



The Senate

STATE CAPITOL
HONOLULU, HAWAII
96813

Friday, June 12, 2020

MEMORANDUM

TO: Senate President Ronald D. Kouchi

FROM: Senate Special Committee on COVID-19

RE: Senate Special Committee on COVID-19 Report

Dear Senate President,

Please see the attached report prepared following the June 9, 2020, Senate Special Committee on COVID-19 meeting with the following:

- Office of Elections
- County of Maui
- County of Hawai'i
- County of Kaua'i
- City and County of Honolulu

Sincerely,

Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz
Senator Jarrett Keohokalole
Senator Michelle N. Kidani

Senator Donna Mercado Kim
Senator Sharon Moriwaki
Senator Kurt Fevella

Attachment

CC: All Senators

Office of Elections

Mr. Scott Nago, Chief Election Officer, provided the committee with the following report.

2020 Primary Election

- There is a calculated effort within the Office of Elections to ensure the success of the state's first all mail-in ballot election.
 - The office is targeting areas that have recorded high in-person turnout in previous elections to educate the community of the changes in our process.
- Mr. Nago notified the committee that on March 27, 2020, CARES Act was signed into law and provided over \$3 million to the state to use for the 2020 elections.
 - This money must be used before December 31, 2020.
 - The committee was also made aware of a fixed 20% state match for which the Office of Elections has set aside existing funds to meet this requirement.
 - Mr. Nago said this money would be used for voter awareness campaigns, facilities, and health and safety supplies.
- Mr. Nago has identified the elderly population as a critical target for educational campaigns and highlighted their intent to reach these voters through printed media.
 - The office has also partnered with Meals on Wheels to include an informational brochure on the new voting efforts throughout the state.
- The Oahu vote-counting center has been moved to the convention center in order to better conform to social distancing requirements.
- The Hawaii island vote-counting location was moved to a mall to better conform to social distancing, as well.
- Mr. Nago noted that his office is renting or leasing these facilities on behalf of the counties.
- There has been a large-scale effort to purchase cleaning equipment and plexiglass barriers in order to adhere to strict cleaning standards.
 - Supplies are invoiced to the Office of Elections and are then reimbursed.
 - \$1.9 of \$3 million has been set aside for such an effort, with \$1.5 million coming from CARES funding, and the remaining \$370,000 from existing state funds.
- Per the committee's request, Mr. Nago agreed to provide a breakdown of expenditures, and how much money went to various counties.
- The remaining funds will be used in the preparation of the 2020 general election.

Voter Service Centers

- Common Cause submitted a concern to the committee, questioning the possibility of too few voter service centers given the geographic sprawl of Oahu and Hawai'i island.
 - Mr. Nago addressed this inquiry, stating the establishment of voter service centers were the statutory responsibility of the counties, but to his knowledge, the concerns highlighted by Common Cause were a factor in deciding the ultimate locations of Voter Service Centers at the county level.
- Mr. Nago added that funding for voting centers is split between the counties and state, so in order to open more centers, there needs to be available funding in both budgets.

- Current voting centers include two on Hawaii Island, and Oahu, and one on Kaua'i, Maui, Moloka'i, and Lana'i.
 - Each number was determined by what the county felt best to account for its individual geographic circumstances.
- The committee highlighted their desire that these service centers were in strategic locations to ensure they were accessible to residents on all islands.

City and County of Honolulu

Mr. Glen Takahashi, City Clerk, provided the committee with the following report.

Voting Drop Boxes

- Mr. Takahashi noted that currently registered voters should have received a signature card in the mail.
 - This card should only be returned if a voter wishes to update their signature on file.
 - To date, one hundred fifteen thousand cards returned to update signatures.
- Mr. Takahashi reiterated that there would be no traditional polling places for this election.
- Mr. Takahashi highlighted their efforts to educate people on the vote by mail for this election, including \$40,000 to form an advertising campaign to better inform voters of the new procedures.
- There are eight locations across Oahu where people may drop off their ballots.
 - A map was provided to the committee showing the location of ballot dropboxes on Oahu.
 - The dropboxes are large, half-ton boxes, made of ½ inch steel, and are inherently secure as they can only be lifted with heavy machinery, according to Mr. Takahashi.
 - Collision testing was performed and left vehicles with more damage than the boxes. However, some damage has been anticipated, and there are replacement boxes on standby should this occur.
 - The boxes are intended to have daily retrievals and will be available for use at least 18 days before the election.
 - Retrievals will be handled by teams of two, where the contents of each box will be transferred into vans, tracked at a central location, with the goal of total collection by 7:00 pm HST, on election night.
- These boxes are supplemental to normal, postal operations, in addition to the USPS collection boxes.
- The committee asked that all counties produce a similar map to that of the City and County of Honolulu that identifies the location and operating hours of all Voter Service Center(s), Ballot Dropboxes, and USPS collection boxes.
 - Additionally, the committee asked that an appropriate amount of lead time be identified and included in the maps to ensure ballots deposited in USPS boxes are received in time to be considered valid.
- Per the committee's request, Mr. Nago agreed to post these maps on the Office of Elections website once they are completed by the counties.

Concerns for Disabled Voters

- Mr. Takahashi ensured the committee that the voting centers are accessible to everyone, and they can provide voting devices upon request.
- Mr. Nago also informed the committee of HTML ballots available upon request.
 - These ballots are written in code, accessible to most computer devices, or visual aid devices.
 - The voter can vote using the HTML, and it would act as a marking device, but not be a transmission of the vote.
- Per the committee's request, Mr. Nago explained that certified caregivers might only help a patient vote. However, they would not be able to sign the voting envelope for them as it would lead to fraud.
 - Other jurisdictions may send out teams for voter assistance.
 - Employers, Unions, and Candidates are forbidden from being the ones aiding in the vote.
- Mr. Nago stressed the importance of the patient being able to find an assistant they trust to aid in voting should it be necessary.

County of Kaua'i

Ms. Jade Fountain-Tanigawa, County Clerk, provided the committee with the following report.

Voting Locations

- The county will be utilizing one voter service center as well as seven ballot drop box locations.
 - The locations will be the five fire stations, the county's Piikoi building, and the elections division office.
 - The Piikoi building has been designated as the voter service center, as it is best equipped to handle social distancing.
 - Similar utilization of CARES funds is being used on Kaua'i to address sanitation efforts.
- Per the committee's request, Ms. Fountain-Tanigawa agreed to provide the number of USPS boxes within Kaua'i County.

County of Maui

Ms. Kathy Kaohu, County Clerk, provided the committee with the following report.

Voting Locations

- Ms. Kaohu informed the committee that there would be three voter service centers.
 - Including one on Maui, Lana'i, and Moloka'i.
- There are 12 ballot drop boxes located throughout the central area, South Maui, West Maui, and upcountry, each containing two drop boxes.
- The county was unable to find a voter service center for Hana that could comply with appropriate hours of operation and social distancing.

- The county believes that the sole voting center is strategically located and will be sufficient for the island of Maui.
- Per the committee's request, the county identified 34 postal boxes that can also be used to submit completed ballots.

County of Hawai'i

Mr. Jon Hendricks, County Clerk, provided the committee with the following report.

Voting Locations

- Mr. Hendricks informed the committee of the two voting centers in Kona and Hilo and believes they are appropriate locations due to those cities being the most populated on the island.
- The county is looking into ramping up its education efforts to increase voter turnout.
- Per the committee's request, Mr. Hendricks agreed to provide the number of USPS boxes within Hawai'i county.