

**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 FINANCE
ON HOUSE BILL NO. 2541, HD 1
RELATING TO ELECTIONS**

February 27, 2018

Chair Luke and members of the House Committee on Finance, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill No. 2541, HD 1. The purpose of this bill is to require that elections by mail be implemented statewide beginning with the 2020 Primary Election and to permit election officials, as they determine appropriate, to conduct elections by mail, in whole or in part, prior to that time.

We support elections by mail because it is convenient and accessible for voters. The trend toward absentee voting has steadily increased since statehood and through legislation to allow for no-excuse absentee voting. Since the 2014 Elections, more voters have cast their ballot prior to election day rather than at their polling place.

We estimate the State's savings for elections by mail to be \$750,000 per election cycle from its biennium budget. This savings is from election day officials, more specifically precinct officials.

This bill provides an appropriation to the Office of Elections, half of which is to be provided to the Counties based on the percentage of registered voters. However, there are disparate and unique differences with each Counties' needs to implement elections by mail.

We believe it would be more efficient to appropriate funding for fiscal year 2018-2019 to the Office of Elections and directly to each County. The Office of Elections is requesting funds for voter education. The Counties' capital startup

costs include scanner/sorters to receive ballot envelopes, community drop boxes, and security containers. The table below shows the breakdown:

County	Cost
Office of Elections	\$200,000
County of Hawaii	175,051
County of Maui	202,610
County of Kauai	75,450
City and County of Honolulu	377,620
Total	<u>\$1,030,731</u>

As such, we would propose that Section 54 be amended to read as follows:

“SECTION 54. There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$200,000 or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2018-2019 for the purpose of preparing for and implementing elections by mail, including voter education and public awareness programs.

The sum appropriated shall be expended by the office of elections for the purposes of this Act.

There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$175,051 or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2018-2019 for the purpose of preparing for and implementing elections by mail, including voter education and public awareness programs.

The sum appropriated shall be expended by the county of Hawaii for the purposes of this Act.

There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$202,610 or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2018-2019 for the purpose of preparing for and implementing elections by mail, including voter education and public awareness programs.

The sum appropriated shall be expended by the county of Maui for the purposes of this Act.

There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$75,450 or so much thereof as may be

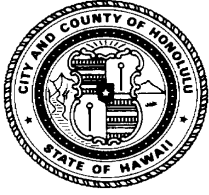
necessary for fiscal year 2018-2019 for the purpose of preparing for and implementing elections by mail, including voter education and public awareness programs.

The sum appropriated shall be expended by the county of Kauai for the purposes of this Act.

There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$377,620 or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2018-2019 for the purpose of preparing for and implementing elections by mail, including voter education and public awareness programs.

The sum appropriated shall be expended by the city and county of Honolulu for the purposes of this Act.”

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill No. 2541, HD 1.



GLEN I. TAKAHASHI
City Clerk

OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-3077 TELEPHONE (808) 768-3810

TESTIMONY OF GLEN TAKAHASHI
CITY CLERK, CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU
TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
ON HOUSE BILL NO. 2541 HD1
RELATING TO VOTING BY MAIL

February 27, 2018

Chair Luke and Committee members:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 2541 HD1 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, of the 460,977 votes cast in 2016, 256,547 or 56 percent, were cast by absentee ballot.

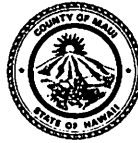
The current scheme requires planning for polling places to be capable of servicing the entire remaining complement of registered voters (with a general planning assumption that half of the votes will likely be cast prior to election day).

These resources include poll worker training and stipends, transport of ballot/election materials, a wide array of polling place support services managed at the State Capitol (meals, staffing, telecommunications), and most substantially, the costs relating to the operation and maintenance of voting devices (precinct counters/accessible voting units).

HD2541 HD1 would enable the State and the Counties to focus resources at a single election scheme and utilize the logistical/delivery operations of the United States Postal Service.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB2541 HD1.

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
www.mauicounty.gov/county/clerk

TESTIMONY OF DANNY A. MATEO
COUNTY CLERK, COUNTY OF MAUI
TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
ON HOUSE BILL NO. 2541, HD 1
RELATING TO ELECTIONS
FEBRUARY 27, 2018

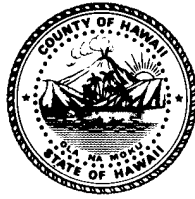
Chair Luke and members of the House Committee on Finance, thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony in support of House Bill No. 2541, HD 1. The purpose of this bill is to have elections by mail statewide beginning with the 2020 elections and allows any election to be conducted by mail prior to the 2020 primary election, in whole or in part as determined by the chief election officer or county clerk, as appropriate.

House Bill No. 2541, HD 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 House Bill No. 2541, HD 1.

STEWART MAEDA
County Clerk



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CLERK

Elections Division
County of Hawai'i
Hawai'i County Building
25 Aupuni Street
Hilo, Hawai'i 96720

TESTIMONY OF STEWART MAEDA

COUNTY CLERK, COUNTY OF HAWAI'I

TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

REGARDING HOUSE BILL NO. 2541, HD 1

RELATING TO ELECTIONS

February 26, 2018

Chair Luke and members of the House Committee on Finance, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill No. 2541, HD 1. The purpose of this bill is to enact voting by mail uniformly across all counties for all elections commencing in 2020, and allows any election to be conducted by mail prior to the 2020 primary election, in whole or in part, as determined as appropriate.

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. Individuals choosing to vote absentee has consistently increased since 2014. The total voter turnout for Hawai'i County in the 2014 General Election was 50,158 in which 27,339 voters, or fifty-five percent (55%) chose to vote by absentee. The total voter turnout for Hawai'i County in the 2016 General Election was 66,021 in which 39,551 voters, or sixty percent (60%) chose to cast their ballot by absentee.

At this time, Hawai'i has one of the lowest voter turnout in the nation. We believe, transitioning to a vote by mail election would increase voter turnout by creating a more convenient voter process and could allow for financial savings.

The passage of this measure will encourage voters who may feel alienated due to isolation, lack of transportation, or disability, to feel more a part of the process.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill No. 2541, HD 1.



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

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

TUESDAY, February 27, 2018, 11:00 a.m., Room 308

HB 2541 HD1 Relating to Elections

TESTIMONY

Janet Mason, Legislative Committee, League of Women Voters

Chair Luke, Vice Chair Cullen, and Committee Members:

The League of Women Voters supports HB2541, HD1 Relating to Elections, which would enact voting by mail in Hawaii in 2020, establish a limited number of voter service centers that would remain open for in-person voting, and allow for additional places of deposit for personal delivery of mail-in ballots.

There is now even more evidence that voting by mail would improve voter turnout, build on Hawaii's 42 years' experience with absentee voting, give all voters more time to study the ballot to make informed choices and save about \$750 thousand per election cycle.

League supports an appropriation of approximately \$1 million in capital costs for 2018-2019 to implement this bill. The Office of Elections estimates savings of approximately \$750 thousand per election cycle. We do not have sufficient information to assess the return on investment nor the net present value of this change, but the "payback" approach shows 75% of the \$1 million investment would be recouped in the first election cycle of 2020. This is truly a good investment from a financial perspective.

We should embrace this important change. Hawaii is ready to vote by mail.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.



House Committee on Finance
Chair Sylvia Luke, Vice Chair Ty Cullen

02/27/2018 11:00 AM Room 308
HB2541 HD1 – Relating to Elections

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

Dear Chair Luke, Vice Chair Cullen, and members of the committee:

Common Cause Hawaii strongly supports HB2541 HD1 which would establish a statewide “Vote By Mail” or “Elections By Mail” system by 2020. It would also establish voter service centers and ballot drop off sites.

We believe democracy works best when everyone participates and all voices are heard through a vote of the people. As such, Vote By Mail, has been and remains one of our top legislative priorities. As the state with the lowest voter turnout in the country, we appreciate that the committee is looking for ways to make our elections more accessible, efficient, and convenient for everyone.

Under this program, voters retain the right and opportunity to vote in person if they wish, security features such as signature verification remain in place, and the Office of Elections estimates a savings of approximately \$800 thousand each election cycle.

Voting By Mail is a key component to modernizing our elections and we urge the committee to pass HB2541 HD1.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony **strongly supporting HB2541 HD1**.



Aloha Chair Luke, Vice Chair Cullen and members of the House Committee on Finance,

The Young Progressives Demanding Action – Hawai‘i, representing nearly 600 registered members, **strongly supports** HB2541 to enact a uniform Vote By Mail (VBM) system throughout Hawai‘i.

Just 43 percent of eligible Hawai‘i voters cast ballots in 2016, giving our state the lowest turnout in the nation for the fifth presidential election in a row. Nationwide, young people are often one of the lowest voting demographics. This happens for a variety of reasons, but one of the primary reasons for low voter turnout among young people (and people in general) is because current registration systems rely largely on outdated, multi-step processes.

We believe democracy works best when everyone participates and all voices are heard through a vote of the people. As the state with the lowest voter turnout in the country, we must look for ways to make our elections more accessible, efficient and convenient for everyone.

Under VBM, a ballot is mailed to every registered voter—no request or application is necessary. Voters are then able to return their ballot via mail or at a drop-off location; or cast their vote in person at early voting centers or service centers on Election Day. This provides more flexibility and creates more opportunities for people to participate and vote. It will also save the state money: The Hawai‘i State Office of Elections estimates approximately \$800,000 would be saved in each election cycle by converting to a full VBM system. This system would also alleviate pressure put on poll sites and workers, and save time on Election Day.

We cannot ignore the growing pro-democracy movement, from communities and states across the country, reacting to unprecedented threats we, the people, face with respect to self-governance. We must work together—Democrats, Republicans, small parties and independents—to restore balance to our democracy; to put a check on the wealthy special interests trying to change the rules and write the voice of the people out of our democracy.

We must remind them that the Constitution says the people *are* the power, and the best way to do that is by diminishing barriers to participation and increasing voter turnout. As the state with the lowest voter turnout, we ask that you join us as we work to accomplish this goal and bring Hawai'i's elections into the 21st century.

Mahalo for your support,

Will Caron
Social Justice Action Committee Chair
8083874920



HAWAII APPLESEED

CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Testimony of Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice
Supporting HB 2541 HD1 – Relating to Elections
House Committee on Finance
Scheduled for hearing at Tuesday, February 27, 2018, 11:00 AM, in Conference Room 308

Dear Chair Luke, Vice Chair Cullen, and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in SUPPORT of **HB 2541 HD1**, which would enact voting by mail uniformly across all counties for all elections commencing in 2020, appropriate funds for the implementation and administration of the election by mail program, and require the office of elections to submit reports to the legislature regarding the implementation of the system.

“Hawaii ranks dead last in voter turnout for 2016 election,” blared a *Star-Advertiser* headline on March 16, 2017. The logistical barriers to voting are higher for our low-income neighbors, since they are less likely to be able to leave work to vote, as well as work far from their homes and polling places. Vote by Mail (VBM) would enable more registered voters, especially low-income ones, to participate in our elections.

With a VBM system, a ballot would be automatically mailed to every registered voter. The voter would be able to return their ballot via mail or at a drop-off location, or cast their vote in person at early a voting center or at a polling place on Election Day. VBM would:

- provide more flexibility and create more opportunities for citizens to vote,
- save the state money -- the Hawaii State Office of Elections estimates approximately \$800,000 would be saved in each election cycle if the state were to adopt VBM,
- alleviate pressure on poll sites and workers, as well as save time on Election Day.

We need to do more to get more than 43 percent of our eligible voters to the polls on election day. VBM should be a key part of those efforts.

We appreciate your consideration of this testimony.

The Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice is committed to a more socially just Hawai'i, where everyone has genuine opportunities to achieve economic security and fulfill their potential. We change systems that perpetuate inequality and injustice through policy development, advocacy, and coalition building.

HB-2541-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2018 12:26:00 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/27/2018 11:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Melodie Aduja	OCC Legislative Priorities Committee, Democratic Party of Hawai'i	Support	No

Comments:

**PRESENTATION OF THE
OAHU COUNTY COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES**

DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF HAWAII'

TO THE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE

REGULAR SESSION OF 2018

Tuesday, February 27, 2018

11:00 A.M.

Hawaii State Capitol, Conference Room 308

RE: Testimony in Support of **HB2541 HD1** RELATING TO ELECTIONS

To the Honorable Sylvia Luke, Chair; the Honorable Ty J.K. Cullen, Vice-Chair, and Members of the Committee on Finance:

Good morning, my name is Melodie Aduja. I serve as Chair of the Oahu County Committee ("OCC") Legislative Priorities Committee of the Democratic Party of Hawaii. Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on House Bill No. **2541 HD1**, relating to Voting by Mail; Voter Service Centers; Places of Deposit; and an Appropriation.

The OCC Legislative Priorities Committee is in favor of House Bill No. **2541 HD1**, and supports its passage.

House Bill No. **2541 HD1**, is in alignment with the Platform of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i ("DPH"), 2016, as it (1) enacts voting by mail uniformly across all counties for all elections commencing in 2020, and allows any election to be conducted by mail prior to the 2020 primary election, in whole or in part, as determined by the chief election officer or county clerk, as appropriate; (2) establishes a limited number of voter service centers that would remain open from the tenth business day preceding an election through the day of the election to receive personal delivery of mail-in ballots, accommodate voters with special needs, offer same day registration and voting, and provide other election services; (3) allows for additional places of deposit for personal delivery of mail—in ballots; (4) appropriates funds for the implementation and administration of the election by mail program; (5) requires the office of elections to submit a report to the legislature prior to the convening of each regular session from 2019 through 2023, regarding the implementation of a vote by mail system; and (6) having an effective date of 7/1/2050.

The DPH Platform states that "[w]e believe in a government that will adequately, efficiently, courteously, openly, ethically and fairly administer to the needs of the people. We support the integrity of Hawaii's voting process with a fair, voter-verifiable, fully transparent and auditable voting system. We must ensure the security of our electoral process with regard to electronic infiltration and manipulation." (Platform of the DPH, P. 5, Lines 245-248 (2016)).

Given that House Bill No. **2541 HD1**, (1) enacts voting by mail uniformly across all counties for all elections commencing in 2020, and allows any election to be conducted by mail prior to the 2020 primary election, in whole or in part, as determined by the chief election officer or county clerk, as appropriate; (2) establishes a limited number of voter service centers that would remain open from the tenth business day preceding an election through the day of the election to receive personal delivery of mail-in ballots, accommodate voters with special needs, offer same day registration and voting, and provide other election services; (3) allows for additional places of deposit for personal delivery of mail—in ballots; (4) appropriates funds for the implementation and administration of the election by mail program; (5) requires the office of elections to submit a report to the legislature prior to the convening of each regular session from 2019 through 2023, regarding the implementation of a vote by mail system; and (6) having an effective date of 7/1/2050, it is the position of the OCC Legislative Priorities Committee to support this measure.

Thank you very much for your kind consideration.

Sincerely yours,

/s/ Melodie Aduja

Melodie Aduja, Chair, OCC Legislative Priorities Committee

Email: legislativepriorities@gmail.com, Text/Tel.: (808) 258-8889

To: Hawaii State House of Representatives Committee on Finance
Hearing Date/Time: Tuesday, Feb. 27, 2018, 11:00 a.m.
Place: Hawaii State Capitol, Rm. 308
Re: Testimony of Planned Parenthood Votes Northwest and Hawaii in support of H.B. 2541, HD1, relating to Voting

Dear Chair Luke and Members of the Committee,

Planned Parenthood Votes Northwest and Hawaii (“PPVNH”) writes in support of H.B. 2541, HD1, establishing a program to allow citizens to vote by mail. PPVNH supports policies that make it easier for all eligible voters to cast a ballot and that ensure that all votes are counted equally.

Planned Parenthood believes in fairness and equal opportunity - values that form the foundation of any healthy democracy and which need to be protected. We work to ensure that our children and communities experience a democracy that embraces the principle of “One Person, One Vote.” Further, as stewards of public health we know that being able to participate in one’s community contributes significantly to an individual’s wellbeing – and knowing one’s vote counts is a crucial element to civic engagement.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of this important measure.

Sincerely,

Laurie Field
Hawaii Legislative Director

PETER L. FRITZ

TELEPHONE (SPRINT RELAY): (808) 568-0077

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES THE TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE REGULAR SESSION OF 2018

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Testimony on H.B. 2541 H.D. 1 RELATING TO ELECTIONS

Chair Luke, Vice Chair Cullen and members of the Committee. My name is Peter Fritz. I am an individual with a disability and an attorney. I am testifying **in support with comments**.

This bill enacts voting by mail uniformly across all counties for all elections commencing in 2020. It repeals and amends provisions relating to polling places, establishes voter service centers to accommodate personal delivery of ballots. It allows for electronic transmission of ballots under certain circumstances.

Voting by mail can provide greater accessibility for individuals with disabilities; however, it can also create new barriers because of inaccessible paper ballots or difficulty in traveling to remote voting service centers.

Access for individuals with disabilities using electronic transmission of ballots is partially addressed in Section 11-G of the bill; however, it is unclear about whether a request for an electronic ballot can be made any time after ballots have been mailed or only within 5 days of the election. Individuals with disabilities receiving an electronic ballot should have the same time period to vote as individuals receiving a ballot by mail. To comply with the Help America Vote Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act accessible ballots need to be made available to individuals with disabilities. To address these issues, Section 11-G could be amended to read as follows:

“provided that any time after ballots are mailed to voters, a voter with special needs may request that an accessible ballot be forwarded by electronic transmission. Voters with special needs may request a ballot be forwarded by electronic transmission permanently.”

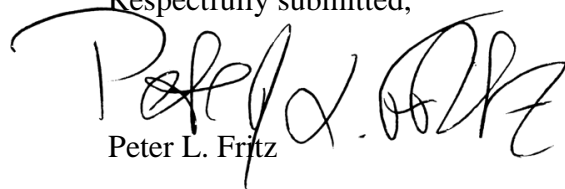
This bill includes an appropriation. I would respectfully suggest that consideration be given to the following be given when determining the amount of the appropriation:

- Development Costs for Accessible Ballots such as:
 - Tactile and large-print ballots for some voters with visual disabilities.
 - HTML ballots, which can be marked and printed with a home computer.
 - Software such as Prime III
 - Ballots that are compatible with JAWS[®], WindowsEyes, ZoomText, Voice Over (Mac) and NVDA software.

- For voters without access to a computer or other assistive technology, an appropriation to acquire tablets with remote voting software and funding for Office of Election personnel to take such equipment to a voter. Oregon has a program where election officials take a tablet to nursing homes and to disabled voters so that these individuals can participate in elections.
- For voters without access to a computer or other assistive technology, an appropriation to acquire tablets with remote voting software and funding for Office of Election personnel to take such equipment to a voter. Oregon has a program where election officials take a tablet to nursing homes and to disabled voters so that these individuals can participate in elections.
- Funding for Training of Caregivers. Training for caregivers would include specific instructions on the legal requirements for voting and on the degree of assistance that is permissible. Even with the best imaginable accommodations, some voters with disabilities are likely to require third-party assistance in voting by mail. There is a concern that caregivers may assume an inappropriate “gatekeeping” role by failing to help someone complete a ballot even though that person still has the ability to understand the nature and effect of voting.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully submitted,



Peter L. Fritz

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Rep. Sylvia Luke, Chair
Rep. Ty Cullen, Vice Chair

From: Bart Dame
Date: Tuesday, February 27, 2018
Time: 11 a.m.
Place: Conference room 308

HB2541, RELATING TO ELECTIONS

IN SUPPORT

My name is Bart Dame and I am testifying as an individual in SUPPORT of HB2541, which would move us to mail-in elections in time for the 2020 primary election, while still providing the opportunity for voters who want, or need, to vote in walk-in facilities. Such locations would be able to serve voters with accessible voting technologies, as well as provide for last minute voter registration.

The bill has broad support from both election officials as well as community groups dedicated to increasing voter participation. It is anticipated the change to an all mail-in system will both increase voter turnout slightly and save the Office of Elections an estimated \$800,000 per election cycle.

That sounds like a WIN-WIN outcome.

Please pass this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

HB-2541-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2018 6:49:43 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/27/2018 11:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Comments:

Giving Hawaii voters the ability to vote by mail:

- would provide more flexibility and create more opportunities for people to participate and vote.
- would save the state money. The Hawaii State Office of Elections estimates approximately \$800,000 would be saved in each election cycle by converting to Voting by Mail.
- would alleviate chaos at poll sites and pressure on workers, and save time on Election Day.

This issue has been before the legislature several times and it's now time to get off the dime and pass it.

HB-2541-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2018 8:45:26 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/27/2018 11:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Melinda Wood	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support this bill to change our election system to 100% mail-in voting. There is no excuse for not voting from the comfort of one's own couch: no long lines, no weather problems--you can even vote from a hospital bed! Every person deserves to have her or his voice heard. And then Hawaii might avoid the shame of having the lowest voter turnout in the entire country. Auwe!

HB-2541-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2018 5:18:57 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/27/2018 11:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Randy Ching	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Chair Luke, Vice Chair Cullen and members of the committee,

I strongly support HB2541 HD1. Voting by mail will encourage more voting and save the State of Hawaii money. This bill will also make it easier for the Office of Elections to staff all the polls leading up to election day. The Office of Elections has been having a hard time finding poll workers lately.

Voting by mail will also allow people as much time as they need to study ballot items such as charter amendments and state constitutional amendments. These can be quite complicated and can take a lot of time to understand. People would be able to ask their family and friends about an amendment or candidate and get as much information as they need.

Please pass HB2541 HD1. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Randy Ching / Honolulu

HB-2541-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2018 12:25:27 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/27/2018 11:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
lynne matusow	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I fail to understand why we go through this exercise every legislative session. This measure should have been enacted years ago. More and more people are voting absentee, either by mail or walk in voting. Voting by mail saves money. It does away with lines at the polls, incorrect ballots being delivered to polling stations, having to recruit inspectors to work the polls, and the list goes on. I have for the last 30 yeras. I do not even know where my polling place is.

I have never voted at my polling place. I once voted absentee and the rest of the time walk in. Voting by mail will also reduce the possibility of hacking, as we will be back to all paper ballots. There was a meeting of Secretaries of State in Washington, D.C. this past week where hacking in the upcoming 2018 elections was discussed. We know the Russians are working on hacking, and did so in 2016. A recent re;ort gave us a C grade. Security experts say computerized voting can be hacked, even if it is not internet enabled, as at soe time the information will be tansmitted through cell phone towers which can be hacked.

Lynne Matusow

HB-2541-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2018 4:33:54 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/27/2018 11:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
elizabeth hansen	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha - it is critical to pass this bill. Hawaii has an exceptionally poor voter turnout; this can assist improving this and will be cost effective.

Mahalo.

Elizabeth Hansen,

Hakalau HI 96710

HB-2541-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2018 7:11:03 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/27/2018 11:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Joy Marshall	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

HB-2541-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2018 7:38:33 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/27/2018 11:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Ruth Robison	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I urge the Finance Committee to support a \$1 million appropriation for the capital cost to begin Vote by Mail in 2020. I am a registered voter in Hawai`i and a member of the League of Women Voters of Hawai`i County. As you probably know, the League does a great deal of research before deciding to take a position and it is the League's position to support Vote by Mail; it could increase voter turnout and will definitely save the State money. It is estimated that the savings would be \$750,000 to \$800,000 per election cycle, thus more than paying for the initial capital cost in two election cycles. State and County elections officials approve of Vote by Mail and are ready to modernize in this way. Vote by Mail is a secure process, which the majority of Hawai`i voters have actually been using since the 2014 national election via absentee ballots. Three states - Oregon, Washington and Colorado -- already conduct all elections by mail and it would be beneficial to Hawai`i to follow their lead. Thank you for your work on this important issue.

Sincerely, Ruth E. Robison, Hilo, HI

HB-2541-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2018 10:18:11 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/27/2018 11:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
marjorie erway	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

There are several advantages to voting by mail. You've read them all, by now. I urge you to support this bill, esp. since the majority of voters already vote absentee and State and County elections officials are ready for it.

Please support voting by mail! Mahalo for your consideration.

HB-2541-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2018 10:38:10 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/27/2018 11:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Ann S. Shaver	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I strongly support this bill which will both make voting easier for registered voters and reduce election costs for the state. I urge you to allocate the \$1 million appropriation to capital costs to get this modernization underway.

Voting by mail as described is secure, county and state election officials are in favor of it and already have procedures to begin voting by mail, and the wide use of permanent absentee ballots suggests voters, too, endorse this method.

Moreover, holding elections by mail will save the state over \$750,000 per election.

Please vote in favor of HB2541 HD1

Thank you,

Ann S. Shaver

HB-2541-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2018 12:15:04 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/27/2018 11:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Brenda Ford	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

As a former Hawaii County Council Member, I wrote Vote By Mail (VBM) legislation for HSAC and the State Legislature, the State Legislature refused to allow this easy and proven method of voting. Hawaii has one of the lowest voter turnouts in the nation. It is time for change and fairness. Many of our residents commute long distances to get to work. Two hours off from work is many times insufficient. While absentee or permanent absentee ballots are very helpful, VBM levels the voting field. VBM allows each person to take the time to consider each issue or person and vote their preference. I'll never forget a person testifying before the Hawaii Council and complaining about the number of issues in that particular election. They stated that they got frustrated and stop marking their ballot and turned it in with many issues not marked. If VBM has existed, hopefully, those decisions would be made at home. Please pass VBM.

HB-2541-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2018 4:54:07 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/27/2018 11:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Remember it'll save approx. \$800,000 every election cycle, but it does need the initial investment for startup costs. It'll pay for itself in a little over 2 years.

To: Hawaii House Committee on Finance

Re: Testimony in **SUPPORT** of H.B. 2541 HD1, relating to Elections

Date/Time: Tuesday, February 27, 2018, 11:00 a.m. at Capitol, Rm. 30

Aloha, Chair Luke, Vice Cullen and members of the Finance Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in SUPPORT of H.B. 2541.

“Hawaii Ranks Dead Last in Voter Turnout for 2016” said the Star Advertiser headline. Sadly, Hawaii is consistently near the bottom of voter turnout in the nation.

There are two things we can do to improve voter turnout while saving the taxpayers some money . First, we can move to mail in voting like Oregon, Washington, and Colorado. Second, we can automatically register voters like 9 states and the District of Columbia. *

The League of Women Voters, Office of Elections and voters support mail-in balloting. Running statewide elections at every precinct is a logistically complicated and labor-intensive exercise: volunteer staff must be recruited and trained, sites need to be equipped with voting machines and materials, and after a long election day, volunteers must escort the equipment and ballots to a central location where more volunteers verify and count the ballots. Mail-in elections will not only save \$800,000, they will require less man power and are more voter friendly.

I first started voting by mail because working as an election volunteer at the Capitol doesn't allow for voting at a local poll. Now, I vote by mail for convenience. Voters avoid long lines, the physical barriers at polling locations, or election day weather challenges. I support mail-in voting.

Thank you,

Amy Monk

Commissioner,

Hawaii State Commission on the Status of Women

*Brennan Center for Justice (<https://www.brennancenter.org/analysis/automatic-voter-registration>)

February 27, 2018

Committee on Finance
Rep. Sylvia Luke, Chair
Rep. Ty J.K. Cullen, Vice Chair

State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Aloha Chair Luke, Vice Chair Cullen and Members of the Committee,

I would humbly like to submit this testimony in support of HB 2541 HD 1, which enacts voting by mail uniformly across all counties for all elections commencing in 2020, and allows any election to be conducted by mail prior to the 2020 primary election, in whole or in part, as determined by the chief election officer or county clerk, as appropriate; establishes a limited number of voter service centers that would remain open from the tenth business day preceding an election through the day of the election to receive personal delivery of mail-in ballots, accommodate voters with special needs, offer same day registration and voting, and provide other election services; allows for additional places of deposit for personal delivery of mail-in ballots; appropriates funds for the implementation and administration of the election by mail program; and requires the office of elections to submit a report to the legislature prior to the convening of each regular session from 2019 through 2023, regarding the implementation of a vote by mail system.

As an engaged citizen, elected neighborhood board member, and former political staffer, I find it incredibly disheartening that Hawaii continues to have the lowest voter turnout rate in the nation, with only 43 percent of eligible voters casting ballots in the last general election. Make no mistake, this is a crisis. The act of voting is at the core of our democratic society, and an disengaged electorate creates a lack of accountability in our institutions that can lead to corruption, inefficiency, and misguided priorities.

We need to shift our mindset around voting so that we provide the flexibility and ease that is needed to encourage more people to participate and vote. HB 2541 HD 1 will create those conditions while also saving taxpayers money, as the Hawaii State Office of Elections estimates approximately \$800,000 would be saved in each election cycle by converting to Voting by Mail. We would also alleviate pressure on poll sites and workers, and save time on Election Day.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

David Miyashiro

Kailua, HI

TO: Senator Sylvia Luke, Chair of the Committee on Finance, Vice Chair Cullen, and
Members of the House Committee on Finance
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street

FROM: Joan Platz
660A Kaumana Drive
Hilo, Hawaii 96720

Tuesday, February 27, 2018

Dear Chairperson Luke, Vice Chair Cullen, and Members of the House Committee on Finance:

My name is Joan Platz and I support House Bill 2541, which would enact voting by mail uniformly across all counties of Hawai'i for all elections commencing in 2020; allow any election to be conducted by mail prior to the 2020 primary election; establish a limited number of voter service centers to receive personal delivery of mail-in ballots and provide election services; allow for additional places of deposit for personal delivery of mail—in ballots; appropriate funds for the implementation and administration of the election by mail program; and require the office of elections to submit a report to the legislature prior to the convening of each regular session from 2019 through 2023, regarding the implementation of a vote by mail system.

Voting by mail is long overdue. According to the testimony of Scott T. Nago, Chief Election Officer, a majority of voters have selected to vote prior to election day rather than at their polling places since the general election of 2014.

Voting by mail is more secure in three ways: The voter's signature on the outside of the return envelope can be matched to the voter's signature on file with the County Clerks office; voting by mail doesn't require an internet connection that could be hacked; and the paper ballots are available for a recount if necessary.

The requested appropriation will be used to implement the vote by mail program, but in the future there should be savings to offset these initial costs.

The voters of Hawai'i have been waiting for this opportunity, which has the backing of State and County elections officials. Vote by mail will provide voters convenience; a secure process to vote; and could increase the voter participation. I urge the committee to favorably approve this bill.

Mahalo.

Joan Platz

HB-2541-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2018 11:52:07 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/27/2018 11:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Lisa Hoang	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Voting is both a privilege and a right, and should be made as accessible as possible. For the 2016 presidential election, I had to wait in a long, hot line with children in tow-one hour and 15 minutes to cast my ballot. This is a deterrence and impacts democracy. Voting by mail is secure and increases voter participation dramatically by making voting easy and convenient, and allows voters to take their time making decisions and thus put more thought and effort into their selections.

HB-2541-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2018 12:54:36 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/27/2018 11:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

HB-2541-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2018 2:46:25 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/27/2018 11:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
cheryl	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Voting by mail! 100% YES.. Making ballots in 'olelo Hawai'i as they do for other languages YES as well. Why should a Hawaiian have to ask for a ballot in Hawaiian? There are plenty people who can translate for OE.. and OE has plenty of time between elections to get it done.

HB-2541-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2018 12:01:59 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/27/2018 11:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Mary Smart	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

We don't want Vote by mail. We lose our secret ballot and the ability to visually see who is voting in our elections. It is well known that voter fraud increases with this scheme. People who want that option already use it. About 50% of the voters in Hawaii reject vote by mail. You are supposed to be serving the people -- not ramming your bad ideas down our throats.

Do not pass this bill.

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
LĪHŪĒ, KAUAI, HAWAII 96766-1819

LATE

February 27, 2018

TESTIMONY OF JADE K. FOUNTAIN-TANIGAWA
COUNTY CLERK, COUNTY OF KAUAI
TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
ON HOUSE BILL NO. 2541, HD 1
RELATING TO ELECTIONS

Chair Luke and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of House Bill No. 2541, HD 1. This Bill enacts voting by mail uniformly across all counties for all elections commencing in 2020, and allows any election to be conducted by mail in whole or in part, prior to the 2020 primary election, as determined by the chief election officer or county clerk, as appropriate. HB 2541, HD 1 also establishes a limited number of voter service centers, allows for places of deposit for the personal delivery of ballots, and appropriates funds.

Our Office supports the migration to a system that encourages voting by mail and believes that it is the proper time to begin making this change, especially due to the increased number of voters in each election who have chosen to vote utilizing a ballot which has been mailed to them.

The current election model does not deliver the level of convenience desired by many voters, as voters must still initiate the voting process by either applying for an absentee mail ballot, or physically reporting to an early voting site or Election Day polling place. Conducting elections by mail will send a ballot to every properly registered voter and establish a voting process which is as effortless and convenient as reasonably possible.

Thank you for this opportunity to offer written testimony in support of House Bill No. 2541, HD 1.

Sincerely,

JADE K. FOUNTAIN-TANIGAWA
County Clerk, County of Kauai

HB-2541-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2018 6:00:37 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/27/2018 11:00:00 AM



Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Susan J. Wurtzburg	American Association of University Women, Hawaii	Support	No

Comments:

AAUW-HI strongly supports making voting registration and actual voting easier for Hawaii residents.

Sincerely,

Susan J. Wurtzburg, Ph.D.

Policy Chair, AAUW-Hawaii

LATE

HB-2541-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2018 11:28:31 PM
Testimony for FIN on 2/27/2018 11:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Justin Salisbury	National Federation of the Blind of Hawaii	Support	No

Comments:

LATE



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

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Tuesday, February 27, 2018 11:00AM Room 308

In SUPPORT of HB 2541 HD1 Relating to elections

Aloha Chair Luke, Vice Chair Cullen, and members of the Committee,

On behalf of our 20,000 members and supporters, the Sierra Club of Hawai'i, a member of the Common Good Coalition, **strongly supports HB 2541 HD1**, which authorizes 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 turnout, which is extremely important in Hawai'i. For five election cycles in a row, Hawai'i has had the lowest voter turnout rate of all 50 states, with only 43% of eligible voters casting ballots¹. Mailing in a vote provides more flexibility and creates more opportunities for eligible individuals to participate in the voting process.

We know that mail-in voting will save the State money. The Hawai'i State Office of Elections estimates that approximately \$800,000 would be saved in each election cycle by converting to Voting by Mail. It would also alleviate pressure on poll sites and workers, and save time on Election Day.

We know that mail-in voting will save Hawai'i money, increase voter turnout, and improve the quality of our democracy. For these reasons, we urge the Committee to pass this measure.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this important issue.

¹ <http://www.commoncause.org/states/hawaii/news/hawaii-ranks-last-for-voter.pdf>