

**SB-1225**

Submitted on: 2/23/2025 11:13:14 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michael Golojuch, Jr. (he/him)	Testifying for Pride at Work – Hawai‘i	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Senators,

Pride at Work – Hawai‘i is an official chapter of [Pride at Work](#) which is a national nonprofit organization that represents LGBTQIA+ union members and their allies. We are an officially recognized constituency group of the AFL-CIO that organizes mutual support between the organized Labor Movement and the LGBTQIA+ Community to further social and economic justice.

Pride at Work – Hawai‘i fully supports SB 1225 SD 1.

We ask that you support this needed piece of legislation.

Mahalo,

Michael Golojuch, Jr. (he/him)

President

[Pride at Work – Hawai‘i](#)



## **TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF SB1225**

Before the Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Hearing Date: February 26, 2025

Hearing Time: 10:03am

Location: Hawaii State Capitol, Conference Room 211 & via Videoconference

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Abby Simmons, Chair of the Stonewall Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i, testifying in strong support for SB1225 on behalf of the Caucus. The measure proposes an amendment to Article XVII, Section 3 of the Hawai'i State Constitution to change the standard for voter approval of constitutional amendments proposed by the legislature.

This bill addresses a critical issue in our voting process. Under the current system, blank, spoiled, and over-voted ballots are effectively counted as "no" votes on constitutional amendments. This practice can result in unintended outcomes that do not accurately reflect the will of the voters. By changing the standard to count only active "yes" and "no" votes, SB1225 will ensure a more transparent and fair assessment of public opinion.

A good example of a real world implication is last November's Con Am question on removing discriminatory language from our constitution relating to marriage equality. Although marriage equality enjoys strong support in our island home, blank votes in part contributed to the outcome being a lot closer than reflected in actual public opinion. This distorted result could have caused the Con Am question to fail and puts future Con Am questions at risk.

A constitutional amendment should reflect the informed and deliberate choices of Hawaii's voters, not the byproduct of confusion or unintentional ballot errors. The proposed change will help uphold the democratic principle that only clear and intentional votes are counted toward such critical decisions.

We respectfully urge the committee to pass SB1225 to enhance the integrity and clarity of our voting process. Mahalo for the opportunity to submit this testimony.

Respectfully,

Abby Simmons (she/her)  
Chair & SCC Representative  
Stonewall Caucus  
Democratic Party of Hawai'i  
<https://linktr.ee/stonewalldph>  
(808)352-6818

**SB-1225**

Submitted on: 2/23/2025 11:28:09 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carolyn Martinez-Golojuch, MSW	Testifying for Rainbow Family 808	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Carolyn Martinez-Golojuch, and I am writing today as a deeply concerned mother and activist who believes in protecting the future of our children and our community. I strongly support SB 1225, which seeks to amend article XVII, section 3 of the Hawai‘i State Constitution to ensure that constitutional amendments are ratified based solely on the votes that are explicitly cast on the measure itself, without being undermined by blank, spoiled, or over votes.

As a mother, my greatest priority is safeguarding my children’s future by ensuring that our government operates with clarity, fairness, and integrity. The current system, which effectively treats blank votes as a "no" vote, is misleading and disenfranchises voters who may choose not to vote on a particular amendment. It also distorts the true intent of the electorate and sets an unreasonably high bar for necessary constitutional changes.

The current standard allows confusion and unintended voter suppression to persist. Many voters do not realize that leaving a ballot question blank is functionally equivalent to opposing the measure. In a democracy, every vote should count in a straightforward and transparent manner. SB 1225 corrects this injustice by ensuring that only those who actively vote on the issue determine its outcome, making our constitutional amendment process more representative of the will of the people.

As a mother, I want all keiki to grow up in a state where democracy is respected and strengthened, not weakened by arbitrary technicalities. We teach our children that their voices matter, and yet, under the current system, their voices can be drowned out by an antiquated rule that misrepresents the true will of the voters. If we are to foster trust in the democratic process, we must remove barriers that prevent fair and accurate decision-making.

For the sake of future generations, we must ensure that our constitution is amended only when the people truly support it, not when their voices are suppressed by a flawed voting system. I urge you to pass SB 1225 and take this crucial step toward a more just and democratic Hawai‘i.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Carolyn Martinez-Golojuch, MSW

President and Founder  
Rainbow Family 808



Committee on WAYS AND MEANS  
Chair Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Sharon Y. Moriwaki

Wednesday, February 26, 2025, Conference Room 211 & Videoconference

SB 1225 — PROPOSING AN AMENDMENT TO ARTICLE XVII, SECTION 3 OF THE HAWAII CONSTITUTION TO SPECIFY THAT THE STANDARD FOR VOTER APPROVAL OF A CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT PROPOSED BY THE LEGISLATURE IS A MAJORITY OF ALL THE VOTES TALLIED UPON THE QUESTION.

TESTIMONY

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

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Committee Members:

**The League of Women Voters of Hawaii supports SB 1225 that proposes to amend article XVII, section 3 of the Hawaii State Constitution regarding the standard for ratification of a constitutional amendment proposed by the legislature, to require that a majority of all the votes tallied upon the question be a "yes" vote, and not include blank, spoiled, and over votes in determining whether a majority was reached.**

The proposed amendment will make tabulation of ballot questions concerning proposed Constitutional amendments straightforward and make it easier to make results easier for voters to understand.

We support an effective date that is reached through compliance with article XVII, section 3 of Hawaii's Constitution regarding Constitutional amendments proposed by the legislature.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

## **SB-1225**

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 11:04:50 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Andrew Crossland	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

### Comments:

As a citizen rooted in values of upholding electoral integrity, citizen sovereignty, and constitutional strength, I submit this testimony in resolute opposition to SB1225. This bill amends Article XVII, Section 3, to lower the voter approval threshold for legislative constitutional amendments, counting only “yes” and “no” votes tallied, not blank, spoiled, or over-votes as “no.” It claims simplicity but risks undermining our Constitution’s sanctity. I urge you—Republicans and Democrats alike—to **VOTE NO**. Here’s why this bill fails Hawaii.

### **It Weakens Constitutional Protections**

By excluding blank, spoiled, and over-votes from the tally—currently treated as “no” under a dual 50% threshold—this bill drops the bar for amendment passage, making it easier to alter our foundational document. Since 1978, Hawaii’s system has ensured broad consensus; in 2018, only 43% of votes cast favored an amendment, failing rightly due to non-responses. Democrats, you’ve fought to protect rights—why loosen safeguards that keep our Constitution stable against hasty changes? This isn’t clarity; it’s vulnerability.

### **It Disenfranchises Silent Voters**

Counting non-responses as “no” reflects intent—voters skipping a question often signal skepticism, a choice Hawaii respects. This bill dismisses them, favoring a slim majority of vocal “yes” votes; in 2020, 25% of ballots left amendment questions blank (state data). Democrats, you’ve championed every voice—why silence those who abstain, tilting power to organized factions? Fairness honors all voters, not just the loudest.

### **It Risks Partisan Overreach**

Lowering the threshold—potentially to 51% of tallied votes—lets a energized minority rewrite our Constitution, especially in low-turnout elections. Trump’s 2016 win showed turnout matters; this bill could let 30% of voters (if turnout’s 60%) impose changes, per 2022 election patterns. Democrats, you’ve opposed gerrymandering and power grabs—why invite a system where small, partisan blocs can override the broader will? This threatens balance, not democracy.

### **It Ignores Smarter Fixes for Clarity**

Confusion over blank votes can be fixed with education—Hawaii’s 2022 voter guide reached 80% of households—or clearer ballots, not a constitutional rewrite. The current system’s dual check has worked for decades, rejecting divisive amendments (e.g., 2006 tax measure, 48% “yes”). Democrats, you’ve pushed practical solutions—why overhaul a safeguard when simpler tweaks suffice? This bill’s cure is worse than the ailment.

### **It Betrays Our Shared Duty to Democracy**

Committee members, we all value a strong Constitution—Republicans demand rigorous standards, Democrats seek inclusive process. SB1225 fails both by weakening protections, sidelining voters, and risking partisan hijack. **VOTE NO** to preserve Hawaii’s high bar for change. Let’s keep our amendment process deliberate and fair—reflecting true consensus, not a rushed minority—ensuring our Constitution endures for all.

**SB-1225**

Submitted on: 2/23/2025 7:49:24 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Diane Ware	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair and Committee Members,

I urge you to pass this bill for transparency and upholding voter's wishes regarding ConAm issues. There is no other means for voter direct say in constitutional issues since the state does not allow ballot issues.

Sincerely,

Diane Ware, Volcano HI 96785



**SB-1225**

Submitted on: 2/23/2025 11:17:45 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mike Golojuch, Sr.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support SB1225. Please pass this bill.

Mike Golojuch, Sr.

**SB-1225**

Submitted on: 2/23/2025 12:33:06 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Sarah Simmons	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and esteemed committee members:

Please support the passage of this bill. Only the votes cast on an issue should be counted and we should stop counting blank votes on an issue as "no".

Mahalo!

**SB-1225**

Submitted on: 2/23/2025 12:45:06 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Eric Uyeda	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Subject: Testimony Opposing SB1225

Dear Chair and Committee Members,

I am writing to express my opposition to Senate Bill 1225, which proposes an amendment to Article XVII, Section 3 of the Hawaii State Constitution. This bill seeks to alter the current standard for ratifying constitutional amendments by excluding blank, spoiled, and over votes from the tally, thereby requiring only a majority of votes specifically cast as “yes” or “no” for approval.

While the intent to simplify the ratification process is acknowledged, I have several concerns regarding the potential implications of this change:

1. **Dilution of Voter Participation:** By excluding blank, spoiled, and over votes from the count, the bill effectively diminishes the impact of voters who choose not to select an option on a constitutional amendment. This could lead to a scenario where a constitutional amendment is ratified by a minority of the total electorate, undermining the principle of majority rule.
2. **Increased Risk of Unintended Amendments:** The current system ensures that only amendments with broad support are ratified, as it requires a majority of all votes cast in the election. Changing this standard may result in amendments passing with minimal voter engagement, increasing the risk of unintended or poorly considered changes to the constitution.
3. **Potential for Voter Confusion:** Altering the vote-counting method could confuse voters, especially if they are accustomed to the existing system. Clear understanding of how votes are counted is essential for maintaining public trust in the electoral process.

In conclusion, while the goal of SB1225 to streamline the constitutional amendment process is understandable, the proposed changes may inadvertently weaken the democratic safeguards currently in place. I respectfully urge the committee to reconsider this bill and explore alternative methods to achieve clarity without compromising the integrity of our constitutional framework.

Thank you for considering my testimony.

**SB-1225**

Submitted on: 2/23/2025 12:52:41 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lisa Pollak	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Lisa Pollak, I live on Kauai, and I am submitting testimony to express my strong opposition to the practice of counting blank votes as “no” votes in Hawaii’s constitutional amendment process. This policy is both undemocratic and misleading, as it assumes voter intent where none has been explicitly stated.

First and foremost, counting blank votes as “no” votes fundamentally misrepresents the will of the voters. When a voter chooses to leave a ballot measure blank, there are many possible reasons—perhaps they are undecided, unfamiliar with the issue, or simply prefer not to take a position. In any other election, an abstention is just that—an abstention. But under Hawaii’s current system, that same abstention is unfairly interpreted as opposition. This does not reflect the true intent of voters and skews election results in a way that benefits the status quo.

Additionally, this practice creates an unreasonably high bar for passing constitutional amendments. A proposal doesn’t just need a majority of those who actually vote on the question—it must also overcome every blank ballot as an automatic “no.” This makes it incredibly difficult to enact necessary reforms, even when a clear majority of engaged voters support the amendment.

Moreover, this policy can discourage voter participation. Many voters, especially those unfamiliar with certain ballot measures, might choose to leave an amendment blank rather than making an uninformed decision. But when they learn that doing so actually counts as a “no” vote, they may feel misled or frustrated with the system. Democracy functions best when voter choice is respected—not when a blank response is arbitrarily assigned a meaning.

Finally, this practice contradicts the principles of a fair and democratic voting process. In nearly every other context, an abstention is treated as neutral. Hawaii is one of the only states that still counts blank votes this way, and it is time for us to move toward a system that more accurately reflects voter intent.

For these reasons, I urge you to support efforts to change this outdated policy and ensure that blank votes are not unfairly counted as opposition. The people of Hawaii deserve a voting system that is transparent, fair, and truly representative of their voices.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

**SB-1225**

Submitted on: 2/23/2025 2:02:52 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tamra Hayden	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

## Comments:

We are one of few states that count blank or over votes as no votes, which stacks the deck for the constituents who care enough to vote. This has resulted in proposed ConAm that would address the Supreme Court decision that stacked the deck against ConAms. If it's approved, Hawai'i would go back to just counting "yes" and "no" votes instead of considering blank votes and over-votes as being additional "no" votes. I support this bill wholeheartedly. As an "Aloha" state we need to give voters a voice. That voice is squashed often. Look how many bills are proposed and how many pass?? Voters are not happy.

**SB-1225**

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 7:05:55 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
kamakani de dely	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill.

**SB-1225**

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 7:07:33 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mallory De Dely	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill.



**SB-1225**

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 7:09:10 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Susan Dedely	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill.

**SB-1225**

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 7:18:24 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joelle Seashell	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I OPPOSE this bill

**SB-1225**

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 7:49:33 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Madeleine D Fernandez	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose this bill!

This bill rigs the constitutional amendment process to favor SNEAKY liberal changes by ignoring blank votes, threatening our sacred conservative values.

**SB-1225**

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 8:19:11 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Robin D. Ganitano	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose SB1225 which rigs the constitutional amendment process to favor sneaky liberal changes by ignoring blank votes.

**SB-1225**

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 8:49:49 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marlies Lee	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose

keep everything simple

Marlies Lee

**SB-1225**

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 9:07:03 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Deven English	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in stron opposition of this bill.

**SB-1225**

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 9:23:55 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bart Burford	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this measure - Sincerely, Bart

**SB-1225**

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 9:29:24 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ailanna Lagmay-josiah	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose because it rigs the first ammendment process to favor liberal changes by ignoring blank votes



**SB-1225**

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 10:27:55 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Paul Littleton	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose SB1225

**SB-1225**

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 11:00:54 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Debbie Wyand	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This bill rigs the constitutional amendment process to favor sneaky liberal changes by ignoring blank votes, threatening our sacred conservative values.

**SB-1225**

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 11:47:56 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Wendy	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill.

**SB-1225**

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 12:41:50 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kirk Powles	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Keep blank votes as NO votes.

If the voter wanted to vote on the item, they would have voted yes to begin with.

Stop changing our constitution, unless it's for nuclear power.

**SB-1225**

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 12:45:19 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jeffrey F Mizuno	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Text

**SB-1225**

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 12:45:32 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sharron VanDeusen	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Oppose!

**SB-1225**

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 1:11:44 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bronson Teixeira	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, I stand in strong opposition to this bill. Mahalo

**SB-1225**

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 1:28:55 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Laurie Anne Bell	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

## Comments:

While I understand the intent to clarify the voter approval process for constitutional amendments, I have significant concerns about the implications of this change. First, I worry that excluding blank, spoiled, and over votes from the calculation could undermine the democratic principle of broad voter participation. Many voters who leave a ballot blank or spoil their vote may do so intentionally, as a form of abstention or protest. By not counting these votes in the total, the amendment risks diluting the voices of those who choose not to support any option, potentially skewing the outcome in favor of a smaller, more decisive group of voters.

Second, this change could create confusion and inconsistency in how voter turnout and approval are interpreted in Hawaii. Currently, the standard for constitutional amendments typically requires a majority of votes cast, which includes all valid votes on the question. Shifting to a system that only counts "yes" votes against the total tallied could set a higher bar for approval, making it more difficult to pass constitutional amendments even when a clear majority of participating voters support them. This could lead to voter frustration and erode public trust in the amendment process, especially if important constitutional changes fail due to technicalities rather than genuine opposition.

Finally, I am concerned that this amendment could have unintended consequences for future legislative proposals. Raising the threshold for approval in this way might discourage the legislature from proposing necessary updates to the constitution, fearing that they will not meet the new, stricter standard. Hawaii's constitution is a living document that should evolve with the needs of its people, and I believe this change could hinder that adaptability.

I respectfully urge the committee to reconsider this amendment or to conduct further public consultation to assess its potential impact on voter rights, participation, and the democratic process. We must ensure that any changes to our constitutional framework strengthen, rather than complicate, the ability of Hawaii's citizens to shape their government.

Thank you for allowing me to share my concerns. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.



impact on voter turnout

other state voting laws

more concise

**SB-1225**

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 1:48:24 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sarah Wing	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill

**SB-1225**

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 2:37:00 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cindy R Ajimine	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**I strongly OPPOSE SB1225**

**It diminishes democratic integrity by disregarding blank votes in the ratification of constitutional amendments. The current system ensures that every voter's participation, even in the form of abstaining is accounted for.**

**Blank votes are not accidental omissions; they are deliberate expressions by voters who may find an amendment unnecessary, inadequately justified, or usually, ambiguous, poorly written, and/or incomplete.**

**SB1225 artificially inflates support for constitutional changes, making it easier for amendments to pass even if they lack the people's approval. This adjustment would allow a motivated minority to impose significant alterations to governance, disregarding the silent opposition represented by non-responses - which is a choice in voting.**

**SB-1225**

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 2:42:57 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Paul Giles	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I Oppose SB1225,

Paul Giles

**SB-1225**

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 5:47:48 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Terri Yoshinaga	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill.

**SB-1225**

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 5:52:56 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tiare Smith	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

## Comments:

**\*\*Testimony in Opposition to SB 1225 – Proposing an Amendment to Article XVII, Section 3, of the Hawaii State Constitution Regarding Voter Approval of Constitutional Amendments\*\***

Aloha Honorable Members of the Legislature,

My name is Tiare Smith, a Native Hawaiian resident of Kahalu‘u, O‘ahu, where I have lived for 45 years. As a lifelong participant in Hawaii’s democratic processes and a guardian of its cultural legacy, I submit this testimony in steadfast opposition to SB 1225, which seeks to amend Article XVII, Section 3, of the Hawaii State Constitution to alter the standard for voter approval of legislatively proposed constitutional amendments. By reducing the threshold to a simple majority of votes tallied—excluding blank, spoiled, and over votes—this bill undermines the integrity of our constitutional framework, diminishes the full expression of voter intent, and threatens the deliberative rigor essential to such momentous changes. I respectfully urge you to reject this proposal for the compelling reasons outlined below.

First, the existing dual requirement for constitutional amendment approval—a majority of votes tallied on the question and at least 50% of total votes cast in the election—ensures a robust and legitimate mandate reflective of broad public engagement. By treating blank, spoiled, and over votes as implicit “no” votes, the current system demands that proponents of change secure a decisive consensus, protecting our constitution from amendments driven by narrow or fleeting support. SB 1225’s proposal to count only explicit “yes” and “no” votes precipitously lowers this bar, risking the passage of amendments lacking the depth of assent necessary to justify altering our foundational document. As a Native Hawaiian who has voted in countless elections from Kahalu‘u, I view this high standard as a critical safeguard against impulsive or ill-considered governance.

Second, the bill’s claim that the current method is “confusing” and prone to “unintended” outcomes rests on a flimsy foundation that undervalues voter agency. Blank ballots or spoiled votes often represent deliberate abstention or dissent—legitimate choices that merit inclusion in a process as consequential as constitutional ratification. By dismissing these as irrelevant under SB 1225, the legislature would effectively disenfranchise those who withhold affirmative support, tilting the scales toward “yes” voters and skewing results. This shift could disproportionately affect communities like mine, where a history of imposed changes—echoing Hawaii’s colonial legacy—may manifest as abstention rather than outright opposition, a nuance the current system respects.

Third, SB 1225 introduces an inconsistent standard that fractures the symmetry between legislative and convention-proposed amendments, compromising constitutional coherence. Article XVII, Section 2, retains the stricter dual requirement for convention-initiated amendments, yet this bill carves out a more lenient path for legislative proposals. This disparity raises troubling questions about legislative intent, suggesting a design to facilitate self-serving alterations while preserving higher barriers for citizen-led reform. Having observed Hawaii's political landscape for 45 years, I find this double standard antithetical to the equitable principles that should underpin our state's highest law.

Finally, the gravity of amending our constitution demands a process that withstands scrutiny and commands enduring legitimacy—qualities the current system upholds with distinction. SB 1225's expedient revision, framed as a simplification of tabulation, sacrifices this rigor for convenience, potentially emboldening future amendments that lack the moral and democratic weight to stand the test of time. Hawaii's constitution is a covenant reflecting our collective will, not a malleable tool for legislative ease; altering its approval process should not bend to transient whims.

I acknowledge the legislature's intent to streamline voting mechanics, but the answer lies in voter education and transparency—not in diluting a proven standard. I earnestly implore you to vote no on SB 1225, preserving a constitutional approval process that honors the full spectrum of voter sentiment and upholds the sovereignty of Hawaii's people.

Mahalo nui loa for your thoughtful deliberation.

Sincerely,

Tiare Smith

Kahalu'u, O'ahu

**SB-1225**

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 7:27:36 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
James K. Rzonca	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill



**SB-1225**

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 9:26:11 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Candace Vizcarra	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

NO! STOP MAKING AMENDMENTS THAT THREATENS CONSERVATIVE VALUES!!  
GOD KNOWS & SEES ALL!!!

**SB-1225**

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 9:38:36 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
J Miles	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill.

Thank you.

**SB-1225**

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 9:40:31 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dayna Matsumura	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Oppose.

**SB-1225**

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 9:57:39 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer Cabjuan	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

## Comments:

Oppose this bill. A blank vote should always be a NO vote. The amendments are always word salad confusing for citizens on purpose! Do not use this low standard to try and change our constitution!!!

**SB-1225**

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 10:21:05 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Vernelle Oku	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Respectfully request this measure to not pass.

**SB-1225**

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 10:36:12 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alika Valdez	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill.

**SB-1225**

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 10:51:13 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tim Huycke	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support SB1225.

**SB-1225**

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 11:33:46 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dorinda Ohelo	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose this bill.



**SB-1225**

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 11:42:56 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Blaine De Ramos	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I stronly oppose SB1225.

This bill rigs the constitutional amendment process to favor sneaky liberal changes by ignoring blank votes, threatening our sacred conservative values.

**SB-1225**

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 11:53:11 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Matt	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Blank votes should not be assumed to be in favor of the monopoly party

**SB-1225**

Submitted on: 2/25/2025 1:50:19 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Luis Ma	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

## Comments:

I strongly opposed this bill because allowing election officers to change blanket voter ballots can introduce several significant disadvantages and risks to the electoral process. Here are some key concerns:

1. **\*\*Loss of Voter Trust\*\***:

If voters believe that their ballots can be altered by election officers, it undermines confidence in the fairness and integrity of the election. Trust in the electoral process is essential for a functioning democracy.

2. **\*\*Potential for Fraud\*\***:

Granting election officers the power to change ballots opens the door to potential manipulation or tampering. This could lead to fraudulent outcomes, where election results do not reflect the true will of the voters.

3. **\*\*Lack of Transparency\*\***:

Changes made to ballots by election officers may not be transparent or easily traceable. This lack of accountability can create suspicion and make it difficult to verify the accuracy of election results.

4. **\*\*Violation of Voter Intent\*\***:

Altering ballots could result in misrepresenting the voter's original intent. This is particularly problematic in close elections, where even small changes could significantly impact the outcome.

5. **\*\*Legal and Ethical Concerns\*\***:

Allowing election officers to modify ballots may violate election laws and ethical standards. It could lead to legal challenges, disputes, and prolonged uncertainty about the legitimacy of election results.

6. **\*\*Increased Partisanship\*\***:

If election officers are perceived as having the ability to influence outcomes, it could lead to accusations of partisanship or bias. This could further polarize the political environment and erode public confidence in the electoral system.

7. **\*\*Complexity and Errors\*\***:

The process of changing ballots could introduce unnecessary complexity and increase the likelihood of errors. Mistakes in ballot handling or recording could lead to disputes and delays in finalizing election results.

8. **\*\*Undermining Voter Autonomy\*\***:

Elections are meant to reflect the choices of individual voters. Allowing election officers to alter ballots undermines the principle of voter autonomy and the idea that each vote should count as cast.

9. **\*\*Difficulty in Auditing\*\***:

If ballots are changed, it becomes harder to conduct accurate audits or recounts. This could compromise the ability to verify election results and resolve disputes.

10. **\*\*Erosion of Democratic Principles\*\***:

The ability to change ballots contradicts the fundamental democratic principle of free and fair elections. It could set a dangerous precedent and weaken the legitimacy of the electoral process.

To maintain the integrity of elections, it is crucial to ensure that ballots are secure, transparent, and reflect the unaltered choices of voters. Any changes to ballots should be strictly regulated, transparent, and subject to oversight to prevent abuse or manipulation.

**SB-1225**

Submitted on: 2/25/2025 6:20:32 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
kim santos	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please vote no. Thank you

**SB-1225**

Submitted on: 2/25/2025 7:18:34 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bruce Javellana	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill.

**SB-1225**

Submitted on: 2/25/2025 8:10:12 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shirley Simao	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose SB1225 regarding the process of vote counting on constitutional amendments.



**SB-1225**

Submitted on: 2/25/2025 8:21:12 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Reid Oya	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill

**SB-1225**

Submitted on: 2/25/2025 8:25:50 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
David Nichols	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

## Comments:

I'm opposed to S.B. No. 1225 because it waters down a safeguard that's been part of Hawaii's Constitution for good reason. I see why some might think counting blank or spoiled ballots as "no" votes is confusing, but I think it's a fair way to make sure any change to our state's foundation has real, broad support—not just a slim majority of whoever bothers to mark a box. Right now, an amendment needs over 50% of all votes cast in the election to pass, which forces lawmakers to propose stuff that actually matters to most people, not just a vocal few. Stripping that out and letting it slide with only a majority of votes tallied on the question feels like a shortcut that could let fringe ideas sneak through too easily. I worry we'll end up with a constitution littered with half-baked changes because the bar's been lowered. Plus, the current system's been around forever—why mess with it when it's worked to keep things stable? I'd rather keep the higher hurdle and know our amendments have solid backing, not just a flimsy tally that ignores everyone who didn't say "yes." This isn't clarity; it's a gamble with our state's core rules I don't want to take.

**SB-1225**

Submitted on: 2/25/2025 9:33:49 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dawn O'Brien	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Representatives of We the Citizens of Hawai'i~

Mahalo for taking time to read & review our votes via these letters on topics at hand, i know it takes extra on your part & i do so appreciate it, GOD BLESS YOU!

I stand in **STRONG OPPOSITION** to SB1225 re: reconfiguring ConAm (Constitutional Amendments) processing in such a way to allow liberal changes by ignoring blank votes, threatening our family & conservative values.

For obvious reasons this is not illegal & inethical and also immoral. Why would anyone want to do this: Allowing for underhanded changes by a select few with special interests? This goes against the very nature & definition of a democratic government by the people, of the people and **FOR** the people!

It also undermines our state's security as we allow select few to make vital changes to the state's constitution with little oversight & few checks and balances. This is plain wrong & all around a truly bad idea. In fact, I wonder whose idea it is? Why would this person &/or party propose such a bad idea is the biggest question herein, & one i ask honestly?!

In summary, I strongly oppose SB124 as a proposal for yet further illegal laws in our State of Hawaii that will destroy our people, place & state. And I hope & pray you will represent the majority of Hawai'i citizens (not the minority nor the special interest\$) to **OPPOSE THIS BILL ALSO!**

Aloha &amp; Malama Always,

Dawn O'Brien

President, HOPE HI, Inc.

Lifelong resident &amp; taxpaying citizen

**SB-1225**

Submitted on: 2/25/2025 9:35:31 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Terry Murakami	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose. This bill can rig the constitutional admendment process to favor liberal changes by ignoring blank votes.

**SB-1225**

Submitted on: 2/25/2025 9:44:51 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Pamela Vera	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I urge you to OPPOSE this Bill.

Blank, spoiled, and over votes Must be accounted for in determining whether a majority was reached - otherwise how can it be a true majority. Let the peoples voices (and or silence) be heard...

Thank you for your NO Vote on this measure.

Pamela Vera

**SB-1225**

Submitted on: 2/25/2025 9:51:58 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mary Healy	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose SB-1225.

Amendments to the Hawaii State Constituion should be difficult and only done with the consent of the majority of the voters. Hawaii State Constituion is the youngest in the nation and opening it up to revisions of this magnitude without the consent of the majority voters is a injustice to We the People. The population of this state rely on our officals to protect the integrity of the Constitution of the United States, the Bill of Rights and locally our Hawaii State Constituion which are sacred to our republic.

The bill states:

“The legislature further finds that the

manner in which ballot responses are required to be counted for state constitutional amendment purposes, by deeming ballots left blank, spoiled, or over voted as a vote in opposition to the proposed amendment, is confusing and may lead to a result unintended by the voter.

Pursuant to the state constitution, the standard for passage of a proposed constitutional amendment is two-fold.”

This bill assumes to know the intention of the voter and adjunicate the vote. The most prudent choice is to educate the voters prior to the election on upcoming proposed amendment and that a none vote is a vote in opposition.

Vote No.

Thank you for reading my testimony,

Mary Healy

**LATE**

**SB-1225**

Submitted on: 2/25/2025 10:06:03 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Noela von Wiegandt	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Oppose

**LATE**

**SB-1225**

Submitted on: 2/25/2025 1:23:02 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gregory Misakian	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**I oppose SB1225.**

If our Legislators haven't noticed yet, the residents of Hawaii don't like it when you mess around with "their" Constitution.

Please work on the more important issues facing Hawaii, as there are many.

Mahalo,

Gregory Misakian



**LATE**

**SB-1225**

Submitted on: 2/25/2025 8:06:33 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
james	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose SB1225.This bill riggs the constitutional amendment process.Our voting rigg system is already against us.Scott Nago needs to be arrested and put in jail for cheating and rigging the votes in favor of the democrats like Josh Green Goblin.Nobody likes him and wouldnt vote for him but he wins big.SO RIGGED!!!!