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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO VOTER REGISTRATION.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:**

1           SECTION 1. The right to vote is one of a citizen's most  
2 important rights. In 1959, approximately ninety per cent of  
3 registered voters in Hawaii voted in the election that  
4 eventually led to statehood. Over the ensuing forty years,  
5 however, voter-participation rates in Hawaii have fallen. In  
6 the most recent general election in 2014, only 52.3 per cent of  
7 registered voters cast a ballot. The reasons for the steep  
8 decline in voter-participation rates in Hawaii are many and  
9 complex. Nevertheless, greater efforts must be made to  
10 encourage the people of Hawaii to vote for their leaders. One  
11 way is to help young people acquire the civic habit of voting at  
12 an early age. If a person begins voting as soon as the person  
13 is eligible to do so, that person tends to vote throughout the  
14 person's lifetime.

15           The purpose of this Act is to:

16           (1) Require all twelfth-grade students in public schools  
17           to register to vote before graduating; and



1           (2) Require the department of education to hold a one-hour  
2           class session for all twelfth-grade students in public  
3           schools that is dedicated to elections and voting.

4           SECTION 2. Chapter 302A, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
5           amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated  
6           and to read as follows:

7           "§302A- Voter registration; requirement. (a) The  
8           department shall require all students in the twelfth grade in  
9           public schools who are eligible to vote to register to vote as a  
10          requirement of graduation.

11          (b) The department shall hold a one-hour class session for  
12          all twelfth-grade students in public schools that is dedicated  
13          to elections and voting. The department may determine the  
14          content of the class session; provided that instruction about  
15          elections and information on the voting process shall be  
16          included. The class session shall be held as part of a related  
17          field of study, such as social studies, history, or civics.

18          (c) At least five days prior to the class session required  
19          in subsection (b), voter registration forms shall be distributed  
20          to students. The forms shall be collected from the students  
21          during the class session.



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1        (d) A student shall be exempted from the requirements of  
 2 this section by submitting to the school that the student  
 3 attends, a written request to opt out on a form provided by the  
 4 school; provided that the request to opt out shall be submitted  
 5 by:

- 6        (1) The student, if the student has reached the age of  
 7 majority; or  
 8        (2) The student's parent, legal guardian, custodian, or  
 9 any other person in loco parentis to the student, if  
 10 the student has not reached the age of majority.

11        (e) The department may adopt rules pursuant to chapter 91  
 12 to implement this section."

13        SECTION 2. New statutory material is underscored.

14        SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2016.

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INTRODUCED BY:

*John M. Pappas*  
*Kal Almond*

JAN 25 2016



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**Report Title:**

Voter Registration; Twelfth-Graders in Public Schools

**Description:**

Requires all students in the twelfth grade in public schools who are eligible to vote to register to vote as a requirement of graduation. Requires the Department of Education to hold a one-hour class session for all twelfth-grade students in public schools that is dedicated to elections and voting.

*The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.*

