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STATE TESTIMONY

TESTIMONY OF RICKY R. WATANABE
COUNTY CLERK, COUNTY OF KAUAI
TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY AND LABOR
ON SENATE BILL NO. 2052
RELATING TO ELECTIONS
February 22, 2012

Chair Hee and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Senate Bill No. 2052. The purpose of this bill is to permit the county clerk to mail an absentee ballot to each registered voter who resides in a population pocket of less than five-hundred voters which requires its own unique ballot type. A ballot type contains a unique combination of contests, and ballot questions or issues that only voters in a specific district are entitled to vote on.

This bill offers a sensible solution to an unintended and unfortunate consequence of the reapportionment process. While considerable effort is made to establish simple, straightforward voting districts, oftentimes populations are distributed such that voting district boundaries required for federal, state and county elections cannot precisely overlay one another. The resulting deviation between district boundaries results in population pockets consisting of a relatively small number of voters who require their own unique ballot type.

By allowing all mail voting for these population pockets, SB 2052 ensures that an equitable amount of financial and personnel resources is allocated for servicing impacted voters. We also note that voters residing in a population pocket will always have the option to cast a ballot in-person at an early voting site which is opened at least ten working days prior to each election.

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

RICKY R. WATANABE
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