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TESTIMONY OF
JEFFREY T. KUWADA, COUNTY CLERK, COUNTY OF MAUI
TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY AND LABOR
ON HOUSE BILL NO. 1754, HD 1
RELATING TO ELECTIONS
MARCH 13, 2012

Chair Hee and members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill No. 1754, HD 1. The purpose of this bill is to allow the mailing of absentee ballots to all registered voters in areas of small population, in lieu of operating polling places.

Due to the invalidation of the 2011 Legislative Reapportionment Plan, election officials do not know whether small population pockets requiring their own ballot type can be minimized.

Given the limited amount of time that the Reapportionment Commission has to complete its new plan, the Reapportionment Commission may not be able to devise a plan whose boundaries line up with each other, so as to avoid areas being unnecessarily divided up on the basis of county council, state representative, state senator, and congressional lines. Even if the Reapportionment Commission has the time, the unique configuration of the various state, county, and federal lines, might make it inevitable that small population pockets will have to be created and that each pocket will require its own unique ballot type.

Given the small number of voters in each of these possible population pockets and the financial resources and personnel required to establish and operate a polling place in each pocket, we favor having the authority to mail absentee ballots to registered voters in these impacted areas in lieu of operating polling places. Registered voters residing in these impacted areas will still retain the ability, should they choose, to vote in person at an absentee walk location for a period of ten working days prior to each election.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill No. 1754, HD 1.