



**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 SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
ON SENATE BILL NO. 1066 SD 1
RELATING TO ELECTIONS

February 22, 2017

Chair Tokuda and members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill No. 1066 SD 1. The purpose of this bill is to transition to all mail elections.

We support elections by mail because it is convenient and accessible for voters, and it will streamline the administration of elections. In recent years, more than half of voters have cast their ballot prior to election day.

We support the two-step implementation of elections by mail proposed in this bill. Given our strong support for all mail elections, we believe the bill should permit election officials the flexibility to be able to implement all mail elections earlier. Specifically, election officials should be given the ability as early as 2018 to implement all mail elections in particular precincts or counties, as they deem appropriate. Additionally, we propose the following clarifying amendments.

We believe the bill should be amended for consistency to define the roles and responsibilities of the Office of Elections and the county clerks. The bill states that the chief election officer and clerks will determine and provide for voter service centers and places of deposit. However, this is inconsistent with proposed §11-I which provides that voter services centers will be established at the office of the county clerks and that the county clerks may designate places of deposit.

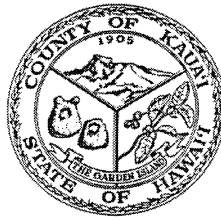
We suggest amending subsection (c) of proposed §11-B, to refer to the county clerk, as opposed to the chief election officer. In addition, an amendment

to proposed §11-J to state that “[t]he counties shall be responsible for voter registration, absentee voting, voter service centers, places of deposit, and the mailing and receipt of ballots.” Similarly, as the mailing of ballots is a task of the county clerks, we believe the public notice of mailing should likewise be issued by the county clerks.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill No. 1066
SD 1.

JADE K. FOUNTAIN-TANIGAWA
County Clerk

Telephone: (808) 241-4800
TTY: (808) 241-5116



SCOTT K. SATO
Deputy County Clerk

Facsimile: (808) 241-6207
E-mail: elections@kauai.gov

**ELECTIONS DIVISION
OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CLERK**
4386 RICE STREET, SUITE 101
LIHU'E, KAUA'I, HAWAII 96766-1819

TESTIMONY OF JADE K. FOUNTAIN-TANIGAWA
COUNTY CLERK, COUNTY OF KAUA'I
TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
ON SENATE BILL NO. 1066, SD 1
RELATING TO ELECTIONS
February 22, 2017

Dear Chair Tokuda and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of Senate Bill No. 1066, SD 1. This Bill proposes implementing elections by mail in a county with a population of fewer than 100,000 beginning with the 2018 primary election and expands elections by mail statewide beginning with the 2020 primary election.

Our Office fully supports migrating to an elections by mail and vote center based elections process, and believes that the phased implementation plan offered in this Bill provides the best means for transitioning from our current polling place based voting process.

We wish to thank the Legislature for hearing this Bill and respectfully request your support of this measure. Additionally, please feel free to contact the County of Kaua'i's Elections Division if we can assist in clarifying issues pertaining to elections by mail or related matters.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of Senate Bill No. 1066, SD 1.

JADE K. FOUNTAIN-TANIGAWA
County Clerk, County of Kaua'i

STEWART MAEDA
County Clerk



JON HENRICKS
Deputy County Clerk

County of Hawai'i

Office of the County Clerk

25 Aupuni Street, Suite 1402 • Hilo, Hawai'i 96720
(808) 961-8255 • Fax (808) 961-8912

TESTIMONY OF STEWART MAEDA

COUNTY CLERK, COUNTY OF HAWAI'I

TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

REGARDING SENATE BILL NO. 1066, SD1

RELATING TO ELECTIONS

FEBRUARY 22, 2017

Chair Tokuda and members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill No. 1066, SD 1. The purpose of this bill is to expand the procedures used for absentee voting and to transition all voters to permanent absentee status by 2020.

Our office strongly supports this bill. Currently, elections in our state consist of absentee voting by mail, absentee walk-in sites and Election Day voting. Absentee voting was implemented to supplement Election Day polling places and to allow greater opportunities to vote. The total turnout for Hawai'i County of individuals who voted in the 2016 General Election was 66,021 and of that 39,551 individuals chose to vote absentee. Sixty percent (60%) of all individuals who voted in Hawai'i County chose to vote absentee rather than by utilizing traditional polling places.

Transitioning to a vote by mail election would help to create a more convenient voter process, increase voter turnout, and provide financial savings during election years. This bill would also allow voters more convenience and flexibility.

Our hope is that the passage of this measure will encourage voters who may feel disenfranchised due to isolation, lack of transportation, or disability, to feel more a part of the process due to the ability to vote by mail.

We would appreciate the ability to implement an all-mail election as early as 2018. With an all-mail voting system, Hawai'i County will see financial savings in in areas such as staff training and Election Day poll workers, decreased voting machines and associated contracts as well as warehouse storage costs.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill No. 1066, SD 1.



AMERICANS FOR DEMOCRATIC ACTION

OFFICERS

John Bickel, President
Alan Burdick, Vice President
Marsha Schweitzer, Treasurer
Karin Gill, Secretary

DIRECTORS

Guy Archer Jan Lubin
Dylan Armstrong Jenny Nomura
Gloria Borland Stephen O'Harrow
Chuck Huxel Cameron Sato

MAILING ADDRESS

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

www.adaaction.org

February 20 , 2017

TO: Honorable Chair Tokuda and Members of the Ways & Means Committee

RE: SB 1066 SD1 Relating to Elections
 Support for hearing on Feb. 22

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 1066 SD1 as it would enact voting by mail beginning with small counties in 2018 and by 2020 would establish an election by mail system for all counties, 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.

Hawaii has one of the lowest voter turnout rates. We believe this bill would increase turnout as it would allow people to vote at home.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

John Bickel
President



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

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

WEDNESDAY, February 22, 2017, 9:30 a.m., Room 211
SB 1066, SD 1 RELATING TO ELECTIONS

TESTIMONY

Janet Mason, Legislative Committee, League of Women Voters of Hawaii

Chair Tokuda, Vice-Chair Dela Cruz and Committee Members:

The League of Women Voters of Hawaii strongly supports SB 1066, SD1 that introduces voting by mail in Kauai County in 2018 and across the remaining counties in Hawaii in 2020.

This measure modernizes the way we vote, can increase voter turnout, and saves money in the process. The League encourages everyone to register to vote and then vote. But in the 21st century, voting does not mean we must line up at a polling place!

Voter education promoting “voting by mail” is already well underway, and voters are responding. To succeed with this approach, certain reminders we already use should be emphasized, such as signing the outside ballot return envelope and meeting the deadline for ballot return.

Conducting elections by mail **statewide** is an extension of decades of experience with successful distribution, collection and counting of mail-in absentee ballots. Hawaii has permitted absentee voting since 1976, so procedures for voting by mail, including division of labor between the Counties and the State, are well established. Our County Clerks and the Office of Elections support this change.

We should start a logical expansion of this already popular absentee voting to a statewide “vote by mail” approach like that outlined in SB1066 SD1. We have experience with this approach - Hawaii’s U.S. House vacancy election in 2010 and the special vacancy elections conducted by the City & County of Honolulu in 2009 and 2010, were conducted entirely by mail and produced high turnout.

The League of Women Voters supports a simple, secure, and effective approach plan as outlined in this bill. Beginning in 2020 all registered voters would receive a ballot in the mail that would give them eighteen days before the election to study the candidates and issues. We would have time to consider the ballot without



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

the pressure of a long voting line behind us. The voted ballot will be inserted in a secrecy envelope and then placed in a prepaid return envelope. No one will know an individual's vote!

Also, Voter Service Centers for those who need assistance and for those who like to vote in person will be provided.

Voting by mail will reduce the high cost of maintaining, storing, and transporting voting equipment and supplies to more than 200 polling places. No longer will we need to recruit and train thousands of volunteers for state elections—small changes with a big impact! The Office of Elections estimates it will save Hawaii \$800 thousand per election cycle.

But what's even better most studies have now found that vote by mail increased turnout.¹

Implementing vote-by-mail in Kauai County in 2018 has a couple of minor advantages. First, the sooner we start voting this way, the sooner we'll start saving money (though the 2018 savings for Kauai only will be relatively small). Second, there will always be naysayers and Kauai by itself in 2018 might put to rest any notion that this change is difficult to implement.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

¹ United States Government Accountability Office, "Elections; Issues Related to Registering Voters and Administering Elections," June 2016, p. 31

February 20, 2017

COMMENTS ON SB334 and SB1066 RELATING TO ELECTIONS

Dear Chair Jill Tokuda, Vice Chair Donovan Dela Cruz and
Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Vote By Mail (VBM) gives up the privacy of the voting booth and potentially subjects voters to inappropriate pressure and monitoring of their vote by family members, friends, and others. It also raises some additional concerns about privacy of the ballots during counting. To ensure the integrity of elections, I ask that you consider strengthening this bill in the following ways.

Protecting Voter Privacy:

I fear that vulnerable people may be subject to pressure to vote in ways they did not choose. With ballots sent out in advance, there is room for others to intervene and check on how a family member or friend has voted. Although there are detailed proscriptions concerning interference with the privacy of the voter at polling places, the same needs to be spelled out for wherever a voter fills out a ballot. I would suggest adding, in the appropriate place, wording similar to the following:

“Every voter has the right to fill out their ballot in private, to place it in an envelope and mail it themselves. Any attempt by family members, friends, or others to interfere with this right shall constitute election fraud.”

This category of fraud should also be included in the section on voter fraud and sent to voters along with instructions on filling out their ballots.

Observers for Ballot Counting:

Although there are detailed the procedures for appointment of and duties of poll watchers, there is nothing in this bill about watchers for ballot counting, except for a brief reference to “official watchers.” Because counting of ballots may begin several days prior to election day, it is important to spell out the involvement of observers. I believe it is important to add wording to **guarantee that official watchers must be present as ballots are opened and as they are counted, that each registered party is allowed to have a watcher present, and how and when the Office of Elections will let designated watchers know when counting will be taking place and where. Also, “official watchers” should be present when clerks “prepare the ballots for counting”** unless no one will see an actual marked ballot during this process.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on these bills.

Aloha,
Barbara B. Polk



Senate Ways and Means Committee
Chair Jill Tokuda, Vice Chair Donovan Dela Cruz

02/22/2017 at 9:30 AM in Room 211
SB1066 SD1— Relating to Elections

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

Dear Chair Tokuda, Vice Chair Dela Cruz and members of the Committee:

Common Cause Hawaii supports SB1066 SD1 which would establish a statewide “Voting-by-Mail” or, “Elections-by-Mail” system.

Common Cause believes that increased citizen participation in the electoral process is a crucial component of maintaining a successful democracy, and believes that Voting-by-Mail provides people more time to exercise their right to vote.

VOTING TRENDS

It’s important that the ways we engage the voting public be maximized to counter the perceived voter apathy, and other factors that have led to a decrease in voter participation in recent years. We believe the intent of SB1066 SD1 achieves that goal in numerous ways; the first of which being the basic voter preference for Voting-by-Mail. Although statewide Voting-by-Mail has yet to be fully implemented locally, it has been successfully utilized in Hawaii as recently as the 2010 1st Congressional District election. According to figures provided by the Office of Elections, trends show a leaning of basic voter preference for Voting-By-Mail with 54.4% of voters from the 2016 Hawaii Primary Election opting to participate by mail-in absentee ballot, compared with 38.1% who voted at their precinct.

OVERCOMING LOGISTICAL OBSTICLES

In addition to the individual and collective benefits that Voting-by-Mail provides to the public, tangible solutions to significant logistical obstacles accompany the intent of this bill: Hawaii’s 2014 Primary Election reminded us that the potential for storms, hurricanes, and other natural disasters, pose a substantial threat to an electoral system which relies heavily on holding elections on a single day. A Voting-by-Mail system is more “protected” from these natural disasters.

POTENTIAL TO SAVE TAXPAYER MONEY

Estimates from the Office of Elections show that after an initial technology investment, the state would save approximately \$800,000 per election cycle. Tax dollars can be saved by the reduced need for as many walk-in voter service centers that accompanies a Voting-by-Mail system; a system which will only be further complemented by the election reform measures that are in the process of being implemented: Online Voter Registration, as of 2015; Late Voter Registration at Early Walk-In Sites as of 2016, and Election Day Registration as of 2018. Phasing in Voting-by-Mail will enable election officials to better implement and refine the new voting programs, and allow voters to become accustomed to them as well.

These programs, combined with implementing a Voting-by-Mail system, will showcase Hawaii as a “model” state for voting reforms.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony **supporting SB1066 SD1**.



HAWAI'I KAI NEIGHBORHOOD BOARD NO. 1

NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION • 925 DILLINGHAM BOULEVARD, SUITE 160 • HONOLULU, HAWAII, 96817
PHONE (808) 768-3710 • FAX (808) 768-3711 • INTERNET <http://www.honolulu.gov/nco>

RESOLUTION REQUESTING THE HAWAII STATE LEGISLATURE TO ESTABLISH AN ELECTIONS-BY-MAIL SYSTEM

WHEREAS, Hawai'i has historically suffered from low voter turnout; and

WHEREAS, our current election model consists of three election systems: absentee mail, absentee walk-in, and election day polling place voting; and

WHEREAS, these three systems utilize a considerable amount of resources; and

WHEREAS, the current election model does not deliver the convenience preferred by many voters, as voters must still initiate the process by either applying for an absentee mail ballot, or physically reporting to an early voting site or election day polling place; and

WHEREAS, voter turnout statistics show that in recent elections more voters are choosing to cast their ballots prior to election day, and the Office of Elections believes it would be more efficient to focus increasingly limited resources on absentee voting; and

WHEREAS, in the 2014 general election, 51.2% of the voters that turned out opted to vote by mail instead of voting in person at walk-in polling places; and

WHEREAS, the increase in permanent absentee mail voting appears to indicate that voters prefer the convenience of voting by mail to cast their ballot; and

WHEREAS, the Office of Elections estimates approximately \$800,000 would be saved in each election cycle by converting to an all-mail voting system; and

WHEREAS, the state and all four county election offices support an all-mail voting system; and

WHEREAS, the Office of Hawaiian Affairs believes an all-mail voting system will reduce barriers to voting and increase voter participation opportunities among Native Hawaiians; and

WHEREAS, maximum citizen participation in the electoral process is a crucial component to maintain a successful democracy and a vote-by-mail system provides people more time to exercise their right to vote by giving them ample opportunity to consider issues, candidates, and make more informed decisions; now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Hawaii Kai Neighborhood Board requests the State legislature to pass legislation to establish and implement an election by mail voting system in the State of Hawai'i; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that copies of this resolution be distributed electronically to all State Legislators, Chief Election Officer, County Election Clerks, Governor, and Neighborhood Board Members.

Adopted by the Hawaii Kai Neighborhood Board No. 1 at its regular meeting of JANUARY 31, 2017, by a vote of 12-0-1.

Natalie Iwasa, Chair

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

18 February 2017

To: Committee on Ways And Means, Sen. Jill N. Tokuda, Chair, Sen. Dela Cruz, Vice Chair

Date: Wednesday, February 22, 2017, 9:30 a .m. Room 211

Re: **SB 1066, SD1_Relating to Elections**, Requires the office of elections to implement election by mail.
Chair Tokuda, Vice Chair Dela Cruz and members of the committee:

My name is T. J. Davies Jr. I am 82 years old, retired and live in Kakaako. I am writing in **STRONG SUPPORT** of **SB 1066, SD1_Relating to Elections**, Requiring the office of elections to implement election by mail.

Hawaii voters want the convenience of voting by mail. Voters can avoid long lines and take their time when casting their ballots, rather than being pressured and rushed in a cramped booth on Election Day. In recent years, voters have increasingly opted to vote by mail instead of voting in person at walk-in polling places. During the 2016 general election, **53.6%** of Hawaii voters cast their ballots prior to Election Day.

The state will save money. The Hawaii State Office of Elections estimates approximately \$800,000 would be saved in each election cycle by converting to Voting by Mail.

Your favorable consideration of this legislation is urgently 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)

Aloha Chair Tokuda, Vice Chair De La Cruz and committee members.

I am a senior citizen and a resident of House District 19 and Senate District 9. I am a member of AARP, Kokua Council, the Hawaii Alliance of Retired Americans and the Legislative Committee of PABEA.

I have been a precinct worker, voter assistance official or precinct chair for more than 45 years.

I'm testifying in strong support of SB1066, SD1, which will allow voting by mail as a primary voting mechanism. This would allow individuals to vote in their own homes, affording privacy and comfort. It would alleviate the problem of congested voting placements and problems with voting machines. The latter has cause so many problems that last November, some left the voting places in frustration without voting. Of course, there would still be select places where individuals could go to cast their ballots.

Please support SB1066, SD1, to ease the voting process and save the state as much as \$800,000 per election cycle.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Barbara J. Service

SB1066

Submitted on: 2/20/2017

Testimony for WAM on Feb 22, 2017 09:30AM in Conference Room 211

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

Comments: I strongly support SB334's effort to improve the election process by implementing vote by mail across the board. One of the most important reasons to do this is access and equity. Right now, only people with the time and transportation to get to polls have all of the voting options available to them. As we know, not everyone is in a position to get that time off of work. We have vote by mail now, but many people may not be aware that this option is available to them and instead either endure the hardship to vote or not vote at all. Another reason to do this is cost savings to the state. I suspect, over time the cost to administer the program will even go down, and will allow Hawaii to accommodate a larger electorate at a lower cost. I applaud this legislature's support of an engaged electorate which is so essential to our democratic process and giving every citizen a voice.

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.

Do not reply to this email. This inbox is not monitored. For assistance please email webmaster@capitol.hawaii.gov

Thank you for the opportunity to express support for SB 334 SD1 and SB 1066 SD1.

Voting by mail is more efficient, economical, and convenient. The savings alone recommend it. And by making voting more convenient, it encourages greater participation in our democratic process.

Thank you,

R. Elton Johnson, III

B1066

Submitted on: 2/17/2017

Testimony for WAM on Feb 22, 2017 09:30AM in Conference Room 211

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Nancy Davlantes	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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.

Do not reply to this email. This inbox is not monitored. For assistance please email webmaster@capitol.hawaii.gov