

STAND. COM. REP. NO. 706

Honolulu, Hawaii

MAR 06 2015

RE: S.B. No. 287
S.D. 2

Honorable Donna Mercado Kim
President of the Senate
Twenty-Eighth State Legislature
Regular Session of 2015
State of Hawaii

Madam:

Your Committee on Ways and Means, to which was referred S.B. No. 287, S.D. 1, entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO ELECTIONS,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to implement elections by mail as the standard method for voting statewide.

Specifically, this measure:

- (1) Requires the Office of Elections to implement elections by mail in a county with a population of less than 100,000 beginning with the 2016 primary election, and by 2018, requires all federal, state, and county primary, special primary, general, special general, and special elections to be conducted by mail;
- (2) Establishes voter service centers to receive voted ballots, accommodate disabled voters, and provide voter registration assistance and other services;
- (3) Provides for the return of ballots by mail or by personal delivery to designated places of deposit or voter service centers; and
- (4) Appropriates funds for the implementation and administration of the election-by-mail program.



Your Committee received written comments in support of this measure from the Office of Elections, the Office of the County Clerk for the County of Kauai, the Office of the County Clerk for the County of Maui, and one individual. Common Cause Hawaii submitted written comments opposing this measure. The League of Women Voters of Hawaii submitted written comments.

Your Committee finds that a transition to elections by mail in Hawaii is appropriate in light of the increasing number of voters who have chosen to vote by absentee mail-in ballot in recent election years. In addition to making voting easier and more convenient, elections by mail could boost voter turnout, streamline the administration of elections, and provide cost savings.

Your Committee further finds that the transition to statewide elections by mail will be a major undertaking that necessitates planning and incremental implementation to address any issues and challenges. In addition, your Committee notes there are concerns that all-mail elections may increase the potential for election fraud in comparison with walk-in voting. Your Committee therefore believes that a more gradual implementation schedule and regular updates on the status of implementation are essential to identifying and resolving any issues and concerns and ensuring the integrity of the election process. Your Committee intends to closely follow the progress made by the Office of Elections in implementing this measure and, in particular, will be interested in how the Office handles the integrity issues posed.

Accordingly, your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Requiring the Office of Elections to implement elections by mail in accordance with the following phased-in schedule:
 - (A) Beginning with the 2016 primary election, in a county with a population of less than 100,000;
 - (B) Beginning with the 2018 primary election, expansion into each county with a population of less than 500,000; and
 - (C) Beginning 2020, all elections statewide to be conducted by mail; and



- (2) Requiring the Office of Elections to submit annual reports to the Legislature from 2016 through 2021 regarding the progress of implementing the elections-by-mail program, including a description of any difficulties encountered, additional resources necessary to implement the program, and specific steps taken and recommendations necessary to prevent fraud and ensure the integrity of the election process.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Ways and Means that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of S.B. No. 287, S.D. 1, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Third Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 287, S.D. 2.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Ways and Means,

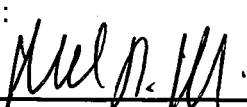


JILL N. TOKUDA, Chair



The Senate
 Twenty-Eighth Legislature
 State of Hawai'i

Record of Votes
Committee on Ways and Means
WAM

Bill / Resolution No.:*	Committee Referral:	Date:		
SB287SD1	JDL, WAM	2/27/15		
<input type="checkbox"/> The Committee is reconsidering its previous decision on this measure. If so, then the previous decision was to: _____				
The Recommendation is: <input type="checkbox"/> Pass, unamended 2312 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pass, with amendments 2311 <input type="checkbox"/> Hold 2310 <input type="checkbox"/> Recommit 2313				
Members	Aye	Aye (WR)	Nay	Excused
TOKUDA, Jill N. (C)	✓			
KOUCHI, Ronald D. (VC)	✓			
CHUN OAKLAND, Suzanne	✓			
DELA CRUZ, Donovan M.	✓			
ENGLISH, J. Kalani	✓			
GALUTERIA, Brickwood				✓
HARIMOTO, Breene	✓			
INOUYE, Lorraine R.	✓			
RIVIERE, Gil	✓			
RUDERMAN, Russell E.	✓			
SLOM, Sam	✓			
TOTAL	10	0	0	1
Recommendation: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adopted <input type="checkbox"/> Not Adopted				
Chair's or Designee's Signature: <div style="text-align:center; font-family: cursive; font-size: 1.2em;">  </div>				
Distribution: Original Yellow Pink Goldenrod File with Committee Report Clerk's Office Drafting Agency Committee File Copy				

*Only one measure per Record of Votes