



**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 SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY AND LABOR
ON SENATE BILL NO. 2496
RELATING TO ELECTIONS

February 2, 2016

Chair Keith-Agaran and members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill No. 2496. The purpose of this bill is to transition all voters by 2022 to all-mail elections.

We believe the transition to all-mail elections will encourage voter turnout, streamline the administration of elections, and result in cost savings. Currently, elections consist of three systems: (1) absentee walk locations; (2) election day polling places; and (3) absentee mail. The vast majority of voters either vote at election day polling places or by absentee mail. As such, we believe it would be more efficient to focus our resources on absentee mail, with a significantly smaller election day presence limited to voters obtaining a replacement ballot package, or voting on a direct recording electronic voting machine; as well as some minor variation at the absentee walk locations. We have the following technical concerns regarding the bill.

We recommend that the division of responsibilities and expenses in proposed Section 7, subsections (f), (g) and (h) be deleted and replaced with the following subsections that are consistent with the traditional roles of the state and counties in the administration of elections.

(f) Election expenses in an election by mail shall be shared and set forth as follows:

- (1) Expenses related to mail elections involving both state and county offices, or federal and county offices, unrelated to voter registration shall be divided in half between the State and the counties. Each county will pay a proration of expenses as a proportion of the registered voters at the time of the general election. The counties will separately be responsible for expenses associated with voter registration.
 - (2) All expenses for county mail elections, which do not involve state or federal offices, shall be borne by the county and paid out of such appropriations as may be made by the council.
 - (3) All expenses for state or federal mail elections, which do not involve county offices, shall be borne by the State and paid out of such appropriations as may be made by the legislature. Expenses attributable to registration of voters by the county clerk, for said state or federal elections, which do not involve county offices, shall be borne by the State and paid out of such appropriations as may be made by the legislature.
- (g) Election responsibilities in elections by mail shall be shared and set forth as follows:
- (1) In mail elections involving both state and county offices, or federal and county offices, the counties will be responsible for voter registration, absentee voting, and the mailing and receipt of ballots, while the State will be responsible for the printing and counting of ballots. The State and counties may mutually agree to the delegation of these responsibilities to each other. Any responsibilities not enumerated above may be assigned to the counties or the state by the chief election officer.
 - (2) The county will be responsible for mail elections involving county only offices.
 - (3) For mail elections involving only state or federal offices, the counties will be responsible for voter registration and absentee voting, while the State will be responsible for the printing, mailing and receipt, and counting of ballots. Any responsibilities not

enumerated above shall be assigned to the counties or the state by the chief election officer.

(h) To the extent an election is conducted by mail for certain precincts and utilizes election day polling places for other precincts, the chief election officer will determine state and county responsibilities and expenses, consistent with this section and section 11-184.

(i) The chief election officer shall adopt rules pursuant to chapter 91 to provide for uniformity in the conduct of federal, state, and county elections by mail.”

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill No. 2496.

TESTIMONY

**The Libertarian Party of Hawaii
c/o 1658 Liholiho St #205
Honolulu, HI 96822**

RE: SB 2496 to be heard Tuesday February 2, at 9AM in conference room 016

OPPOSE

To the Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary”

Currently voters have a choice to vote at the polls on election-day or by absentee mail in or walk in. This bill seeks to eliminate the most popular choice. Why annoy hundreds of thousands of voters who have shown by their behavior how they prefer to vote? Have you forgotten the van cams wherein the legislature thought forcing hundreds of thousands of drivers to obey our speed limits despite the clear knowledge that they didn't want to was a smart idea.

From a practical stand point mail in voting creates several problems. Not the least of which being the privacy of voting can no longer be assured. Nor can it be certain that the votes were cast by the voters indicated. Voters can be made subject to manipulation by persons from some group they belong to who sends representatives to their home to “assist them with the voting.” Family members can also abuse the process. With fewer voting choices many of the people who now vote at the polls may stop voting.

I am sure there are do-gooders who think this is a wonderful idea. They will show charts and graphs and other stuff. I ask you to consider the people in your district who prefer to vote the old fashioned way and if you feel compelling them to do something different is what they elected you for.

Sincerely:



Tracy Ryan, Chair