



Senate Judiciary and Labor Committee
Chair Clayton Hee, Vice Chair Maile Shimabukuro

Friday 02/08/13 at 10:00AM in Room 016
SB834– Relating to Elections Observers

TESTIMONY OF SUPPORT
Carmille Lim, Executive Director, Common Cause Hawaii

Dear Chair Hee, Vice Chair Shimabukuro, and members of the Senate Judiciary and Labor Committee:

Common Cause Hawaii supports SB834. This bill would specify specific duties of the Observers Program, and would elaborate on the existing observers program to include ballot-tabulating processes. It would also give the duty of implementing and maintaining the program to the Chief Election Officer.

While the existing – and independent -- Observers Program has been in place for more than 30 years, its roles and responsibilities has never been required by law. One way to ensure the mishaps of the 2012 elections don't repeat, is to recalibrate how elections are conducted, facilitated, and audited. We believe formally establishing the Observers Program and its roles and responsibilities is part of this larger recalibrating process.

SB834 would help safeguard the ballot-counting process for how our “hybrid” elections are currently set up (i.e., absentee and in-person voting), as well as for anticipated statewide vote-by-mail elections. In a vote-by-mail election model, independent oversight of the ballot-tabulation process would still be required in Counting Centers.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB834.



LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS®

League of Women Voters of Hawaii

49 South Hotel Street, Room 314 | Honolulu, HI 96813

www.lwv-hawaii.com | 808.531.7488 | voters@lwvhawaii.com

SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY AND LABOR
Senator Clayton Hee, Chair and Senator Maile S.L. Shimabukuro, Vice Chair

Friday, February 8, 2013, 10:00 a.m. , Conference Room 016

SB 834, RELATING TO ELECTION OBSERVERS

TESTIMONY

Janet Mason, Vice-President, League of Women Voters of Hawaii

Chair Hee, Vice-Chair Shimabukuro, and Committee Members:

The League of Women Voters of Hawaii strongly supports SB834 which specifies the purposes of the elections observer program sponsored by the Election Commission and the duty of the Chief Elections Officer to implement and maintain the program. While Section 11-8.5, Hawaii Revised Statutes, permits the Elections Commission to establish policies for administering such a program, it does not specify the duties of this Election Observer program. The League of Women Voters believes Election Observers are an essential safeguard for voting integrity, and their responsibilities should be clear in our statutes.

For more than 20 years, the Office of Elections has sponsored a successful Election Day Observers' Team in Hawaii's vote counting centers. This important team watches to see that counting center activities are conducted in accordance with State election laws and the rules and regulations governing elections. They assist elections officials in preparing an audit trail that accounts for all ballots and documents as they are processed through the counting centers, and they maintain the integrity of the electoral system by conducting all activities with the highest professional and ethical standards. In short, the Election Observer program is legitimate observation by trained independent members of the general public.

We think an Election Observer program sponsored by the Elections Commission and conducted by the Office of Elections is preferable to one composed entirely of partisan political party observers. Nevertheless, in the precincts themselves, we support Section 11-77 of our current law for appointment of watchers at precincts, whereby no more than one watcher from each qualified political party may be present at any time in each precinct. This law appropriately prohibits unauthorized pollwatchers and also limits the number of pollwatchers so that precinct operations may be conducted carefully and efficiently.



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The League of Women Voters pledges to cooperate with the Office of Elections in recruiting volunteers for the Election Observer program. This program together with our law regarding appointment of pollwatchers are important, because we are aware there are infrequent attempts by self-appointed pollwatchers, without any official sanction, to "monitor" Hawaii Election Day activities. We reject such unsponsored challengers out of hand.

We urge you to pass this bill. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

hee2 - Kathleen

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Thursday, February 07, 2013 9:40 AM
To: JDLTestimony
Cc: rondavis@prettyrocks.com
Subject: *Submitted testimony for SB834 on Feb 8, 2013 10:00AM*

SB834

Submitted on: 2/7/2013

Testimony for JDL on Feb 8, 2013 10:00AM in Conference Room 016

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Ronald Davis	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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hee2 - Kathleen

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Thursday, February 07, 2013 7:43 AM
To: JDLTestimony
Cc: bwseaton99@earthlink.net
Subject: Submitted testimony for SB834 on Feb 8, 2013 10:00AM

SB834

Submitted on: 2/7/2013

Testimony for JDL on Feb 8, 2013 10:00AM in Conference Room 016

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
william seaton	Individual	Support	No

Comments: The election observer program was a disaster at the last election. It must be FIXED

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hee2 - Kathleen

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Wednesday, February 06, 2013 11:31 PM
To: JDLTestimony
Cc: 808val@hawaii.rr.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for SB834 on Feb 8, 2013 10:00AM

SB834

Submitted on: 2/6/2013

Testimony for JDL on Feb 8, 2013 10:00AM in Conference Room 016

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Valerie Sisneros	Individual	Support	No

Comments: I am writing in support of this bill. It is imperative that we have a poll watching program that ensures the integrity of our elections. Voter fraud is a massive problem in our elections nationally. I have worked the polls for the last 6 or 7 elections and have seen many ways the process could be improved. if this elections review program can address voter fraud, it should be considered and passed. There is not enough training in the short time given for the volunteers to be able to handle all the issues. This is important if it can be done without massive cost to the taxpayer. Please proceed efficiently on this one. Thank you.

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hee2 - Kathleen

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Wednesday, February 06, 2013 10:49 PM
To: JDLTestimony
Cc: Mack127osu@yahoo.com
Subject: *Submitted testimony for SB834 on Feb 8, 2013 10:00AM*

SB834

Submitted on: 2/6/2013

Testimony for JDL on Feb 8, 2013 10:00AM in Conference Room 016

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Kristin	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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