



**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 JUDICIARY
ON HOUSE BILL NO. 168

RELATING TO THE ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION OF BALLOTS

March 12, 2019

Chair Rhoads and members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill No. 168. The purpose of this bill is to authorize a voter with special needs to request that a ballot be forwarded by electronic transmission at any time.

This bill ensures accessibility for voters with special needs who choose to cast their ballot by mail. Currently, a ballot may be electronically transmitted to meet the requirements of the Uniformed and Overseas Citizen Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA), or an absentee mail voter within 5 days of the election. By allowing voters with special needs to request a ballot be forwarded by electronic transmission at any time, they could conveniently vote with a compatible device as soon as the ballot is available.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill No. 168.



DISABILITY AND COMMUNICATION ACCESS BOARD

1010 Richards Street, Room 118 • Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
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March 12, 2019

TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

House Bill 168 - Relating to Electronic Transmission of Ballots

The Disability and Communication Access Board (DCAB) supports House Bill 168 that authorizes a voter with special needs to request that a ballot be forwarded by electronic transmission at any time.

The current wording in the bill on page 1, lines 9 and 10 are "...provided that a voter with special needs may request a ballot be forwarded by electronic transmission at any time." The definition of "voter with special needs" is unclear in the bill. Does "voter with special needs" mean a "voter with a disability," or "voter who has limited English proficiency," or both? The phrase "voter with special needs" needs to be clarified in the bill.

The Help America Vote Act requires accessibility for voters with disabilities to cast their ballots privately and independently. Providing the voter with a disability, who has access to a computer, the opportunity to obtain an electronic ballot at any time would be an excellent alternative to receiving a print ballot.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully submitted,

Debbin L. Jackson
for FRANCINE WAI
Executive Director



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COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY
TUESDAY, March 12, 2019, 9:00 a.m., Room 016

HB 168 RELATING TO THE ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION OF BALLOTS
TESTIMONY
Janet Mason, Legislative Committee, League of Women Voters of Hawaii

Chair Rhoads, Vice-Chair Wakai and Committee Members:

The League of Women Voters of Hawaii supports this bill, which would permit voters with special needs to receive their ballot by electronic transmission at any time the ballot is available through the Office of Elections.

Every eligible voter with special needs deserves the accommodation described in this bill. We are very pleased to see that the Office of Elections endorses this change, as it's another step forward in making voting more accessible in Hawaii.

As Hawaii's population ages, the measure may prove more popular than expected. The U.S. Census Bureau reports 17.8%¹ of Hawaii's population is already 65 or older, and some 35.2% of this group has some type of disability². The proportion of seniors is increasing rapidly – by 25 percent from 2010 to 2016,³ meaning it is more likely voters will need accommodations for disabilities in the future than in the past.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

¹ U.S. Census Bureau, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/hi>.

² Figure 4, 2017 Disability Statistics Annual Report, https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=2&ved=2ahUKewjZnrXR1_igAhXkHDQIHYYUDXQQFjABe_gQIBhAE&url=https%3A%2F%2Fdisabilitycompendium.org%2Fsites%2Fdefault%2Ffiles%2Fuser-uploads%2F2017_AnnualReport_2017_FINAL.pdf&usg=AOvVaw0hx3wXYbilCEDXAq6g7s5A

³ Hawaii Population Characteristics 2016-Hawaii.gov, page 1.

HB-168

Submitted on: 3/11/2019 8:53:41 AM

Testimony for JDC on 3/12/2019 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Melodie Aduja	Testifying for O`ahu County Committee on Legislative Priorities of the Democratic Party of Hawai`i	Support	No

Comments:

Common Cause Hawaii • 307A Kamani St. • Honolulu, HI 96813 • 808.275.6275

To: The Senate Committee on the Judiciary
From: Brodie Lockard for the Common Cause Hawaii Board
Date: Tuesday, March 12, 2019, 9:00 am

In strong support of HB 168

Dear JDC Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Wakai and Committee Members—

Common Cause Hawaii strongly supports HB 168.

As a quadriplegic, I can attest that voters with special needs are subject to emergencies and unforeseen inconveniences at unfortunate times that could prevent them from requesting an absentee ballot on time, accessing their U.S. mail, going to the polls as they had planned, and completing other steps in the voting process that most people take for granted.

Thank you for seeing the need for this bill. It will help voters with special needs participate more easily in elections.

Brodie Lockard
Board Member, Common Cause Hawaii