

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 WAYS AND MEANS
ON SENATE BILL NO. 334 and 1066 (Senate Draft 1)
RELATING TO ELECTIONS

February 22, 2017

Chair Tokuda and Committee members:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Senate Bills 334 SD1 and 1066 SD1, two 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 before 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 SD1 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 effort should have been exerted to conform their entire election statutes to ensure that the election scheme functions correctly and does not contain ambiguities caused by the different methods of voting. We believe that SB334 SD1 incorporates that comprehensive review of Hawaii's election statutes for transitioning to a vote-by-mail election scheme.

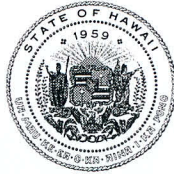
In addition to modifying or removing references to polling places, SB334 SD1 adds further structure to requirements that arise from the implementation and deployment of a vote-by-mail election scheme. Chief among the proposals is addressing the ballot return postal "service gap" by establishing places of deposit starting five-days prior to the election. The measure also allows election officials to mail ballot packets to voters to allow 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 Office of the City Clerk also supports SB1066 SD1, the contents of which have been subjected to considerable discussion (in 2016). We believe both bills include the essential features that can capably transition the State to a full vote-by-mail system.

SB1066 SD1 alternatively envisions a phased implementation of elections by mail. However, while this approach is also a viable option, we urge the Committee to ponder 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.

Finally, for purposes of clarity, we recommend an amendment to Section 6 of SB334 SD1, pertaining to the sworn affirmation required of election day registrants utilizing a voter service center. We believe that the intent of the sworn affirmation in subsection (c) is to require an acknowledgement that the voter "*has not voted and will not attempt to vote again*" if allowed to exercise same day registration, whether it be at another voter service center or in another jurisdiction elsewhere.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB334 SD1 and SB1066 SD1.



**STATE OF HAWAII
OFFICE OF ELECTIONS**

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PEARL CITY, HAWAII 96782
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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. 334 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. 334 SD 1. The purpose of this bill is to implement elections by mail statewide beginning in 2020.

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.

This bill envisions elections by mail to be implemented statewide in 2020. 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. As such, we would propose the following changes to proposed section 11-A.

§11-A Elections eligible to be conducted by mail. Beginning with the 2020 primary election, all elections shall be conducted by mail in accordance with this title. Any election prior to the 2020 primary election may be conducted by mail, in whole or in part, as determined by the chief election officer for state or federal elections or the county clerk for county elections. To the extent an election is only conducted in part by mail, any proclamation will

clearly detail which precincts will continue to have polling places
and which ones will be conducted by mail.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill No. 334
SD 1.

JADE K. FOUNTAIN-TANIGAWA
County Clerk

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SCOTT K. SATO
Deputy County Clerk

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**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. 334, 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. 334, SD 1. This Bill proposes establishing elections by mail statewide beginning with the 2020 primary election.

Our Office fully supports this Bill, but believes that a plan to phase in implementation provides the best means for transitioning from our current polling place based voting process to elections by mail. We therefore, respectfully request that this Bill be amended by adopting language contained in Senate Bill 1066, SD 1, which authorizes the County of Kaua'i to implement an elections by mail and vote center based elections process beginning with the 2018 primary election.

We wish to thank the Legislature for hearing this Bill and respectfully request 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. 334, SD 1.

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

DANNY A. MATEO
County Clerk



JOSIAH K. NISHITA
Deputy County Clerk

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CLERK

COUNTY OF MAUI
200 S. HIGH STREET
WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAII 96793
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TESTIMONY OF DANNY A. MATEO
COUNTY CLERK, COUNTY OF MAUI
TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
ON SENATE BILL NO. 334 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 offer testimony in support of Senate Bill No. 334 SD 1, with comments. The purpose of this bill is to have elections by mail statewide beginning with the 2020 elections.

Senate Bill No. 334 SD 1 provides a comprehensive overhaul of current statutory provisions related to elections, to conform to elections by mail operations. Feedback from other jurisdictions that have transitioned to elections by mail have indicated a comprehensive overhaul is needed for creation of effective and efficient elections by mail law.

Overall, we feel that elections by mail is a more efficient and effective way to reach our voters and administer elections and we respectfully request your support of this Bill.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of Senate Bill No. 334 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 334 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 334 SD1 as it would enact voting by mail uniformly across all counties for all elections commencing in 2020

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 334, 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 334, SD1 that introduces voting by mail across all counties 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 SB334 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



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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

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



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



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

02/22/2017 at 9:30 AM in Room 211
SB334 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 SB334 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 SB 334 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. 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 SB334 SD1**.

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 SB334, 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 SB334, 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

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

17 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 334, SD1, Relating to Elections.** Enacts voting by mail uniformly across all counties for all elections commencing in 2020.

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 334, SD1, Relating to Elections.** Enacts voting 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)

SB334

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. I applaud this legislature's support of an engaged electorate which is so essential to our democratic process and giving every citizen a voice.

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SB334

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.

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