

IRONWORKERS STABILIZATION FUND

February 20, 2013

Sylvia Luke, Chair
Committee on Finance
House of Representative
State Capitol
415 S. Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Honorable Chair Luke and Members of the Committee on Finance:

Re: Support for HB269 HD1 –Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of the State of Hawaii Relating to Residency Requirements for Members of the Legislature

We wish to offer our support of HB 269 HD1, Relating to Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of the State of Hawaii Relating to Residency Requirements for Members of the Legislature

We believe that this bill will ensure that the residents of an area will be represented by a person who knows and understands the issues of their location. Additionally, we would like to be represented by residents that live, shop and resides in their area. Not someone who only cares for themselves and not the people. As we seen in recent media articles the residents are upset at people who are not members of their community. We hope that you and your committee understand the needs of the people.

We support this very important measure. Thank you for your time and consideration

Sincerely,

Arnold Wong /s/



46-063 Emepela Pl. #U101 Kaneohe, HI 96744 · (808) 679-7454 · Kris Coffield · Co-founder/Legislative Director

**TESTIMONY FOR HOUSE BILL 269, PROPOSING AN AMENDMENT TO
THE CONSTITUTION OF THE STATE OF HAWAII RELATING TO
RESIDENCY REQUIREMENTS FOR MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATURE**

**House Committee on Finance
Hon. Sylvia Luke, Chair
Hon. Scott Y. Nishimoto, Vice Chair
Hon. Aaron Ling Johanson, Vice Chair**

**Friday, February 22, 2013, 1:30 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 308**

Honorable Chair Luke and committee members:

I am Kris Coffield, representing the IMUAlliance, a nonpartisan political advocacy organization that currently boasts over 150 local members. On behalf of our members, we offer this testimony in opposition to HB 269, proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the State of Hawaii relating to residency requirements for the members of the legislature.

While we applaud attempts to guarantee legislative representation for Hawaii residents and safeguard the state's electoral processes, we are concerned that this amendment would have unintended consequences that undermine its purpose. In the 2012 general election, only 60 percent of the state's Senate races (15 out of 25) were contested, with a mere 62.7 percent House races (32 out of 51) being contested. Should the constitutional amendment proposed by this bill be effectuated, fewer people will be eligible to run for public office. We firmly believe that lawmakers should incentivize greater electoral participation, given the state's meager number of prospective candidates.

IMUAlliance boasts a significant number of college-age members, many of whom would like to enter public service at some point, or at least attempt to do so. For our outer-island members who attend UH-Manoa, however, a continuous twelve-month residency requirement prior to seeking public office would delay candidacy at a time when these individuals are eager to put their education and

energy to use (or, conversely, necessitate that these students run for, and subsequently remain residents of, the greater Manoa community, since their residency often changes to Manoa as they complete their degrees). Since Hawaii's high cost of living necessitates an income (one might find it difficult to spend a year preparing for candidacy, sans full-time employment, and college graduates typically earn less than their tenured and vested colleagues), we feel that this requirement disproportionately favors an older, more professionally established, and wealthier candidate pool.

Consider, as an example, the case of Rep. Kaniela Ing. Elected last year to represent District 11 in the State House, Ing grew up in and around Kihei, the heart of his constituency. After completing his B.A. in psychology, in 2010, and M.P.A., in 2012, from UH-Manoa, Ing opted to use his newly minted public administration skills to benefit the community in which he spent much of his youth. His election over Republican incumbent George Fontaine was largely seen as an improbable upset, especially for someone aged 23-years-old (at the time of the election). Since entering the State Legislature, Ing has co-sponsored dozens of measures relating to issues as varied as voter registration to vocational licensing for veterans to procurement savings. Yet, according to the terms of the proposed amendment, Ing's energy and ideas would have been put on pause for a year (and actually several years, when one considers the election cycle lag), denying his electorate the representation that, according to their votes, they clearly favor. Ing likely would have been forced to find another means of supporting himself during the interim, the responsibilities of which may have ultimately led him away from local politics.

Don't deny Hawaii's future leaders the opportunity to participate in our state's elections. We need to foster greater political action among Hawaii's younger generations, not stage barriers to their engagement. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in opposition to of this bill.

Sincerely,
Kris Coffield
Legislative Director
IMUAlliance

FINTestimony

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Thursday, February 21, 2013 5:21 PM
To: FINTestimony
Cc: tabraham08@gmail.com
Subject: *Submitted testimony for HB269 on Feb 22, 2013 13:30PM*

HB269

Submitted on: 2/21/2013

Testimony for FIN on Feb 22, 2013 13:30PM in Conference Room 308

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Troy Abraham	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

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