

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF HAWAII

LATE TESTIMONY

SB 2218 PROPOSING AN AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION OF THE STATE OF HAWAII
RELATING TO RESIDENCY REQUIREMENTS FOR MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATURE

Committee on Judiciary and Labor
Senator Clayton Hee, Chair
Senator Maile S.L. Shimabukuro, Vice Chair
Friday, January 27, 2012
9:30 A.M. Conf. Rm. 016

Testimony from **Jean Aoki**, LWV Legislative Committee member

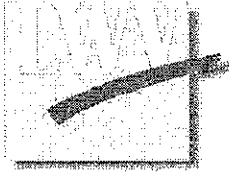
Chair Hee, Vice Chair Shimabukuro and members of the Committee on Judiciary and Labor,

The League of Women Voters of Hawaii **opposes** the increase from 3 years to 5 years in the number of years candidates must reside in this state to qualify to serve in the Hawaii State Senate and House of Representatives.

We feel that a 3-year residency requirement is sufficient time for anyone interested in community improvements and state issues to actively get involved in organizations, community activities and research to qualify for service in the Senate and the House. Some people may feel they need more time and they may wisely defer their running for office till they feel prepared. But for those who are eager to serve and feel they qualify, they should be allowed to let the voters judge their readiness.

We support the requirement for candidates to be residents of the district from which they seek to be elected for not less than twelve consecutive months prior to the next succeeding general election, especially since the laws make exceptions for displacements caused by redistricting after the national census. One should feel comfortably a member of the community, sharing the community's dreams and hopes for making it and the state a better place for themselves and their children, before daring to represent it at the legislature.

For voting, a residency requirement of a year is still in our state constitution because voters have refused to remove it in spite of the fact that it is against our federal constitution and cannot be



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recognized. Constitutional provisions governing elections and even candidacies seem not to be easily changed even when they are declared unconstitutional and we should be careful when we amend constitutional provisions that we have good reason to do so, and this bill does not provide the rationale for that need.

We urge you to leave the current 3-year state residency requirement as is, and to amend the section on a one-year district residency.

We thank you for this opportunity to testify on SB 2218.