

SB2052



**STATE OF HAWAII
OFFICE OF ELECTIONS**

802 LEHUA AVENUE
PEARL CITY, HAWAII 96782
www.hawaii.gov/elections

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. 2052
RELATING TO ELECTIONS
FEBRUARY 22, 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. 2052. The purpose of this bill is to allow for the mailing of absentee ballots to all registered voters residing in areas, due to reapportionment, which are significantly smaller in population than normally associated with the justification and establishment of a polling place.

In 2011, the Hawaii State Reapportionment Commission and the Redistricting Commissions for the County of Hawaii and the City and County of Honolulu, convened to develop new boundaries based on the last decennial census. In a normal reapportionment year, attempts are made, to the extent possible, to have 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. However, at times small population pockets will occur that will each need to have their own unique ballot type developed. A ballot type contains the specific contests, questions, or issues that voters who reside in a specific area are entitled to vote on.

The 2010 General Election, based on the 2001 Reapportionment Plan, involved 242 polling places. These polling places ranged in size from 188 to 6,000 registered voters. The average polling place is typically within the range of 2,500 to 3,000 registered voters. The present bill refers to population pockets of less than 500 registered voters that would require their own ballot type. Based on the 2010 General Election, the impacted polling places, assuming the 2011 Reapportionment Plan is the same, would be the following:

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- District/Precinct 03/02 - Hale Aloha Nazarene School;
- District/Precinct 25/03 – St. Clement's Episcopal Church;
- District/Precinct 30/03 - Moanalua Elementary School; and
- District/Precinct 36/04 - Leeward Community College.

This reapportionment year, we expect that the ability to keep to a minimum the amount of small population pockets that require their own ballot type will be difficult to know or control. Specifically, because the 2011 Reapportionment Plan for the House of Representatives and Senate has been invalidated by the Hawaii Supreme Court and with the quickly approaching Primary Election, the Reapportionment Commission only had a limited amount of time to redraft the plan. As such, without sufficient time, the Reapportionment Commission may not have been able to have 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.

Additionally, even if the Reapportionment Commission had the time to make these attempts, the unique configuration of the various state, county, and federal lines, might make it inevitable that there will be small population pockets that will each need to have their own unique ballot type developed.

As such, given the small amount of voters in each of these possible population pockets and the financial resources and personnel required to establish and operate a polling place, the purpose of this bill is to permit the mailing of absentee ballots to all registered voters in these impacted areas in lieu of the operation of polling places. Additionally, voters in these impacted areas will still retain the ability, in lieu of utilizing the absentee mail ballot, to vote in person at absentee walk locations that are opened at least ten working days prior to each election.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill No. 2052.



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CLERK

COUNTY OF MAUI
200 S. HIGH STREET
WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAII 96793
www.mauicounty.gov/county/clerk

TESTIMONY OF
JEFFREY T. KUWADA, COUNTY CLERK, COUNTY OF MAUI
TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY AND LABOR
ON SENATE BILL NO. 2052
RELATING TO ELECTIONS
FEBRUARY 22, 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. 2052. 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 the operation of 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 the operation of 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 Senate Bill No. 2052.



LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS®

League of Women Voters of Hawaii

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SENATE JUDICIARY AND LABOR COMMITTEE
CLAYTON HEE, CHAIR, MAILE S.L.SHIMABUKURO, VICE CHAIR

FEBRUARY 22, 9:45 A.M. CONF. ROOM. 016

SB 2052—RE: ELECTIONS

TESTIMONY

From: Marian W. Wilkins, Member Elections Committee, League of Women Voters of
Hawaii

To: Chairman Hee, Vice Chair Maile S.L. Shimabukuro and Committee Members:

The League of Women Voters of Hawaii supports SB 2052 which would allow the Office of Elections to facilitate voting for small populations of residents whose voting districts have been redrawn due to the latest census and redistricting.

Since polling places normally have ballots that list candidates that are to be elected from that specific area and since the numbers of voters who fall into each special category would be small, staffing and furnishing all the accoutrements for these polls would be burdensome and expensive.

It therefore seems reasonable to send ballots to the voters involved and have them returned by mail. The method would be the same as absentee voting. It is a tried and true method and would simplify the voting in these areas for all concerned.

The Office of Elections carried out an entire special election for the First Congressional district in May, 2010 on short notice and it went very well. We are confident that in the special circumstances that the redistricting has created, voting by mail is the solution.

Thank you for your consideration.

Marian W. Wilkins, LWV Elections Committee Member

February 20, 2012

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
To: [JDLTestimony](#)
Cc: Pandiorama@yahoo.com
Subject: Testimony for SB2052 on 2/22/2012 9:45:00 AM
Date: Saturday, February 18, 2012 5:49:47 AM

Testimony for JDL 2/22/2012 9:45:00 AM SB2052

Conference room: 016
Testifier position: Support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Andrea Hamblin
Organization: Individual
E-mail: Pandiorama@yahoo.com
Submitted on: 2/18/2012

Comments:

Please support SB2502. Considering the cost involved in operating polling stations, the state should consider mailing absentee ballots for all voters in all elections.