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OFFICE OF ELECTIONS**

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TESTIMONY OF THE  
CHIEF ELECTION OFFICER, OFFICE OF ELECTIONS  
TO THE COMMISSION TO IMPROVE STANDARDS OF CONDUCT  
ON HOUSE RESOLUTION BILL NO. 9  
RELATING TO ELECTIONS

October 14, 2022

Chair Foley and members of the Commission to Improve Standards of Conduct, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on the Commission's draft legislation related to voter education. The proposed legislation resolution 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; and appropriates funds to the office of elections for the preparation and distribution of the voter information guides.

We believe an informed electorate is essential for the health of our democracy; however, our office must remain apolitical. To do so, as well as compile a voter information guide, we would ask candidates to submit their 150-word statement for inclusion in the voter information guide when they file their nomination paper. At the close of candidate filing, we would translate the statements into Olelo Hawaii, and the languages covered by the federal Voting Rights Act – Chinese, Tagalog, and Ilocano. The digital voter information guide would be available in the required languages and accessible on our website. We would note that the voter information guide would have to be made available at least 45 days before each election to coincide with ballots sent to uniformed and overseas voters.

We propose amending the bill to allow for flexibility in the distribution of a printed notice. Rather than printing a separate notice that the guide is available online, we would like to be able to consider including the information with existing

mail ballot packet materials, such as part of the ballot instructions or the ballot envelopes.

We would also like to propose a 200-word-count limit be set for ballot statements and arguments for the purpose of printing and mailing logistics. Further, we would ask that the bill be amended for clarification and consistency to specify that the ballot question statements also be translated into the same languages – Olelo Hawaii, Chinese, Ilocano, and Tagalog. We would request that the bill require the Attorney General and Corporation Counsel to provide the translations of the statements and arguments to our office when questions are due, 75 days before the general election.

While we understand the focus is to provide the voter guide online, we envision the printed version would look like an Oahu Midweek newspaper with four candidates per page. We propose that the printed voter information guide in every required language be made available at state libraries and voter service centers for public viewing. This model would allow our office to solidly determine the printing costs associated with the voter information guide. As part of the distribution of a printed copy, we would also include voting information such as voter registration, voting instructions, and any other voter education information to share with voters to participate in the electoral process.

The following table estimates the Office of Elections' costs per election to produce and mail a notice to voters about the voter information guide. The table excludes translations and printing costs of ballot questions.

	<b>Primary</b>	<b>General</b>	<b>Total</b>
Translations	54,390	28,560	82,950
Accessibility	13,780	13,780	27,560
Printed Notice	51,480	51,480	102,960
Printed Copy	253	253	506
<b>Total</b>	<b>119,903</b>	<b>94,073</b>	<b>213,976</b>

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the Commission's proposed legislation.