



**STATE OF HAWAII
OFFICE OF ELECTIONS**

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SCOTT T. NAGO
CHIEF ELECTION OFFICER

**TESTIMONY OF THE
CHIEF ELECTION OFFICER, OFFICE OF ELECTIONS
TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY
ON HOUSE BILL NO. 2251
RELATING TO ELECTIONS**

January 31, 2012

Chair Keith-Agaran and members of the House Committee on Judiciary, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill No. 2251. The purpose of this bill is to authorize the county clerk of any county with a population of less than one hundred thousand to mail an absentee ballot to each registered voter of any island of that county not contiguous with the island where the county seat of government is located.

The logistical and administrative issues associated with establishing a polling place on such an island are significant. For example, for the Island of Niihau, these issues include the delivery and return of ballots, voting machines, and associated election materials, in addition to the recruitment of on-island precinct officials to operate the polling place. This bill instead gives the county clerk the ability to give voters in this situation the convenience of an absentee ballot.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill No. 2251.

RICKY R. WATANABE
County Clerk

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JADE K. FOUNTAIN-TANIGAWA
Deputy County Clerk

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**ELECTIONS DIVISION
OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CLERK**
4386 RICE STREET, SUITE 101
LIHU'E, KAUAI, HAWAII 96766-1819

TESTIMONY OF RICKY R. WATANABE
COUNTY CLERK, COUNTY OF KAUAI
TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY
ON HOUSE BILL NO. 2251
RELATING TO ELECTIONS
January 31, 2012

Chair Keith-Agaran and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill No. 2251. The purpose of this bill is to authorize the county clerk of any county with a population of less than one hundred thousand to mail an absentee ballot for each primary, special primary, special, general, and special general election to all properly registered voters of any island of that county that is not contiguous with the island where the county seat of government is located.

HB 2251 will equitably reallocate diminished personnel and fiscal resources to improve the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of delivering of voting services. Additionally, HB 2251 is commensurate with the voting publics' growing acceptance and use of non-precinct based voting such as absentee mail voting.

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony in support of House Bill No. 2251.

RICKY R. WATANABE
County Clerk



**LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS***

League of Women Voters of Hawaii

49 South Hotel Street, Room 314 | Honolulu, HI 96813

www.lwv-hawaii.com | 808.531.7488 | voters@lwvhawaii.com

TESTIMONY TO HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

SUPPORTING HB 2251 RELATING TO ELECTIONS

HEARING: TUESDAY, JANUARY 31, 2012, 2:00 p.m.

To Chair: Gilbert S.C, Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair Kari Rhoads: Elections by Mail

The League of Women Voters of Hawaii supports HB 2251.

One of the reasons that the our League supports voting by mail in general is the hardship for people to get to the polls in the hours that polls are open. Many people commute long distances to work or work shifts. The polls do not open until 7:00 a.m. and it may be difficult for them to get to the polls before 6:00 p.m.

Now that we are allowed to vote by permanent absentee balloting, it is easier for everyone to vote, but many still do not take advantage of this option because they don't know about it or just don't get around to it in time.

Mailing ballots to registered voters solves many of these problems. The League supports extending voting by mail whenever possible when proper safeguards and the necessary mechanism is in place to assure the public that their ballots are secure.

Thank you for your consideration.

Marian W. Wilkins, Member, LWV Elections Committee

January 30, 2012