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COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY AND LABOR

Wednesday, February 4, 2015, 9:00 a.m., Conference Room 016
SB 701 RELATING TO ELECTIONS

TESTIMONY

Susan Irvine, Legislative Committee, League of Women Voters of Hawaii

Chair Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair Shimabakuro and Committee Members:

The League of Women Voters of Hawaii would like to comment on SB 701 which deletes the authority of the chief elections officer to postpone an election up to 21 days due to damage caused by natural disaster; sets a deadline for the return of absentee ballots for elections affected by natural disasters; prohibits releasing statewide election results until absentee votes in affected precincts are counted; requires immediate notification of registered voters in affected precincts of the issuance of the order of absentee voting; and requires immediate delivery of absentee ballots following the order.

The League of Women Voters opposes deleting the authority of the chief elections officer to postpone an election in precincts affected by natural disasters. No one can predict exactly the consequences of any given natural disaster, so it would be wise to keep all options open. Results for the 2014 Primary Election in Puna would have been delivered much later, and with as much difficulty for all concerned, if the election had been done by absentee, rather than a special election.

League supports adding a statement requiring that statewide election results be withheld until affected precinct votes are received or polls are closed. Living in Hawaii, we are all keenly aware of the fact that, nationally, election results are often released before our polls close. This is not desirable for voters or candidates involved.

League supports amending HRS Section 15-2.5 to say "immediately," rather than a number of days for notifying voters and delivering of absentee ballots after a natural disaster. The sooner after a natural disaster the election process is completed, the better.

We urge you to consider our comments on this bill and thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.