

Honolulu, Hawaii
March 24, 2016

RE: S.B. No. 2496
S.D. 2
H.D. 1

Honorable Joseph M. Souki
Speaker, House of Representatives
Twenty-Eighth State Legislature
Regular Session of 2016
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Judiciary, to which was referred S.B. No. 2496, S.D. 2, entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO ELECTIONS,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to implement an incremental conversion to a system of elections by mail in voting for the State. Specifically, this measure:

- (1) Requires the Office of Elections to implement elections by mail:
 - (A) Beginning with the 2018 primary election in a county with a population of fewer than one hundred thousand; and
 - (B) Beginning with the 2020 primary election in all counties and for all elections;
- (2) Specifies the requirements for the distribution, voting, and tabulation of absentee, permanent absentee, and mail in ballots, including specifications for voter service centers to receive the personal delivery of ballots and to accommodate voters with special needs;
- (3) Establishes the responsibility of the State and counties for the expense of operating the mail in voting system;



- (4) Makes an appropriation for the implementation and administration of the election by mail system; and
- (5) Requires the Office of Elections to submit annual reports to the Legislature from 2017 until 2023 regarding the implementation of the elections by mail system.

The Office of Elections, Disability and Communication Access Board, Office of Hawaiian Affairs, Office of the County Clerk of the Counties of Kauai and Maui, Office of the City Clerk of the City and County of Honolulu, Planned Parenthood Votes Northwest and Hawaii, Common Cause Hawaii, League of Women Voters of Hawaii, and one concerned individual testified in support of this measure.

Your Committee has amended this measure to:

- (1) Incrementally phase in statewide elections by mail beginning with the County of Kauai in the 2018 primary; including the County of Hawaii and County of Maui beginning with the 2020 primary; and all counties beginning with the 2022 primary. Thereafter, all elections in all counties shall be conducted by mail; and
- (2) Limit the Election Day state holiday to individuals voting by mail at an absentee polling place, effective January 1, 2022.

Your Committee finds that increased citizen participation in the electoral process is a crucial component of maintaining a successful democracy. This measure would reduce hurdles for voter participation by allowing the convenience of voting by mail.

The elimination of the Election Day state holiday is not intended to impact any collective bargaining agreements.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Judiciary that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of S.B. No. 2496, S.D. 2, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 2496, S.D. 2, H.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Finance.



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

Karl Rhoads

KARL RHOADS, Chair



