



**LATE**

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COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY  
TUESDAY, February 5, 2019, 2:05 p.m., Room 325

HB 1588 RELATING TO ELECTIONS  
**TESTIMONY**

Janet Mason, Legislative Committee, League of Women Voters of Hawaii

Chair Lee, Vice-Chair Shimabukuro and Committee Members:

This measure suggests a major change to the way elections are conducted in Hawaii by allowing a voter to vote for any primary election candidate, regardless of the candidate's party or status as a nonpartisan candidate. If there are 2 or more candidates for a state public office, and a candidate receives the most votes for that office in the primary, that candidate is elected, but if no candidate receives a majority, the 2 candidates receiving the highest vote totals shall advance to the general election. **We offer comments only on HB1588 because we need more time to develop our position on this important question.**

No preamble is offered, so we are not certain of the rationale for introduction of this measure; some people think it will improve voter turnout in a general election by creating more excitement; we would be interested to see evidence of this.

The measure greatly de-emphasizes the role of political parties in elections; critics say it almost completely shuts out any party except Democrats and Republicans. We hope the legislature will carefully appraise the impact of the bill in this context since Hawaii politics are already dominated by a single party (the Democratic Party), and this doesn't look likely to change in the foreseeable future.

For primaries, no party affiliations would be placed on the ballot; candidate names would be placed in alphabetical order for their respective primaries. Is this a good idea? Sometimes, party identification on the ballot provides useful information to voters, especially in a state that has virtually no official voter education about differences among candidates.

On the other hand, the "top two" approach suggested in HB1588 could take care of the "spoiler effect," where vote splitting between candidates of the same party causes a strong opponent of both to win. It seems like this is more typical of a Presidential election than state elections; I'm not sure.



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Under HB 1588 it is entirely possible that multiple candidates of the *same* political party would advance to the general election. Having multiple candidates for many offices could complicate the general election ballot.

We expect Hawaii's respective political parties to weigh in on this bill, and that's good. Perhaps they'll test the bill for us with some scenarios from the 2018 elections.

We sincerely hope this measure is a long way from being implemented. A corresponding constitutional amendment is required, underscoring the importance of this contemplated change.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

TESTIMONY  
FOR THE LIBERTARIAN PARTY OF HAWAII

c/o 1658 Liholiho St #205  
Honolulu, HI 96822

February 2, 2019

RE: HB1588 to be heard Tuesday February 5, in Room 325, at 2:05 PM

**OPPOSE**

To the members of the House Committee on Judiciary

We oppose this idea that aims to limit the scope of public discussion in the general election to a top two, which is conceived of as two Democrats. If the only candidates to choose from are Democrats I wouldn't bother to vote. A competitive race is a positive in getting more people to vote, but if it is only competitive in terms of the individuals and not in terms of policy who cares? I don't.

We have testified in favor of ranked choice voting that has been suggested in several other bills. Unlike HB1588, ranked choice voting will facilitate more candidates on a ballot rather than less ones and makes every vote count. Our big problems with elections at the state legislative level is a shortage of candidates, particularly ones who have points of view that don't align with the Democratic Party. Fixing our campaign finance laws along the lines of HB1514 will help solve that problem. Changing the rules that defacto exclude independents from the general election in state legislative races would be another desirable change. Ranked choice voting may help. Top two won't. It is only a gimmick, not a solution.

Aloha



Tracy Ryan  
For the Libertarian Party of Hawaii

**HB-1588**

Submitted on: 2/2/2019 12:25:16 AM

Testimony for JUD on 2/5/2019 2:05:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Gerard Silva	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

As long as we have more than on party this can not happen it would be Unconstutional to even propose this.

I can see this State is head down the tubs. There will be NO return From things like this that will make this State a DICTATORSHIP.

THE END!!!!!!