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LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE BUREAU
State of Hawaii
State Capitol, Room 446
415 S. Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Written Comments

HCR116

REQUESTING THE OFFICE OF ELECTIONS TO CONVENE A TASK FORCE ON AUTOMATIC VOTER REGISTRATION

Charlotte A. Carter-Yamauchi, Director
Legislative Reference Bureau

Presented to the House Committee on Judiciary

Thursday, March 23, 2017, 2:15 p.m.
Conference Room 325

Chair Nishimoto and Members of the Committee:

Good afternoon Chair Nishimoto and members of the Committee, my name is Charlotte Carter-Yamauchi and I am the Director of the Legislative Reference Bureau. Thank you for providing the opportunity to submit written comments on H.C.R. No. 116, Requesting the Office of Elections to Convene a Task Force on Automatic Voter Registration.

The purpose of this measure is to request that the Office of Elections convene an automatic voter registration task force to:

- (1) Review current data systems used by the Department of Transportation and the counties to identify collaborative ways to streamline data transfers;
- (2) Review existing federal and state laws and practices regarding voter registration, including the Help America Vote Again Act of 2002 and the National Voter Registration Act of 1993, and consider ways to bring the State into compliance with existing federal law and to avail the State of potential funding;
- (3) Determine the feasibility, cost savings, and fiscal impact of implementing automatic voter registration in the State;

- (4) Propose legislation that would implement the automatic voter registration process; and
- (5) Submit a report of its findings and recommendations, including proposed legislation, to the Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the 2018 Regular Session.

The measure also requests that:

- (1) The Legislative Reference Bureau assist the task force as necessary; and
- (2) The task force and the Legislative Reference Bureau be available to provide testimony to the Legislature and for informational briefings.

The Bureau takes no position on the merits of this measure, but submits the following comments for your consideration.

As a general matter, we note that the task force will be convened by an executive branch agency and it does not appear that the task force will include any members of the Legislature. The Bureau is statutorily directed to use its resources and services to assist the Legislature and its members, unless otherwise directed by the Legislature.

Accordingly, we have some concerns with how the measure is currently drafted with respect to the work requested of the Bureau. The language of the measure broadly requires the Bureau to take on the responsibility of "assisting" the automatic voter registration task force "as necessary," even though the task force will be convened by an executive branch agency. We note that the task force is largely made up of representatives from public entities with greater available resources compared to the Bureau and, as such, could more readily provide the necessary staffing responsibilities. We have particular concerns that the reference in the measure to "assist . . . as necessary" could be read very broadly. The Bureau lacks the resources, including but not limited to sufficient research staff, to provide any administrative or logistical support to individual Legislators or non-legislative committees, working groups, or task forces of this nature. Moreover, the Bureau does not possess the facilities to accommodate meetings of a task force, nor do we possess any priority for requesting use of any of the conference rooms throughout the Capitol.

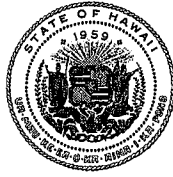
In addition, it is unclear why the measure specifically requests that the Legislative Reference Bureau be available to provide testimony to the Legislature and for informational briefings on the issue of automatic voter registration, since customarily, it is the responsibility of the task force's chairperson or selected representatives to speak on behalf of the convened task force.

If the Committee decides to recommend the adoption of this measure and desires to keep the Bureau involved, we respectfully request that it be amended by deleting:

- (1) The use of the phrase "as necessary" and limit the Bureau's involvement to assisting the task force with the finalizing of a report and any proposed legislation in relation thereto. Furthermore, to ensure the task force completes its work in a timely fashion, we would also request that it be specified that a draft report be submitted to the Bureau no later than October 1, 2017, so that work on the report would not adversely impact our ability to provide our core services to the Legislature for the upcoming 2018 Regular Session; and
- (2) The reference to the Bureau making itself available to testify before the Legislature and for informational briefings.

If the measure is amended to address the concerns noted above to narrow the scope of the Bureau's involvement with the task force to assisting with finalizing the report and proposed legislation, the Bureau believes that the services requested under the measure would be manageable and that the Bureau will be able to provide the services in the time allotted; provided that the Bureau's interim workload is not adversely impacted by too many other studies or additional responsibilities, such as conducting, writing, or finalizing other reports, drafting legislation, or both, for other state agencies, task forces, or working groups that may be requested or required under other legislative measures.

Thank you again for your consideration.



STATE OF HAWAII
OFFICE OF ELECTIONS
802 LEHUA AVENUE
PEARL CITY, HAWAII 96782
elections.hawaii.gov

SCOTT T. NAGO
CHIEF ELECTION OFFICER

TESTIMONY OF THE
CHIEF ELECTION OFFICER, OFFICE OF ELECTIONS
TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY
ON HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 70 AND
HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 116
REQUESTING THE OFFICE OF ELECTIONS TO CONVENE A TASK FORCE
ON AUTOMATIC VOTER REGISTRATION

March 23, 2017

Chair Nishimoto and members of the House Committee on Judiciary, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Resolution No. 70 and House Concurrent Resolution No. 116. The purpose of these resolutions is to convene a task force to explore the feasibility of establishing and implementing an automatic voter registration system in Hawaii.

The Office of Elections supports automatic voter registration because it is convenient for voters and it may increase registration. Additionally, we believe the electronic sharing of data between driver license and election officials will help to ensure the accuracy of the voter registration rolls.

The Office of Elections and the Department of Transportation have had ongoing discussions to formalize a memorandum of agreement to share data electronically. These discussions began as we moved towards upgrading the statewide voter registration system and to ensure the timely transfer of driver license/state identification data. We believe this task force may help us to understand and resolve challenges of the various stakeholders such as the Clerks' Offices, representatives of the Office of Enterprise Technology Services, the City Licensing Administrator, and the City and County of Honolulu's Department of Information Technology.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Resolution No. 70 and House Concurrent Resolution 116.



House Judiciary Committee
Chair Scott Nishimoto and Vice Chair Joy San Buenaventura

03/23/2017 at 2:15 PM in Room 325
HCR116 Requesting the Office of Elections to Convene a Task Force on Automatic Voter Registration

TESTIMONY / SUPPORT
Corie Tanida, Executive Director, Common Cause Hawaii

Dear Chair Nishimoto, Vice Chair San Buenaventura, and committee members:

Common Cause Hawaii supports HCR116 which would establish a task force to explore the feasibility of establishing and implanting an Automatic Voter Registration system in Hawaii.

As a state that consistently ranks last in the nation for voter participation, we commend your consideration of this important step to use existing technology and pathways to improve the process for registering eligible voters.

Automatic Voter Registration (AVR), which would automatically register eligible citizens, who apply for or renew their driver's license or identification card, to vote; unless they decline. It also authorizes the electronic transfer of voter registration information from the counties and Department of Transportation, to election officials and the statewide voter registration system.

Automatic Voter Registration (AVR) is a critical step toward modernizing our elections system. With AVR:

- Elections will be more secure. The electronic transfer of data in real time will lead to fewer typos, duplicates, and lost forms, thus our voter rolls will be more accurate and the chances of voter fraud will be reduced.
- The state will save money. States that have upgraded their systems estimate it costs approximately 30 times less to process an electronic application than a paper application.¹
- Privacy remains protected. If an individual chooses to decline to participate, their personal information will not be shared with election officials. For those who do participate, only information needed to register the voter will be shared.
- Hawaii will become a "model" state for voting reforms. AVR complements recent voting reforms, such as online voter registration (2015) and same day voter registration (2018), aimed at reducing barriers and ensuring access to the polls. AVR would also complement Voting By Mail, if passed, as more accurate voter rolls will reduce the amount of returned mail.

Automatic Voter Registration works. Oregon was the first state to implement this system in 2016. Over 270,000 were registered via Automatic Voter Registration, of those 42.73% (or 97,184) voted in the 2016 General Election, which helped Oregon set a new state record for number of votes cast.²

We believe that with the creation of this task force Hawaii will be one step closer to reducing another barrier to voting. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **support of HCR116**.

¹ Center for Secure and Modern Elections. (2016). *Modernelections.org*.

² Oregon Secretary of State. (2016). *Oregon Breaks 2 Million Ballots in Nov. 8 General Election, Setting New Record*. Retrieved from <http://oregonsosblog.us/2016/11/oregon-breaks-2-million-ballots-nov-8-general-election-setting-new-record/>



49 South Hotel Street, Room 314 | Honolulu, HI 96813
www.lwv-hawaii.com | 808.531.7448 | voters@lwv-hawaii.com

COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY
THURSDAY, March 23, 2017, 2:15 P.M., CONFERENCE ROOM 325

HCR 116, REQUESTING THE CHIEF ELECTION OFFICER TO CONVENE AN AUTOMATIC VOTER REGISTRATIN TASK FORCE TO EXPLORE THE FEASIBILITY OF ESTABLISHING AND IMPLEMENTING AN AUTOMATIC VOTER REGISTRATION SYSTEM IN HAWAII

REVISED TESTIMONY

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

Chair Nishimoto, Vice-Chair San Buenaventura and Committee Members:

The League of Women Voters of Hawaii strongly supports HCR 116.

To us, it's already clear that establishing automatic voter registration is feasible; the only remaining questions concern how it could be cooperatively implemented among the State and County officials responsible for driver's license, state identification cards and voter registration services.

In recent years, Hawaii has done much to modernize how citizens can register to vote. Despite this, recent estimates show that more than 250,000 eligible persons – some 26% of those eligible- are still not registered.¹ We will not be able to make inroads with voter turnout until we boost the number of persons registered to vote as a percent of those eligible to vote. Of course, the League acknowledges motivating registered voters to vote also remains a challenge, and we are committed to working on this effort as well.

Convening a task force will enable members to anticipate any unexpected procedural issues in automatic voter registration while drafting complementary legislation. We respectfully urge that the task force be created so that work can begin as soon as possible. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

¹ United States Elections Project,
https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1VAcF0eJ06y_8T4o2gvlL4YcyQy8pxb1zYkgXF76Uu1s/edit#gid=2030096602



AMERICANS FOR DEMOCRATIC ACTION

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MAILING ADDRESS

P.O. Box 23404
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96823

www.adaaction.org

March 22, 2017

TO: Honorable Chair Nishimoto and Members of the Judiciary Committee

RE: HR 70 & HCR 116 REQUESTING THE OFFICE OF ELECTIONS TO CONVENE A TASK FORCE
ON AUTOMATIC VOTER REGISTRATION.
Support for hearing on March 23

Americans for Democratic Action is an organization founded in the 1950s by leading supporters of the New Deal and led by Patsy Mink in the 1970s. We are devoted to the promotion of progressive public policies.

We support SB 334 SD1 as it would to convene an automatic voter registration task force to: identify collaborative ways to streamline data transfers; consider ways to bring the State into compliance with existing federal law and to avail the State of potential funding; determine the feasibility, cost savings, and fiscal impact of implementing automatic voter registration in the State; and propose legislation that would implement the automatic voter registration process.

Hawaii has one of the lowest voter turnout rates. We believe automatic voter registration would increase turnout. With new technology the task force should find some good solutions. It could save money and make voting more secure.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

John Bickel
President

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Tuesday, March 21, 2017 8:56 AM
To: JUDtestimony
Cc: lady.flach@gmail.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for HCR116 on Mar 23, 2017 14:15PM

HCR116

Submitted on: 3/21/2017

Testimony for JUD on Mar 23, 2017 14:15PM in Conference Room 325

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Present at Hearing |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Teri Heede | Individual | Support | No |

Comments: This is a common sense, low/no cost solution and WILL help with voter turnout. STRONG SUPPORT!!!!

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Tuesday, March 21, 2017 8:35 AM
To: JUDtestimony
Cc: ramizusawa@gmail.com
Subject: *Submitted testimony for HCR116 on Mar 23, 2017 14:15PM*

HCR116

Submitted on: 3/21/2017

Testimony for JUD on Mar 23, 2017 14:15PM in Conference Room 325

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Present at Hearing |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Richard Mizusawa | Individual | Support | No |

Comments:

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*Capt. T. J. Davies, Jr. (Ret.)
909 Kapiolani Blvd # 601
Honolulu, HI 96814-2132
tjdavies@juno.com
808-593-1026*

21 March 2017

To: Committee on Judiciary, Rep. Scott Nishimoto, Chair, Rep. Joy San Buenaventura, Vice Chair

Date: Thursday, March 23, 2017, 2:15 P.m., Room 325

Re: HCR 116, Requesting the Chief Election Officer to convene a Task Force on Automatic Voter Registration.

Chair Nishimoto, Vice Chair San Buenaventura and members of the committee:

My name is T. J. Davies Jr. I am 82 years old, retired, handicapped and live in Kakaako. I am writing in **STRONG SUPPORT** of HCR 116, **Requesting the Chief Election Officer to convene a Task Force on Automatic Voter Registration** to explore the feasibility of establishing and implementing an Automatic Voter Registration System in Hawaii.

Modernizing our elections: Thanks to advances in technology, we no longer have to stick to traditional paper forms which require staff to literally take the forms from one agency to the next and then manually enter data. Updating and modernizing our system will lead to increased processing efficiency and productivity.

Save money: States that have switched to electronic systems have reported that it costs about 30 times less to process an electronic application than a paper application

Elections will be more secure: Due to the increased accuracy of voter rolls—thanks to real time data transfers, fewer typos, fewer duplicate records, no more lost forms, etc. the chances of voter fraud will be reduced. The use of an encrypted system, rather than paper forms to transfer data, will also make our elections more secure.

Privacy and the right to choose to participate is assured, as those who do not want to register to vote can opt-out and their information will not be shared with the Office of Elections.

Your favorable consideration of HCR 116 is requested. Mahalo & Aloha

T. J. Davies Jr., Volunteer
Treasurer, AARP Chapter 60 Honolulu
Treasurer, Kokua Council for Senior Citizens of Hawaii Education Fund
Director, Hawaii Alliance for Retired Americans
Kakaako (District 26 / Senate District 12)

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Tuesday, March 21, 2017 11:20 AM
To: JUDtestimony
Cc: kaulanad@gmail.com
Subject: *Submitted testimony for HCR116 on Mar 23, 2017 14:15PM*

HCR116

Submitted on: 3/21/2017

Testimony for JUD on Mar 23, 2017 14:15PM in Conference Room 325

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Present at Hearing |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Kaulana Dameg | Individual | Support | No |

Comments:

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Tuesday, March 21, 2017 11:15 AM
To: JUDtestimony
Cc: ben@bikesharehawaii.org
Subject: Submitted testimony for HCR116 on Mar 23, 2017 14:15PM

HCR116

Submitted on: 3/21/2017

Testimony for JUD on Mar 23, 2017 14:15PM in Conference Room 325

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Present at Hearing |
|--------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Ben Trevino | Individual | Support | No |

Comments: I am a resident of Ala Moana, an active voter and a member of the board of Common Cause Hawaii. I strongly support SCR108 Automatic voter registration is an incredibly important tool in giving the residents of this state a voice in the government process. Participation in elections is one of the most basic forms of engagement and with the lowest voter turnout in the country, we need all the help we can get. On a personal note, as a software developer, I've worked on a lot of projects and applications that have asked people to register for a new service. Having enough users to the service was often the difference between success and failure of the product, possibly the company. It was thus, always smart to look at the registration process and make it as convenient and efficient as possible, after all a user that decided to abandon the signup process was a significant loss. And if we could make it even easier for someone to sign up, say by using their existing and trusted Google or Facebook accounts instead of having every new user enter their information all over again, even better! Why should our voter registration work any different? Our democracy is an application that directs the substantial and critical resources of the public sector -- our roads, our parks, our infrastructure, our natural environment -- things we all share, and is successful or unsuccessful based on the number of people it can engage. We want to onboard as many people as possible, really everyone who is eligible, not lose potential users to a sign-up process that is a drag. The question isn't should we implement automatic voter registration, it's really what has taken us so long to do it?

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Tuesday, March 21, 2017 3:44 PM
To: JUDtestimony
Cc: mendezj@hawaii.edu
Subject: *Submitted testimony for HCR116 on Mar 23, 2017 14:15PM*

HCR116

Submitted on: 3/21/2017

Testimony for JUD on Mar 23, 2017 14:15PM in Conference Room 325

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Present at Hearing |
|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Javier Mendez-Alvarez | Individual | Support | No |

Comments:

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Tuesday, March 21, 2017 4:07 PM
To: JUDtestimony
Cc: maxinekla@gmail.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for HCR116 on Mar 23, 2017 14:15PM

HCR116

Submitted on: 3/21/2017

Testimony for JUD on Mar 23, 2017 14:15PM in Conference Room 325

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Present at Hearing |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Maxine Anderson | Individual | Support | No |

Comments: I SUPPORT this bill and ask that the legislature go further by instituting automatic mail-in ballots for all eligible voters statewide.

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Tuesday, March 21, 2017 7:34 PM
To: JUDtestimony
Cc: makapuu3@gmail.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for HCR116 on Mar 23, 2017 14:15PM

HCR116

Submitted on: 3/21/2017

Testimony for JUD on Mar 23, 2017 14:15PM in Conference Room 325

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Present at Hearing |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Elton Johnson | Individual | Support | No |

Comments: Thank you for considering HCR 116, and thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support. Automatic voter registration would help increase participation in our democracy. The greater security, efficiency, and economy it would provide are just bonuses. Please support the proposed task force to study automatic voter registration. Mahalo, R. Elton Johnson, III

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Wednesday, March 22, 2017 10:43 AM
To: JUDtestimony
Cc: barbarapolk@hawaiiantel.net
Subject: Submitted testimony for HCR116 on Mar 23, 2017 14:15PM

HCR116

Submitted on: 3/22/2017

Testimony for JUD on Mar 23, 2017 14:15PM in Conference Room 325

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Present at Hearing |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Barbara Polk | Individual | Support | No |

Comments: Automatic Voter Registration is being implemented around the country to increase voter registration, produce more accurate voter rolls, and decrease the costs of voter registration. I urge you to pass this resolution that will pull together those who would need to implement it to work out the details of doing so.

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Submitted testimony for HR70 on Mar 23, 2017 14:15PM

mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov

Mon 3/20/2017 7:29 PM

To:JUDtestimony <judtestimony@capitol.hawaii.gov>;

Cc:KarinNomura1@gmail.com <KarinNomura1@gmail.com>;

HR70

Submitted on: 3/20/2017

Testimony for JUD on Mar 23, 2017 14:15PM in Conference Room 325

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Present at Hearing |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Karin Nomura | Individual | Support | No |

Comments: I think it would increase voter turnout

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Submitted testimony for HR70 on Mar 23, 2017 14:15PM

mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov

Mon 3/20/2017 9:38 PM

To:JUDtestimony <judtestimony@capitol.hawaii.gov>;

Cc:mkhan@hawaiiantel.net <mkhan@hawaiiantel.net>;

HR70

Submitted on: 3/20/2017

Testimony for JUD on Mar 23, 2017 14:15PM in Conference Room 325

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Present at Hearing |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Leimomi Khan | Individual | Support | No |

Comments: Support, however, recommend inclusion of representatives of the political parties in Hawaii, such as the Democratic and Republican parties because they play a major part in supporting voter registration and turnout.

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LATE

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Thursday, March 23, 2017 12:16 AM
To: JUDtestimony
Cc: dr.yoshicedo@gmail.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for HCR116 on Mar 23, 2017 14:15PM

HCR116

Submitted on: 3/23/2017

Testimony for JUD on Mar 23, 2017 14:15PM in Conference Room 325

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Present at Hearing |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Jill Yoshicedo | Individual | Support | Yes |

Comments: Dear Judiciary Committee: I am in support of HCR116 as automatic voter registration helps ensure every citizen's right to vote, removes barriers and inconveniences experienced with voter registration, and increases voter turnout. Increasing voter turnout contributes to the stability and efficacy of our democratic system. I am also in favor of an electronic system over manual data entry, which will save money, increase departmental efficiency, and increase accuracy. Thank you for your consideration.

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

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