



**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. 1005, SD 1
RELATING TO THE ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT

March 1, 2023

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. 1005, SD 1. This bill establishes presidential preference primaries; and makes an appropriation.

We want to emphasize that our office does not conduct closed primary elections, and political affiliation is not collected nor is it a requirement to register to vote. The conduct of a presidential preference primary election would need to comply with Article II, Section 4, of the Hawaii State Constitution, which provides “[s]ecrecy of voting and choice of political party affiliation or nonpartisanship shall be preserved.” Our voter registration laws do not involve individuals registering or affiliating with a particular party. Instead, voters select the political affiliation to vote on at the primary election.

We would propose removing the provision in this measure to allow a political party to opt out of the State-conducted presidential primary in favor of conducting their own nomination process. We do not believe this is feasible since all registered voters would be eligible and automatically receive a ballot in the mail, not just members of qualified political parties participating in the State-conducted election. The conduct of a presidential preference primary election would have to be at the same time, date, and manner for all voters to eliminate voters from voting in the State-conducted presidential primary and participating in their party-run nomination process and to comply with the provisions of the State Constitution.

We also have comments on operational matters regarding funding and additional legal considerations, as adding a presidential preference primary establishes a new standalone election impacting various statutes and timelines.

Operational Matters

The conduct of a presidential preference primary election would require the Office of Elections to conduct candidate filing, including an objection and appeal process, print and mail ballots to all registered voters, support and maintain the voting equipment, and count, report, and audit the ballots. The County Clerks would also be responsible for voter registration, absentee voting, voter service centers, and places of deposit at the cost of the State. Our initial estimate of the costs of State responsibilities is \$2,787,705 for over 900,000 registered voters. This does not include any costs accrued by the counties.

Mail ballot packet - ballot and envelopes	\$ 232,259
Ballot printing services	189,930
Ballot mailing services	237,774
Postage (Outgoing)	452,213
Postage (Incoming)	569,789
Balloting tracking	60,000
Counting Center Volunteers	192,500
Counting Center Facility	400,000
Staff Overtime	155,400
Voting System Vendor	147,840
Voter education campaign	150,000
Initial Estimate	<u><u>\$2,787,705</u></u>

Legal Considerations

We propose the following amendments to the various statutes related to the conduct of a presidential preference primary to distinguish it from a traditional primary election.

1. Candidate Filing

We would ask that candidate filing open 145 days before the presidential preference primary. This allows candidates 60 days to be issued and file their nomination paper.

2. Qualified Political Parties

We would recommend moving the deadline for a group to qualify as a political party to field candidates for the presidential preference primary ballot to 90 days before the close of candidate filing or clarify that the ability to participate in the presidential preference primary election only applies to political parties recognized by HRS § 11-62 that are in existence six months prior to the date of the presidential preference primary.

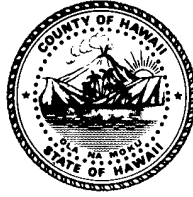
The proposed date of the presidential preference primary election, “the first Tuesday after the first Monday in March,” occurs too close to the statutory provisions concerning the formation of political parties for the regularly scheduled primary election. HRS § 11-62 (i.e., “the one hundred seventieth day prior to the next primary,” which corresponds to February 22, 2024, for the upcoming election cycle). With the existing deadline for a group to qualify as a political party, we would be unable to add a new political party or its candidates to the presidential preference primary ballot.

3. Contest for Cause Deadline

Given the subject matter of HRS § 11-173.5 concerning election contests, substantive amendments would be necessary to clearly have this statute apply to the presidential preference primary and to address the specific procedures involved and what the Supreme Court would be authorized to decide.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on Senate Bill No. 1005, SD 1.

JON HENRICKS
County Clerk



AARON BROWN
Deputy 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 JON HENRICKS

COUNTY CLERK, COUNTY OF HAWAI'I

TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

ON SENATE BILL NO. 1005, SD 1

RELATING TO THE ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT

February 27, 2023

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means, thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on Senate Bill No. 1005, SD 1. This bill establishes presidential preference primaries and makes an appropriation.

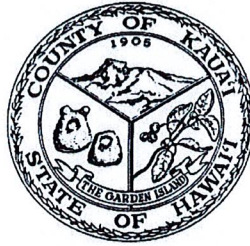
A presidential preference primary election would require the County of Hawai'i to administer Candidate Filing, Voter Registration, Voter Service Centers, Places of Deposit, in-house mailing of ballots, and receiving of ballots. We estimate our initial cost of conducting a presidential preference primary election for nearly 132,000 registered voters to be approximately \$258,075.00. The cost estimates reflect a program that would provide similar services and resources deployed during the 2020 and 2022 Primary and General Elections.

Notification Cards Postage	\$52,000.00
Notification Cards Personalize and Manufacture	\$19,000.00
In-house Mailing Postage	\$ 1,800.00
Security – VSC/Counting Center	\$ 8,000.00
Vehicle Rental - Vans, Box Trucks	\$ 5,100.00
Fuel	\$ 2,200.00
Mailing Inserts	\$ 2,800.00
Places of Deposit Coordinators	\$ 1,575.00
Voter Service Center Staffing	\$14,000.00
Temporary Election Staff	\$60,000.00
Temporary Warehouse Workers	\$75,000.00
Staff Overtime	\$15,000.00
Ballot Sorter Maintenance	\$ 1,600.00
Total	<u>\$258,075.00</u>

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on Senate Bill 1005, SD 1.

COUNTY COUNCIL

Mel Rapozo, Chair
KipuKai Kualii, Vice Chair
Addison Bulosan
Bernard P. Carvalho, Jr.
Felicia Cowden
Bill DeCosta
Ross Kagawa



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CLERK

Jade K. Fountain-Tanigawa, County Clerk
Lyndon M. Yoshioka, Deputy County Clerk

Telephone: (808) 241-4188
Facsimile: (808) 241-6349
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Council Services Division
4396 Rice Street, Suite 209
Lihu'e, Kauai, Hawaii 96766

March 1, 2023

**TESTIMONY OF JADE K. FOUNTAIN-TANIGAWA
COUNTY CLERK, COUNTY OF KAUAI
TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
ON SENATE BILL NO. 1005, SD1
RELATING TO THE ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT**

Dear Chair Dela Cruz and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on Senate Bill No. 1005, SD1. This Bill establishes presidential preference primaries for the state of Hawai'i, and specifies signature and fee requirements for a person to be nominated as a presidential primary candidate.

Our office takes no position on this Bill but notes that it will introduce significant operational and fiscal challenges for our County, especially given the effective date. In addition to costs already reported by the State Office of Elections, we anticipate needing an additional \$147,500 to conduct a presidential preference primary election.

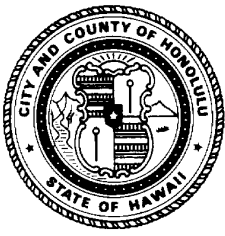
Temporary Staff	\$45,000
Staff Overtime	25,000
Election Notification Mailing Vendor	7,500
Postage*	25,000
Voter Service Center Volunteers	15,000
Voter Education (County-specific)	30,000
	<u>\$147,500</u>

*For outgoing Notifications and return postage for undeliverable Notifications.

The additional expenses are especially problematic for this fiscal year since our present budget lacks sufficient funds to pay for the required staff and to procure the services needed to conduct the presidential preference primary election.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer comments on Senate Bill No. 1005, SD1.

JADE K. FOUNTAIN-TANIGAWA
County Clerk



GLEN I. TAKAHASHI
City Clerk

LATE

ELECTIONS
OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK
530 SOUTH KING STREET, ROOM 100
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-3099
TELEPHONE: (808) 768-3800 • FAX: (808) 768-3835

TESTIMONY
TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
ON SENATE BILL NO. 1005 SD1
RELATING TO THE ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT.

February 28, 2023

Chair Dela Cruz and Committee members:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on Senate Bill 1005 SD1. The bill proposes to conduct a presidential preference primary election in March of certain election years.

The Office of the City Clerk takes no position on the merits of the proposal but notes that the outcome of the 'election' would have no bearing on the candidate names that may be subsequently included on the general election ballot later in the year.

As one might expect, a new election in March would necessitate onboarding and training seasonal personnel on a timetable that is five months earlier than when staff is typically required.

We broadly estimate that the cost expected to be incurred by the Honolulu Elections Division for this 'federal contest only' election to be \$775,000. This estimate is comprised primarily of labor and other costs associated with processing returned vote-by-mail ballot envelopes (i.e. signature/authentication activities), the full complement of places of deposit, voter service centers, and an informational direct mail notification to educate voters.

As you are likely aware, each County is engaged in annual budgeting activities that do not contemplate conducting a presidential preference election next year. For regularly scheduled elections, we typically find ourselves procuring certain services as early as eight months prior the regularly scheduled elections. If this matter is to move forward, funding for the anticipated County expenses would need to be made available by September 2023. This would enable the Honolulu Elections Division (and all election offices) to enter into the necessary contractual obligations associated with the effort.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on SB1005 SD1.

MOANA M. LUTEY
County Clerk



LATE

SHELLE M. THOMSON
Deputy County Clerk

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CLERK

COUNTY OF MAUI
200 S. HIGH STREET
WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAII 96793
www.mauicounty.gov/county/clerk

February 28, 2023

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

RE: Senate Bill No. 1005, SD 1

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on Senate Bill No. 1005, SD 1. This bill establishes presidential preference primaries and makes an appropriation. In its current form, the first presidential preference primary would be held in March 2024.

A presidential preference primary election would require the County of Maui to administer Candidate Filing, Voter Registration, Voter Service Centers, Places of Deposit, in-house mailing of ballots, and receiving of ballots on all three of the County's islands. We estimate the initial cost of conducting a presidential preference primary election for nearly 116,000 registered voters to be approximately \$600,000.00. The cost estimates reflect a program that would provide similar services and resources deployed during the 2020 and 2022 Primary and General Elections.


Maui County is especially concerned that funding to enable the presidential primary would need to be in place by September 2023 to enable the County to solicit and obtain the necessary temporary staff and services in compliance with Hawaii's procurement law. If the State intends that the Counties fund the presidential preference primary and seek reimbursement, these costs should be planned for and included in the County's FY24 Budget, which requests have already been submitted.

In addition, the process of securing locations for service centers and voter convenience centers on all three islands is already occurring for the primary and general elections in 2024. Further, the March 2024 presidential

February 28, 2023
Page 2

primary would occur in the midst of Candidate Filing, which will complicate staffing and operations.

With best regards,



MOANA M. LUTEY
County Clerk



Democratic Party of Hawai'i Supports S.B. No. 1005

Aloha. We testify in further support of S.B. No. 1005, which amends the state election law to provide for a state-run Presidential Primary to permit the voters of the State of Hawai'i to select by ballot party candidates for the office of President of the United States of America in primary elections organized and controlled by the State of Hawai'i.

Article I, Section 1 of the DPH Constitution provides as follows:

Section 1. General. The Democratic Party of Hawai'i shall be open to all persons who desire to support the Party, who wish to be known as Democrats, and who live in Hawai'i. The Democratic Party of Hawai'i believes that its primary election, a state-imposed mandatory nomination procedure, ought to be open to participation of only such persons as are willing to declare their affiliation with and support for the Party, either through public registration to vote, or through maintenance of membership in the Party. The Party further believes that the current Constitution and laws of the State of Hawai'i, by maintaining secrecy of affiliation, and by compelling the Party to admit to its nomination procedures those who may have no interest in, or actually oppose the interests, values, and platform of the Party, do violence to the Party's associational freedoms and the individual freedoms of its membership to define their own political views, guaranteed under the Constitution of the United States.

Notwithstanding the above, we whole heartily support S.B. No. 1005, because we accept the reality of modern politics. The present system of party-run caucuses protects our inherent power to have a substantial influence over the selection of a party's candidate for President.

The proposed Presidential Primary shares the inherent power of political parties with the people of the state of Hawai'i.

A Presidential Primary will cost the state of Hawai'i about \$2.7 million. The counties will have to contribute additional sums, but a Presidential Primary in Hawai'i will elevate our stature, and the importance of our state. Presidential candidates ought to consider winning our votes and our delegates if they want the right to be their party's nominee for President. They might want to take an interest in our people, and in our special needs and concerns. They might want to come *here* to share with us their hopes, dreams, and plans as to how they will make our lives better. They might want to come *here, in person*, to give us a chance for us to share with them how we think they can help us to make our hopes, our dreams, and our futures a reality.

No candidate for President of the United States of America is currently required to think about us, because all that they need to do right now is convince a small number of people within our political parties to vote their way. A Presidential Primary will change all of this. We ask for your kokua. Mahalo.

DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF HAWAII

PO Box 2041 • Honolulu, HI 96805 • www.hawaiidemocrats.org

**STONEWALL
CAUCUS**

FORMED IN 2001



THE FIRST CAUCUS
**DEMOCRATIC PARTY
OF HAWAII**

LATE

February 28, 2023

Senate's Committee on Ways & Means
Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Hearing: Friday, February 24, 2022 at 2:00 PM

RE: OPPOSITION for Senate Bill 1005 SD 1

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice-Chair Keith-Agaran and fellow committee members,

I am writing opposition for Senate Bill 1005 on behalf of the Stonewall Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawaii, Hawaii's oldest and largest policy and political LGBTQIA+ focused organization, in its current form.

HB 1485 would establish a date for presidential primaries, as well as signature and fee requirements for a person to be nominated as a presidential primary candidate.

The Stonewall Caucus held a talk-story on Monday, January 9 at 6:00 PM via Zoom to discuss the subject of this bill. Everyone, caucus member or not, were invited to attend.

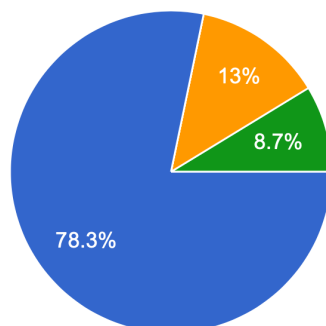
Here are the resources from that event:

1. Recording of the primer that was used before we opened the floor for discussion: <https://youtu.be/3-3TIm8GxM> (13 minutes long)
2. Slide deck used for the talk-story: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1VQH-cS2E7Pqcrz7Uut1Lvt5FXwwSRL5Q/view?usp=share_link

The results from the survey show **OVERWHELMING** support (91.3%) for a Closed Primary no matter who runs it, which coincides with what is dictated to the DPH by our foundational documents.

For the 2024 Presidential Primary which of the following proposals do you support the most:

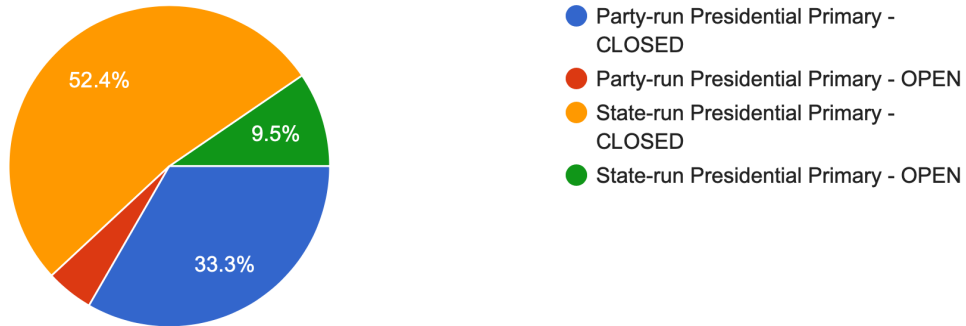
23 responses



- Party-run Presidential Primary - CLOSED
- Party-run Presidential Primary - OPEN
- State-run Presidential Primary - CLOSED
- State-run Presidential Primary - OPEN
- None of the above (See preference provided below)

For the 2024 Presidential Primary which of the following proposals do you support the second most:

21 responses



It should be noted that the 2 people that did not give a 2nd choice picked “Party-run Presidential Primary – CLOSED” as their 1st choice.

Given the responses from our members, plus the Caucus’ long-standing position on this matter, and what is in the Democratic Party of Hawai’i’s foundational documents in our Constitution¹ and Resolution² the Stonewall Caucus can ONLY be able to support a CLOSED Presidential Primary. The Caucus understands for the State to run a closed Presidential Primary it would require an amendment to the State Constitution.

The Caucus can also think of a lot of better ways of spending \$2.7+ million dollars.

Without any amendments to the bill to ensure a closed Presidential Primary we must oppose SB 1005.

Mahalo for your time and consideration,

Michael Golojuch, Jr. (he/him)
Chair and SCC Representative
Stonewall Caucus for the DPH

¹ Article 1, Section1 - DPH State Constitution - https://www.hawaiidemocrats.org/files/ugd/cac0ab_e0fbaa66facd465fa9fd16f24cb10dc0.pdf

² GOV 2010-02 Limitation of Voting in Democratic Party Primaries to Party Members - https://drive.google.com/file/d/1fYib_Dca9bR4K1kjP-flEfoAiXfW-Ih7/view

DPH Constitution as amended by the State Convention 05/28/2022

Art. I, Sec. 1

The Democratic Party of Hawai'i believes that its primary election, a state-imposed mandatory nomination procedure, ought to be open to participation of only such persons as are willing to declare their affiliation with and support for the Party, either through public registration to vote, or through maintenance of membership in the Party. The Party further believes that the current Constitution and laws of the State of Hawai'i, by maintaining secrecy of affiliation, and by compelling the Party to admit to its nomination procedures those who may have no interest in, or actually oppose the interests, values, and platform of the Party, do violence to the Party's associational freedoms and the individual freedoms of its membership to define their own political views, guaranteed under the Constitution of the United States.

Art. VIII, Sec. 8

The **resolving clauses of resolutions**, except for those clauses that refer to a specific date, event, or legislative session, **once adopted by delegates at a convention of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i shall represent the official policies of the Party and shall remain in force and effect until rescinded or amended by the delegates at an annual or special convention.**

GOV 2010-02 Limitation of Voting in Democratic Party Primaries to Party Members

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1fYib_Dca9bR4K1kjP-flEfoAiXfW-lh7/view

Be It Resolved, That the Democratic Party of Hawai'i take all action necessary and proper to limit participation in all Democratic Party primaries within the State of Hawai'i to persons who are bona fide members of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i, and to cause the Hawai'i State Government to institute such limitations in all future primaries as soon as possible; and

SB-1005-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2023 11:32:57 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/1/2023 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Leimomi Khan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support as a means to encourage wider participation of voters and because costs to conduct the Presidential Primary by political parties is no longer feasible. Prefer a closed primary. An open presidential primary places each Party at risk of having a candidate elected who may not fully support its Party Platform. Even though, a state-run Presidential Primary would enable more of Hawaii's citizens, including more members of political parties, to engage in this critical process.

SB-1005-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2023 12:55:28 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/1/2023 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Larry Smith	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, I ask your support for SB1005_SD1 that authorizes the State to carry out a Presidential Primary election. The State run Presidential Primary is the best option to provide access for voting in the Presidential Primary for Hawaii registered voters. The State system works, is safe and accurate. The Democratic Party nationally has strongly encouraged all states to use a State run Presidential Primary approach. 37 states currently use the State run option with the remaining states currently deciding what action to take.

Alternatives to the State run Presidential Primary do not allow Hawaii voters an easy to use option to vote. In 2020, a Party run Presidential Primary was administered by the Democratic Party of Hawaii. Only 30,000 votes were cast to determine the Democratic candidate whose name would appear on the General Election ballot because only the 70,000 enrolled members of the Democratic Party of Hawaii could vote in that election. In the 2020 General election over 360,000 votes were cast for the Democratic candidate. SO, 30,000 voters in the Primary decided the candidate for the 360,000 voters who supported the Democrat on the General Election ballot.

This will be a Primary election only held every four years. State costs of \$2.8 million will only be incurred in the Election year, so annual costs are \$700,000.

SB-1005-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2023 1:24:50 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/1/2023 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Larry Meacham	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Than you for the opporunity to offer Testimony SUPPORTING SB 1005

Most states have a Presidential Primary, which allows all voters to have a say in deciding which candidate to support in our country's most important election.

However, in Hawai'i the parties have to run their own elections, which reach only the fraction of voters who have signed up as party members. For example, in 2020 the Democratic Party of Hawaii polled its 80,000 enrolled members, who are only 20% of the approximately 400,000 registered voters in Hawaii.

SB 1005 would remedy this by setting up a Presidential Primary every four years, so that all voters would have an opportunity to express their preference. This expansion of democracy would reinforce our state's modern history of increased inclusion and opportunity, and bring us in line with practices in the rest of the country.

Most of the testimony has been in favor of the bill, and it was favorably reported out of the Senate Judiciary Committee. This is to urge you to continue this effort to broaden participation in our most important election.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony.

To: WAM Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair and Committee members

Date of Hearing: Mar. 1, 2023, at 9:30, Rm. 016

Re: Testimony in support of SB1005 Relating to the Election of the President

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of SB1005 relating to the selection of President candidates.

The strength of a democracy is in the participation of its citizens in the democratic process. It has never been more important to assure transparency and the widest possible participation of America's citizens and voters in the selection of their candidates and elected leaders.

A government-run presidential primary is a reasonable price to pay to strengthen our democracy and ensuring the participation of voters in the selection of the leadership of the nation.

The Hawai'i legislature should be congratulated for making voting easier and more convenient. Voting by mail and automatic registration at driver's license renewal were important advancements in citizen participation.

Prior to 2016, the selection of the Democratic candidate for President was done in caucuses. I recall how across the state, in schools and community centers, registered Democrats gathered to select their Presidential candidate. Democrats gathered at a specific date and time to cast their vote for the candidate of their choice. But many could not participate, those who didn't drive at night, the disabled, those who had to work, those with childcare or family issues, or, as in the 2008 or 2012 elections, couldn't find parking or get through the crowds to cast a vote.

In 2020, in an effort to expand participation beyond caucuses, the Democratic Party of Hawai'i held a Party-run Presidential Primary. It was a mail-in ballot, so physical access was not a problem. However, not all Democrats are registered, and only registered Democrats received a ballot. In 2020, 35,000 Democrats voted in the first Party-run Presidential Primary. By contrast, over 290,000 voted for Senator Schatz and over 260,000 voted for a Democratic governor in the 2022 General election.

The only certainty is to get the widest voter participation we need to move to a State-run presidential primary. Please pass SB1005.

Thank you,

Amy Monk

DNC Committeewoman for Hawai'i

SB-1005-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2023 8:02:02 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/1/2023 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
John Bickel	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am testifying for this bill as an individual. I have had experience with the Central Committee of the Democratic Party, the Affirmative Action Committee of the Party, and the Presidential Preference Poll committee of the Party. I am familiar with the Democratic Party rules for state parties as they choose their delegates to the Democratic National Convention. The Democratic National Committee has been urging us to hold a state run primary. In 2020, we did our first Party-run Presidential Primary. This opened the process to a lot more people than the old caucus system. One reason I like the state-run primary is it opens the process even more. Admittedly I like a closed primary, but I understand the State Constitution makes that unlikely. Yet a primary gives the parties key data that enables the parties to award delegates to national conventions. I also like ranked choice voting. We did it in 2020. You may want to amend the bill to accommodate this. The Democratic Party nationally gives an incentive to hold primaries a little later in the calendar. So Hawaii Democrats got a bonus of two extra delegates in 2020 for holding the primary on or after April 1. Therefore I encourage you to amend this bill to move the date to early April. For Democrats it is helpful to get the bonus delegates but also to have time between the primary and the state convention. The state conventions usually translate the numbers to named individuals who will go to the national convention. So it is helpful to have some lead time. The mail-in voting system is fine for the Democratic National Committee. They do want drop boxes. We want our presidential nominees to be the ones supported by the party members. President Biden has indicated he wants to see primaries more than caucuses. This bill would help make that a reality. It is big task to ask the parties to run their primaries. Having the state do it ensures it is fair and done with enough resources to do the job.

SB-1005-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2023 10:29:36 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/1/2023 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Barbara Dalton	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I write to support and urge the swift passage of SB 1005, SD 1.

As I stated in testimony to the Senate Judiciary Committee and to the House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs, voters in the 50th state are effectively disenfranchised from choosing the national nominees for President. At last week’s House JHA hearing, Chair Tarnas deferred HB 1485, mainly because it was not referred to the House Committee on Finance. SB 1005, SD 1, now under consideration by WAM, funds a state-run Presidential Primary Election to be conducted every four years by the State Office of Elections. It is important to note that the estimated \$2.7 million cost of such an election will be incurred only every four years, not during every 2-year election cycle. I asked the Hawai’i County Clerk what a Special Election would cost and was told \$258,075.00—again, a cost incurred only every four years rather than two.

The creation of a Presidential Primary Election will encourage participation and allow Hawai’i voters to cast our votes for the Presidential nominees. With one of the lowest voter turnout rates nationwide, we MUST take active measures to amplify the voice of the Hawai’i electorate. The best way to ensure that is for the Office of Elections to conduct a statewide election. SB 1005, SD1 will accomplish that.

Those who do not avidly follow politics or serve as party officials simply don’t pay much attention to how they may support a presidential candidate. Since 2008, inspired voters have been moved to turn out for a candidate that speaks to them, but, from my experience as a Democratic Party leader on the Big Island, they have little grasp of the process that (barely) allows them to do so. A state-run Presidential Primary Election would remedy this.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify. I do so with more than ten years’ experience organizing and executing the process for Hawai’i Island Democrats to express their preference for president. We need the Office of Elections to help make the process successful.