

JAN 23 2025

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO ELECTIONS.

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

SECTION 1. The legislature recognizes that current election law requires the establishment and operation of voter service centers, which are intended to provide several walk-in services to voters, including registration, ballot receipt, and in-person voting. The legislature also recognizes, however, that the State has far too few voter service centers, as infamously demonstrated during the November 5, 2024, general election, during which voters faced widespread issues, including excessively long lines and insufficient access to voting services. The problems revealed systemic inequalities in the State's administration of elections.

Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to ensure a fair, efficient, equitable, and accessible voting process by:

- (1) Increasing the number of voter service centers in the State;
- (2) Requiring all voter services centers to operate during the same days and hours statewide;



(3) Clarifying that during each day of operation, during all hours of operation, each voter service center is to provide in-person voter registration, receive absentee and election-by-mail ballots, allow voters to vote in person, and provide voting machine services for persons with disabilities; and

(4) Appropriating moneys to the counties for the administrative costs of voter service centers.

SECTION 2. Section 11-1, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended by amending the definition of "voter service center" to read as follows:

"Voter service center" means a location [~~within the county of the voter's registration address~~] established pursuant to section 11-109 [~~to serve all of the following purposes:~~

~~(1) Receive return envelopes for absentee ballots pursuant to chapter 15;~~

~~(2) Receive return identification envelopes in an election by mail conducted pursuant to part VIIA;~~

~~(3) Provide voting machine services for persons with disabilities pursuant to the Help America Vote Act of~~



1 ~~2002, P.L. 107-252, as amended, and any other federal~~
2 ~~or state law relating to persons with disabilities,~~
3 ~~(4) Provide any other voting services as provided by law,~~
4 ~~and~~
5 ~~(5) Any other purposes the chief election officer or clerk~~
6 ~~may deem necessary if a natural disaster or other~~
7 ~~exigent circumstance occurs before an election]."~~

8 SECTION 3. Section 11-109, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
9 amended to read as follows:

10 **"§11-109 Voter service centers; places of deposit. (a)**
11 Voter service centers shall be established by the clerks to
12 service the particular needs of each county's voters. Each
13 voter service center within a county shall serve any voter who
14 resides within the county. The number of voter service centers
15 within a county shall be equal to the number of county
16 councilmembers serving on the county council. Further, one
17 voter service center shall be located in each county council
18 district; provided that in any county having at-large county
19 council members, voter service centers shall be located in a
20 manner designed to be equitable and accommodate all of the
21 county's residents, including those in rural areas.



1 (b) In each county, [a] each voter service center shall be
2 open from the tenth business day preceding the day of the
3 election during regular business hours until the closing hour of
4 voting and at the same times statewide. [~~The clerks may operate~~
5 ~~additional voter service centers with varying days or hours of~~
6 ~~operation to service the voters of particular areas that~~
7 ~~otherwise could not support the operation of a voter service~~
8 ~~center for ten business days or the same times statewide.~~
9 Anyone] Any person standing in line at a voter service center at
10 the closing hour of voting with the intent of voting shall be
11 permitted to do so. A person eligible to vote but who is not
12 registered to vote standing in line at a voter service center at
13 the closing hour of voting shall be permitted to apply under
14 section 11-15.2 to register to vote and subsequently vote that
15 election day. To the extent the registration clerk determines
16 the applicant to be registered at that time, the applicant will
17 be permitted to vote a regular ballot. If additional time is
18 required to process the application, the applicant shall be
19 provided a provisional ballot.



1 (c) Each voter service center shall [~~provide the services~~
2 ~~specified in section 11-1 under the definition of "voter service~~
3 ~~center".~~]:

4 (1) During each day of operation, during all hours of
5 operation, as established pursuant to subsection (b):

6 (A) Register voters in-person, pursuant to section
7 11-15.2;

8 (B) Receive return envelopes for absentee ballots
9 pursuant to chapter 15; and

10 (C) Receive return identification envelopes in an
11 election by mail conducted pursuant to part VIIA;

12 (D) Allow voters to vote in person; and

13 (E) Provide voting machine services for persons with
14 disabilities pursuant to the Help America Vote
15 Act of 2002, P.L. 107-252, as amended, and any
16 other federal or state law relating to persons
17 with disabilities;

18 (2) Perform other duties the chief election officer or
19 clerk may deem necessary if a natural disaster or
20 other exigent circumstance occurs before an election;
21 and



1 (3) Provide any other voting services as provided by law."

2 (d) The clerks may designate and provide for places of
3 deposit to be open as early as the mailing of ballots by the
4 clerks; provided that the locations and apparatus for receiving
5 voted ballots can be securely maintained during the period of
6 use for each election, and as ~~[may be]~~ permitted by the
7 operational hours."

8 SECTION 4. There is appropriated out of the general
9 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of:

10 (1) \$ to the city and county of Honolulu;

11 (2) \$ to the county of Hawaii;

12 (3) \$ to the county of Maui; and

13 (4) \$ to the county of Kauai;

14 or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2025-2026
15 and the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for
16 fiscal year 2026-2027 for the administrative costs of operating
17 voter service centers pursuant to this Act.

18 The sums appropriated shall be expended by the respective
19 counties for the purposes of this Act.



1 SECTION 5. This Act does not affect rights and duties that
2 matured, penalties that were incurred, and proceedings that were
3 begun before its effective date.

4 SECTION 6. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed
5 and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

6 SECTION 7. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

7

INTRODUCED BY: 



S.B. NO. 1240

Report Title:

Elections; Voter Service Centers; Counties; Appropriations

Description:

Increases the number of voter service centers in the State. Requiring all voter services centers to operate during the same days and hours statewide. Clarifies that during each day of operation, during all hours of operation, each voter service center is to provide in-person voter registration, receive absentee and election-by-mail ballots, allow voters to vote in person, and provide voting machine services for persons with disabilities. Appropriates moneys to the counties for the administrative costs of voter service centers.

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

