



**STATE OF HAWAII
OFFICE OF ELECTIONS**

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SCOTT T. NAGO
CHIEF ELECTION OFFICER

TESTIMONY OF THE
CHIEF ELECTION OFFICER, OFFICE OF ELECTIONS
TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT
ON HOUSE BILL NO. 1474
RELATING TO ELECTIONS

February 10, 2015

Chair Nakashima and members of the House Committee on Labor and Public Employment, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill No. 1474. The purpose of this bill is to encourage election day official recruitment by recognizing private employers that permit their employees to have paid leave to be election day officials, and to authorize an additional day of paid leave for state and county workers who serve as election day officials.

The Office of Elections recruits over 3,000 election day officials for each election to service over 230 polling places and 4 counting centers. Elections could not function without the dedication and time of these volunteer. Over the years it has become increasingly difficult to recruit election day officials and this measure provides an additional incentive to serve as an election day volunteer.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill No. 1474.

STEWART MAEDA
County Clerk



JON HENRICKS
Deputy County Clerk

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CLERK

Elections Division
County of Hawai'i
Hawai'i County Building
25 Aupuni Street
Hilo, Hawai'i 96720

TESTIMONY OF STEWART MAEDA
COUNTY CLERK, COUNTY OF HAWAII
TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT
ON HOUSE BILL NO. 1474
RELATING TO ELECTIONS
FEBRUARY 10, 2015

Chair Nakashima and members of the House Committee on Labor and Public Employment, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill No. 1474. The purpose of this bill is to encourage election day official recruitment by recognizing private employers that permit their employees to have paid leave to be election day officials, and to authorize an additional day of paid leave for state and county workers who serve as election day officials.

Election Day officials are a vital part of the election process. It is due to the dedication and commitment of these officials that voters are able to cast their ballots on election day. The County of Hawai'i recruits approximately 850 officials for both the primary and general election days. These election day officials staff 41 polling places, a control center and the counting center in the County of Hawai'i.

Over the years it has become increasingly challenging to recruit election day officials. This has resulted in polling places operating understaffed on election days. This shortage can cause inconveniences for voters and places a burden on officials that are tasked with providing a very important service to the voters in their community. This bill takes a step in encouraging participation in the electoral process.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill No. 1474.

Hawai'i County is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



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COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT

Tuesday, February 10, 2015, 9:00 a.m.
HB 1474 RELATING TO ELECTIONS
TESTIMONY

Janet Mason, Co-Chair, Legislative Committee, League of Women Voters of Hawaii

Chair Nakashima, Vice-Chair Keohokalole, and Committee Members:

The League of Women Voters of Hawaii supports the intent of HB1474, which would establish a special designation of “kiwila pono” for employers who permit employees to be absent with pay on Election Day to work at a polling place. The bill would also give state and county employees who work on Election Day a paid leave of absence for that day.

In recent years the League knows firsthand how challenging it has been for the Office of Elections and County Clerks to recruit and retain a sufficient number of well-trained Election Day volunteers. Having a voluntary “kiwila pono” designation is a very creative approach to recognizing employers who can afford to make a practical contribution to their communities by providing compensation to their employees for such service to the public. “Kiwila pono” – we absolutely need more of these!

The bill has cost implications. If private employers take up the “kiwila pono” challenge it would shift some Election Day labor costs from the public to the private sector. As for public sector labor cost, we hope the Office of Elections will testify as to their typical Election Day labor volunteer expense, because we are skeptical that these costs are so high that it would make sense to substitute higher-paid state and county employees for election day volunteers, as would be permitted under this bill. We also recognize that in most cases the paid time off feature for public employees would need to be collectively bargained.

The way we vote is changing. The League expects and supports statewide voting by mail in Hawaii. When this happens, it would not entirely eliminate the need for Election Day volunteers, but it would greatly reduce this requirement. Could the “kiwila pono” idea be extended to cover voter registration activities throughout the year as well as on Election Day? The number of people eligible to vote but unregistered is dismal – more than 400,000 statewide.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this innovative idea.



HAWAII GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION
AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO

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**The Twenty-Eighth Legislature, State of Hawaii
House of Representatives
Committee on Labor and Public Employment**

**Testimony by
Hawaii Government Employees Association
February 10, 2015**

H.B. 1474 – RELATING TO ELECTIONS

The Hawaii Government Employees Association, AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO, supports the intent of H.B. 1474, which establishes the designation of “kiwila pono,” or “champion of democracy” for employers who permit employees to be absent with pay on election day to work at a polling place, and authorizes a paid leave of absence for state and county employees who serve as precinct officials and other temporary employees on election day.

In recent elections, there has been an almost desperate need for election workers. Without the appropriate number of workers, polling locations could open late, cause inconveniences for voters, or delay statewide election results. We are hopeful that if passed, this legislation will result not only in increased voter participation, but increased assistance from both public and private employees who choose to work at election sites on Election Day.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of H.B. 1474.

Respectfully submitted,

**Randy Perreira
Executive Director**