
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO ELECTIONS.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the house of
2 representatives adopted House Resolution No. 9 (2022) to
3 establish the commission to improve standards of conduct. The
4 resolution requests the commission ensure state laws and rules
5 relating to standards of conduct of public officers and
6 employees contain clear standards, enforcement, and penalties
7 and provide recommendations to increase awareness of, compliance
8 with, and deterrent effects of the code of ethics, lobbying
9 laws, campaign finance laws, and other relevant laws and rules.

10 Pursuant to House Resolution No. 9, the commission to
11 improve standards of conduct convened regularly throughout 2022
12 to diligently review, discuss, and consider the issues
13 presented, submitted an interim report to the house of
14 representatives outlining areas of immediate and long-term
15 focus, then continued its work with input from the public and
16 invited individuals and agencies to issue a final report with
17 various recommendations and accompanying proposed legislation.



1 The legislature also finds that the strength and stability
2 of our democratic government rely upon the public's trust in
3 government institutions, including the expectation that officers
4 act ethically with prudence, integrity, and sound judgement.
5 Therefore, an essential goal of the commission was to provide
6 recommendations that would help restore public trust in state
7 government and increase the level of transparency in its
8 operations and accountability of individuals.

9 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to implement
10 recommendations of the commission to improve standards of
11 conduct relating to educating the electorate on candidates and
12 ballot questions.

13 SECTION 2. Chapter 11, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended
14 by adding a new section to part VIII to be appropriately
15 designated and to read as follows:

16 "§11- Voter information guide. (a) The office of
17 elections shall prepare, and post on its website, a voter
18 information guide. A physical copy of the voter information
19 guide shall be made available upon the request by a voter. The
20 office of elections shall provide a translation of the voter
21 information guide on its website in Olelo Hawaii, Chinese,



1 Ilocano, and Tagalog, and any other language as required by
2 federal or state law. The voter information guide shall be
3 posted in a screen reader-accessible format for voters with
4 special needs who are unable to read standard print due to
5 disability.

6 (b) The voter information guide shall include:

7 (1) A short statement of no more than one hundred fifty
8 words for each candidate running for public office, to
9 be prepared by the candidate; provided that the office
10 of elections may uniformly limit the number of words
11 for the candidate statement by applicable public
12 office;

13 (2) The statement and arguments prepared by the attorney
14 general, in consultation with the legislative
15 reference bureau, pursuant to section 11-118.5(b);

16 (3) A clear and concise statement, prepared by the
17 appropriate county corporation counsel or county
18 attorney, in consultation with the office of county
19 council services, that indicates the purpose,
20 limitations, and effects for each proposed county



1 charter amendment, proposed initiative, and proposed
2 referendum issue; and
3 (4) Arguments submitted by the public to the appropriate
4 county corporation counsel or county attorney and
5 office of county council services for and against each
6 proposed county charter amendment, proposed
7 initiative, and proposed referendum issue. The office
8 of county council services shall establish a process
9 to solicit arguments from the public, which may
10 include a word limit.

11 (c) The office of elections shall prepare and mail with
12 each ballot for a primary election or special election a notice
13 to voters that the voter information guide is available on the
14 office of elections website. The notice shall be sent by
15 electronic mail to all voters with special needs who have
16 registered to receive alternate format ballots.

17 (d) Information made available over the Internet pursuant
18 to this section shall meet or exceed the most current, ratified
19 standards under section 508 of the federal Rehabilitation Act of
20 1973 (29 U.S.C. 794d), as amended, and the Web Content



1 Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 adopted by the World Wide
2 Consortium for accessibility."

3 SECTION 3. Section 11-118.5, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
4 amended by amending subsection (b) to read as follows:

5 "(b) The attorney general, in consultation with the
6 legislative reference bureau, shall prepare [a]:

7 (1) A statement in English and Hawaiian for each proposed
8 constitutional amendment in language that is clear and
9 that indicates the purpose, limitations, and effects
10 of the proposed amendment[-]; and

11 (2) Arguments submitted by the public for and against the
12 proposed constitutional amendment. The legislative
13 reference bureau shall establish a process to solicit
14 arguments from the public, which may include a word
15 limit.

16 The attorney general shall distribute each statement and the
17 arguments to the state office of elections and all county clerks
18 for further distribution. The office of elections and county
19 clerks shall make the statement and arguments available to the
20 public at all polling places in the State and on a website
21 operated by the office of elections."



1 SECTION 4. There is appropriated out of the general
2 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
3 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2023-2024 and
4 the sum of \$ or so much thereof as may be necessary
5 for fiscal year 2024-2025 for the preparation of the statement
6 and arguments for the voter information guide.

7 The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department
8 of the attorney general for the purposes of this Act.

9 SECTION 5. There is appropriated out of the general
10 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
11 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2023-2024 and
12 the sum of \$ or so much thereof as may be necessary
13 for fiscal year 2024-2025 for the preparation and distribution
14 of voter information guides.

15 The sums appropriated shall be expended by the office of
16 elections for the purposes of this Act.

17 SECTION 6. There is appropriated out of the general
18 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
19 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2023-2024 and
20 the sum of \$ or so much thereof as may be necessary



1 for fiscal year 2024-2025 for preparation of the statement and
2 arguments for the voter information guide.

3 The sums appropriated shall be expended by the legislative
4 reference bureau for the purposes of this Act.

5 SECTION 7. There is appropriated out of the general
6 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
7 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2023-2024 and
8 the sum of \$ or so much thereof as may be necessary
9 for fiscal year 2024-2025 for the preparation of the statement
10 and arguments for the voter information guide as follows:

	<u>2023-2024</u>	<u>2024-2025</u>
11		
12	\$	\$
13	\$	\$
14	\$	\$
15	\$	\$
16		

17 The sums appropriated to each county shall be expended by
18 each county for the purposes of this Act.

19 SECTION 8. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed
20 and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

21 SECTION 9. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2023.



H.B. NO. 716

Report Title:

Commission to Improve Standards of Conduct; Elections; Voter Information Guide; Candidate Statements; Explanations; Appropriations

Description:

Requires the office of elections to prepare a voter information guide that includes candidate statements and statements on ballot questions. Appropriates funds to the department of the attorney general, legislative reference bureau, and counties for the preparation of the ballot analyses. Appropriates funds to the office of elections for the preparation and distribution of the voter information guides.

The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.

