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BERNICE K.N. MAU
City Clerk

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB2051
RELATING TO VOTER REGISTRATION.

Committee on Judiciary and Labor
Rm. 016
February 7, 2012

Chairman Hee and Members of the Committee:

The Office of the City Clerk is in qualified support of SB2051, which would allow the establishment of an online voter registration system and make corresponding technical amendments to the voter registration election laws.

Our support for this measure is contingent upon the availability of financial resources to design, implement, and maintain the online system. Although the Legislature passed online voter registration in HB 545 during the last session (which was vetoed by the Governor for lack of funding), we believe that SB2051 provides the necessary flexibility to allow designing the system in a cost effective manner.

In a hearing on the companion measure (HB1755) in the House Judiciary Committee, concerns were raised that the "government database" utilized for the online transaction verification should be specified. We would support an amendment to stipulate that the drivers license database and/or civil identification program database be utilized for this purpose.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.



League of Women Voters of Hawaii

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Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor
Chair Sen. Clayton Hee, Vice Chair Sen. Maile S.L. Shimabukuro

Tuesday, February 2/7/2012 at 10:15 AM in Room 016

SB 2051 — RELATING TO VOTER REGISTRATION

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT

Carmille Lim, Voter Services Chair, League of Women Voters of Hawaii

Chair Hee, Vice Chair Shimabukuro, and Committee Members,

Aloha, my name is Carmille Lim, Board Member and Voter Services Chair of the League of Women Voters of Hawaii, and I thank you for this opportunity to testify on behalf of our members throughout Hawai'i.

On behalf of the League, I am respectfully submitting my testimony in support of SB2051. This bill would establish an online system for electronic voter registration, which would allow eligible voters to register entirely online instead of using hard-copy paper forms. If implemented, we can expect to see a decrease in monies spent on paper forms and an increase in voter registration and turnout.

There are currently 12 states that have implemented online voter registration, and we hope that Hawai'i will soon follow. **The League of Women Voters of Hawaii supports this bill for the following 4 reasons:**

1 . Online voter registration is cost-effective and saves states millions of dollars each year;

- In recent years, states like California, Louisiana, Indiana, and Colorado have implemented the reform to great success – and this has also resulted in significant savings. For example: in Maricopa County, Arizona, processing an online voter registration now costs the state 3 cents, compared to 83 cents for each paper registration. Due to its popularity, online registration has helped reduce printing costs by 75% in the county. Washington State has also experienced a similar cost reduction at both the state and county level. Washington's Secretary of State's office (Washington's Secretary of State serves as the state's chief elections officer) reports saving 25 cents per online application, while counties have saved anywhere from 50 cents to \$2 with each application.¹

- Additionally, it cost Arizona less than \$130,000 and Washington state \$279,000 to implement both online voter registration *and* automated voter registration at DMVs.²

¹ Anonymous. "Cost Savings Win Bipartisan Support for Online Voter Registration." Progressive States Network. March 3, 2011. <http://www.progressivestates.org/news/dispatch/cost-savings-win-bipartisan-support-online-voter-registration>

² Ponoroff. "Voter Registration in a Digital Age." Brennan Center for Justice. July 13, 2010.



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2. Streamlines the registration process for election officials;

- Online voter registration ensures that citizens' information goes directly to election officials, thus reducing the number of people who have to handle a registration application. This greatly reduces the chances for human and data entry errors.
- Allowing Hawai'i residents to register to vote *or* update their registrations online would likely reduce the number of provisional ballots cast at the polls, which can prove costly and time-consuming to process.

3. Would likely increase the accuracy of voter lists;

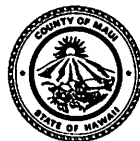
- Again, online voter registration would significantly reduce the data entry work county officials must do to process new registrations.
- Hawai'i already has an electronic record of the signature for most people with a Hawai'i state driver's license or state-issued ID card. So by transferring electronic data between the Department of Motor Vehicles and the Office of Elections, we can allow people to register to vote online without the delays and errors that can occur when mailing in a handwritten paper form which then has to be entered by hand into a registration database.

4. Due to its convenience, online voter registration would likely increase voter participation, especially from those of the "younger" generation.

- Completing an online voter registration form makes it easier for many voters to register -- particularly among the "younger" generation and those who spend more time online.
- In 2003, Arizona was the first state to implement Online Voter Registration, and reported an improvement in voter turnout -- greatest among young voters. In 2008, voters under 34 years old who registered online turned out at 93 percent compared to a 73 percent turnout rate for younger voters who registered "offline."³
- Registration rates among 18-24 year-old citizens rose from 28 to 53 percent after Arizona introduced online and automated registration.

In these tough times, online voter registration is an important step in making voter registration more modern and cost-effective. We support the online voter registration to register new voters and allow existing voters to update their registrations online. *The League of Women Voters of Hawaii humbly asks you to support this bill, too.* Mahalo for this opportunity to submit testimony.

³ Baretto, Glaser, Mac Donald, Collingwood, Pedraza, Pump. "Online Voter Registration Systems in Arizona and Washington: Evaluating Usage, Public Confidence and Implementation Process." Wiser Institute of the Study of Ethnicity and Race & Election Administration Research Center. April 10, 2010.
http://www.pewcenteronthestates.org/uploadedFiles/wwwpewcenteronthestatesorg/Initiatives/MVW/online_voter_reg.pdf?n=2908



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CLERK

COUNTY OF MAUI
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TESTIMONY OF

JEFFREY T. KUWADA, COUNTY CLERK, COUNTY OF MAUI

TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY AND LABOR

ON SENATE BILL NO. 2051

RELATING TO VOTER REGISTRATION

FEBRUARY 7, 2012

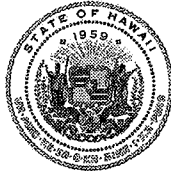
Chair Hee and members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill No. 2051. The purpose of this bill is to provide for online voter registration and housekeeping changes to current voter registration laws.

Senate Bill No. 2051 will allow eligible individuals the opportunity to register to vote electronically. This will require the creation of an online voter registration system. There will be technological issues associated with planning and designing such a system. We support the appropriation included in the bill.

We respectfully request the Committee consider adding a provision requiring government agencies and officials that issue government identification or maintain databases containing personal information to provide to election officials information that can be used to confirm a prospective registered voter's identity and verify the accuracy of information provided in applications for voter registration. It is imperative that election officials have real time access to such information.

We favor the removal of the requirement calling for the posting of a list of all registered voters in each precinct at the polling place. Registered voters have in the past expressed concern that the list includes their residence address.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of Senate Bill No. 2051.



**STATE OF HAWAII
OFFICE OF ELECTIONS**

802 LEHUA AVENUE
PEARL CITY, HAWAII 96782
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SCOTT T. NAGO
CHIEF ELECTION OFFICER

**TESTIMONY OF THE
CHIEF ELECTION OFFICER, OFFICE OF ELECTIONS
TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY AND LABOR
ON SENATE BILL NO. 2051
RELATING TO VOTER REGISTRATION**

February 7, 2012

Chair Hee and members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill No. 2051. The purpose of this bill is to provide for online voter registration and to make various housekeeping changes to our voter registration laws.

In order to provide another opportunity for the registration of eligible voters, the present bill authorizes applicants to register electronically. This will require the creation of an online voter registration system. Given the technological issues associated with planning and designing such a system, this bill appropriates \$500,000 for fiscal year 2012-2013 for that purpose. The possible need for additional funding for the implementation of the system will be addressed after the planning and design stage.

The bill additionally makes minor housekeeping changes to update our voter registration laws, such as removing the requirement to maintain a separate voter registration list for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, as now all registered voters are eligible to vote for those seats.

Finally, the bill removes the requirement to post a list of all registered voters in each precinct at the polling place. Voters have expressed privacy concerns in the past as the list is required to include the voter's residence address, unless a voter has gone through the process of obtaining confidential status to have the information removed.

In order to ensure access to the necessary government databases and the expertise associated with those databases, which would be necessary for the planning, designing, and implementing the online voter registration system, we would ask that the Committee consider amending the bill to include the following subsection at the end of Section 1.

“(f) Notwithstanding any law to the contrary, the examiners of drivers, the attorney general, and any other agency or official, which issues government identification or maintains databases that in the opinion of election officials can be utilized to confirm a prospective voter’s identity, verify the accuracy of the information provided on applications for voter registration, or otherwise ensure the continuing integrity of the voter registration rolls, shall at no cost to the election officials, provide technical assistance and real time access to those databases.”

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill No. 2051.



Senate JDL Committee
Chair Clayton Hee, Vice Chair Maile Shimabukuro

Tuesday 2/7/12 at 10:15AM in Room 016
SB2051 – Voter Registration

TESTIMONY
Nikki Love, Executive Director, Common Cause Hawaii

Chair Hee, Vice Chair Shimabukuro, and Committee Members:

Common Cause Hawaii supports SB2051. This bill allows for the establishment of online voter registration, and appropriates funds to create and implement the system.

We support this effort to modernize voter registration for the 21st century and reduce barriers to voting. Hawaii has been consistently at or near the bottom of all 50 states in voter turnout, and every effort should be made to encourage eligible citizens to participate. 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 Online voter registration can make participation in our democratic process more accessible and convenient.

Online voter registration can also provide greater accuracy in the voter rolls and save significant money in the long term, by streamlining the process and reducing the burden of data entry. A study by the Pew Center on the States showed that in Arizona, it costs an average of three cents to process an online application compared to an average of 83 cents per paper application; in Washington, the state saves 25 cents per online application and counties save between 50 cents and \$2.00 per online application compared to paper forms.ⁱⁱ

Two questions and suggestions:

- In Section 1 of the bill, it reads: “*the county clerk may permit...*” Does the bill require the establishment of an online voter registration system, or only permit it? We would ask the legislature to work towards requiring an online voter registration system for all eligible voters throughout Hawaii as soon as possible.

(continued on next page...)

- In Section 5 of the bill, it provides funds in FY 2012-2013 for the planning and design of the system. By what date would the system be completed and ready for use by the new prospective voters? We would urge the legislature to ensure the system can be ready for use by the 2014 elections.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony.

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

ⁱⁱ “Online Voter Registration: Case Studies in Arizona and Washington” (Pew Center on the States, 2010),
http://www.pewcenteronthestates.org/report_detail.aspx?id=58215.