SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE CHIEF ELECTION OFFICER TO CONVENE AN AUTOMATIC VOTER REGISTRATION TASK FORCE TO EXPLORE THE FEASIBILITY OF ESTABLISHING AND IMPLEMENTING AN AUTOMATIC VOTER REGISTRATION SYSTEM IN HAWAII.

WHEREAS, Hawaii's voter turnout percentage has significantly declined since Hawaii became a state in 1959, when the voter turnout was reported at ninety-four percent of registered voters; and

WHEREAS, Hawaii currently ranks among the bottom of all states in the nation in the percentage of registered voters who turn out to vote; and

WHEREAS, voter participation is the hallmark of an effective democracy; and

WHEREAS, an automatic voter registration process is beneficial to the public and will reduce any inconveniences that individuals may experience that prevent them from turning out to vote; and

WHEREAS, automatic voter registration increases accuracy and efficiency and improves access to voting by removing barriers to registration for eligible voters; and

WHEREAS, automatic voter registration provides eligible voters an opportunity to register to vote when applying for or renewing a driver's license or a civil identification card, commonly known as a state identification card, unless the eligible voter affirmatively declines to be registered to vote; and

WHEREAS, automatic voter registration uses information that government agencies have available in electronic databases; and
WHEREAS, existing federal laws authorize the electronic transfer of voter registration information from the counties and Department of Transportation to election officials and the statewide voter registration system; and

WHEREAS, six states and the District of Columbia have already successfully enacted automatic voter registration; and

WHEREAS, in 2016, Oregon implemented automatic voter registration and, as a result, over two hundred seventy thousand eligible voters registered via automatic voter registration, and of those individuals who registered, forty-three percent voted in the 2016 general election, which helped Oregon set a new state record for the number of votes cast; and

WHEREAS, automatic voter registration will increase security and improve accuracy of the voter rolls through the use of an encrypted system to transfer voter registration data rather than paper voter registration application forms; and

WHEREAS, automatic voter registration will result in long-term cost savings for the State as the cost of processing paper voter registration application forms is approximately thirty times more than the processing costs of an electronic registration system; and

WHEREAS, innovation in other states has successfully reduced barriers to voting, encouraged voter participation, and increased convenience and access in the voting process, and Hawaii could greatly benefit from similar innovations; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Twenty-ninth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2017, the House of Representatives concurring, that the Chief Election Officer is requested to convene an automatic voter registration task force; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force is requested to comprise the following:
(1) The Chief Election Officer, or the Chief Election Officer's designee;

(2) The Chief Executive Officer of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, or the Chief Executive Officer's designee;

(3) The Director of Transportation, or the Director's designee;

(4) The City Clerk of the City and County of Honolulu, or the City Clerk's designee;

(5) The Clerk of the County of Maui, or the Clerk's designee;

(6) The Clerk of the County of Hawaii, or the Clerk's designee;

(7) The Clerk of the County of Kauai, or the Clerk's designee; and

(8) Up to three additional members representing stakeholder parties selected by the Chief Election Officer; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Chief Election Officer, or the Chief Election Officer's designee, is requested to serve as the chairperson of the task force; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the members of the task force be selected from among registered voters in the State; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that an initial meeting of the task force be convened no later than July 1, 2017; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force is requested to:

(1) Review existing data systems used by the Department of Transportation and the counties that contain pertinent information for the purposes of voter registration to identify collaborative methods to streamline the transfer of data;
(2) Review existing federal and state laws and practices relating to voter registration, including but not limited to the Help America Vote Act of 2002, as amended, and National Voter Registration Act of 1993, as amended;

(3) Determine the feasibility, cost savings, and cost impact of implementing an automatic voter registration system in Hawaii and potential sources of funding for the system; and

(4) Develop proposed legislation to establish and implement an automatic voter registration process in Hawaii; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force, with the assistance of the Office of Elections, is requested to submit a report of its findings and recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2018; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force be dissolved on June 30, 2018; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Chief Election Officer, Chief Executive Officer of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, Director of Transportation, City Clerk of the City and County of Honolulu, Clerk of the County of Maui, Clerk of the County of Hawaii, and Clerk of the County of Kauai.