



**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. 855 SD 1
RELATING TO ELECTIONS

February 24, 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. 855 SD 1. The purpose of this bill is to require that an application to register to vote shall constitute a request for an absentee ballot unless the applicant indicates they do not wish to be a permanent absentee voter.

The Office of Elections believes this bill will make voting more convenient by ensuring that every applicant will be mailed a ballot, unless they opt out and would prefer to vote in person.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill No. 855 SD 1.



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

02/24/2017 at 9:35AM in Room 211
SB855 SD1 – Relating to Elections

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

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

Common Cause Hawaii supports SB855 SD1 with comments. This bill provides that a submission of a voter registration application constitutes as a request for permanent absentee voter status unless the applicant declines.

We support this provision of this bill, but ask that you reinsert the original contents (Section 11-A) of SB855, which would establish Automatic Voter Registration in Hawaii. Section 11-A specifies that applications for civil identification cards or driver's licenses would not be processed until the applicant declined to register to vote or completed the registration affidavit. 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.

In Committee Report 513, it was noted that the contents of SB206 was very similar to Section 11-A of SB855, which is why the section was removed from SB855 SD1. While there are similarities, we note some of the key differences which highlights why SB855 is preferable and why Section 11-A should be reinserted.

- SB855 specifically states which information is to be transferred from DMVs to the Office of Elections. This will help alleviate privacy concerns, as not all of an applicant's information is needed in order to register to vote.
- SB855 requires applicant information to be electronically sent to the Office of Elections on a "real time" basis rather than the DOT just making the information accessible to the Office of Elections.
- SB855 specifically states that only the information of applicants who are United States citizens will be transferred to the Office of Elections, SB206 does not.

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

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

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/>

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.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on SB855 SD1.



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
FRIDAY February 24, 2017, 9:35 A.M., CONFERENCE ROOM 211

SB 855, SD1 RELATING TO ELECTIONS

TESTIMONY

Janet Mason, Legislative Co-Chair, 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 855, SD1 which provides that all applicants who are eligible to vote and apply for a driver's license will be automatically registered to vote (if not already registered to vote) unless the applicant affirmatively declines to register to vote.

This is excellent, much-needed legislation, if Hawaii is to make significant progress in improving its voter turnout. 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. One recent estimate is that about 36% of those eligible haven't registered.¹ 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.

We are pleased that the actual affidavit for voter registration would be included as a part of these applications. This should satisfy provisions of the National Voter Registration Act that require an "opt out" clause. Likewise, we support automatically registering an application for registration as a permanent absentee voter.

The bill makes clear that information from County departments of motor vehicles should be transmitted electronically to the clerk of the county on a real-time basis and permits the counties to electronically share the voter registration data with the statewide voter registration system, so applications to vote can be processed in a timely way.

¹ Office of Elections, Hawaii registered voters as of 3/9/2016 = 711,518; U.S. Census Bureau Hawaii Voting Eligible Population is 1,111,117, March 2016., https://www.census.gov/library/visualizations/2016/comm/cb16-tps35_voting_hawaii-social.html



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The bill requires that for voter registration purposes data transmitted to the county clerk would include the digitized signature of the person who wishes to register. The bill also makes clear that databases operated by the counties or department of transportation should be electronically accessible to the statewide voter registration system. Though not the express purpose of this measure we fully expect these steps will also support quality voter registration data.

To us making data processing changes to correspond with this his bill are straightforward, so we respectfully request that the bill take effect upon its approval. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.



Senate Committee on Ways and Means

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Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action supports SB855 SD1

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Cade Watanabe

Aloha Senate Committee on Ways and Means.

My name is Anne Frederick and I am the Executive Director for the Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action (HAPA). HAPA is a statewide environmental, social and economic justice organization. HAPA engages over 10,000 local residents annually through our work.

From October through December of 2016 HAPA and several of our partners held a series of input gathering forums across the islands called the People's Congress. Over 800 people attended forums on Kaua'i, O'ahu, Maui and Hawai'i Island to discuss the most pressing issues facing their communities. The need to increase voter participation was a key issues raised.

I am writing in strong support of SB855 SD1 for automatic voter registration. Automatic Voter registration will help:

- Modernize our elections. Thanks to advances in technology, we no longer have to stick to traditional paper forms which require staff to literally have to 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.

Respectfully,

Anne Frederick, Executive Director
Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action (H.A.P.A.)



ADA

HAWAII

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MAILING ADDRESS

P.O. Box 23404
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96823
www.adaaction.org

February 24 , 2017

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

RE: SB 855 Relating to Elections
Support for hearing on Feb. 24

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 855 as it would provide that the submission of a voter registration application either to register to vote or update the voter's registration information would constitute a request for permanent absentee voter status unless the applicant specifically indicates the applicant does not wish to be a permanent absentee voter.

Hawaii has one of the lowest voter turnout rates. We believe this bill will make it easier to vote as it will increase electronic registration and the use of absentee ballots to allow people to vote at home.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

John Bickel
President

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Wednesday, February 22, 2017 10:41 AM
To: WAM Testimony
Cc: barbarapolk@hawaiiantel.net
Subject: Submitted testimony for SB855 on Feb 24, 2017 09:35AM

SB855

Submitted on: 2/22/2017

Testimony for WAM on Feb 24, 2017 09:35AM in Conference Room 211

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

Comments: Thank you for hearing this bill. I support HB855 to register residents to vote at the time they apply for driver's licenses or state IDs, unless they opt out of registering. I believe this bill handles voter choice appropriately, while helping increase registration and voting.

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: Wednesday, February 22, 2017 4:44 PM
To: WAM Testimony
Cc: elif.beall@gmail.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for SB855 on Feb 24, 2017 09:35AM

SB855

Submitted on: 2/22/2017

Testimony for WAM on Feb 24, 2017 09:35AM in Conference Room 211

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Elif Beall	Individual	Support	No

Comments: I am in strong support of SB855 to automate voter registration and promote absentee ballot registration in service of increasing civic participation and strengthening democracy in Hawai'i. This will modernize our elections consistent with the available advances in technology, 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), and make our elections more secure. Please pass Bill SB855. Thank you!

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Thursday, February 23, 2017 8:44 AM
To: WAM Testimony
Cc: dr.yoshicedo@gmail.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for SB855 on Feb 24, 2017 09:35AM

SB855

Submitted on: 2/23/2017

Testimony for WAM on Feb 24, 2017 09:35AM in Conference Room 211

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Jill Yoshicedo	Individual	Support	No

Comments: Dear Ways and Means Committee: I am in support of SB855 as automatic voter registration helps ensure every citizen's right to vote. I am in favor of an electronic system over manual data entry, which will save money, increase departmental efficiency, and increase accuracy. In addition, I would ask that the original language of SB855 be restored, to include the provisions regarding the electronic transfer of information between the licensing agencies and elections officials and the section about voter affidavits. Thank you for your consideration.

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Thursday, February 23, 2017 11:31 AM
To: WAM Testimony
Cc: ariannafeinberg@gmail.com
Subject: *Submitted testimony for SB855 on Feb 24, 2017 09:35AM*

SB855

Submitted on: 2/23/2017

Testimony for WAM on Feb 24, 2017 09:35AM in Conference Room 211

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Arianna Feinberg	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Thursday, February 23, 2017 11:21 AM
To: WAM Testimony
Cc: ljb3@ljb3.com
Subject: *Submitted testimony for SB855 on Feb 24, 2017 09:35AM*

SB855

Submitted on: 2/23/2017

Testimony for WAM on Feb 24, 2017 09:35AM in Conference Room 211

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
LJ Bates III	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Thursday, February 23, 2017 10:08 AM
To: WAM Testimony
Cc: tulsigreenlee@icloud.com
Subject: *Submitted testimony for SB855 on Feb 24, 2017 09:35AM*

SB855

Submitted on: 2/23/2017

Testimony for WAM on Feb 24, 2017 09:35AM in Conference Room 211

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Tulsi Greenlee	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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I am a resident of Ala Moana and a active voter.

I want to express my strong support of SB855 and the effort to streamline open up the election process.

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?

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

I am writing to urge support for SB855 SD1, Automatic Voter Registration.

Automatic registration will encourage voter turnout, cost about 30 times less than what it costs Hawaii now, and, if done correctly, increase security.

Thank you,

Aaron Jacobs
Kona

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Thursday, February 23, 2017 3:52 PM
To: WAM Testimony
Cc: ELITEHAWAII@AOL.COM
Subject: Submitted testimony for SB855 on Feb 24, 2017 09:35AM

SB855

Submitted on: 2/23/2017

Testimony for WAM on Feb 24, 2017 09:35AM in Conference Room 211

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
DONNIE BECKER	Individual	Support	No

Comments: *****Takes effect on 1/7/2059.***** I DONT UNDERSTAND THIS PART..??

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Thursday, February 23, 2017 3:53 PM
To: WAM Testimony
Cc: blackbird4aloha@hotmail.com
Subject: *Submitted testimony for SB855 on Feb 24, 2017 09:35AM*

SB855

Submitted on: 2/23/2017

Testimony for WAM on Feb 24, 2017 09:35AM in Conference Room 211

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Merle Hayward	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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It is so important to have as many people as possible voting in our elections. I support SB855 SD1 and hope that you will too.
thank you,
Sharon Levine
96792

We need to increase voter participation in Hawaii. One way to do that is with automatic registration. This will not compel people to vote if they do not wish to do so. Rather, it will ALLOW people who want to vote to have their voices heard. Certainly registering individually is one way to do it, but you know how it goes. People get busy. They don't keep track of manini things. And pretty soon it's time to vote and they find out they're not registered. Let's make it easier for our voices to be heard!

Mahalo,
Kris Bordessa
Honoka'a