

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 15 2007

RE: S.B. No. 156
S.D. 1

Honorable Colleen Hanabusa
President of the Senate
Twenty-Fourth State Legislature
Regular Session of 2007
State of Hawaii

Madam:

Your Committee on Judiciary and Labor, to which was referred
S.B. No. 156 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO VOTING,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to authorize a vote-by-mail system as the exclusive means for casting ballots for all federal, state and county elections, if authorized by the Chief Elections Officer.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the League of Women Voters of Hawaii and two concerned individuals. The Office of Elections and the County Clerk of the County of Kaua'i commented on this measure.

Your Committee finds that voting by mail has the potential to enhance public participation in elections. As noted in the Office of Elections testimony, absentee mail voting provides voters "a means to 'fit' voting into their busy lifestyles" and "the opportunity to fully deliberate on the votes they will cast, and the convenience of being able to consult with information on candidates and ballot questions in familiar and comfortable settings."

Your Committee notes that operational concerns raised by elections officials may need to be addressed as this measure moves through the legislative process. Your Committee has amended this measure by:



- (1) Adding "used in an election by mail" to the definition of ballot in new section -3 to conform to the definition of "absentee ballot" in section 15-1, Hawaii Revised Statutes;
- (2) Providing that the return envelope to be mailed to registered voters is to include a statement to be subscribed to by the voter, instructions relating to the ballot's validity, and other information as required by rule, to follow existing requirements for absentee voting under section 15-6, Hawaii Revised Statutes;
- (3) Inserting language requiring the county clerk to mail ballot packages no later than an unspecified number of days prior to the election (the precise number to be determined as this measure moves through the legislative process); and
- (4) Making additional technical, nonsubstantive changes for clarity and style.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Judiciary and Labor that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of S.B. No. 156, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 156, S.D. 1, and be referred to the Committee on Ways and Means.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Judiciary and
Labor,



CLAYTON HEE, Chair



