

STAND. COM. REP. NO.

934

Honolulu, Hawaii

MAR 02 2007

RE: S.B. No. 156
S.D. 2

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

Madam:

Your Committee on Ways and Means, to which was referred S.B. No. 156, S.D. 1, entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO VOTING,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to increase voter participation by authorizing a vote by mail system for all elections, upon a determination of economic and administrative feasibility by the Chief Election Officer, in consultation with the county clerks.

The Chief Election Officer of the Office of Elections, the League of Women Voters, and the Disability Communication Access Board submitted comments in support of this measure.

Your Committee finds that the National Census Bureau reported that in 2004 Hawaii had the lowest voter turnout in the nation, a disturbing distinction for our State. In contrast, there has been a noticeable increase in the number of absentee voters in recent elections. Other states that have implemented voting by mail systems have seen an increase in voter participation. Your Committee believes that this measure will allow registered voters in Hawaii flexibility in determining a convenient time to cast their vote, which will result in a higher rate of voter participation.

Upon consideration, your Committee has amended this measure by:

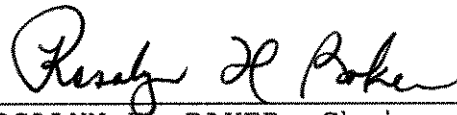
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- (1) Specifying a deadline of eighteen days before the elections for the county clerk to mail ballots outside of the State;
- (2) Adding language to provide that mailing and returning the ballots shall be at no cost to the voter to conform to absentee ballot requirements;
- (3) Specifying that ballots may be counted after noon on election day;
- (4) Requiring that, to be counted, a ballot be from a voter who has registered to vote in compliance with section 11-15, Hawaii Revised Statutes; and
- (5) Making technical nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity and style.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Ways and Means that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of S.B. No. 156, S.D. 1, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Third Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 156, S.D. 2.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Ways and Means,



ROSALYN H. BAKER, Chair



