



**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 HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS  
ON SENATE BILL NO. 1005, SD 2  
RELATING TO THE ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT

March 22, 2023

Chair Tarnas and members of the House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs, thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on Senate Bill No. 1005, SD 2. 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 on the primary election ballot.

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, and since we do not register by political party, 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 estimate of the costs of State responsibilities is \$3,395,703 for over 900,000 registered voters. Our estimate does not reflect the need for any costs accrued by the counties.

From our previous testimony, we have increased our cost estimates related to voter education to include media production and a mailer notifying voters of the addition of a presidential preference primary. Additionally, we have increased the estimate related to the labor and travel of the voting system vendor.

|   |                           |
|---|---------------------------|
| 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                      | 538,995                   |
| Voter Education Campaign                  | 366,843                   |
| <b>Initial Estimate</b>                   | <b><u>\$3,395,703</u></b> |

### 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

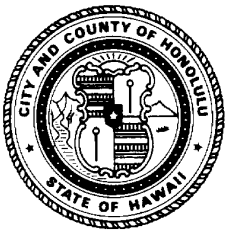
We would recommend moving the deadline for a group to qualify as a political party to field candidates for the presidential preference primary ballot to 90 days before the close of candidate filing or clarify that the ability to participate in the presidential preference primary election only applies 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 2.



GLEN I. TAKAHASHI  
City Clerk

**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 HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY AND HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS  
ON SENATE BILL NO. 1005 SD2  
RELATING TO THE ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT.

March 22, 2023

Chair Tarnas and Committee members:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on Senate Bill 1005 SD2. 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.

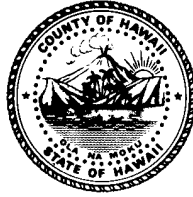
As one might expect, a new election in March would necessitate onboarding and training seasonal personnel on a timetable that is five months earlier than when staff is typically required.

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 for election operations administered by the Counties under the vote-by-mail election model. These include processing returned vote-by-mail ballot envelopes (i.e. signature/authentication activities), administering 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 SD2.

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 JUDICIARY & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

ON SENATE BILL NO. 1005, SD 2

RELATING TO THE ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT

March 20, 2023

Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Takayama, and members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs, thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on Senate Bill No. 1005, SD 2. 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> |

For the County of Hawaii, any purchases made in excess of \$1,000.00 must follow procurement guidelines which can be a lengthy process. As the presidential preference primary election would occur on March 5, 2024, we kindly request appropriations be made available by September 2023 as this additional funding is not included in our annual budget.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on Senate Bill 1005, SD 2.



## Democratic Party of Hawai'i Supports S.B. No. 1005 SD2

The Democratic Party of Hawai'i support of S.B. No. 1005 SD2, 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 heartly support S.B. No. 1005 SD2, because we accept the reality of modern politics. State party run caucuses reach out and touch a small number of prospective voters, who may or may not reflect the economic, geographical, and social diversity of our people, even despite our best efforts as partisans to be inclusive.

We seek to promote democracy. We have good reason to be concerned about the process of how we elect our national leaders. We ought to encourage broad participation in an open process to elect our national leaders in a way that strives to be responsive to the needs and wishes of the people.

We believe that a Presidential Primary serves all these goals. We believe in elections that are inclusive, rather than elections that are exclusive, even if this means that we, as self-motivated partisans, must relinquish a certain quality of us being able to promote the niceties of our political views in favor of the political views of the people.

The President of the United States of America is arguably the most important leader in the free world. It makes a difference who we elect to sit in the Oval Office. So consequential is this matter that we ought to do everything within our power to bring the question of who should be President to each and every registered voter in the State of Hawai'i.

We believe that S.B. No. 1005 SD2 will achieve all of this.

S.B. No. 1005 SD2 recognizes the need for a special election aligned with the time when our nation turns its attention to the question of who should be our President.

We respectfully suggest that S.B. No. 1005 SD2 encourages all our political parties to engage in a uniform process to bring forth their best candidates and to give choice to the people.

*A Presidential primary in Hawai'i may induce candidates for the office of President to come to Hawai'i to share with us their hopes, and dreams, and their vision for our collective future. A Presidential primary in Hawai'i may give us with a chance to share with them a sense of our hopes, and dreams, and our vision for our collective future.*

We urge passage of S.B. No. 1005 SD2. We respectfully ask for this bill to become law effective **forthwith**.

Mahalo.

Dennis W. Jung  
State Chair  
Democratic Party of Hawai'i



# STONEWALL CAUCUS

FORMED IN 2001



# THE FIRST CAUCUS OF THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF HAWAII

March 20, 2023

House's Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs  
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 2**

Aloha Chair Tamas, Vice-Chair Takayama and fellow committee members,

I am writing opposition for House Bill 1485 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.

SB 1005 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 to discuss the subject of this bill. Everyone, caucus member or not, were invited to attend.

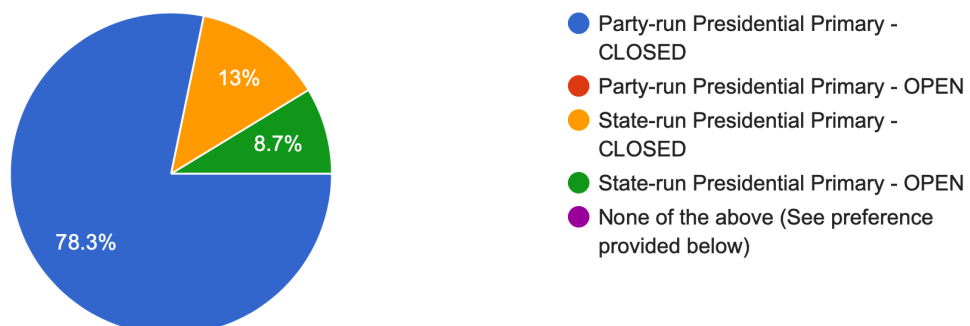
Here are the resources from that event:

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](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.

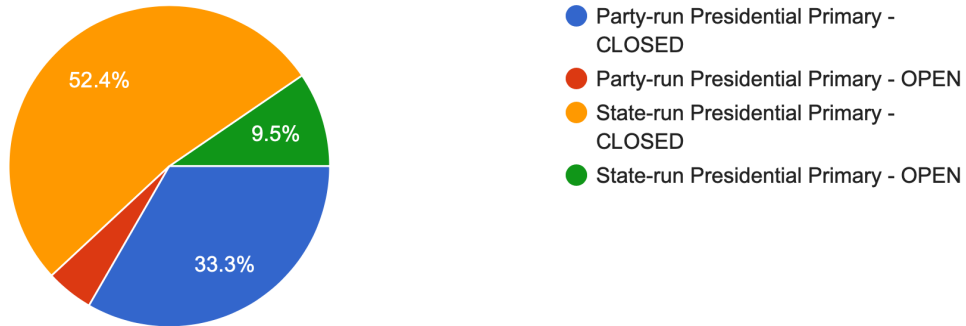
For the 2024 Presidential Primary which of the following proposals do you support the most:

23 responses



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 2<sup>nd</sup> choice picked “Party-run Presidential Primary – CLOSED” as their 1<sup>st</sup> 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 Constitution<sup>1</sup> and Resolution<sup>2</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> Article 1, Section1 - DPH State Constitution - [https://www.hawaiidemocrats.org/files/ugd/cac0ab\\_e0fbaa66facd465fa9fd16f24cb10dc0.pdf](https://www.hawaiidemocrats.org/files/ugd/cac0ab_e0fbaa66facd465fa9fd16f24cb10dc0.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> GOV 2010-02 Limitation of Voting in Democratic Party Primaries to Party Members - [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1fYib\\_Dca9bR4K1kjP-flEfoAiXfW-Ih7/view](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.**

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

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1fYib\\_Dca9bR4K1kjP-flEfoAiXfW-lh7/view](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

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY &  
HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

RE: SB 1005 SD2 – RELATING TO THE ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 22, 2023

JASON BRADSHAW, CHAIR  
DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF HAWAII LABOR CAUCUS

Chair Tarnas and Members of the Committee:

The Democratic Party of Hawaii Labor Caucus **offers comments on SB 1005, SD2,** relating to the election of the president. This bill establishes a date for presidential primaries, as well as signature and fee requirements for a person to be nominated as a presidential primary candidate.

As part of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i Labor Caucus we support a state run presidential primary; **however, it would have to be a closed primary with only those registered as members of the Democratic Party voting, and that would require a State Constitutional Amendment for it to be state run.** In our last SCC meeting for the Democratic Party of Hawaii, it was specifically stated that only members of the Democratic Party should be able to vote for the choice of which candidate should be the choice of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i for president. If this cannot be done by the state, then the Democratic Party must continue to run our own Presidential Preference Poll with our members to ensure that our choice of a primary candidate for president is indeed, a choice of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i members.

The Labor Caucus supports a closed primary for the Presidential Preference Poll, which would deter crossover voting. An open primary would allow all unaffiliated voters to cast a vote for a Primary candidate and crossover voting.

**As members of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i, we must abide by our DPH Constitution as amended by our last State Convention on 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.



Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs  
Chair David A. Tarnas, Vice Chair Gregg Takayama

Wednesday, March 22, 2023, Room 325 and VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE  
SB 1005, SD2 – RELATING TO ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT

TESTIMONY

Janet Mason and Holly Plackett, Legislative Committee, League of Women Voters of Hawaii

Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Takayama, and Committee Members:

**The League of Women Voters of Hawaii offers comments only on SB1005 SD2, which establishes a Presidential Preference Primary in Hawaii.**

This bill provides evidence that Hawaii's Political Party caucuses or Political Party primaries are not representative of the Parties themselves (or representative of the number of people who vote in official primaries (e.g., for State Governor). This means a relatively small number of people nominate someone to be President of the United States in our State's primary election because of limited participation in such caucuses or primaries.

Currently Party primaries add value to our elections process; they fulfill the important function of recruiting and screening candidates for President of the United States. They also provide information to voters that contrasts different political points of view. Is it possible to support this effort without the State operating the election? To us, this is a difficult question.

Since Hawaii is an "open primary" state, a Presidential Preference Election should also be open, where all parties could participate. But how could the state compel all parties to participate? It remains to be seen whether all parties would voluntarily participate. The SD2 version of this measure specifically allows parties to opt out of the preference primary election six months before the date of the scheduled Preference Primary Election.

The League supports direct, proportional representation in elections. However, like the Electoral College (which we do not support) the elections proposed in this measure would not be "direct," whereby the candidate with the most votes automatically receives the Party nomination. Rather the eventual Party candidate is determined at national conventions following national party committee rules for such nominations. How could we guarantee that the Hawaii delegates to a Party's convention would nominate the

person who won the Hawaii Presidential Preference primary? We couldn't. Also, if this measure moves forward, our "faithless elector" laws pertaining to the Electoral College should be amended so delegates to national Party conventions would also be subject to these laws since they would be elected by Hawaii voters under Hawaii Presidential Preference laws.

If all parties fielded a candidate, having an "open primary" where all parties were represented makes the election close to nonpartisan (except for self-declared non-partisan candidates who would not be included in the Preference Election). This is the only circumstance under which Hawaii should consider operating such an election. Otherwise, it's just a State-run partisan party election, which we would not support.

The Office of Elections and the Honolulu County Clerk have testified that a Presidential preference election would cost over \$4.5 million for the state and its counties to operate and require a State appropriation of \$2,787,705. This is probably an indication that the current system of party primaries has already become too expensive for some (perhaps all parties) though that is not specifically mentioned in any party testimony. Ironically, the greater the turnout in these party primaries the more representative the result, but the greater the expense.

The Office of Elections identified at least 12 "Legal Considerations," which were incorporated in the SD2 version of the bill, and we support these additions.

Some voters believe that if Hawaii held an early presidential preference primary the State would have more influence on the selection of the presidential candidate at Party conventions. This is not a persuasive argument, because regardless of the timing of the election, Hawaii has a small population and is a relatively remote location.

Neither would a separate, earlier, presidential primary election necessarily result in higher voter turnout. Having three elections in a Presidential election year might result in voter fatigue. At this point it is difficult for us to support anything that could offset voter turnout in the State's primary and general elections.

We thank the legislature for hearing this measure, an important idea that is already used in more than 30 locations throughout the United States. An alternative might be a subsidy for individual Party primaries, but this is another question for which we do not yet have a position.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Representative David Tarnas, Chair  
House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs

Dear Chair Tarnas and members of the Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs Committee:

I write in support of SB1005 SD2.

I am currently a member of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i (DPH).

When I moved back to this State in 2014, I was not a DPH member. In 2016 I wanted to vote in the Democratic Presidential Primary and awaited notice in the mail. I missed my chance, only realizing that when I found out the caucus had been held. I was puzzled about why nothing came in the mail about the election. I only found out later that there is no State-run Presidential Primary in Hawai'i and that you have to be a registered Democrat to participate. Thus, due to no fault of my own, I was unable to exercise my right to vote. Others in my position and those who just turned 18 will similarly not be aware that extra steps need to be taken in order to vote in a Presidential Primary under this State's current system.

That's why this bill is needed. Under the current law there are hundreds or voters, perhaps thousands, who want to vote in the Presidential Primary but cannot because they lack the knowledge of how the system works.

I also agree with the Office of Elections' prior testimony that a party's ability to opt-out of the State-run Presidential Primary should be deleted from the bill.

Thank you.

Elton Fukumoto



## HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

Rep. David Tarnas, Chair  
Rep. Gregg Takayama, Vice Chair

Wednesday, March 22, 2023 2p.m.

### HB1005, SD2, RELATING TO THE ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT

Good afternoon, Chair Tarnas, Vice-Chair Takayama and Members of the Committee,

My name is Bart Dame. I am speaking as an individual in STRONG SUPPORT of SB1005, which would establish a State-run presidential primary, to be held in the Spring every four years.

The number of Hawaii residents wanting to vote in the presidential nominating process has grown to the point where it has outstripped the ability of the political parties to provide a convenient, secure, accurate and verifiable means for them to cast their vote.

The policy question facing legislators is whether there is a public interest in providing Hawaii voters a secure, convenient and verifiable voting system for the presidential primary as is already done by the state for all other primary elections.

These 44 state governments have decided it is in the interest of their citizens state and county agencies to run a presidential primary:

|                |             |               |              |
|----------------|-------------|---------------|--------------|
| New Hampshire  | Tennessee   | Illinois      | Nebraska     |
| Nevada         | Texas       | Ohio          | Kentucky     |
| South Carolina | Utah        | Louisiana     | Oregon       |
| Alabama        | Vermont     | Wisconsin     | Montana      |
| Arkansas       | Virginia    | Delaware      | New Jersey   |
| California     | Idaho       | Maryland      | New Mexico   |
| Colorado       | Michigan    | Pennsylvania  | South Dakota |
| Maine          | Mississippi | Rhode Island  | Georgia      |
| Massachusetts  | Missouri    | Connecticut   |              |
| Minnesota      | Washington  | New York      |              |
| North Carolina | Arizona     | Indiana       |              |
| Oklahoma       | Florida     | West Virginia |              |

Only these states continue to use caucuses or party-run primaries:

|        |              |         |
|--------|--------------|---------|
| Alaska | Iowa         | Wyoming |
| Kansas | North Dakota | Hawaii  |

These territories continue to rely upon party caucuses:

American Samoa      Guam      Northern Marianas      Virgin Islands

But the two largest territories, Puerto Rico and Washington, DC, provide their voters with a government-run presidential primary.

I note the other states without a government-run primary are all run by Republicans. Which does not mean they oppose voter rights, but it does mean they are less likely to respond to the wish of the DNC to move away from caucuses. As the only Democratic state on the list, Hawaii stands out as an outlier. I am used to Hawaii being treated as a backwater by some mainland people as well as some recent transplants. But I am hoping Hawaii's lawmakers agree our people better than second-class voting rights, but deserve a modern efficient voting system that is both convenient and secure.

To be fair, the Democratic Party has wanted to maintain control over our presidential nominating system and have not asked for the state to take over the running of the presidential primary. But the reality is, we do not have the capability to handle the increased public desire to vote.

My experience has been with Democratic presidential nomination campaigns. I do not pretend to speak for the Republicans, but I believe this reform would serve the interests of Hawaii residents wanting to help pick the presidential nominee for any of the parties. I think it is important the bill serves the interests of Republican and independent voters as well as Democrats.

## **HISTORICAL TURNOUT IN DPH PRESIDENTIAL CAUCUSES**

These figures will help understand what has happened in recent years on the Democratic side. These are Total Statewide turnout figures:

|      |       |                          |      |        |                          |
|------|-------|--------------------------|------|--------|--------------------------|
| 1988 | 4,975 | M. Dukakis v J. Jackson  | 2008 | 37,562 | H. Clinton v B. Obama    |
| 1992 | 3,014 | Clinton v Brown v Harkin | 2016 | 33,734 | H. Clinton v B. Sanders  |
| 2004 | 4,080 | Kerry v Dean v Kucinich  | 2020 | 35,044 | Biden v Sanders v et al. |

From 1988 to 2004, voting in the Democratic presidential caucuses was very low. Only active party members, plus a few newcomers excited by a particular candidate, showed up. Party volunteers were able to hold meetings, collect and count the votes in full view of those present and report the results.

That changed in 2008 with the Obama v Clinton race. Both campaigns in Hawaii were well-financed and backed by major institutional forces. They flew in professional campaign workers. The local media, and the public, took an interest. The number of people wanting to vote shot up and a voting system that had previously been able to handle a few thousand voters strained and struggled under the load.

Again, in 2016, there was a massive turnout of people wanting to vote in the presidential race and the party volunteers struggled to carry the load. Again, as in 2008, there were news stories about "chaos" at the voting sites. There were long lines of cars trying to get into the school parking lots. There were long lines of voters waiting to register, to join the party, to get their ballots, to vote. At many sites, we ran out of ballots and had to resort to pieces of scrap paper, even torn up cardboard boxes. At some sites, even if we had enough ballots, we ran out of voter registration forms for new voters or party enrollment forms needed so people could join the party prior to voting.

There were long lines of cars trying to get into parking lots and then of voters trying to get ballots to cast. There were many news accounts decrying the "chaos" of the process. Thousands of voters turned away in frustration. I have no doubt the experience has discouraged turnout.

I have attached a news story about the problems at the 2016 voting sites to help refresh your memory. There were similar stories in the Star-Advertiser and on TV news. (2016 Civil Beat article ATTACHED below)

## **MAIL-IN, PARTY-RUN PRIMARY**

In 2020, the Democrats moved to an all mail-in party-run primary election, in part to make it easier for people to vote without waiting in line or excluding those who could not make it to their local school in a short and specific period of time. The Covid public health crisis hit just at that time, also making in-person voting impossible.

But a mail-in voting system requires, as the most basic safeguard, the ability to verify the signatures on the return envelope to protect against election fraud. The political parties do not have access to a signature database, unlike the State and County election offices. I spent six years as an Official Observer of the State election process, asking questions and working to ensure a secure, accurate and verifiable election system. While I trust our vendors, the party staff and most of the volunteers involved in our election process, the number of voters wanting to be involved in helping pick the president has outstripped our abilities, in my opinion, our well-intended, amateurish efforts be replaced by the professionalism and efficiency of a state-run primary.

I was also one of the leaders of Safe Vote Hawaii, the group that led the successful effort to pass legislation requiring that all electronic voting machines used in Hawaii be able to produce a Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail. I have pushed, argued and lobbied for secure, “best practices” in the conduct of state-run elections for many years. I cannot ignore how the party-run presidential primary system, despite best efforts from staff, volunteers and vendors, is unable to live up to the same security standards I have previously insisted are needed by any acceptable voting system.

## **SECURITY CONCERNS WITH MAIL-IN VOTING**

While I have respect for the professionalism and integrity of the contractors who have been helping the Democratic Party of Hawaii run its party-run presidential primary, neither they nor the Party has access to the signature verification software that is necessary for scanning and verifying the signatures on the envelopes containing returned ballots.

Ask Scott Nago or one of the County Clerks how they verify the identity of those casting votes via mail-in balloting and if they would be willing to save money by skipping signature verification?

## **CLOSED VERSUS OPEN PRIMARY**

Some lawmakers have asked about the Democratic Party’s explicit preference for closed primaries, as expressed in our party Constitution. First off, that preference is not limited to the presidential nominating process but to ALL primaries, including those for the Legislature, Congress and the Governor. But our preference conflicts with a provision in the Hawaii State Constitution which prohibits closed primaries. In fact, the provision in our Rules was drafted by the late Tony Gill precisely to conflict with the State Constitution as preparation for filing a lawsuit in Federal court against Hawaii’s open primary election system in use for Legislative, Congressional and Gubernatorial elections. We think all government run primary elections should be closed.

But we fought that battle and lost. In 2013, Tony Gill filed a federal lawsuit on behalf of the Democratic Party. He lost and appealed to the 9<sup>th</sup> Circuit, where he lost again. When the SCC voted to authorize the DPH Chair and Legislation Committee to seek passage of legislation for a state-run presidential primary, it was done with the understanding that such a primary would almost inevitably be open to all voters. The Democratic preference for a closed primary is counter-balanced by a preference for a competent and

professionally election run consistent with “best practices” to ensure a secure and accurate vote. WE can no longer do that. We are willing to set aside our preference for a closed primary in favor of shifting to a secure and efficient voting system.

When the State Central Committee of the Democratic Party voted to authorize the DPH Chair and Legislation Committee to seek passage of legislation for a state-run presidential primary, it was done with the understanding that such a primary would almost inevitably be open to all voters.

I hope you will be able to support SB1005. I can be available to answer questions and listen to your concerns. While my experience has been rooted in the Democratic Party, I do not believe the bill favors any particular party and that a state-run primary will greatly increase the number of participating in the selection of presidential candidates for all parties. The main beneficiary will be the voters.

**I you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to ask me questions during the hearing.**

Thank you for your consideration,

Bart Dame  
Honolulu

NEWS ARTICLE FROM CIVIL BEAT ABOUT THE 2016 PRESIDENTIAL ATTACHED  
TO HELP RE-KINDLE YOUR MEMORY

# Caucus ‘Chaos’: Complaints Follow Hawaii Democrats’ Presidential Preference Poll

**UPDATED:** The state’s Saturday balloting was criticized by many voters, but local party officials defended the process.

By Chad Blair    / March 29, 2016

 Reading time: 8 minutes.



Long lines. Disorganization and poor communication. Voters turned away.

Those are some of the criticisms that have been shared about Saturday’s [presidential preference poll](#), where Hawaii Democrats chose Bernie Sanders over Hillary Clinton by a more than 2-to-1 margin.

Complaints have been posted on Civil Beat’s report on Sanders’ victory, on Twitter, via email and on the [Facebook page](#) of the Democratic Party of Hawaii. National media [such as NBC](#) shared some of the discontent in news reports.

Were things that bad?

Party Chair Stephanie Ohigashi doesn’t think so.

“I have been trying to follow up on some of these complaints, calling the county chairs,” she said. “For instance, I was told a Big Island poll closed at 1:15 p.m. and people were turned away. “But I checked with Hawaii County Chair Phil Barnes and he said, ‘No, that’s not true.’ So, with some of these things, I am not really sure if it’s just that people weren’t playing by our rules or they are just making accusations.”



Hawaii Democratic caucus voters drop their ballots in a shoebox at Stevenson Middle School in Makiki.

Knowledge of party rules is important to understanding what happened Saturday, said Democrat Bart Dame, who coordinated the Sanders campaign locally.

"One problem we brought on ourselves is we were trying to accomplish two things on the same day," he said. "One was the presidential preference poll and the second was the precinct organization meeting, where we elect our local officers and delegates to the state convention."

That meant holding the polling first and the other business after. The idea was to bring new blood into the party — something that was accomplished, said Ohigashi, who noted that at least 18,000 new members were registered.

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## Not A State-Run Election

The challenge, however, was that many voters who turned out Saturday seemed to expect the private poll to run just like a state primary or general election.

"I am concerned about the complaints because it creates hostility of the party," said Dame. "But a big part of the problem is under-educated voters. People have been spoiled by the efficiency of the [Office of Elections](#) and come expecting something similar to a government-run election."

That resulted in situations like one that Ohigashi described: Workers at a precinct allowed the last people in line to vote and then turned to completing the balloting process and moving on to other party matters. Ten minutes later, however, a voter and her son walked up expecting to still be able to vote. But, under party rules, it was too late.



A sign at Jefferson Elementary School near Waikiki directing voters where to vote in the caucus.

"Accusations that there was planned disenfranchisement or planned turning away of voters, I doubt very much that happened," she said. "It was probably just a matter of miscommunication."

Not everyone said there were problems at the polls.

Marilyn Lee said, "Our caucus in Mililani was well organized, and went fairly smoothly — thanks to the work of the district chairs, and the many volunteers who came out to help."

Mililani extended the voting until 3 p.m., she said, "so most folks got a chance to vote. There was a crowd that was pretty much good natured."

But Linda Morgan, who voted at the Ocean View Community Center on the Big Island, had a far different experience.



Honolulu City Councilwoman Ann Kobayashi holds ballots in the Manoa Elementary School cafeteria.

"I waited in line a half hour to get into the room, which was packed shoulder to shoulder," Morgan said. "It was impossible to hear the directions of those in charge. It was complete chaos. Many left in frustration before voting. I waited two hours to get my ballot."



Morgan said some participants speculated that the confusion was planned by the party establishment, which has embraced Hillary Clinton, to suppress Sanders voters. But she also observed that if that was the case, it simply didn't work.

Sanders prevailed with 70 percent of the vote to Clinton's 30 percent. All told, 33,716 people voted Saturday — down from the Hillary Clinton versus Barack Obama matchup in 2008, when 37,273 participated. (The results were even more lopsided then, with native son Obama winning 75 percent to 24 percent.)

## Voters Turned Away

Still, complaints persist.

Dennis B. Miller, a Sanders supporter who was at Jefferson Elementary School near Waikiki, said, "Ballots were counted before the precinct meeting at District 34 and 35 (Aiea and Pearl City), and while other volunteers were visibly helping a trickle of newly arriving voters. Notice was not given that ballots were going to be counted."

A few officials tried unsuccessfully to stop the counting, said Miller, but the ballots were counted anyway.



Ballot boxes came in various forms throughout Oahu during Saturday's Democratic caucus in Hawaii.

"People who were still arriving to vote were told that they were too late," he said, adding that was the case when he left the precinct after 4 p.m.

"I feel that their precinct meetings are invalid because they were held in violation of Hawaii Democratic Party rules," said Miller. "I feel that the precinct officers and delegates, which were elected in meetings which were held in a manner that violated party rules, are invalid. The meetings need to be held again, ASAP, because those delegates can go to the state party convention and propose changes."

**UPDATE:** Miller wants to end the caucus, which technically is not a caucus in Hawaii but a presidential preference poll. Miller prefers mail-in and online voting that would replace the caucus.

"That's important, because we're talking about saving the party money and increasing voter participation," he said.

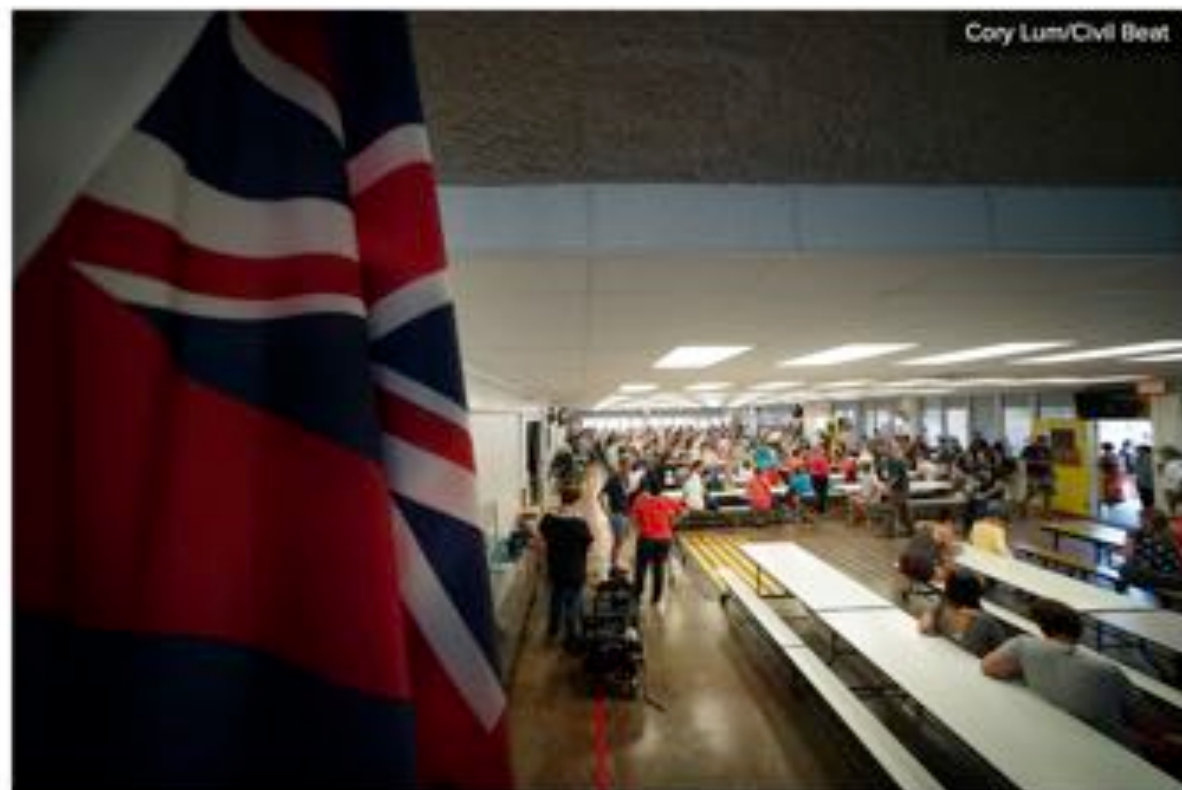
## Time For A Primary Instead?

Some suggest a solution to a better-run election is to hold a primary rather than a caucus.

The idea has the interest of U.S. Rep. Mark Takai, a Clinton supporter, who visited three polling sites Saturday on Oahu.

"It ran better this year than it did in 2008," he said, noting that when they ran out of ballots in the previous election, some people voted on scraps of paper.

But Takai said the complaints "resonated" with him, and he said it might be better to hold a traditional primary instead. He said that would make Hawaii similar to Illinois and California, where people vote for president but also other offices.



People gather at Manoa Elementary School cafeteria, one of Saturday's polling locations.

Hawaii Democrats used to caucus on a Tuesday evening but switched to a Saturday at the urging of the Democratic National Committee, said Dame — the same day as party caucuses held in Alaska and Washington state.

The reason is that the state party would be awarded more delegates — 34 as opposed to 31.

## Look North To Alaska?

Hawaii Democrats might also consult with their counterparts in Alaska on how to run a caucus.

Jake Hamburg, communications director for the Alaska Democratic Party, said the turnout surpassed the 2008 numbers, even though Alaska is considered a Republican state. Hamburg credited the turnout — 10,617 voters compared with 8,880 eight years ago — to an aggressive outreach campaign that included robocalls to party members letting them know where their caucus was.

The party also held a press availability before the election so that “everyone knew what to expect.”

Hamburg said the feedback he’s heard from Democrats in his state was a sense of “general satisfaction” about the caucus, which Sanders also won by a large margin.

“It was my first caucus and I did not know what to expect, but I walked away with a smile on my face,” he said. “It was so much fun.”

What was especially gratifying, he said, was that Democrats in the 49th state were surprised to see that there were other Democrats who turned out to vote.

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“It was my first caucus and I did not know what to expect, but I walked away with a smile on my face,” he said. “It was so much fun.”

What was especially gratifying, he said, was that Democrats in the 49th state were surprised to see that there were other Democrats who turned out to vote.

“They did not know that there were this many Democrats in Alaska,” he said.

That’s something Democrats in the 50th state never have to worry about — unless it comes to wanting to vote in a Saturday caucus for president of the United States.

## About the Author



**Chad Blair** [✈](#) [✉](#) [📺](#)

Chad Blair is the politics and opinion editor for Civil Beat. You can reach him by email at [cblair@civilbeat.org](mailto:cblair@civilbeat.org) or follow him on Twitter at [@chadblairCB](https://twitter.com/chadblairCB).

**SB-1005-SD-2**

Submitted on: 3/21/2023 1:34:04 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/22/2023 2:00:00 PM

| Submitted By   | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify           |
|----------------|--------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Barbara Dalton | Individual   | Support            | Remotely Via Zoom |

Comments:

Thank you once again for the opportunity to testify in favor of this important bill that will grant the Hawai'i electorate a vote in choosing the Presidential nominees for the major parties.

When considering testimony opposing SB 1005 and arguing for a “closed” primary, I urge the committee to keep in mind the August 15, 2016 decision by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in the case of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i (DPH) v. Nago, which upheld Hawai'i's practice of holding open primary elections. The court found that the DPH “did not show that the open primary system burdens its associational rights,” nor that the open primary “impacted its candidates or messages.” As former Attorney General Doug Chin noted at the time, “the open primary is part of Hawai'i's commitment to make voting easier and to include more persons in the democratic process. This ruling keeps Hawai'i's primary elections open to all registered voters.” Clearly, the matter of “closed” primaries in Hawai'i was settled in 2016.

Voters who do not avidly follow politics or serve as party officials simply don't pay attention to the minutiae of how to help push their preferred presidential candidate toward the White House. Since 2008, inspired voters have wanted to turn out for the candidate that moves them, but have little awareness of the process that barely allowed them to do so. Motivated voters call the Office of Elections to find out how to pledge their support to a presidential candidate, and are in turn referred to their County Clerk's office where voter registration rolls are maintained. In years past this has befuddled voters AND election officials, as the political parties have relied on, among other things, haphazard caucusing, informal preference polling, or a party-run “primary” to have our voices heard.

In 2016, roughly 35,000 Democrats caucused in the race between Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders for the nomination, yet 266,891 voted for the Democratic nominee in the General Election. In 2020, around 37,000 Democrats voted in the “Party Presidential Primary” to select the nominee, while 366,130 voted for the Democratic presidential nominee in the General. This enfranchisement gap must be closed.

A state-run Presidential Primary Election would close that gap and encourage voter participation. Voter turnout neared 100% in 1960, the first year that 50th-state residents could vote for President of the United States. Now, with the lowest voter turnout nationwide, we MUST take vigorous measures to give better access to Hawai'i voters. What better way to do that than to run a formal election? Please pass SB 1005 to eliminate confusion and ensure Hawai'i voters have a say in selecting the national candidates for President.

Mahalo!

**SB-1005-SD-2**

Submitted on: 3/20/2023 8:49:25 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/22/2023 2:00:00 PM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>            |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Shannon Rudolph     | Individual          | Support                   | Written Testimony<br>Only |

Comments:

Support



To: JHA Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Takayama and Committee members

Date of Hearing: Mar. 22, 2023, at 2 p.m., Rm. 325

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. I went to Koko Head Elementary School, 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 or attendance 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-2**

Submitted on: 3/20/2023 1:22:19 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/22/2023 2:00:00 PM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>            |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Nancy Taylor        | Individual          | Support                   | Written Testimony<br>Only |

Comments:

Thank you for the opportunity to voice my strong support in the hearing of SB1005.

Aloha.

Nancy Taylor

**SB-1005-SD-2**

Submitted on: 3/20/2023 1:43:42 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/22/2023 2:00:00 PM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>         |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Larry Smith         | Individual          | Support                   | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

To: Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs

RE: SB1005\_SD2 RELATING TO THE ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT

POSITION: SUPPORT

Aloha,

I ask your support for SB1005\_SD2 which would authorize the State of Hawaii to carry out a Presidential Preference Primary in March,2024 and subsequent presidential election years. With concerns over the election process nationally, a State-run Presidential Preference Primary using the rules and procedures already used by the State for the summer Primary and the General Elections is the best option for Hawaii. The current State-run process allows voter access, is inclusive, secure and fair. It is a process that Hawaii voters already know.

State-run Presidential Preference Primaries similar to that proposed in SB1005\_SD2, are used by 44 states. President Biden has requested that ALL states move to State-run Primaries for the upcoming 2024 election to bolster the confidence of voters in the election process and outcomes.

For Hawaii, the caucuses and Democratic Party-run Presidential Preference Primaries used in the past severely limit voter participation. In 2020, for the Hawaii Democratic Party Run Presidential Preference Primary, only 80,000 ballots were mailed to "enrolled members" of the Hawaii Democratic Party with 36,000 votes cast in the Primary election. Over 366,000 General Election voters supported Biden in the November, 2020 General Election. There was NO Republican Party-run Presidential Preference Primary. It is not fair that in 2020, voter participation was limited in the Preference Primary to less than 10% of the voters who voted for Biden in the General Election.

It is time for Hawaii to adopt for the State-run Presidential Preference Primary, the tested and successful election process that has been used by the State for the Summary Primary and General Elections in the last election cycles.

Please take this step to strengthen our Democracy,

Larry Smith

District 27

Honolulu, Hawaii

**SB-1005-SD-2**

Submitted on: 3/20/2023 8:03:34 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/22/2023 2:00:00 PM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>         |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Betty B Vega        | Individual          | Support                   | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

A state-run Presidential preference primary will be more accurate, fair and give every voter an equal opportunity to participate. Political party membership usually represents less than a quarter of the voters who vote along party lines. A state-run Presidential preference primary allows every voter in the state of Hawaii the opportunity to weigh in on who should run for President of the United States, regardless of whether the voter is a member of a political party or not. In addition, political parties other than the dominant two, are afforded the opportunity to to post candidates in the Presidential preference primary.

Only about 10% of Democrats in Hawaii voted for their preferred Party candidate for President in the last two cycles. And only a small minority of Hawaii voters were able to participate in the decision on Presidential preference when over 366,000 voted for the Democratic candidate for President in the 2020 general election. Forty-four states have State-run primary elections for Presidential preference. Hawaii should too!

Every voter in the state of Hawaii deserves to have their voice heard in a state-run Presidential preference primary on the designated date.

Mahalo for your consideration.

I strongly support SB 1005. The passage of this legislation will give Hawai'i a much needed voice in the choice of the national candidates for the office of the Presidency. A state-wide Presidential Primary election on "Super Tuesday" would go a long way in providing that voice.

**SB-1005-SD-2**

Submitted on: 3/20/2023 10:20:06 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/22/2023 2:00:00 PM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>            |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Mike Golojuch, Sr.  | Individual          | Oppose                    | Written Testimony<br>Only |

Comments:

I oppose SB1005 as written. If it required a closed primary, I could support it. Please deferred this bill as written.

Mike Golojuch, Sr.

**SB-1005-SD-2**

Submitted on: 3/20/2023 10:36:20 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/22/2023 2:00:00 PM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>         |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Larry Meacham       | Individual          | Support                   | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Thank you the for opportunity to offer testimony.

This is in support of SB 1005, Relating to the Election of the President.

Forty-four 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. This is to urge you to continue this effort to broaden participation in our most important election.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Larry Meacham



**SB-1005-SD-2**

Submitted on: 3/20/2023 11:13:16 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/22/2023 2:00:00 PM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>            |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Lois Langham        | Individual          | Support                   | Written Testimony<br>Only |

Comments:

YES! I support this bill, SB 1005.

**SB-1005-SD-2**

Submitted on: 3/21/2023 8:25:20 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/22/2023 2:00:00 PM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>         |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| 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-2**

Submitted on: 3/21/2023 8:29:48 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/22/2023 2:00:00 PM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>            |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| gabrielle davidson  | Individual          | Support                   | Written Testimony<br>Only |

Comments:

I strongly support SB1005! Thank you!

**SB-1005-SD-2**

Submitted on: 3/21/2023 9:51:57 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/22/2023 2:00:00 PM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>            |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Victoria Anderson   | Individual          | Support                   | Written Testimony<br>Only |

Comments:

Please pass this important bill.

**SB-1005-SD-2**

Submitted on: 3/21/2023 10:39:30 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/22/2023 2:00:00 PM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>            |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Keith Richmond      | Individual          | Support                   | Written Testimony<br>Only |

Comments:

Let's pass SB1005 !!!

The citizens do not understand how the present primaries for president work in Hawaii. This would make it more uniform, accessible, and better understood. This is a measure that should be supported by anyone who feels voting is important, and should be made simple and accessible. More voters bring more legitimacy. This change is far overdue. Having our primary on Super Tuesday is icing on the cake.

**SB-1005-SD-2**

Submitted on: 3/21/2023 10:55:36 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/22/2023 2:00:00 PM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>         |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Patti Cook          | Individual          | Support                   | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

MAHALO for hearing this bill.

While I'm a life-long dedicated Democrat (big D), I'm actually even more committed to little "d" democracy – in Hawai'i and across the country. In reviewing Senate hearings on SB1005, I was particularly drawn to a comment from Amy Monk in her testimony submitted to the Senate Judiciary Committee hearing 2-16-23:

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

This pretty much says it all.

SB1005 proposes committing public tax dollars (\$3+M by the State and Counties total), and I view this expenditure of public funds as an “investment” in citizen engagement and ensuring the people of Hawai'i have a meaningful – timely - voice in the US Presidential nomination process. As it is now, the people of Hawai'i are effectively left out, ignored, marginalized. This “investment” would benefit all citizens regardless of their political affiliation – or being independents. Please consider passing this bill to strengthen citizen involvement and participation in governance. We are blessed to live in a democracy – but it's strength and sustainability depend on strong participation.

Mahalo for your time - please expedite passing this bill to get it across the finish line this session. Patti Cook - Waimea, Island of Hawai'i

**SB-1005-SD-2**

Submitted on: 3/21/2023 11:17:18 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/22/2023 2:00:00 PM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>            |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Aileen Wada         | Individual          | Support                   | Written Testimony<br>Only |

Comments:

I STRONGLY support SB1005 SD2 as a member of the Democratic Party of Hawaii State Central Committee for many years, I have witnessed difficult Presidential Preface Poll Caucues as being limited and not serving all democrats in Hawaii.

This bill will allow all Democrats to have a voice in nominating the President of the United States.

This will provide a secure and more complete availability of access to ALL the voters in Hawaii

This special election will occur every 4 years therefore, the financial commitment will not be an annual one.

I humbly ask for your support and approval of this bill.

**SB-1005-SD-2**

Submitted on: 3/21/2023 11:56:57 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/22/2023 2:00:00 PM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>            |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Cheryl Bellamy      | Individual          | Support                   | Written Testimony<br>Only |

Comments:

I support this bill. We need to get the widest voter participation possible and expand participation beyond caucuses and have State run presidential primary.



**SB-1005-SD-2**

Submitted on: 3/21/2023 12:08:40 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/22/2023 2:00:00 PM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>         |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Jane Sugimura       | Individual          | Support                   | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Please support SB1005\_SD2 which would authorize the State of Hawai‘i to carry out a Presidential Preference Primary in March,2024 and subsequent presidential election years. With concerns over the election process nationally, a State-run Presidential Preference Primary using the rules and procedures already used by the State for the summer Primary and the General Elections is the best option for Hawai‘i. The current State-run process allows voter access, is inclusive, secure and fair. It is a process that Hawai‘i voters already know.

State-run Presidential Preference Primaries similar to that proposed in SB1005\_SD2, are used by 44 states. President Biden has requested that ALL states move to State-run Primaries for the upcoming 2024 election to bolster the confidence of voters in the election process and outcomes.

Please take this step to strengthen our Democracy,

**SB-1005-SD-2**

Submitted on: 3/21/2023 12:23:44 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/22/2023 2:00:00 PM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>            |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Martha Nakajima     | Individual          | Support                   | Written Testimony<br>Only |

Comments:

I support this bill. The current system is poorly representative of the voting population and takes place too late to affect the national choice.

**SB-1005-SD-2**

Submitted on: 3/21/2023 12:35:50 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/22/2023 2:00:00 PM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>         |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Shannon Matson      | Individual          | Support                   | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

I am submitting this testimony on my own behalf, but am also speaking as a long-time active Hawai'i Democratic Party member, and recent former State Party Vice Chair.

I believe that our State Democratic Party is no longer in a position to manage an election of this size and that by adopting the language in this bill the State would be doing a service to Democracy and ALL VOTERS, by managing and overseeing this process with their election experience, staff, security resources, and ability to verify signatures on return ballots.

I am in strong support of accessible elections and believe this is a necessary step to take at this point to make sure that we get the highest participation in the primary elections for all those interested in casting a vote.

Mahalo,

Shannon Matson

Hawai'i Island Resident

**SB-1005-SD-2**

Submitted on: 3/21/2023 12:58:52 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/22/2023 2:00:00 PM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>            |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| James Hustace       | Individual          | Support                   | Written Testimony<br>Only |

Comments:

Thank you for your consideration of this proposal. Please move this bill forward to be considered by the Finance Committee. Mahalo.

**SB-1005-SD-2**

Submitted on: 3/21/2023 1:12:22 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/22/2023 2:00:00 PM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>         |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Kai Duponte         | Individual          | Support                   | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

To: Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs

RE: SB1005\_SD2 RELATING TO THE ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT

POSITION: SUPPORT

Aloha!

I ask your support for SB1005\_SD2 which would authorize the State of Hawai'i to carry out a Presidential Preference Primary in March,2024 and subsequent presidential election years. With concerns over the election process nationally, a State-run Presidential Preference Primary using the rules and procedures already used by the State for the summer Primary and the General Elections is the best option for Hawai'i. The current State-run process allows voter access, is inclusive, secure and fair. It is a process that Hawai'i voters already know.

State-run Presidential Preference Primaries similar to that proposed in SB1005\_SD2, are used by 44 states. President Biden has requested that ALL states move to State-run Primaries for the upcoming 2024 election to bolster the confidence of voters in the election process and outcomes.

For Hawai'i, the caucuses and Democratic Party-run Presidential Preference Primaries used in the past severely limit voter participation. In 2020, for the Hawai'i Democratic Party Run Presidential Preference Primary, only 80,000 ballots were mailed to "enrolled members" of the Hawai'i Democratic Party with 36,000 votes cast in the Primary election. Over 366,000 General Election voters supported Biden in the November, 2020 General Election. There was NO Republican Party-run Presidential Preference Primary. It is not fair that in 2020, voter participation was limited in the Preference Primary to less than 10% of the voters who voted for Biden in the General Election.

It is time for Hawai'i to adopt for the State-run Presidential Preference Primary, the tested and successful election process that has been used by the State for the Summary Primary and General Elections in the last election cycles.

Please take this step to strengthen our Democracy,

Me ka ha'a ha'a,

Kai Duponte

(Pukalani, Maui)

**SB-1005-SD-2**

Submitted on: 3/21/2023 1:14:42 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/22/2023 2:00:00 PM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>            |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Lynn Otaguro        | Individual          | Support                   | Written Testimony<br>Only |

Comments:

I write in support of SB1005 SD2 because a state run presidential primary will provide more voters with the opportunity to choose our next president. In this time where some places are making it difficult to vote, let Hawaii provide for the widest participation of voters in choosing our next leader. Please vote for SB 1005 SD2 to do so.

**SB-1005-SD-2**

Submitted on: 3/21/2023 1:23:12 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/22/2023 2:00:00 PM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>            |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| karolle t. bidgood  | Individual          | Support                   | Written Testimony<br>Only |

Comments:

I support SB1005 and ask that you do the same. Thank you.