



Representative Bertrand Kobayashi Community Update

DIAMOND HEAD, KAHALA,
KAIMUKI, KAPAHULU

October 2014

Five (5) Amendments to the Hawaii State Constitution on the November 2014 Ballot

In Hawaii, a proposed constitutional amendment is approved if the amendment receives a majority of all votes tallied at the election, including blank votes.

QUESTION 1: Relating to Disclosure of Judicial Nominees

"Shall the judicial selection commission, when presenting a list of nominees to the governor or the chief justice to fill a vacancy in the office of the chief justice, supreme court, intermediate appellate court, circuit courts or district courts, be required, at the same time, to disclose that list to the public?" (H.B. 420, H.D. 1)

Comment: The Judicial Selection Commission currently publicly discloses the nominees for judicial appointments because of a self-authorized rule. This amendment to the Constitution would elevate that rule to a constitutional requirement.

QUESTION 2: Relating to Agricultural Enterprises

"Shall the State be authorized to issue special purpose revenue bonds and use the proceeds from the bonds to assist agricultural enterprises on any type of land, rather than only important agricultural lands?" (H.B. 748, H.D. 2, S.D. 1, C.D. 1)

Comment: A special purpose revenue bond is a public financing tool that leverages the bond rating of the Hawaii State government to obtain advantageous financing terms for private infrastructure. This change would authorize agricultural enterprises on non-"important agricultural lands" to use this tool.

QUESTION 3: Relating to State Justices and Judges

"Shall the mandatory retirement age for all state court justices and judges be increased from seventy to eighty years of age?" (S.B. 886)

Comment: Currently, Hawaii's Constitution requires judges to retire at age 70. This amendment will increase judges' mandatory retirement age to 80. Voters rejected this exact proposal in 2006 by a 58%-35% margin.

QUESTION 4: Relating to Early Childhood Education

"Shall the appropriation of public funds be permitted for the support or benefit of private early childhood education programs that shall not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, sex or ancestry, as provided by law?" (S.B. 1084, S.D. 1, H.D. 1, C.D. 1)

Comment: Hawaii's Constitution, Art. X, provides in part: "nor shall public funds be appropriated for the support or benefit of any sectarian or nonsectarian private educational institution." This provision would modify the above and would permit the Legislature to appropriate funds for private early childhood education programs.

QUESTION 5: Relating to Dams and Reservoirs

"Shall the State be authorized to issue special purpose revenue bonds and use the proceeds from the bonds to offer loans to qualifying dam and reservoir owners to improve their facilities to protect public safety and provide significant benefits to the general public as important water sources?" (S.B. 2876, S.D. 2, H.D. 2)

Comment: Since the demise of the sugar industry in Hawaii, there are many legacy [old] irrigation facilities (reservoirs, dams, ditches) that require maintenance or improvement which appear beyond the current owner's ability to finance. This amendment would allow the State to authorize special purpose revenue bonds to help with that financing.

Waikiki Elementary School Selected as One of 15 Public Schools for High Achievement

The Hawaii Department of Education (DOE) is awarding \$230,000 to Waikiki Elementary School as one of 15 schools that demonstrated significant success or improvements in the 2013-14 school year. Waikiki Elementary reached "Recognition" status in the DOE's Strive HI Performance System, meaning their performance placed them among the top five percent of schools in the state.

The Strive HI Performance System was introduced by the DOE in the 2012-13 school year as its school accountability and improvement system. Schools are measured on a variety of performance metrics such as student achievement, growth, chronic absenteeism, and other key success indicators – with a focus on college- and career- readiness. Award funds must support initiatives to sustain success aligned with their school academic plans, such as professional development, investments in technology, musical instruments, science lab equipment and other improvement strategies.

Strive HI Awards Criteria

"Recognition" schools are limited to no more than five percent of all Hawaii public schools.

High-performing school criteria:

- Meet or exceed annual targets for all student groups.
- Graduation rates in the top 10 percent of all high schools.
- Current year achievement gap rate less than 30 percent.

