

HB-368

Submitted on: 1/29/2019 4:16:04 PM

Testimony for JUD on 1/31/2019 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Kenneth R. Conklin, Ph.D.	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

It's obvious that this is a good idea. Why was it not implemented several elections ago?



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COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Thursday, January 31, 2019, 2:00 p.m., Room 325

HB368 RELATING TO VOTING TESTIMONY

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

Chair Lee, Vice-Chair San Buenaventura and Committee Members:

The League of Women Voters of Hawaii opposes HB 368 that would require the Office of The Lieutenant Governor to establish a system to track the mailing and receipt of ballots returned by mail and require the County Clerks to notify the Lieutenant Governor immediately upon mailing and receipt of absentee ballots by mail.

This bill would place the Lieutenant Governor in an oversight role with the Office of Elections and the County Clerks. While HB 368 proposes a limited amount of elections administration for the Lieutenant Governor, Hawaii voters did not elect this person to oversee our elections. H.R.S. 11-76 makes it clear that the Elections Commission employs the State Chief Elections Officer.

Hawaii's Administrative Officer Of Elections used to be the Lieutenant Governor until 1995 when the Office of Elections became an independent agency under the oversight of the Elections Appointment and Review Panel (EARP), a five-member panel, with the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House, and the leaders of the minority caucuses each appointing one member, and the Governor appointing the fifth member. The chair was elected by the members of EARP. In 2004, the nine-member Elections Commission was established to take the place of EARP.

The chief reason for removing the administration of elections from the Lieutenant Governor's office to the nonpartisan Elections Commission was to remove any perception or the reality of political manipulation of elections. The states of Florida in the 2000 Election and Ohio in the 2004 Election, both critical to the outcome of the respective presidential races, are examples of elected officials, who through their partisan-motivated actions, permanently placed a cloud over the outcomes of those races.

If we had elected the Lieutenant Governor with required public funding for this office, it might also remove another concern. But under present federal laws which make limiting of election campaign expenditures illegal, we have little alternative but private funding of elections. When candidates for the position of Lieutenant Governor begin to raise campaign funds and solicit other kinds of support, they



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begin to be encumbered with obligations to people and groups and will probably be perceived as being sympathetic toward one party of the other.

For all these reasons we ask you to hold HB 2588 in committee. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

HB-368

Submitted on: 1/29/2019 9:48:25 PM

Testimony for JUD on 1/31/2019 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Brett Kulbis	Honolulu County Republican Party	Oppose	No

Comments:

The Honolulu County Republican Party OPPOSES this bill. This responsibility belongs to the Office of Elections.

HB 368 Late

LATE

HB-368

Submitted on: 1/31/2019 9:20:37 AM

Testimony for JUD on 1/31/2019 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Danielle Castro	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

LATE

HB-368

Submitted on: 1/31/2019 12:16:51 PM

Testimony for JUD on 1/31/2019 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

It is my recommendation that one of the provisions to protect the mail-in vote is that it be limited to those who absolutely be out of town - or physically unable to vote at their precinct. Recent violation of numerous voting regulations that have been uncovered and the failing of our recent Honolulu City Council mail-in vote process is sufficient reason to discontinue the excessive use of mail-in voting. The cost of special elections, and the negative impact of not having representation on the Council during the second election process is justification to go back to primarily precinct voting. Precinct voting will remind people that voting is an important civic duty that has significant repercussions. Once we went to "convenience" voting -- it became a very insignificant event in people's lives -- whereas, it should be and event that energizes and motivates our residents. I would like to see election day be a state holiday.