



**STATE OF HAWAII
OFFICE OF ELECTIONS**

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SCOTT T. NAGO
CHIEF ELECTION OFFICER

TESTIMONY OF THE
CHIEF ELECTION OFFICER, OFFICE OF ELECTIONS
TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY
ON SENATE BILL NO. 1076
RELATING TO ELECTIONS

February 3, 2023

Chair Rhoads and members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary, thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on Senate Bill No. 1076. This bill requires the Office of Elections to prepare a digital voter information guide; requires the Office of Elections to post the guide on its website in compliance with certain accessibility standards; requires the Office of Elections to mail each ballot with a notice that states a voter information guide may be found on its website; and appropriates funds.

We believe an informed electorate is important for the health of our democracy, however, it is important for the integrity of the election that our office remain apolitical. As such, to compile a voter information guide, we would ask all candidates to submit their statement for inclusion in the voter information guide when they file their nomination paper. After the candidate filing deadline, we would translate and compile these statements to make them available on our website. In addition to Olelo Hawaii, as provided by this bill, we would also translate the voter guide into the languages covered by the federal Voting Rights Act, which are Chinese, Ilocano, and Tagalog. The voter information guide would need to be available at least 45 days before each election to coincide with ballots being sent to uniformed and overseas voters.

We propose the bill be amended, as it relates to the ballot questions for clarification and consistency, to specify that the Department of the Attorney General and Corporation Counsel translate the ballot question statements into the same languages – Olelo Hawaii, Chinese, Ilocano, and Tagalog, and to provide the statements with translations to our office when questions are due, 75 days before the general election.

Our initial cost estimate totals \$143,280 for both elections:

	Primary	General	Total
Translations	53,280	0	53,280
Printed Instructions	30,000	30,000	60,000
Inserting Instructions	15,000	15,000	30,000
Total	\$ 98,280	\$ 45,000	\$ 143,280

We understand that the intent of the bill is to provide the voter information guide online and to provide a physical copy upon request by a voter. We would propose that the bill be amended to allow for physical copies to be made available at state libraries for public viewing as an alternate option. This would allow our office to plan for and get a better cost associated with printing the voter information guide.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on Senate Bill No. 1076.

COMMUNITY ALLIANCE ON PRISONS

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COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair

Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair

Friday, February 3, 2023

Room 016

9:30 AM

SUPPORT FOR SB 1076 - VOTER GUIDE

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard 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 4,074 Hawai'i individuals living behind bars¹ and under the "care and custody" of the Department of Public Safety/Corrections and Rehabilitation on any given day. We are always mindful that 964 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.

Community Alliance on Prisons appreciates this opportunity to testify in full support of SB 1076 requiring the Office of Elections to prepare a digital voter information guide and print copies for those requesting one.

A vibrant democracy demands an informed electorate. Hawai'i's voting numbers must improve if we are to have a fully functioning democracy. The Center for Civic Design described their work in California:

Our research for the [Future of California Elections](#) explored how voters (including new voters, registered non-voters and potential voters) find information about elections, and what works — and doesn't work — about their current sources. We learned that voters need information that helps them bridge civic literacy gaps, and gives them the information they need, in words they understand.

In time for the 2016 election, we worked with election departments in California to update voter guides with the best practice recommendations for the 2016 elections. Any election department can use the resources we have created to update their voter guides.

¹ Department of Public Safety, Weekly Population Report, January 30, 2023.

https://dps.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Pop-Reports-Weekly-2023-01-23_George-King.pdf

The Center for Civic Design also has resources for creating a voter guide:

Best Practices Manual for Official Voter Information Guides Released

February 25, 2015

In the November 2014 election, only 31% of eligible Californians voted and young people and people of color continued to be underrepresented. Although many factors contribute to low voter turnout, we believe that voter information is an important tool to engage and expand the electorate.

To help make voter information more effective, more inviting, and more useful, we have released our ***Best Practices Manual for Official Voter Information Guides***. This manual was specifically developed as an easy-to-use resource for election officials and community groups working to enfranchise and educate California voters.

- **[Download the Manual](#)**
- **[View a prototype voter guide](#)**
- **[View a sample Voter Bill of Rights](#) written in plain language**

What is in the Best Practices Manual for Official Voter Information Guides Manual?

To better serve California's diverse voters, this manual provides a full checklist of recommendations for creating or reviewing a voter guide to help answer the questions voters need. We must effectively provide voter information that:

- bridges civic literacy gaps
- is designed to make information easy to read
- is written in a language voters can understand

More resources can be found on their website:

<https://cavotes.org/announcement/2015/feb/best-practices-manual-official-voter-information-guides-released>

Community Alliance on Prisons urges the committee to pass this important civic bill. Please send it to WAM with a strong recommendation for funding this incredibly worthy project.

Let's do everything we can to encourage voter participation in our democracy!



Committee on Judiciary
Chair Karl Rhoads, Vice Chair Jarrett Kaohokalole

Friday, February 11, 2022, 9:30 a.m. Via Videoconference

SB 3226 RELATING TO ELECTIONS

TESTIMONY

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

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Kaohokalole, and Committee Members:

The League of Women Voters of Hawaii supports SB 3226 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.

Such voter education is long overdue, The measure is silent regarding content of the guide, but the most important topics are candidate statements and an explanation of any ballot questions. Our research of digital voter education in four other Western states suggests that pro/con analysis of ballot proposals is also common, and we believe this feature should be included in the voter guide.

The Office of Elections website has begun providing its own YouTube videos for its voter education topics, and we heartily endorse this effort. Likewise certain logistical education can continue to be included with mailed instructions, such as deadlines, ballot drop-off locations and voter service center locations. To this list of mailed instructions, we like the idea in this bill to mail notice of the voter information guide with the ballot.

That leaves the question of how to reach eligible voters who don't have access to the Internet (or are not willing to use the Internet). It is worth permitting such voters to request a paper version of the voter guide by contacting the Office of Elections. We say this recognizing production and distribution of a paper guide is much more expensive than digital. Unfortunately, without a printed option, certain voters will not have the same access to voter information.

We respectfully suggest that the bill be amended to clarify how responsibility for voter education in Federal, State, and local elections is to be divided between the State and Counties. Sometimes an election is at the County-level only.

We are hopeful State and County election officials will testify on this measure.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

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SB-1076

Submitted on: 1/30/2023 7:46:06 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kenneth R. Conklin, Ph.D.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I have a Ph.D. in Philosophy and M.S. on Mathematics; so I am accustomed to analyzing issues logically and in great depth. But I confess to sometimes having difficulty understanding the purpose and implementation of ballot propositions, especially when they use language that is obscure, ambiguous, or highly technical. A voter information guide would be very helpful. Please be sure that each side of an issue has a statement written by a proponent so that voters can consider viewpoints they might not have thought of.

SB-1076

Submitted on: 1/31/2023 3:10:45 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
PL Fritz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this bill which will provide accessibility to voter information for individuals with disabilities.

SB-1076

Submitted on: 1/30/2023 4:31:38 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gerard Silva	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

End Mail in Voteing and We the People Demand Vote by Idea Only. Our Elections are to Croupt and need to be Cleaned out and redone!!!!

SB-1076

Submitted on: 2/3/2023 9:19:47 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/3/2023 9:30:00 AM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Andrew Crossland	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this Bill.