



**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. 3226, SD 1
RELATING TO ELECTIONS

February 24, 2022

Chair Dela Cruz and members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means, thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on Senate Bill No. 3226, SD1. This bill requires the Office of Elections to prepare a digital voter information guide to be posted on its website; requires the Office of Election to mail a notice with each ballot notifying voters that a voter information guide may be found on its website; makes an appropriation; and takes effect July 30, 2025.

We believe an informed electorate is essential for the health of our democracy; however, our office must remain apolitical. To compile a digital voter information guide, we would ask all candidates to submit a statement and photo for inclusion when they file their nomination paper. After the candidate filing deadline, we would translate and post these statements on our website. Similarly, we would translate the ballot question explanations for a general election. We would need the explanations for the ballot questions on the same day that questions are due, 75 days before the general election. The digital voter guide would be available in English, Olelo Hawaii, the languages covered by the Voting Rights Act – Chinese, Ilocano, and Tagalog, and accessible. We would also note that the voter information guide must be available at least 45 days before each election to coincide with ballots sent to uniformed and overseas voters.

The following table estimates the costs per election to provide a digital voter information guide.

	Primary	General	Total
Translations	54,390	28,560	82,950
Accessibility	13,780	13,780	27,560
Printed Notice	45,000	45,000	90,000
Printed Copy	21,340	20,370	41,710
Mailing Copies	14,982	14,301	29,283
Total	\$149,492	\$122,011	\$271,503

Additionally, with candidate filing set to begin on March 1, 2022, we ask that this measure take effect for the 2024 Elections.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on Senate Bill No. 3226, SD1.

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



CRAIG K. HIRAI
DIRECTOR

GLORIA CHANG
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM
HAWAII EMPLOYER-UNION HEALTH BENEFITS TRUST FUND
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
P.O. BOX 150
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96810-0150

ADMINISTRATIVE AND RESEARCH OFFICE
BUDGET, PROGRAM PLANNING AND
MANAGEMENT DIVISION
FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION DIVISION
OFFICE OF FEDERAL AWARDS MANAGEMENT (OFAM)

WRITTEN ONLY
TESTIMONY BY CRAIG K. HIRAI
DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
ON
SENATE BILL NO. 3226, S.D. 1

February 24, 2022
10:00 a.m.
Room 211 and Videoconference

RELATING TO ELECTIONS

The Department of Budget and Finance (B&F) offers comments on Senate Bill (S.B.) No. 3226, S.D. 1.

S.B. No. 3226, S.D. 1, requires the Office of Elections (OE) to: 1) prepare a digital voter registration guide to be posted on its website; and 2) mail a notice with each ballot notifying voters that a voter information guide may be found on its website. The measure also appropriates unspecified general funds in FY 23 to OE for this purpose.

B&F notes that, with respect to the general fund appropriation in this bill, the federal Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act requires that states receiving Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) II funds and Governor's Emergency Education Relief II funds must maintain state support for:

- Elementary and secondary education in FY 22 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for elementary and secondary education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19; and

- Higher education in FY 22 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for higher education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19.

Further, the federal American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act requires that states receiving ARP ESSER funds must maintain state support for:

- Elementary and secondary education in FY 22 and FY 23 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for elementary and secondary education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19; and
- Higher education in FY 22 and FY 23 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for higher education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19.

The U.S. Department of Education has issued rules governing how these maintenance of effort (MOE) requirements are to be administered. B&F will be working with the money committees of the Legislature to ensure that the State of Hawai'i complies with these ESSER MOE requirements.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.



LATE

DISABILITY AND COMMUNICATION ACCESS BOARD

1010 Richards Street, Room 118 • Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
Ph. (808) 586-8121 (V) • Fax (808) 586-8129

February 24, 2022

TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Senate Bill 3226, Senate Draft 1 – Relating to Elections

The Disability and Communication Access Board (DCAB) is providing comments on Senate Bill 3226, Senate Draft 1. This bill would require the Office of Elections to prepare a digital voter registration guide and post it on their website, and to inform each voter that it can be found online.

It is important that any digital information is accessible for persons with disabilities to comply with federal laws and upon request, an alternate format is readily available.

DCAB supports the amendment in Senate Draft 1 specifying that the digital voter guide must be accessible to screen readers.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments.

Respectfully submitted,

Krishne Pagano
for KIRBY L. SHAW
Executive Director



Committee on Ways and Means
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair, Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran Vice Chair

Thursday, February 24, 2022, 10:00 a.m.

SB 3226 SD1 RELATING TO ELECTIONS
TESTIMONY

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

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Committee Members:

The League of Women Voters of Hawaii strongly supports SB 3226 SD1 that requires the Office of Elections to prepare a digital voter registration guide to be posted on its website and requires the Office of Elections to mail a notice with each ballot notifying voters that a voter information guide may be found on its website.

Regarding content of the guide, the most important topics are covered in the bill, namely candidate statements and an explanation of any ballot questions. The criteria for candidate statements described in Section 1, 11 (1) seems fair. Likewise, in this version of the bill the division of responsibility between the Attorney General and County Corporation Counsels for explanation of ballot proposals, now makes sense.

We respectfully suggest the digital voter guide include a link to the Campaign Spending Commission website so that voters can easily access campaign finance activity for each candidate. This can be accomplished at little/no additional cost. And our examination of digital voter education in four other states suggests that a link to relevant campaign finance information is common.

We are happy to see that the bill was previously amended to require that the Office of Elections must print and mail a copy of the digital guide to voters upon request and that this office must provide a translation of the guide in 'Olelo Hawai 'I on its website. Please add requirements for preparing any additional translations for other non-English speakers as required by the Federal Voting Rights Act.

The combination of digital voter guide plus mailed guide upon requests has reduced the original cost of this proposed bill from \$16 million. The Office of Elections now estimates it will cost \$95,000 per election cycle for the voter guide which is a modest new investment in informed voting for all eligible voters.

The effective date of the bill should be January 1, 2023 (after the filing deadline for the 2024 elections but before the July 2024 ballot packet distribution.)

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

League of Women Voters of Hawaii
P.O. Box 235026 ♦ Honolulu, HI 96823
Voicemail 808.377.6727 ♦ my.lwv.org/hawaii ♦ voters@lwvhi.org

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Hawaii
Holding Power Accountable

Statement Before The
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
Thursday, February 24, 2022
10:00 AM
Conference Room 211 and Videoconference

in consideration of
SB 3226, SD1

RELATING TO ELECTIONS.

Chair DELA CRUZ, Vice Chair KEITH-AGARAN, and Members of the Senate Ways and Means Committee

Common Cause Hawaii supports SB 3226, SD1, which (1) requires the Office of Elections to prepare a digital voter registration guide to be posted on its website, (2) requires the Office of Election to mail a notice with each ballot notifying voters that a voter information guide may be found on its website, and (3) makes an appropriation.

Common Cause Hawaii is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, grassroots organization dedicated to upholding the core values of our representative democracy through efforts that increase civic engagement, voter turnout, and voter participation in our democratic processes.

A voter information guide would create a more informed voting public and hopefully increase voter participation in our elections. A significant number of states have official voter guides published by the state secretary of state, which is equivalent to our State Office of Elections. See https://ballotpedia.org/Features_of_official_voter_guides,_compared_by_state#Comparison_of_voter_guides (retrieved Jan. 28, 2022); see also <https://www.ncsl.org/research/elections-and-campaigns/fiscal-impact-statements.aspx> (retrieved Jan. 28, 2022).

Common Cause Hawaii understands that SB 3226, SD1, at page 1, lines 17, provides that candidates are to submit their own statements for placement in a voter information guide. We suggest that candidates be required to pay for its placement in the guide. California and Alaska's voter information guides operate in in this manner. See <https://vig.cdn.sos.ca.gov/2021/pdf/complete-vig.pdf> (retrieved Feb. 19, 2022) and https://www.elections.alaska.gov/election/2020/General/OEPBooks/2020%20AK%20Region%20I%20pamphlet_FINAL-web.pdf (retrieved Feb. 19, 2022).

Common Cause Hawaii further recognizes that for voter information guides to be trusted and useful to the public, they must:

- Be neutral and written in plain language.
- Be readily available to the public. They should not be disseminated by one means only, such as via electronic means, mail, or in the newspaper. As the current pandemic has revealed, many people do not have access to broadband and/or reliable mail delivery. Voter information guides must be made available at banks, grocery stores, community centers, public libraries, government buildings, and other locations where people are likely to gather.

- Be translated into different languages for all of Hawaii's citizens to be able to access. Hawaii is the most diverse state in the nation with a diversity index of 76% according to the 2020 U.S. Census. The April 2016 DBEDT Research and Economic Analysis Division report on Non-English Speaking Population in Hawaii indicates that Non-English speakers at home in Hawaii increased by 44% from 1980 to 2014. See https://files.hawaii.gov/dbedt/economic/data_reports/Non_English_Speaking_Population_in_Hawaii_April_2016.pdf at Executive Summary pg. i (retrieved Jan. 28, 2022). Ilocano, Tagalog, and Japanese were the top three most common non-English languages spoken at home in Hawaii. *Id.*
- Be accessible to all our various disability communities.

Common Cause Hawaii supports SB 3226, SD1 in creating voter information guides for a more informed and engaged public for the betterment of our representative democracy.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 3226, SD1. If you have any questions of me, please contact me at sma@commoncause.org.

Very respectfully yours,

Sandy Ma
Executive Director, Common Cause Hawaii

COMMUNITY ALLIANCE ON PRISONS

P.O. Box 37158, Honolulu, HI 96837-0158

Phone/E-Mail: (808) 927-1214 / kat.caphi@gmail.com



COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair

Senator Gilbert Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair

Thursday, February 24, 2022

10:00 AM

SB 3326 SD1 – SUPPORT for VOTER INFORMATION GUIDE

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Members of the Committee!

My name is Kat Brady and I am the Coordinator of Community Alliance on Prisons, a community initiative promoting smart justice policies in Hawai`i for more than two decades. This testimony is respectfully offered on behalf of the more than 4,052 Hawai`i individuals living behind bars under the “care and custody” of the Department of Public Safety on any given day. We are always mindful that 1,111 of Hawai`i’s imprisoned people are serving their sentences abroad -- thousands of miles away from their loved ones, their homes and, for the disproportionate number of incarcerated Kanaka Maoli, far, far from their ancestral lands.

SB 3226 SD 1 requires the Office of Elections to prepare a digital voter registration guide to be posted on its website. Requires the Office of Election to mail a notice with each ballot notifying voters that a voter information guide may be found on its website. Makes an appropriation.

Community Alliance on Prisons supports giving voters as much information as possible, however, we are concerned about the digital divide in Hawai`i and people with no access to the internet. A vibrant democracy depends on an informed electorate. A responsible and responsive democracy is inclusive and accessible. We respectfully share some important things to think about when developing this guide.

- Ensure that it is nonpartisan, written in plain language, and is accessible to all.
- To ensure wide user-ability, the guide must be translated into the languages spoken in Hawai`i including, but not limited to, Chuukese, Chinese, Hawaiian, Ilokano, Japanese, Samoan, Tagalog, Tongan, Vietnamese, etc.

- To ensure wide accessibility, besides the normal channels, newspapers, websites, social media, community newsletters, the guide should be available at local businesses and places where people gather - banks, grocery stores, libraries, community centers, government buildings, jails, etc.

Many states have voter guides and many have them translated into the languages spoken by their people. A quick look showed that Alaska's guide is translated into 12 different languages! Community Alliance on Prisons looks forward to the day when incarcerated persons will be treated as citizens and afforded the right to vote! Please pass this measure.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Nothing can stop the power of an informed citizenry when it is empowered, organized, and motivated.

Ralph Nader



AMERICANS FOR DEMOCRATIC ACTION

OFFICERS	DIRECTORS		MAILING ADDRESS	
John Bickel, President	Melodie Aduja	Jan Lubin	Bill South	P.O. Box 23404
Alan Burdick, Vice President	Keola Akana	John Miller	Zahava Zaidoff	Honolulu
Dave Nagajji, Treasurer	Juliet Begley	Jenny Nomura		Hawaii 96823
Doug Pyle, Secretary	Stephanie Fitzpatrick	Stephen O'Harrow		

February 23 , 2022

TO: Chair Dela Cruz and Members of the WAM Committee

RE: SB 3226 SD1 Relating to Elections

Support for a Hearing on February 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.

Americans for Democratic Action Hawaii supports this bill as it would require the Office of Elections to prepare a digital voter registration guide to be posted on its website and would require the Office of Election to mail a notice with each ballot notifying voters that a voter information guide may be found on its website. We value informed voters. This guide would help.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

John Bickel, President

SB-3226-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/19/2022 1:49:41 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/24/2022 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Barbara Best	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

- I support SB 3226, SD1 in creating voter information guides for a more informed and engaged public for the betterment of our representative democracy.

SB-3226-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2022 12:46:55 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/24/2022 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
tlaloc tokuda	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha WAM Chair and Committee,

I am a volunteer with Common Cause (CC) and i usually support their views on bills coming through our state legislature and local councils. I agree with CC and support [SB3226](#) .

- A voter information guide would create a more informed voting public and hopefully increase voter participation in our elections. A significant number of states have official voter guides published by the state secretary of state, which is equivalent to our State Office of Elections. See https://ballotpedia.org/Features_of_official_voter_guides,_compared_by_state#Comparison_of_voter_guides (retrieved Jan. 28, 2022); see also <https://www.ncsl.org/research/elections-and-campaigns/fiscal-impact-statements.aspx> (retrieved Jan. 28, 2022).
- If candidates are to submit their own statements for a voter information guide, per SB 3226, SD1, at page 1, lines 17, I suggest that they be required to pay for its placement in the guide. California and Alaska’s voter information guides operate in in this manner. See <https://vig.cdn.sos.ca.gov/2021/pdf/complete-vig.pdf> (retrieved Feb. 19, 2022) and https://www.elections.alaska.gov/election/2020/General/OEPBooks/2020%20AK%20Region%20I%20pamphlet_FINAL-web.pdf (retrieved Feb. 19, 2022).
- For a voter information to be trusted and useful to the public, I also suggest that:
 - Be neutral and written in plain language.
 - Be readily available to the public. They should not be disseminated by one means only, such as via electronic means, mail, or in the newspaper. As the current pandemic has revealed, many people do not have access to broadband and/or reliable mail delivery. Voter information guides must be made available at banks, grocery stores, community centers, public libraries, government buildings, and other locations where people are likely to gather.
 - Be translated into different languages for all of Hawaii’s citizens to be able to access. Hawaii is the most diverse state in the nation with a diversity index of 76% according to the 2020 U.S. Census. The April 2016 DBEDT Research and Economic Analysis Division report on Non-English Speaking Population in Hawaii indicates that Non-English speakers at home in Hawaii increased by 44% from 1980 to 2014.

Mahalo,

tlaloc tokuda

Kailua Kona, HI 96740

SB-3226-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2022 5:57:35 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/24/2022 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
David Anderson	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

A voter information guide would create a more informed voting public and hopefully increase voter participation in our elections. A significant number of states have official voter guides published by the state secretary of state, which is equivalent to our State Office of Elections.

If candidates are to submit their own statements for a voter information guide, per SB 3226, SD1, at page 1, lines 17, I suggest that they be required to pay for its placement in the guide. California and Alaska’s voter information guides operate in in this manner.

For a voter information to be trusted and useful to the public, it is suggested that:

- Be neutral and written in plain language.
- Be readily available to the public. They should not be disseminated by one means only, such as via electronic means, mail, or in the newspaper. As the current pandemic has revealed, many people do not have access to broadband and/or reliable mail delivery. Voter information guides must be made available at banks, grocery stores, community centers, public libraries, government buildings, and other locations where people are likely to gather.
- Be translated into different languages for all of Hawaii’s citizens to be able to access. Hawaii is the most diverse state in the nation with a diversity index of 76% according to the 2020 U.S. Census. The April 2016 DBEDT Research and Economic Analysis Division report on Non-English Speaking Population in Hawaii indicates that Non-English speakers at home in Hawaii increased by 44% from 1980 to 2014. Ilocano, Tagalog, and Japanese were the top three most common non-English languages spoken at home in Hawaii. *Id.*
- Be accessible to all our various disability communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of SB 3226, SD1 to create voter information guides for a more informed and engaged public for the betterment of our representative democracy.

SB-3226-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2022 11:49:28 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/24/2022 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Susan Dursin	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I applaud the current Legislature's effort to provide a voter information guide. Please support SB3226, SD1.

At the same time, bear in mind that many people do not have access to the internet. They will need to find hard copies of the guide in public places.

Thank you for considering this important step toward voter education.

SB-3226-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2022 5:29:54 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/24/2022 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
laurie boyle	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha,

I support SB3226 for the simple reason that voters should have easy access to accurate information about the issues and candidates on the ballot. This voter's guide should be available online, as well as in libraries and other public locations. An informed electorate is paramount to a well-functioning Democracy.

Mahalo for uour time.