

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

Hearing Date: **Tuesday, March 28th, 2011 9:30AM**

LATE TESTIMONY

Room: **Conference Room 016**

To: **Chairman Clayton Hee, Vice Chair Maile S.L.
Shimabukuro and Members of the JDL Committee**

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

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

Aloha Chairman Hee and Committee Members,

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

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.

Currently you cannot sign up to vote by Permanent Absentee Ballot when you register to vote. Once you are registered to vote you must fill out and send it a Permanent Absentee Ballot Application but that form can only be accepted within 60 days of the next election.

This measure will make the following needed changes:

- **Allow use of the WikiWiki Voter Registration Form to also apply to vote by Permanent Absentee Ballot in one simple process**
- **Change the law so that a person can apply to vote by Absentee Ballot any time up until the application deadline (7 days prior to the upcoming election)**

I am delighted that Chief Elections Officer Scott Nago is serious about increasing voter participation and he supports these changes to the law. The Chief Elections Officer is also determined to eliminate unnecessary expenditures in these tight budget times.

There is a substantial stock of the current Wiki Wiki Voter Registration forms on hand and **HB1613 HD1 needs to be amended to allow use of these forms until the existing supply runs out, with this amendment HB1613 does not need require any new funding or special budget allocation in this very constrained budget year.**

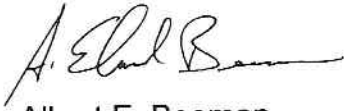
This amendment will allow the Office of Elections to implement the changes required by this measure in their normal form reprint and website maintenance cycles without incurring unplanned cost. Voters can use the existing forms until the old forms run out.

This minor amendment will make the measure much more acceptable to passage by the legislature and enactment by the Governor.

The Office of Elections and the four Counties are to be commended for finding a way to implement these changes without any budget impact; it is another example of their commitment to increasing voter participation.

I ask that you please vote in favor of HB1613 with the amendment described above so that voting by Permanent Absentee Ballot can finally provide the originally intended easy convenient way of voting! I am certain that this measure will increase voter participation.

Me ka mahalo (Respectfully),



Albert E. Beeman
Hilo

March 27, 2011



Hawaii
COMMON CAUSE **LATE TESTIMONY**
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Senate JDL Committee
Chair Clayton Hee, Vice Chair Maile Shimabukuro

Monday 3/28/11 at 9:30AM in Room 016
HB 1613 HD 1 – Voting / Permanent Absentee Ballots

TESTIMONY

Nikki Love, Executive Director, Common Cause Hawaii

Chair Hee, Vice Chair Shimabukuro, 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.