



**STATE OF HAWAII  
OFFICE OF ELECTIONS**

802 LEHUA AVENUE  
PEARL CITY, HAWAII 96782  
elections.hawaii.gov

SCOTT T. NAGO  
CHIEF ELECTION OFFICER

TESTIMONY OF THE  
CHIEF ELECTION OFFICER, OFFICE OF ELECTIONS  
TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY  
ON SENATE BILL NO. 159  
RELATING TO VOTING

February 19, 2021

Chair Rhoads and members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill No. 159. The purpose of this bill is to require any person who is eligible to vote and applies for a motor vehicle driver license or identification card to be automatically registered to vote unless the applicant affirmatively declines; allow an applicant to affirmatively decline to have any of the applicant's information electronically transmitted; and authorize access to and electronic transmission of databases maintained or operated by the counties or the department of transportation that contains driver license or identification card information to election officials and the online voter registration system.

This bill would provide more access to voter registration, as it requires the applicant for a driver license or state identification card to directly address the question of whether they want to register to vote or to opt out as part of the application process. This bill also ensures the accuracy of the voter registration rolls by electronically transmitting voter registration data between the driver licensing and identification card database and the statewide voter registration system. The electronic sharing of data between driver licensing officials and election officials helps to ensure timely compliance with the National Voter Registration Act and the Help America Vote Act. 52 USC § 21083(a)(5)(B) & 52 USC § 20504.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill No. 159.

**SB-159**

Submitted on: 2/16/2021 11:10:42 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/19/2021 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Khara Jabola-Carolus	Testifying for Hawai'i State Commission on the Status of Women	Support	No

Comments:

Chair, Vice Chair and Honorable Members:

The Hawai'i State Commission on the Status of Women supports SB159, relating to automatic voter registration. Women have been denied voting rights longer than they have held voting rights in the United States. AVR has been shown to improve women's civic participation in voting. Accordingly, the Commission asks that the Committee pass SB159.

Sincerely,

Khara Jabola-Carolus

JADE K. FOUNTAIN-TANIGAWA  
County Clerk

Telephone: (808) 241-4800  
TTY: (808) 241-5116



SCOTT K. SATO  
Deputy County Clerk

Facsimile: (808) 241-6207  
E-mail: elections@kauai.gov

**ELECTIONS DIVISION  
OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CLERK**  
4386 RICE STREET, SUITE 101  
LIHU'E, KAUA'I, HAWAII 96766-1819

February 19, 2021

**TESTIMONY OF JADE K. FOUNTAIN-TANIGAWA  
COUNTY CLERK, COUNTY OF KAUA'I  
TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY  
ON SENATE BILL NO. 159  
RELATING TO VOTING**

Dear Chair Rhoads and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of Senate Bill 159. This Bill will require any person who is eligible to vote and who applies for a motor vehicle driver's license or identification card to be automatically registered to vote unless the applicant affirmatively declines. The Bill also authorizes election officials and the online voter registration system to access and receive electronic transmissions of databases maintained or operated by the counties or the department of transportation that contains driver's license or identification card information.

Requiring the electronic transmission of databases containing driver's license and identification card information in order to register applicants to vote will eliminate the inefficiencies inherent to the current paper-based voter registration process currently in offered at motor vehicle driver's license offices.

Provisions allowing applicants to affirmatively decline to register to vote or to update an existing record will ensure that only willing applicants will be entered into the voter registration database.

In addition to applicants who affirmatively decline to participate, we respectfully request that the Bill be amended to clarify that the examiner of drivers also not transmit any information relating to an applicant, if the applicant presents as part of the application for a driver's license, provisional license, instruction permit, or identification card, a document that demonstrates lack of United States citizenship.

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony in support of Senate Bill No. 159.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jade K. Fountain-Tanigawa".

JADE K. FOUNTAIN-TANIGAWA  
County Clerk



49 South Hotel Street, Room 314 | Honolulu, HI 96813  
www.lwv-hawaii.com | 808.531.7448 | voters@lwv-hawaii.com | @LWVHawaii on Facebook

## COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Friday, February 19, 2021, 9:30 a.m. Via Videoconference  
SB 159 RELATING TO VOTING

### TESTIMONY

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

Chair Rhoads, Vice-Chair Keohokolele, and Committee Members:

**The League of Women Voters of Hawaii strongly supports SB 159. As of the start of this session, 20 states and the District of Columbia have passed this voter-friendly reform<sup>1</sup>, and 6 bills have already been introduced on this subject in this session. The demand signal from the public is clear - they want “Opt-Out” Automatic Voter Registration (AVR).**

“Opt-Out” AVR builds upon Congress’s findings in the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 that 1) voting is a fundamental right and 2) it is the duty of governments to promote the exercise of that right<sup>2</sup>.

This bill empowers voters by letting them affirmatively choose whether their information is used to update their registration, or to register them at all, when they interact with the Department of Motor Vehicles. “Opt-Out” AVR will promote - but not mandate - registration by making it convenient and cost-effective. The same proven and secure processes will continue to be used to enter and update a voter’s information. “Opt-Out” AVR would also help the state keep the voter registration rolls more accurate. With registrations more accurate and more frequently updated, errors in ballot delivery and demand for registration services at Voter Service Centers could be reduced as well. The savings in time and money would add up quickly.

Voting is a right, and voters must be registered to exercise that right. “Opt-Out” AVR reinforces those facts by providing a secure, convenient, and cost-effective way to get and keep voters registered. It does not guarantee that turnout will rise, but it will remove a barrier to that turnout.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

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1. “Automatic Voter Registration.” *National Conference of State Legislatures*. <https://www.ncsl.org/research/elections-and-campaigns/automatic-voter-registration.aspx>, accessed 25 January 2021.

2. 52 USC §20501(a).

**SB-159**

Submitted on: 2/16/2021 1:53:49 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/19/2021 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Michael Golojuch Jr	Testifying for LGBT Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawaii	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Senators,

The LGBT Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i, Hawaii's oldest and largest policy and political LGBTQIA+ focused organization, fully supports Senate Bill 159.

Mahalo nui loa for your time and consideration,

Michael Golojuch, Jr.

Chair

LGBT Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i

Statement Before The  
**SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY**

Friday, February 19, 2021

9:30 AM

Via Videoconference

in consideration of

**SB 159**

**RELATING TO VOTING.**

Chair RHOADS, Vice Chair KEOHOKALOLE, and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee

Common Cause Hawaii is testifying in support of SB 159, which (1) requires any person who is eligible to vote and applies for a motor vehicle driver's license or identification card to be automatically registered to vote unless the applicant affirmatively declines, (2) allows an applicant to affirmatively decline to have any of the applicant's information electronically transmitted, and (3) authorizes access to and electronic transmission of databases maintained or operated by the counties or the department of transportation that contains driver's license or identification card information to election officials and the online voter registration system. SB 159 is known as Automatic Voter Registration ("AVR").

Common Cause Hawaii is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, grassroots organization dedicated to strengthening democracy through voting modernization efforts. Common Cause Hawaii supports AVR as a much-needed voter modernization tool for the benefit Hawaii.

One, AVR will modernize our voter registration system to make it more accurate and secure. When a person goes to the County of Department of Motor Vehicles and does not "opt-out" of being a registered voter, the person's information and data are automatically transferred between the County Department of Motor Vehicles and the county elections offices. This does not mean that a U.S. citizen will be "automatically" registered to vote by simply enacting AVR. It will still be necessary for a U.S. citizen to interact with a government official through the DMV—and not decline voter registration—to be registered to vote.

Thus, AVR will make our voter rolls more accurate and secure by helping to keep them updated. With our vote by mail system augmented by AVR, ballots will then be mailed to people's current, correct addresses. Additionally, names on voters' ballots will match their identification for election security. AVR would lessen the number of people who would need to go in-person to a voter service center to register to vote and, thereby, shorten the wait times.

Two, AVR is cost-effective. AVR has been estimated, according to one evaluation, to save approximately \$1 million statewide in each election cycle by eliminating paper-based registrations and decreasing undeliverable mail related to registration issues. Given the budget crisis facing the state as a result of the COVID-pandemic, cost-saving from AVR is not something that we can ignore.

Three, AVR encourages good policy and governance through the promotion of a more inclusive and vibrant society. AVR is a vital step to making sure that Hawaii US citizens have access to our democracy, building a stronger democracy, by allowing voters to automatically register to vote when they interact with DMV.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 159. If you have further questions of me, please contact me at [sma@commoncause.org](mailto:sma@commoncause.org).

Very respectfully yours,

Sandy Ma  
Executive Director, Common Cause Hawaii





Hawaii  
Holding Power Accountable

350

Hawaii



empowering women since 1881

of Hawaii



HAWAII ALLIANCE FOR PROGRESSIVE ACTION



A F S C M E  
LOCAL 152, AFL-CIO



Pono Hawaii Initiative



SIERRA CLUB  
OF HAWAII  
MĀLAMA I KA HONUA  
Cherish the Earth.



DATE: Friday, February 19, 2021  
TIME: 9:30 a.m.  
PLACE: Via Videoconference

### Testimony in support of SB 159, Relating to Voting

Aloha, we are testifying on behalf of the AVR Hawaii Coalition in **support** of automatic voter registration, which provides for the voter registration through the Department of Motor Vehicles of any U.S. citizen who is eligible to vote. Through this process, voters automatically register to vote when they apply for a new or renewal motor vehicle driver's license, provisional license, instruction permit, or a new, renewal, or duplicate identification unless they decline registration. This bill also authorizes access to and electronic transmission of databases maintained or operated by the counties or the department of transportation to election officials.

This past year during the pandemic, we saw that mail-in voting allowed registered voters to more conveniently exercise their right to vote. As voters become more comfortable using mail ballots, it becomes even more important for us to have a system in place to ensure eligible voters in Hawaii are registered at the proper address to streamline and safeguard the mail ballot process. Hawaii's voter rolls need to be accurate, secure, and complete for voting by mail to function properly, and automatic voter registration helps to achieve these goals. Ultimately, this policy improves our democracy and our voter participation rates.

- Automatic voter registration will give voters the opportunity to register to vote or update their address at the same time they complete their driver license application or application for a state identification card. They will also have the opportunity to decline to register to vote. For any applicant who does not decline, the driver licensing office then transmits application information securely and electronically to election officials. Please be assured that no U.S. citizen is "automatically" registered to vote simply by the passing of this legislation. It will be necessary for the U.S. citizen to interact with a government official—and not decline voter registration—to be registered to vote or to update their address.
- Any person who does not want to register to vote or to update their address simply ticks a checkbox on the application to decline. No information will be transmitted for any person who ticks the decline checkbox. "Automatic" simply refers to the transfer of information and data between the County Department of Motor Vehicles and the elections offices in charge of voter registration for those who want to vote.

If voting is the cornerstone of democracy, voter registration is its bedrock. 'A 'ohe hana nui ke alu 'ia – no task is too big when done together by all. Please support automatic voter registration.

The AVR Hawaii Coalition is comprised of organizations and individuals who support automatic voter registration in Hawaii. For more information go to [avrhawaii.com](http://avrhawaii.com)





## Hawaii Women's Coalition

To: Hawai'i State Senate Judiciary Committee on Consumer

Hearing Date/Time: Fri., Feb. 19, 2021, 9:30 am

Place: Via Videoconference

Re: Testimony of Hawai'i Women's Coalition in strong support of SB 159

Dear Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair, Keohokalole, and Members of the Committee,

The Hawai'i Women's Coalition is testifying in support of SB 159, which (1) requires any person who is eligible to vote and applies for a motor vehicle driver's license or identification card to be automatically registered to vote unless the applicant affirmatively declines, (2) allows an applicant to affirmatively decline to have any of the applicant's information electronically transmitted, and (3) authorizes access to and electronic transmission of databases maintained or operated by the counties or the department of transportation that contains driver's license or identification card information to election officials and the online voter registration system. SB 159 is known as Automatic Voter Registration ("AVR").

The Hawai'i Women's Coalition is a catalyst for progressive, social, economic and political change through action on critical issues facing Hawaii's women and girls. Members currently include 29 organizations and agencies (private, public, membership) as well as individuals. The coalition encourages the inclusion of interested parties and in achieving equitable representation.

The Hawai'i Women's Coalition supports AVR because it will ease the barriers to registering to vote and help Hawaii's people, especially women, achieve civic equality. People have to obtain driver's licenses and state identifications to open bank accounts, to travel, for employment verification, and more. Allowing women to register to vote while interacting at the DMV and then having the automatic transfer of the voter registration data to the elections office, will mean time savings, money savings, and accuracy of voter registration data. Women have to shoulder enough burdens, please have registering to vote not be one more.

When the people of Hawaii can easily register to vote to achieve equitable representation, this will have the effect of a healthy, vibrant democracy. For these reasons, Hawai'i Women's Coalition supports SB 159 and AVR.

Thank you for your consideration and support for this important bill.

Sincerely,

Sandy Ma

Hawai'i Women's Coalition Community Member

## TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 159

TO: Chair Rhoads, Vice-Chair Keohokalole, & Judiciary Committee Members

FROM: Nikos Leverenz  
Grants, Development & Policy Manager

DATE: February 19, 2021 (9:30 AM)

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Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center (HHRC) **strongly supports** SB 159, which provides for automatic voter registration (AVR) for anyone eligible to vote who applies for a new, renewal, or duplicate driver's license or state identification, with an opt-out provision.

Last year's elections raised issues that require legislative attention, including more voter service centers and the ongoing need to update voter addresses. The state reportedly spent considerable sums on postal charges in mailing ballots that were returned because of address changes. AVR would help streamline and safeguard the mail ballot process by capturing a good number of those who have moved.

HHRC supports measures that facilitate increased voter registration and participation. HHRC works with many individuals who are impacted by poverty, housing instability, and other social determinants of health. Making voter registration automatic, particularly when combined with an all-mail election, would give many currently not inclined to participate in the electoral process a tangible opportunity to exercise their right to vote.

As noted by the Brennan Center for Justice (BCJ), automatic voter registration reforms that have an opt-out provision where agencies transfer voter registration information electronically to elections officials "[increase registration rates, clean up the voter rolls, and save states money.](#)" BCJ also notes that 16 states and D.C. have approved the policy, with over a third of all Americans living in a jurisdiction that features AVR of some kind.

This is an important measure that will foreseeably expand registration and voter participation. It builds upon reforms, including vote-by-mail, enacted by the Hawai'i Legislature and signed into law in recent years. Ideally, Hawai'i would be among those states where voter information is provided to elections officials by other social service agencies.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



1001 Bishop Street | Suite 625 | Honolulu, HI 96813-2830  
1-866-295-7282 | Fax: 808-536-2882  
aarp.org/hi | [aarphi@aarp.org](mailto:aarphi@aarp.org) | [twitter.com/AARPHawaii](https://twitter.com/AARPHawaii)  
[facebook.com/AARPHawaii](https://facebook.com/AARPHawaii)

**The State Legislature  
The Senate  
Committee on Judiciary  
Friday, February 19, 2021  
9:30 a.m.**

TO: The Honorable Karl Rhoads, Chair

RE: S.B. 159 Relating to Voting

Dear Chair Rhoads and Members of the Committee:

My name is Keali'i Lopez and I am the State Director for AARP Hawai'i. AARP is a membership organization of people age fifty and over, with nearly 145,000 members in Hawai'i.

AARP Hawai'i supports S.B. 159 which requires any person who is eligible to vote and applies for a driver's license or identification card to be automatically registered to vote unless the applicant affirmatively declines. We believe that Hawaii should adopt voter registration and voting systems and procedures that expand the range of voting choices. Public policy should encourage and promote maximum participation in the electoral process.

Requiring those who get or update a license to register to vote (or change address) – or opt-out of doing so – does indeed promote maximum participation. It doesn't require drivers to register to vote but does require them to make the affirmative choice to decline to do so, which is their right. Doing it through this opt-out process encourages participation in what AARP believes is among the most basic of all political rights – the right to vote.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to support S.B. 159.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Keali'i Lopez".

Keali'i Lopez, AARP Hawai'i  
State Director



Committee: Committee on Judiciary  
Hearing Date/Time: Friday, February 19, 2021, 9:30 a.m.  
Place: Via Videoconference  
Re: Testimony of the ACLU of Hawai'i in Support of S.B. 159, Relating to Voting

Dear Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Keohokalole, and Members of the Committee on Judiciary:

The American Civil Liberties Union of Hawai'i ("ACLU of Hawai'i") writes **in support of S.B. 159, which would automatically register eligible people to vote or update voter information when they apply for or renew a state identification card or driver's license, with the option to decline registration.**

Voting is the cornerstone of our democracy and a fundamental right upon which all our civil liberties rest. With the correct safeguards in place, automatic voter registration helps remove barriers to registration for eligible voters, updates voter registration rolls, and leads to more efficient elections. The automatic voter registration program created by S.B. 159 would make our DMVs more efficient by electronically transmitting voter registration information from the agency to election officials. Eligible U.S. citizens will be registered to vote, unless they opt out, and people who are ineligible to vote would be protected from erroneous registration. If a person is already registered to vote, the process established by S.B. 159 will update their address unless they opt out. The ACLU of Hawai'i believes that S.B. 159 contains the appropriate safeguards to ensure greater access to the vote, while also protecting people against erroneous registration.

The ACLU of Hawai'i urges the Committee to pass this measure, and respectfully requests that in its committee report, the Committee recommend that in the future, the automatic voter registration program be expanded to apply to forms or applications submitted to a government office, such as applications for public assistance and intake forms at jails. Limiting automatic voter registration to applications to renew or obtain a driver's license or State ID may disadvantage marginalized communities who are less likely to obtain licenses or IDs. If the Committee is inclined to make this recommendation, we would be happy to assist in reviewing government forms that could potentially be used for automatic voter registration.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

American Civil Liberties Union of Hawai'i  
P.O. Box 3410  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96801  
T: 808.522-5900  
F: 808.522-5909  
E: [office@acluhawaii.org](mailto:office@acluhawaii.org)  
[www.acluhawaii.org](http://www.acluhawaii.org)

Chair Rhoads and Members of the Committee on Judiciary  
February 19, 2021  
Page 2 of 2



Hope Kerpelman  
Legal and Legislative Fellow  
ACLU of Hawai'i

*The mission of the ACLU of Hawai'i is to protect the fundamental freedoms enshrined in the U.S. and State Constitutions. The ACLU of Hawai'i fulfills this through legislative, litigation, and public education programs statewide. The ACLU of Hawai'i is a non-partisan and private non-profit organization that provides its services at no cost to the public and does not accept government funds. The ACLU of Hawai'i has been serving Hawai'i for over 50 years.*

American Civil Liberties Union of Hawai'i  
P.O. Box 3410  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96801  
T: 808.522-5900  
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[www.acluHawai'i.org](http://www.acluHawai'i.org)



February 16, 2021

Contact:

To: Senate Committee on Judiciary Chair Karl Rhoads, Vice Chair Jarrett Keohokalole, and committee members

From: The Hawai'i Democratic Party Women's Caucus

Subject: Testimony in SUPPORT of SB 159.

Thank you for allowing this testimony in SUPPORT of SB 159.

In 2015, California and Oregon were the first two states initiating automatic voter registration. Today, a total of 20 states have adopted some form of automatic voter registration.

The 2017 report by the Brennan Center for Justice said, "Automatic voter registration makes two transformative, yet simple, changes to voter registration: Eligible citizens who interact with government agencies are registered to vote unless they decline, and agencies transfer voter registration information electronically to election officials. These two changes create a seamless process that is more convenient and less error-prone for both voters and government officials. This policy boosts registration rates, cleans up the rolls, makes voting more convenient, and reduces the potential for voter fraud, all while lowering costs."

In other words, applying for a driver's license or state identification would allow you to also register to vote, if you don't opt out. Automatic voter registration will eliminate the expense and labor needed to process a separate voter registration application and result in more accurate and more current voter rolls. Combined with mail-in voting, voting in Hawai'i will be easier and safer. Maintaining and updating voter rolls will be less expensive and more accurate. And our elections will see record turnouts of voters.

There are so many positive reasons to enact automatic voter registration. Please enact this in time for the 2022 election.

Me ke aloha pumehana,

Amy Monk, Co-Chair  
Hawai'i State Democratic Women's Caucus

**SB-159**

Submitted on: 2/16/2021 11:32:38 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/19/2021 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Laurie Field	Testifying for Planned Parenthood Votes Northwest and Hawaii	Support	No

Comments:

Planned Parenthood Votes Northwest and Hawaii supports SB 159. Thank you!



## of Hawaii

Hawaii State Senate Committee on Judiciary  
Hearing Date/Time: Friday February 19, 2021 9:30AM  
Place: Video Conference  
Re: Testimony in STRONG SUPPORT of S.B. 159

Dear Chair Rhoads, Vice-Chair Keohokalole, and Members of the Committees,

Members of AAUW of Hawaii are grateful for this opportunity to testify in support of S.B. 159, which would require any person who is eligible to vote and applies for a motor vehicle driver's license or identification card to be automatically registered to vote unless the applicant affirmatively declines.

Automatic Voter Registration would make our voter registration system more accurate, secure, and cost-effective. Eighteen states and Washington DC already have AVR law; twelve states and Washington DC have already implemented AVR.<sup>1</sup>

The American Association of University Women (AAUW) of Hawaii is a state-wide organization made up of six branches (Hilo, Honolulu, Kauai, Kona, Maui, and Windward Oahu) and over 3800 members and supporters statewide. As advocates for gender equity, AAUW of Hawaii promotes the economic, social, and physical well-being of all persons.

Please pass this important bill to modernize our voting system. Mahalo.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Younghee Overly".

Younghee Overly  
Public Policy Chair, AAUW of Hawaii  
publicpolicy-hi@aauw.net

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ncsl.org/research/elections-and-campaigns/automatic-voter-registration.aspx>





AMERICANS FOR DEMOCRATIC ACTION

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OFFICERS	DIRECTORS			MAILING ADDRESS
John Bickel, President	Melodie Aduja	John Miller	Bill South	P.O. Box 23404
Alan Burdick, Vice President	Juliet Begley	Jenny Nomura	Zahava Zaidoff	Honolulu
Dave Nagajji, Treasurer	Stephanie Fitzpatrick	Stephen O'Harrow		Hawaii 96823
Doug Pyle, Secretary	Jan Lubin	Lyn Pyle		

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February 16, 2021

TO: Chair Rhoads and members of JDC Committee

RE: SB 159 Relating to Voting

Support for hearing on Feb. 19

Americans for Democratic Action is an organization founded in the 1950s by leading supporters of the New Deal and led by Patsy Mink in the 1970s. We are devoted to the promotion of progressive public policies.

We support SB 159 as it would automatically register for voting when one gets a driver's license. These motor voter laws have helped to increase voter registration and therefore voter turnout. Critics have correctly pointed out people even with registration need a reason to vote. Yet the classic book on the topic is Who Votes by Ray Wolfinger. He argues easier registration laws can account for up to a 9 percentage point increase in voting over more restrictive states.

Thank you for your favorable consideration.

Sincerely,

John Bickel, President





Young Progressives Demanding Action  
P.O. Box 11105  
Honolulu, HI 96828

February 16, 2021

**TO: SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY**  
**RE: Testimony in support of SB159**

Dear Senators,

Young Progressives Demanding Action (YPDA) advocates for public policies that reflect the values of young people throughout the State of Hawai'i. One of those values is that an open democracy is a necessary component to ensuring a healthy society that is free of oppression.

Too often, the economic and social realities of life make participating in the democratic and civic processes unnecessarily burdensome for average citizens. Between working multiple jobs, studying to earn a degree to help us get ahead, taking care of our families—both keiki and aging kupuna—and allowing for the necessary level of social interactions we need to stay connected with our communities, young people in particular find it challenging to participate.

But recent improvements to our democratic system, including the option to testify here via zoom, as well as the state's highly successful vote by mail program have brought democracy a little closer to all of us. Democracy is not something that is ever complete—it is something we must work at and actively engage and participate in at every possible level of input if we hope to keep at bay the forces of fascism that prey on apathy and ignorance.

Passing Automatic Voter Registration (AVR) is the logical next step in strengthening our democracy through increased participation.

While AVR won't eliminate voter apathy—that will require the hard work of organizing—it will eliminate one barrier to participation. It's a quick and easy step that the state can take this year that will have dramatic results. How do we know? Because in other jurisdictions, implementation of Automatic Voter Registration policies have made huge differences in participation rates. One early-adopting jurisdiction (Oregon), now has a 90 percent registration

rate, and blew the rest of the country out of the water for voter participation in the 2018 midterm elections—68 percent compared to the national average of 49 percent. (Read more: <https://www.sightline.org/2018/12/13/voter-turnout-oregon-tops-charts-2018-midterms>).

Oregon also demonstrated that Automatic Voter Registration increases the diversity of voters too by enfranchising the very demographic groups that have the most difficulty finding time in their busy days to participate in the process: young people, struggling working class families, minorities—all of whom need to have an electoral voice and a seat at the policy table if we are to develop well-rounded, inclusive solutions to our problems that have genuine community buy-in.

If we are serious when we say that we value democracy, then let us show that we are willing to take action to live up to are values. Let us demonstrate that we mean what we say when we insist that a healthy democracy is the only practical defense against fascism. To live up to that value, we must make sure that we provide access to democracy for groups who struggle to find time to engage with the process. We lose out as a society when potential solutions to our problems are not heard. We lose out as a society when simple technical barriers keep people from participating.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Will Caron  
Board President & Secretary (2020–21)  
action@ypdahawaii.org



## SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

February 19, 2021 9:30 AM

In **SUPPORT of SB159**: Relating to Voting

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Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Keohokalole, and members of the committee,

On behalf of our 27,000 members and supporters, the Sierra Club of Hawai'i **supports SB159** to enact automatic voter registration.

The Sierra Club of Hawai'i is committed to ensuring a fair, open, and transparent democratic process. We encourage our members and supporters to actively protect their right to vote, have their voices heard in government, and engage in the legislative process. Automatic voter registration would make these efforts just that much easier for many Hawai'i residents. By making registration automatic whenever someone gets a driver's license or updates their address at the DMV, voters are more likely to be engaged and ready to participate in our electoral process. We welcome that—and so should our lawmakers.

Automatic voter registration is the logical next step in modernizing our elections by eliminating needless paperwork. It has been estimated that paper registration costs 30 times more than AVR. The possibility of human error in transcribing voter information from paper forms will be reduced and the state could save the nearly \$600,000 it spent in 2016 alone in processing paper forms. Furthermore, Hawai'i has had the lowest voter turnout in the U.S. for the last twenty years. AVR will not only simplify the process to register to vote, but is likely to save us money and result in increased turnout on Election Day.

Automatic voter registration has already been approved in 23 other states and is a common sense solution for Hawai'i. AVR will strengthen our democracy, increase the security of our elections, and is simply the most cost effective, efficient, and modern system available.

Thank you very much for this opportunity to provide testimony in **support of SB159**.

**SB-159**

Submitted on: 2/16/2021 3:50:41 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/19/2021 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Pride at Work - Hawaii	Testifying for Pride @ Work - Hawaii	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Senators,

Pride at Work - Hawai'i, the state-wide chapter of Pride At Work (a constituency group of the national AFL-CIO) and an affiliate of the Hawai'i State AFL-CIO, fully supports Senate Bill 159.

Mahalo nui loa,

Pride at Work - Hawai'i



## HIPHI Board

Michael  
Robinson, MBA, MA  
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Hawaii Pacific Health

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Kamehameha Schools

Keawe'aimoku  
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Native Hawaiian Health

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Medicine, Department of  
Pediatrics

Rachel Novotny,  
PhD, RDN, LD  
University of Hawaii at Manoa,  
College of Tropical Agriculture  
and Human Resources

Garret Sugai  
Kaiser Permanente

Date: February 16, 2021

To: Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair  
Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Vice Chair  
Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee

Re: Support for SB 159, Relating to Voting

Hrg: February 19, 2021 at 9:30 AM via Videoconference

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The Hawai'i Public Health Institute<sup>i</sup> is in **Support of SB 159**, which would automatically register any person who is eligible to vote by default when they apply for a state driver's license or state ID.

This measure, also known as Automatic Voter Registration (AVR), will help to modernize Hawaii's elections process and complement the new "Vote by Mail" law. With AVR, the information of eligible voters that do not opt out are transferred electronically and automatically from the Department of Motor Vehicles to the State Office of Elections. This system is efficient, saves money, and keeps the voter rolls up to date.

HIPHI supports increasing civic engagement and believes AVR will reduce barriers to participation in the democratic process. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Jessica Yamauchi'.

Jessica Yamauchi, MA  
Executive Director

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<sup>i</sup> Hawai'i Public Health Institute is a hub for building healthy communities, providing issue-based advocacy, education, and technical assistance through partnerships with government, academia, foundations, business, and community-based organizations.

**SB-159**

Submitted on: 2/17/2021 10:14:33 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/19/2021 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
David Bruce Leonard	Testifying for Earth Medicine Institute	Support	No

Comments:

Please support SB159 to automatically register citizens of Hawai'i to vote. Thank you.



**HAWAII GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION**  
AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO

**RANDY PERREIRA**, Executive Director • Tel: 808.543.0011 • Fax: 808.528.0922

The Thirty-First Legislature, State of Hawaii  
The Senate  
Committee on Judiciary

Testimony by  
Hawaii Government Employees Association

February 19, 2021

S.B. 159 – RELATING TO VOTING

The Hawaii Government Employees Association, AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO supports the purpose and intent of S.B. 159 which requires any person who is eligible to vote and applies for a motor vehicle driver's license or identification card to be automatically registered to vote unless the applicant affirmatively declines.

The right to vote is the foundation of our democracy and essential to protect all other rights, therefore we must ensure that the voting process is easy to understand and participate in. Given Hawaii's infamously low voter turnout, the Legislature has taken appropriate steps to make it easier for residents to vote, which include implementing online voter registration in 2015, phasing in same-day registration in 2016, and establishing an all-mail election in 2019. The next logical step to improve and increase access to voting is to implement automatic voter registration, as many other states have done. Automatic voter registration reduces the time and effort it takes to register, ensures current addresses are on file, and reduces the overall costs to the state.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of S.B. 159.

Respectfully submitted,

Randy Perreira  
Executive Director



# COMMUNITY ALLIANCE ON PRISONS

P.O. Box 37158, Honolulu, HI 96837-0158

Phone/E-Mail: (808) 927-1214 / [kat.caphi@gmail.com](mailto:kat.caphi@gmail.com)



## COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair

Senator Gil Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair

Friday, February 19, 2021

10:00 AM

## SUPPORT FOR SB 159 - AUTOMATIC VOTER REGISTRATION

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Members of the Committee!

My name is Kat Brady and I am the Coordinator of Community Alliance on Prisons, a community initiative promoting smart justice policies in Hawai`i for more than two decades. This testimony is respectfully offered on behalf of the more than 4,100 Hawai`i individuals living behind bars or under the "care and custody" of the Department of Public Safety on any given day. We are always mindful that 1,000 of Hawai`i's imprisoned people are serving their sentences abroad, thousands of miles away from their loved ones, their homes and, for the disproportionate number of incarcerated Kanaka Maoli, far, far from their ancestral land.

Community Alliance on Prisons supports this automatic voter registration (AVR) because it creates a more efficient system by electronically transmitting voter registration information directly to election officials - unless a citizen decides to exercise the Opt Out option.

We support the safeguards the system has that protect non-citizens from erroneous registration and protects voters in the address confidentiality program. It also keeps the voter roles updated, unless the person opts out.

AVR has been estimated to save approximately \$1 million statewide in each election cycle by eliminating paper-based registrations and decreasing undeliverable mail related to registration issues. Given the budget crisis facing the state as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, cost-saving from AVR is an important factor to consider.

A vibrant democracy demands participation. We encourage good public policy and governance by promoting equitable access to participation in civic actions that affect each and every one of us.

Please pass this important measure. Hawai`i's 2020 election was mostly successful and we can do even better! Mahalo for this opportunity to participate in this discussion!



Corey Rosenlee  
President  
Osa Tui, Jr.  
Vice President  
Logan Okita  
Secretary-Treasurer  
Wilbert Holck  
Executive Director

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON  
JUDICIARY

RE: SB 159 - RELATING TO VOTING

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2021

COREY ROSENLEE, PRESIDENT  
HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Chair Rhoads and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii State Teachers Association **supports SB 159**, relating to voting. This bill requires any person who is eligible to vote and applies for a motor vehicle driver's license or identification card to be automatically registered to vote unless the applicant affirmatively declines. It allows an applicant to affirmatively decline to have any of the applicant's information electronically transmitted. It also authorizes access to and electronic transmission of databases maintained or operated by the counties or the department of transportation that contains driver's license or identification card information to election officials and the online voter registration system.

Automatic Voter Registration (AVR) will modernize our voter registration system to make it more accurate and secure. It will make our voter rolls more accurate and secure by helping to keep them updated. With our vote by mail system enhanced by automatic voter registration, ballots will then be mailed to people's current, correct addresses. Additionally, names on voters' ballots will match their identification for election security. Automatic voter registration would lessen the number of people who would need to go in-person to a voter service center to register to vote and, thereby, shorten the wait times.

Automatic voter registration is also cost-effective. It has been estimated that it would, save approximately \$1 million statewide in each election cycle by eliminating paper-based registrations and decreasing undeliverable mail related to registration issues. Given the budget crisis facing the state as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, cost-saving from automatic voter registration is not something that we can ignore.

Lastly, automatic voter registration encourages good policy and governance through the promotion of a more inclusive and vibrant society. Automatic voter registration is a vital step to making sure that Hawaii U.S. citizens have access to our democracy, building a stronger democracy, by allowing voters to automatically register to vote when they interact with DMV.

Therefore, Hawaii State Teachers Association asks your committee to **support** this bill.

**SB-159**

Submitted on: 2/18/2021 1:22:14 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/19/2021 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Kristen Alice	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Automatic Voter Registration just makes sense! Please **support** this bill. Mahalo.

**SB-159**

Submitted on: 2/16/2021 3:05:58 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/19/2021 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
tlaloc tokuda	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Please support SB159.

- First, AVR will modernize our voter registration system to make it more accurate and secure. When a person goes to the County of Department of Motor Vehicles and does not “opt-out” of being a registered voter, the person’s information and data are automatically transferred between the County Department of Motor Vehicles and the county elections offices. This does not mean that a U.S. citizen will be “automatically” registered to vote by simply enacting AVR. It will still be necessary for a U.S. citizen to interact with a government official through the DMV—and not decline voter registration—to be registered to vote.
- Two, AVR will make our voter rolls more accurate and secure by helping to keep them updated. With our vote by mail system enhanced by AVR, ballots will then be mailed to people’s current, correct addresses. Additionally, names on voters’ ballots will match their identification for election security. AVR would lessen the number of people who would need to go in-person to a voter service center to register to vote and, thereby, shorten the wait times.
- Three, AVR is cost-effective. AVR has been estimated, according to one evaluation, to save approximately \$1 million statewide in each election cycle by eliminating paper-based registrations and decreasing undeliverable mail related to registration issues. Given the budget crisis facing the state as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, cost-saving from AVR is not something that we can ignore.
- Four, AVR encourages good policy and governance through the promotion of a more inclusive and vibrant society. AVR is a vital step to making sure that Hawaii US citizens have access to our democracy, building a stronger democracy, by allowing voters to automatically register to vote when they interact with DMV.

Please pass SB159 so that AVR will make our democracy stronger and more participatory.'

Mahalo for your consideration,

Tlaloc Tokuda

Kailua Kona HI 96740

1. **S**

**SB-159**

Submitted on: 2/16/2021 4:04:26 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/19/2021 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Edward B Hanel Jr	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Strongly support passage of SB159. Recent events show the danger of misinformation about electoral processes. I support any proposal that contributes to the security of the "ballot box."

Automatic Voting Registration should also increase participation by the general public in the electoral process.

Concur with Common Cause Hawaii comments regarding SB159.

**SB-159**

Submitted on: 2/16/2021 11:14:57 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/19/2021 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Patricia Bilyk	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Senator Rhoads and Members of the Judiciary Committee

RE: SB 159 Relating to Voting

Date: February 19, 2021 9:30am

I STRONGLY SUPPORT SB 159.

I feel voter registration done at the same time as an individual registers or renews their car registration at the Department of Motor Vehicles is an efficient and effective way to help Hawaii's citizens to accomplish 2 important tasks at once. Also, it is time saving, cost effective, as the AVR Hawai'i Coalition's testimony has so eloquently illustrated, and a safe way to register to vote!

In the USA, 23 states and the District of Columbia feel AVR is good for their citizenry and have enacted laws to conduct business in this way.

I encourage this Committee to pass this bill.

Thank you.

Patricia L Bilyk

2047 Nuuanu Ave Honolulu HI 96817



**SB-159**

Submitted on: 2/16/2021 10:32:20 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/19/2021 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Caroline Kunitake	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Keohokalole and Committee on Judiciary,

Please support SB159.

The time is now to modernize Hawaii's elections.

Automatic Voter Registration is a cost saving measure that will ease access to voter registration.

Given the economic fallout due to the COVID-19 pandemic, I am hopeful that Hawaii will take concrete steps to make voter registration a legislative priority.

Thank you for taking the time to review this issue. I appreciate the opportunity to testify in support of this bill.

Mahalo,

Caroline Kunitake

**SB-159**

Submitted on: 2/16/2021 9:48:09 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/19/2021 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Kenneth R. Conklin, Ph.D.	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

The only people allowed to vote are U.S. citizens.

We should keep it that way.

There is no citizenship requirement for anyone to apply for or receive a Hawaii driver license.

If you allow someone to become a registered voter merely because they have applied for a driver license, you WILL be allowing people to become registered voters despite the fact that they are not citizens.

Stop this nonsense!

Anyone who wants to become a registered voter should be required to provide proof of citizenship, such as a birth certificate or documents proving citizenship through naturalization. Furthermore, voter registration should require a voluntary affirmative action; it should not be merely an accident that happens by default due to failure of someone to opt out.

**SB-159**

Submitted on: 2/16/2021 4:15:24 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/19/2021 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Dyson Chee	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB159.

**SB-159**

Submitted on: 2/16/2021 4:26:20 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/19/2021 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
chelsea pang	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

voter registration must be easier to enhance civil engagement and better self-governance

**SB-159**

Submitted on: 2/16/2021 5:55:09 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/19/2021 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Christy MacPherson	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am in strong support of SB159. We need to make it as seamless as possible for our citizens to have a voice and participate in our democracy!

**SB-159**

Submitted on: 2/16/2021 6:23:56 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/19/2021 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Nancy Davlantes	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

- One, AVR will modernize our voter registration system to make it more accurate and secure by helping to keep the system updated. Additionally, names on voters' ballots will match their identification for election security. AVR would lessen the number of people who would need to go in-person to a voter service center to register to vote and, thereby, shorten the wait times.
- Two, AVR has been estimated, according to one evaluation, to save approximately \$1 million statewide in each election cycle by eliminating paper-based registrations and decreasing undeliverable mail related to registration issues. Given the budget crisis facing the state as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, cost-saving from AVR is not something that we can ignore.
- Three, AVR encourages good policy and governance through the promotion of a more inclusive and vibrant society.

**SB-159**

Submitted on: 2/16/2021 10:02:16 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/19/2021 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
John	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Chair and Committee Members

In this legislative session, we are presented with an idea of such importance and of such non-partisan good sense, that only simple inertia could possibly prevent its passage. And, it comes at a time when common cause is dearly needed as we rebound from a recent insurrection at our nation's Capitol and challenges to the very foundation of our democracy.

That idea is Automatic Voter Registration (AVR), already passed by 23 states and the District of Columbia. The idea is as simple as it is smart: The Department of Motor Vehicles would electronically submit to election officials, updated information for voter registration of US citizens whenever citizens apply for, or renew their driver's license or State ID. Applicants can choose to opt out and not have their information transmitted if they have no desire to exercise their right to vote. This simple procedure would yield an estimated cost savings to the state of more than a million dollars per election cycle. No small matter when the state is crying poverty at every turn and looking for savings.

The state must make voting accessible to all, wherever they live, regardless of income. As the late Congressman, John Lewis famously said, "The vote is precious. It is the most powerful non-violent tool we have in a democratic society, and we must use it." Clearly, the moment has come when we need to rededicate ourselves to building trust in government, and that starts with making the vote accessible to all. Living in a rural area without easy access to broadband; struggling to make ends meet; being stressed for time. All of these are factors that inhibit voter engagement.

We have seen too many pernicious efforts to suppress the vote. Making AVR a reality in Hawaii is an idea so worthy that only inertia could prevent its passage. Please pass AVR in Hawaii.

Thank you.

John Webster

**SB-159**

Submitted on: 2/16/2021 10:27:10 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/19/2021 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Dawn Morais Webster Ph.D.	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Chair Rhoads,

Like many others who are concerned about the state of our beleaguered democracy, I appreciate your long-standing commitment to policies that encourage greater civic engagement and in particular to making Automatic Voter Registration a reality in Hawaii. I am grateful that you have called for AVR for about a dozen years now. We appear finally to be on the cusp of enacting it into law.

Today, I am very encouraged that you, Vice Chair Keohokalole, and the members of this Committee are considering SB 159 that holds the promise of making democracy work for everyone. Income level, location, and the stresses of daily living should not keep people from participating in the voting process. This bill helps ensure that voting is accessible to all by making voter registration and updates something that happens with very little extra effort when visiting the DMV. Yet it preserves the freedom of people to opt out as well. Especially after the success of Vote By Mail statewide, this measure--which could save an estimated million dollars per election cycle--will ensure greater accuracy in voter addresses and minimize wasted labor and printing costs. The spectacle of the last few weeks in Washington D.C. should make us all more mindful of the need to do all we can to protect the right to vote and ensure accessibility for all. This bill will do that. Thank you for giving SB159 your serious consideration. Please move it out of this committee with your strong support. Mahalo nui.



**SB-159**

Submitted on: 2/16/2021 11:53:49 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/19/2021 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Raymond Catania	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha,

I fully support SB159.

Mahalo,

Raymond A.V.Catania may11nineteen71@gmail.com 4215 Kole Place Lihue 96766

**SB-159**

Submitted on: 2/17/2021 5:13:13 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/19/2021 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Barbara Best	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

This bill will modernize voter registration, making it more accurate, secure, and cost-effective, inclusive building a stronger democracy.

Mahalo for drafting this bill and passing it and allowing citizen testimony

**SB-159**

Submitted on: 2/17/2021 6:34:12 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/19/2021 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
David Anderson	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Automatic Voter Registration will modernize our voter registration system to make it more accurate and secure. When a person goes to the County of Department of Motor Vehicles and does not “opt-out” of being a registered voter, the person’s information and data are automatically transferred between the County Department of Motor Vehicles and the county elections offices. This does not mean that a U.S. citizen will be “automatically” registered to vote by simply enacting AVR. It will still be necessary for a U.S. citizen to interact with a government official through the DMV—and not decline voter registration—to be registered to vote.

So, AVR will make our voter rolls more accurate and secure by helping to keep them updated. With our vote by mail system enhanced by AVR, ballots will then be mailed to people’s current, correct addresses. Additionally, names on voters’ ballots will match their identification for election security. AVR would lessen the number of people who would need to go in-person to a voter service center to register to vote and, thereby, shorten the wait times.

AVR is also cost-effective, having been estimated, according to one evaluation, to save approximately \$1 million statewide in each election cycle by eliminating paper-based registrations and decreasing undeliverable mail related to registration issues. Given the budget crisis facing the state as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, cost-saving from AVR is not something that we can ignore.

AVR encourages good policy and governance through the promotion of a more inclusive and vibrant society. AVR is a vital step to making sure that Hawaii US citizens have access to our democracy, building a stronger democracy, by allowing voters to automatically register to vote when they interact with DMV.

**SB-159**

Submitted on: 2/17/2021 7:04:42 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/19/2021 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Lynn Robinson-Onderko	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Committee Members,

I am writing in strong support for SB159. Making voter registration automatic is another great step to increase voter access and participation.

Mahalo nui,

Lynn Robinson-Onderko. Ewa Beach

**SB-159**

Submitted on: 2/17/2021 9:09:47 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/19/2021 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Shay Chan Hodges	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support SB159. Automatic Voter Registration will modernize our voter registration system to make it more accurate and secure. When a person goes to the County of Department of Motor Vehicles and does not “opt-out” of being a registered voter, the person’s information and data are automatically transferred between the County Department of Motor Vehicles and the county elections offices. This does not mean that a U.S. citizen will be “automatically” registered to vote by simply enacting AVR. It will still be necessary for a U.S. citizen to interact with a government official through the DMV—and not decline voter registration—to be registered to vote.

Thus, AVR will make our voter rolls more accurate and secure by helping to keep them updated. With our vote by mail system enhanced by AVR, ballots will then be mailed to people’s current, correct addresses. Additionally, names on voters’ ballots will match their identification for election security. AVR would lessen the number of people who would need to go in-person to a voter service center to register to vote and, thereby, shorten the wait times.

AVR is cost-effective. AVR has been estimated, according to one evaluation, to save approximately \$1 million statewide in each election cycle by eliminating paper-based registrations and decreasing undeliverable mail related to registration issues. Given the budget crisis facing the state as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, cost-saving from AVR is not something that we can ignore.

AVR encourages good policy and governance through the promotion of a more inclusive and vibrant society. AVR is a vital step to making sure that Hawaii US citizens have access to our democracy, building a stronger democracy, by allowing voters to automatically register to vote when they interact with DMV.

Mahalo.

Shay Chan Hodges

Haiku, Maui

**SB-159**

Submitted on: 2/17/2021 10:22:31 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/19/2021 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Eliel Starbright	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

AVR is cost-effective. AVR has been estimated, according to one evaluation, to save approximately \$1 million statewide in each election cycle by eliminating paper-based registrations and decreasing undeliverable mail.

**SB-159**

Submitted on: 2/17/2021 10:28:57 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/19/2021 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Katherine Orr	Individual	Support	No

## Comments:

I support Automatic Voter Registration because I think it will streamline our voting system in the following ways: it's cost effective (saves a lot of paperwork); it's more efficient (keeping voter info up to date and secure...less room for errors), and it encourages those who are eligible to vote to do so (by making it easier...less hassel).

**SB-159**

Submitted on: 2/17/2021 10:37:36 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/19/2021 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Scott Garris	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

AVR is a good idea, for the people, and saves the gov money, please pass SB159



**SB-159**

Submitted on: 2/17/2021 11:37:42 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/19/2021 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Lorraine Newman	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha, I fully support this bill. It will save taxpayers money in terms of the cost of running elections, and even more important, it will make it easier for people to register to vote. The bill speaks for itself. Please pass it.

**SB-159**

Submitted on: 2/17/2021 12:10:47 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/19/2021 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Leimomi Khan	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Support SB159 that would require any person who is eligible to vote and applies for a motor vehicle driver's license or identification card to be automatically registered to vote unless the applicant affirmatively declines. Allows an applicant to affirmatively decline to have any of the applicant's information electronically transmitted. Authorizes access to and electronic transmission of databases maintained or operated by the counties or the department of transportation that contains driver's license or identification card information to election officials and the online voter registration system.

As an advocate for empowering the voices of Hawaii's citizens, I support this bill because it will help to increase voter enrollment and participation.

I note that SB282 and HB349 are also under consideration by the legislature, but have not yet been scheduled for hearing. They seem to be more comprehensive in that they include driver's license, provisional license, instruction permit, identification card; and affirmative opt-out. These bills mirror SB 2005, SD1 HD1 that saw passage in 2020 in hearings all the way through a second reading.

I appreciate that legislators are looking for solutions to Hawaii's low voter registration and turnout. After voter registration is improved, we then need to give emphasis to voter education so that citizens can make informed choices.

**SB-159**

Submitted on: 2/17/2021 12:45:27 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/19/2021 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Jane E Arnold	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Please support SB159. Hawaii's voter turnout is usually very low, and this bill would encourage more people to vote.

**SB-159**

Submitted on: 2/17/2021 2:43:20 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/19/2021 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Nanea Lo	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Hello,

My name is Nanea Lo and I'm a lifelong resident in Hawai'i.

I'm writing in support of ZSB159. We have the opportunity to make our elections here in Hawaii more inclusive, accurate, and secure with one simple reform: Automatic Voter Registration (AVR).

Here's how it works: when any eligible voter visits their DMV, their information is immediately verified and then the voter registration information is electronically transmitted to election officials to be securely added to the voter rolls unless they opt out.

AVR would make our election system much safer, less expensive, and more accessible. It's a much-needed improvement over our cumbersome, outdated voter registration process. Plus, with Hawaii's vote-by-mail system, AVR will help to ensure that ballots are mailed to voters current, correct addresses.

There's no reason to delay any longer. It's time to bring this simple, groundbreaking solution to Hawai'i.

Please support this bill.

me ke aloha 'Ä• ina,

Nanea Lo

**SB-159**

Submitted on: 2/17/2021 2:51:20 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/19/2021 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
irene kloepfer	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Voting should be easy - automatic voter registration does that. Pass it now. Mahalo.  
Irene kloepfer

**SB-159**

Submitted on: 2/17/2021 3:21:07 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/19/2021 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Barbara L. George	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Why isn't this done already????? SUPPORT!!

**SB-159**

Submitted on: 2/17/2021 3:55:06 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/19/2021 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Michal Fentin Stover	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support Automatic Voter Registration as it will make it easier for more Hawai'i residents to vote.

**SB-159**

Submitted on: 2/17/2021 4:35:38 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/19/2021 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Andrea Quinn	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Honorable Committee Members,

Please support SB159.

Thank you,

Andrea Quinn



**SB-159**

Submitted on: 2/18/2021 8:13:39 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/19/2021 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Erika Johnson	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Honorable Chair Rhoads and Committee Members,

I strongly support Senate Bill 159.

I moved to Hawai'i from Lima, Peru a few years ago and recently became an American citizen. I am so proud that I will be able to vote in the next federal and state elections. Voting is a right and a responsibility of all citizens, and I think voter registration should be more convenient and accessible. In my native country, voter registration is not necessary. Any citizen is able and expected to vote after they reach the age of 18 years old. They just need to keep their addresses updated in the *Documento Nacional de Identidad* (National Identity Card) system so that they can vote at an official polling place close to where they live; and because of this, voter turnout is over 80%.

For the last two U.S. federal elections, I was surprised to learn how low the voter turnout was in Hawai'i—about 51% for the Primary and nearly 70% for the General in 2020. In 2016 that was about 35% for the Primary and more than 58% for the General. It appears that the higher turnout in the recent election may have been linked to the added convenience of registered voters receiving a mail-in ballot automatically at their home addresses. This simple convenience contributed to a significant increase in civic engagement, something that is very good for our democracy.

Since most adults, even in the U.S., need a government identification card, providing the option to register to vote when an eligible citizen applies for, or updates a Hawai'i driver's license or state identification card makes very good sense. There is no reason not to include an option for all eligible voters to register to vote, or make the voter registration automatic, unless the person decides to opt-out of registering to vote. Having implemented Vote by Mail so successfully, it is time to take the next step of enacting automatic voter registration.

I recognize how having the convenience of automatic voter registration will help Hawai'i's citizens participate in the political process by reducing barriers to access. Voting is the most basic right of all citizens. Anything we can do to make voting more accessible will only contribute to more citizens' voices being heard. It is time for Hawai'i to join the growing number of states nationwide who recognize the efficiency and cost-savings in automatic voter registration and have made it a law. As a new American, I

am one of those aspiring voters who would welcome the convenience of automatic voter registration because I believe it will help strengthen our democracy. I strongly support Senate Bill 159.

Thank you for providing this opportunity for me to testify,

Erika Johnson

**SB-159**

Submitted on: 2/18/2021 8:36:17 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/19/2021 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Larry Meacham	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Testimony SUPPORTING SB 159, Automatic Voter Registration

Thank you to the Chair and the Committee for the opportunity to offer testimony.

In this age of attacks on the legitimacy of our elections, we need to safeguard and enhance everyone's ability to vote. One important tool is Automatic Voter Registration. AVR has several advantages:

-It will modernize voter registration and make it more accurate and secure, by registering everyone who gets their driver's license at the DMV, rather than requiring people to go through an extra procedure to vote, by obtaining their correct address, and by matching their voter and ID information.

-In this time of budget austerity, it saves money versus paper registration and reduces undeliverable mail.

-AVR is more inclusive by increasing access to voting.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

**SB-159**

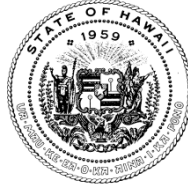
Submitted on: 2/18/2021 8:52:21 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/19/2021 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Linda Morgan	Individual	Support	No

## Comments:

I support SB159 as a method to increase voter registration, thus voter participation. Our state has poor voter turnout. Having automatic registration will increase participation in elections and provide more accurate voter information. Please vote for SB159.



**TESTIMONY BY:**

JADE T. BUTAY  
DIRECTOR

Deputy Directors  
LYNN A.S. ARAKI-REGAN  
DEREK J. CHOW  
ROSS M. HIGASHI  
EDWIN H. SNIFFEN

**LATE**

**STATE OF HAWAII**  
**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**  
869 PUNCHBOWL STREET  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-5097

February 19, 2021  
9:30 A.M.  
State Capitol, Teleconference

**S.B. 159**  
**RELATING TO VOTING**

Senate Committee on Judiciary

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The Department of Transportation (DOT) **supports** S.B. 159 with the following amendments.

In Section 1, Page 2, 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph, the last sentence on Line 13 thru 15, the paragraph should be amended to delete the last sentence of the paragraph because the previous sentence provides for the public's privacy protection that the public would expect should a person decline to be registered to vote. The paragraph should be amended as follows:

“ The examiner of drivers shall not transmit any information necessary to register an applicant as a voter nor change any voter registration information, if the applicant affirmatively declines to be registered to vote. ~~[The examiner of drivers shall not electronically transmit any information that the applicant affirmatively declines to be transmitted.]~~”

The word “directly” should be removed from subsection (d) on Page 3, line 12 of the bill, because election officials do not have direct access to the desired data; rather, they have indirect access via a web service.

In Section 2, Page 5 of new Section 286-A (b), 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph, the last sentence on Line 6 thru 8, the paragraph should be amended to delete the last sentence of the paragraph because the previous sentence provides for the public's privacy protection that the public would expect should a person decline to be registered to vote. The paragraph should be amended as follows:

“ The examiner of drivers shall not transmit any information necessary to register a qualified applicant as a voter if the qualified applicant affirmatively declines to be registered to vote. ~~[The examiner of drivers shall not electronically transmit any information that the qualified applicant affirmatively declines to be transmitted.]~~”

In Section 3, Page 6 of new Section 286-B (b), 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph, the last sentence on Line 19 thru 21, the paragraph should be amended to delete the last sentence of the paragraph because the previous sentence provides for the public's privacy protection that the public would expect should a person decline to be registered to vote. The paragraph should be amended as follows:

“ The examiner of drivers shall not transmit any information necessary to register a qualified applicant as a voter if the qualified applicant affirmatively declines to be registered to vote. [~~The examiner of drivers shall not electronically transmit any information that the qualified applicant affirmatively declines to be transmitted.~~]

A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the Department of Transportation and Office of Elections was signed by both parties in August 2017. Should there be a need to modify the voter registration form or computer systems, the counties, DOT and the Office of Elections will continue to work collaboratively as they have already demonstrated with the current application forms and MOA to ensure the driver's license and civil identification card application forms reflect all future state and federally legislated requirements.

The effective date of the act should be dependent on when the State Office of Elections and county computer programming can be completed to allow for the electronic transmittal of data. Other provisions of the bill are currently being performed and part of the driver's license and state identification card application.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

**LATE**

**SB-159**

Submitted on: 2/18/2021 11:06:58 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/19/2021 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
amy agbayani	Testifying for Hawai'i Friends of Civil Rights	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha.

Please accept my testimony in strong support of SB159

FYI I have included my OpEd Star Advertiser 03/30/2020 in support of AVR.

Amy Agbayani,

Agbayani,Co- Chair of Hawai'i Friends of Civil Rights

These are tough times. And tough times demand we do more. We must truly take seriously our responsibilities to take care of ourselves, our families and our community during the COVID 19 local and global crisis. And part of our personal and civic responsibility is to keep us functioning well as a democracy. I count making voting accessible to all communities-- regardless of ethnicity or geography or economic standing-- a critical part of the essential housekeeping that ensures the health of our democracy. That is why I am so pleased that Hawai'i has moved to Vote By Mail this year statewide. It is a smart move that saves time and money and makes it possible for everyone who wants to make their voice heard to do so. But Vote By Mail will work as it should only if our voter rolls are current and updated.

Automatic Voter Registration(AVR) is the next logical step to ensure that we, the people, are not inadvertently disenfranchised. If we enact AVR, the updated information we provide the Division of Motor Vehicles will be automatically transmitted to the Office of Elections— unless we decline to allow them to do so. All of us, no matter how busy, do make sure we renew our driving license or get a state ID. It is important to note that AVR does not compel people to vote. It simply ensures a state of readiness so that when elections are upon us, people who may have been too busy to pay attention to the status of their voter registration are in fact ready to vote.

As an educator and civil rights advocate for women, lgbt, persons with disabilities, immigrants and underrepresented ethnic groups, I support equality and inclusion. I want to remove barriers to voter participation. It is not enough to lament the poor voter turnout in Hawai'i. It is also necessary to acknowledge that when people are rushing between two or three low wage jobs, taking care of their family and putting food on the table, updating their voter registration is a task that can easily fall by the wayside. AVR is one answer to that challenge: it will make it easier for voters to update their voter registration and vote.

As we are addressing the COVID 19 crisis and everyday tasks, let's also take the opportunity to make government work better for people. I urge lawmakers to pass AVR this year. Any policy that improves community engagement and saves the state and individuals time and money is something that we should seize and implement without delay. I hope lawmakers don't take their eye off the ball relative to this smart measure to make us a more vibrant democracy. AVR can make voting just a little bit less stressful and make our state a lot more inclusive. That is something we should all welcome.



DATE: Friday, February 19, 2021

TIME: 9:30 a.m.

PLACE: Via Videoconference

Testimony in support of SB 159, Relating to Voting

Aloha,

Save Medicaid Hawaii supports automatic voter registration, which provides for the voter registration through the Department of Motor Vehicles of any U.S. citizen who is eligible to vote. Through this process, voters automatically register to vote when they apply for a new or renewal motor vehicle driver's license, provisional license, instruction permit, or a new, renewal, or duplicate identification unless they decline registration.

We strongly urge our legislators to support this bill to promote widespread registration and strengthen our democracy

*Doris Segal Matsunaga*

On behalf of Save Medicaid Hawaii

**LATE**

**SB-159**

Submitted on: 2/18/2021 9:30:58 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/19/2021 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
laurie boyle	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Yes sb159 auto voter with dmv

**LATE**

**SB-159**

Submitted on: 2/18/2021 7:03:32 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/19/2021 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Brodie Lockard	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I strongly support SB159. AVR is long past due.

Brodie Lockard  
Common Cause Hawaii Board

**LATE**

**SB-159**

Submitted on: 2/19/2021 9:40:57 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/19/2021 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Becky Gardner	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I strongly support this bill. I especially love the approach that voters "opt-out" of the process - reinforcing an expectation that the resident/driver wants to vote - and that government is willing to help them do that. Otherwise, people are so busy with their lives and surviving a pandemic, the notion of registering to vote defaults as a low priority. Let's make it easy for everyone to engage.