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**Senate JDL Committee
Chair Clayton Hee, Vice Chair Maile Shimabukuro**

**Tuesday 3/15/11 at 9:30 AM in Room 016
HB 545 HD 1– Online Voter Registration**

TESTIMONY

Nikki Love, Executive Director, Common Cause Hawaii

Chair Hee, Vice Chair Shimabukuro, and Committee Members:

Common Cause Hawaii supports HB 545 HD 1, which would establish a system of online voter registration.

This is an important measure to modernize the voter registration process. Our current voter registration method is archaic and burdensome, and unnecessarily excludes many eligible voters from participating in our democracy. In 2001, the National Election Commission chaired by Jimmy Carter and Gerald Ford concluded: “The registration laws in force throughout the United States are among the world’s most demanding ... [and are] one reason why voter turnout in the United States is near the bottom of the developed world.”

Modernizing voter registration is especially necessary in Hawaii, which has been consistently at or near the bottom of all 50 states in voter turnout. The numbers from the 2010 General Election show that there are 930,624 eligible voters in Hawaii, but only 690,748 registered voters. This leaves an estimated 239,876 potential voters (26% of those eligible) who were not registered at the time of the 2010 General Election.ⁱ

The concept of online voter registration is especially relevant for younger citizens, who are among the least likely to vote. For the generation who grew up with the Internet, doing anything via paper “hard copy” is considered old-fashioned and serves as a reminder that our government is not keeping up with the times.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony.

ⁱ Sources: http://elections.gmu.edu/Turnout_2010G.html,
<http://hawaii.gov/elections/results/2010/general/files/histatewide.pdf>