the privilege of being able to vote permanently by absentee ballot, but, as any PAB voter will tell you, **it is not easy to obtain PAB voter status today.**

Now, almost half of all participating voters vote absentee. I am convinced that most of any future increase in voter participation will come from Permanent Absentee Ballot voting because it takes less time, is less physically challenging and does not require constant re-application for an Absentee Ballot.

In order to get more citizens to voter we need to eliminate these annoying roadblocks to obtaining permanent absentee voter status:

- **Currently you cannot apply for Permanent Absentee Voter status on the WikiWiki Voter Registration form.** You must apply separately on Permanent Absentee Ballot form and then only mail in that form within the very narrow PAB form acceptance window.

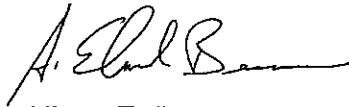
- **PAB forms are currently only accepted “no earlier than 60 days and no later than 7 days prior to the election**

New voters are probably not all that familiar with voting in Hawaii either because they are young inexperienced voters or new to our state's voting procedures yet we make them navigate these complex roadblocks to easy convenient voting.

You have to be one determined new voter to get registered to vote by Permanent Absentee Ballot in Hawaii. And, the narrow acceptance window for more experienced voters makes voting by PAB a pretty tricky endeavor as well.

I ask that you please vote in favor of HB1613, HD1 so that voting by Permanent Absentee Ballot can finally provide the originally intended easy convenient way of voting!

Me ka mahalo (Respectfully),



Albert E. Beeman
Hilo

FINTestimony

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
ent: Monday, February 28, 2011 7:47 PM
To: FINTestimony
Cc: albeeman@gmail.com
Subject: Testimony for HB1613 on 3/1/2011 12:00:00 PM

Testimony for FIN 3/1/2011 12:00:00 PM HB1613

Conference room: 308
Testifier position: support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: ALBERT EDWARD BEEMAN
Organization: Individual
Address:
Phone:
E-mail: albeeman@gmail.com
Submitted on: 2/28/2011

Comments:

Additional testimony:

I am very concerned that there must be some misunderstanding of this proposed bill in the testimony Chief Elections Officer Scott T. Nago submitted for the JUD hearing on HB1613:

Here is what Chief Elections Officer Scott T. Nago wrote:

“Given that the bill would require the creation of a new form, the Office of Elections requests that it include appropriation language in the amount of \$57,000. This amount would cover the design, minority language translations required by federal law, and printing costs associated with the new form.

Maui County Clerk Jeffery T. Kuwada submitted similar testimony to JUD but with not cost estimate:

“The bill (HB1613) will require the creation of a new form. The Clerk’s Office is not in a position to presently estimate the cost of creating the new form. The cost will include, but not be limited to, design of the new form, translation of the form into minority languages required by federal law, and printing costs”

Again, there must be some misunderstanding of this bill on Maui as well.

To implement HB1613, HD1 all that is required is the adding of a tick box allowing the person filling out the WikiWiki Voter Registration form to elect to vote by Permanent Absentee Ballot.

The creation of no new forms is required and all of the information on the WikiWiki Voter Registration Form is sufficient information to also meet the Permanent Absentee Ballot registration requirements.

It is inconceivable that it will cost the State of Hawaii or the Counties \$57,000 to add a tick box to an existing form.

Given the tight budgets constraints the State is under and in the spirit of wanting to make it easier for our citizens to participate by voting I can see no reason for this measure to require any new budget implementation funds whatsoever.

HB1613, HD1's tick box could be added as part of the normal maintenance to the Office of Elections website as the form is there as a downloadable .PDF file. The paper Wiki Wiki Voter Registration form could be modified in seconds and only reprinted when the existing supply of forms runs out.

I strongly urge the House FIN Committee to approve HB1613, HD1 with no budget allocation whatsoever because I feel certain that little or no money is needed to add one tick box to an existing and well known form.

As for the translation costs, I will be happy to translate the term "Permanent Absent Ballot" and any needed explanations/directions needed to meet the

"minority language translations required by federal law";

for free in the spirit making it easier for registered voters to vote, which was the intention of the PAB law when it was enacted a couple of years ago over Governor Lingle's veto!

While I am mentioning language translation, I am still wondering why it is that you can vote in Hawaii in several different languages but not in Hawaiian, that is not pono.

I would like to thank Rep. Della Au Belatti for championing this important Good Government measure and Speaker Say and the other 36 House Members for co-sponsoring HB1613.

Me ka mahalo (Respectfully),

Albert E Beeman
Hilo