

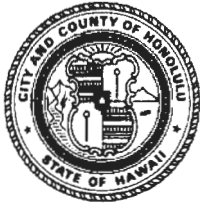
LATE

SB 1066

RELATING TO ELECTIONS

Beginning with the primary election in 2018, requires the office of elections to implement election by mail in a county with a population of fewer than 100,000 and beginning with the 2020 primary election, implement election by mail in each of the other counties for all elections. Establishes an election by mail system, including requirements for ballots, replacement ballots, deficient return of ballots, electronic transmission of replacement ballots under certain circumstances, ballot counting, voter service centers, places of deposit, and election expenses and responsibilities. Establishes procedures for postponed elections. Makes conforming amendments to provide for an election by mail system. Allows voters in an election by mail system to request that their ballots be temporarily forwarded to another address in or outside of the State for a single election or a primary or special primary election and the election immediately following it. Appropriates funds for the implementation and administration of the elections by mail program.

Requires the office of elections to submit annual reports to the legislature from 2018 to 2024 regarding implementing the elections by mail program.



GLEN I. TAKAHASHI
City Clerk

KIMBERLY L. RIBELLIA
Deputy City Clerk

ELECTIONS
OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK
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TESTIMONY OF GLEN TAKAHASHI
CITY CLERK, CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU
TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY AND LABOR
ON SENATE BILL NO. 334, 428, and 1066
RELATING TO VOTING
February 2, 2017

Chair Keith-Agaran and Committee members:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Senate Bills 334, 420 and 1066, three bills that would transition Hawaii's elections into a vote-by-mail election scheme.

As evident in 2016 and in other recent elections, an increasing number of voters now cast their ballots prior to election day. In the City & County of Honolulu, absentee voting comprised 60 and 51 percent of votes cast in the 2016 primary and general elections, respectively. We expect this trend to continue, even as the State continues to expend considerable energy and expense to administer polling places statewide.

The Office of the City Clerk supports SB334 as the vote-by-mail measure going forward.

In a general consensus, our counterparts in both Oregon and Washington indicated that in their elections by mail transitions, more initial consideration should have been given to amending their entire election statutes to ensure that the election scheme functions properly and does not contain ambiguities caused by the different methods of voting. We believe that SB334 incorporates that comprehensive review of Hawaii's election statutes for transitioning to a vote-by-mail election scheme.

In addition to modifying or removing references to polling places, SB334 adds further structure to requirements that arise from the implementation and deployment of a vote-by-mail scheme. Chief among the proposals is addressing the ballot return postal "service gap" by establishing places of deposit starting five-days prior to the election. The measure also allows election officials to consider the USPS service standards for the particular mailing origin of the vote by mail ballot packets to ensure that all voters have a full 18-days to receive and return their ballots, regardless of whether the ballots may be mailed from within Hawaii or anywhere on the U.S. mainland.

That being said, the City also supports Senate Bills 420 and 1066, the contents of which have been subjected to considerable discussion, and incorporates the input provided by our office, fellow election officials, and other stakeholders. We believe both bills include the essential features that can capably transition the state to a full vote-by-mail system.

Should either of these two bills move forward, the City recommends that the Committee consider an amendment to allow more time for voters to correct deficient signatures on ballot return envelopes (e.g. blank or non-matching signatures). Upon further consideration, we are now recommending that voters be allowed a full 10 days (versus 5 days in our 2016 testimony) to cure these deficiencies. The additional time to receive notice of and remedy the signature issues is needed most in areas such as Molokai, Lanai, and other areas where postal delivery of written communication to the County Clerk's office may take a bit longer.

While these two bills recommend a phased in approach for various reasons, we urge the Committee to consider whether all voters and election stakeholders statewide should be allowed a uniform experience within the same election. Doing so would also avoid potential confusion arising from conducting a media/voter education program (a critical component of any transition) intended for only a portion of the electorate.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 334, 428, and 1066.



SIERRA CLUB OF HAWAII
MĀLAMA I KA HONUA. *Cherish the Earth.*

SENATE JUDICIARY AND LABOR COMMITTEE
Friday, February 3, 2017 8:45 AM Conference Room 016

In SUPPORT of SB334 SB428 SB1066 Relating to Voting

Aloha Chairman Keith-Agaran and members of the Judiciary and Labor Committee,

On behalf of our 20,000 members and supporters, the Sierra Club of Hawai'i strongly supports SB334, SB428, SB1066, which authorize mail-in voting for the State of Hawai'i.

For nearly 50 years, the Sierra Club of Hawai'i has helped people explore, enjoy, and protect the Hawaiian Islands. The work of our volunteers spans the spectrum of community engagement, including outdoor education, lobbying, and elections.

Our volunteers also engage people in the democratic process. From issue education to voter registration, candidate endorsements and get out the vote efforts, we know firsthand how the obstacles to public participation in our democracy.

Conducting our vote by mail is one way to lower a key barrier to voter turn-out. That is why we strongly support the passage of SB334, SB428, and SB1066.

We know that mail-in voting will save Hawai'i money, increase voter turn-out, and improve the quality of our democracy.

Thank you very much for this opportunity to provide testimony on this important issue.

Mahalo,

Marti Townsend
Director

From: [L. Osterer](#)
To: [JDL Testimony](#)
Subject: Strong Support for SB334, SB428 and SB1066
Date: Thursday, February 2, 2017 8:19:08 PM

Dear Chair Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair Rhoads, and Committee Members,

I am testifying in support of these three Vote By Mail bills because they are an important step forward to increasing voting and civic engagement in Hawai'i.

The convenience of voting by mail would help residents avoid long voting lines, have time to study, and vote on our own schedule.

These measures would also save the State money: the Office of Elections estimates by having Vote By Mail and service centers, the state will save approximately \$800,000 every election cycle due to the streamlining of our elections.

With proper ballot and voter identification, I believe voting by email could also be accomplished.

Please pass SB334, SB428, and SB1066.

Sincerely,
L. Osterer
Koloa, Hawaii