

STATE OF HAWAII OFFICE OF ELECTIONS 802 LEHUA AVENUE PEARL CITY, HAWAII 96782 www.hawaii.gov/elections

SCOTT T. NAGO CHIEF ELECTION OFFICER

TESTIMONY OF THE

CHIEF ELECTION OFFICER, OFFICE OF ELECTIONS

TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

ON HOUSE BILL NO. 1027, HD 1

RELATING TO ELECTIONS

February 25, 2013

Chair Luke and members of the House Committee on Finance, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill No. 1027, HD 1. The purpose of this bill is to prohibit a voter's employer or agent of the employer, agent of the voter's union, or a candidate on the ballot, from assisting a voter with completing the voter's ballot. Additionally, the bill requires absentee mail voters to affirm by signature on the return envelope that the ballot was completed in secrecy and without influence by others. Finally, the bill requires information regarding election fraud, voter fraud, and related penalties to be included with the absentee ballot.

The Office of Elections provides the following comments for the committee's consideration.

The Voter Assistance Provision of the Voting Rights Act provides that "[a]ny voter who requires assistance to vote by reason of blindness, disability, or inability to read or write may be given assistance by a person of the voter's choice, other than the voter's employer or agent of that employer or officer or agent of the voter's union." 42 USC § 1973aa-6. We interpret this statute to apply to the act of voting, including voting an absentee ballot.

The state counterpart to this federal provision is HRS § 11-139 which prohibits the same conduct in the polling place for a voter's employer or agent of that employer or agent of the voter's union. The current draft adds the category of candidates to the list of individuals who cannot provide assistance to the voter and provides that those who violate the statute will be deemed guilty of an election fraud, punishable by fine and/or imprisonment. Testimony for HB 1027, HD 1 February 25, 2013 Page 2

We would defer to the Department of the Attorney General as to whether the exclusion of candidates providing assistance conflicts with federal law because under federal law voters are allowed to receive assistance from anyone except their employer or agent of that employer or officer or agent of the voter's union.

On the issue of the bill's requirement that "materials summarizing the provisions in sections 19-3, 19-3.5, 19-4, and 19-6" be provided with the absentee ballot we see possible administrative and financial impacts. Specifically, while "summarizing" provisions of law related to election fraud, voter fraud, and related penalties, does not on its face appear objectionable, the actual implementation may prove problematic based on previous attempts to summarize voter information.

Specifically, the Legislative Reference Bureau (LRB) previously used to draft voter educational materials in connection with proposed constitutional amendments and provide them to the Office of Elections for dissemination to public. These materials included a summary, factsheet and digest, which would include the purpose and intent of the proposed constitutional amendment, along with argument for and against ratification of the proposed amendment.

Despite the best efforts of LRB, there were people who claimed that these informational materials were not objective enough or that overall they tended to support or oppose an amendment, and as such ratification of an amendment should be reversed. *Watland v. Lingle*, 104 Hawai'i 128 (2004) (The Hawaii Supreme Court found that the State had not published the text of a proposed constitutional amendment in 2002 as required by the Hawaii State Constitution, and as such left unaddressed Plaintiffs' second contention that LRB's materials were incorrect and should serve as a separate basis to reverse the ratification of a proposed amendment.) Ultimately, in 2003, the requirement for the creation of such documents was removed from the law and replaced merely by a statutory requirement simply restating that the Legislature publish the text of proposed constitutional amendments in accordance with Article XVII, Section 3 of the Hawaii State Constitution. Act 8, SLH 2003.

The various County Clerk's offices, who are statutorily responsible for absentee voting, may experience similar difficulties in drafting a summary of these laws that will not be objected to. For example, a criminal defendant might argue that they detrimentally relied upon the summary, when they acted in a manner that was a technical violation of the law, but which was not technically inconsistent with the summary. If this is a significant issue, as it was for the LRB summaries, then similarly, it might be less controversial to simply provide the text Testimony for HB 1027, HD 1 February 25, 2013 Page 3

of the statutes, or the bill should be amended to provide the exact language to be provided with the absentee ballot.

In regard to financial impact for the counties, one needs to factor in the cost of the printing of the summary, or the text of HRS §§ 19-3, 19-3.5, 19-4, and 19-6 for inclusion with each absentee mail ballot. These costs would include the cost of copying the summary or statutes and also postage, to the extent the additional weight of the absentee mail ballots requires it. Additionally, there would be the cost of translation services, to translate the materials as required by the Voting Rights Act into the covered minority language groups for those counties designated by the U.S. Census Bureau finds significant minority language groups. 42 USC 1973aa-1a. Those languages are currently Chinese, llocano, and Japanese.

The County of Maui is required to translate voting materials into Ilocano, while the City and County of Honolulu is required to be translated into Chinese, Ilocano, and Japanese.

Should this bill become law, this office will consult with the legal counsel to develop language that would best meet the goals and challenges posed by the bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill No. 1027, HD 1.



46-063 Emepela Pl. #U101 Kaneohe, HI 96744 · (808) 679-7454 · Kris Coffield · Co-founder/Legislative Director

TESTIMONY FOR HOUSE BILL 1027, HOUSE DRAFT 1, Relating to Elections

House Committee on Finance Hon. Sylvia Luke, Chair Hon. Scott Y. Nishimoto, Vice Chair Hon. Aaron Ling Johanson, Vice Chair

Monday, February 25, 2013, 1:30 PM State Capitol, Conference Room 308

Honorable Chair Luke and committee members:

I am Kris Coffield, representing the IMUAlliance, a nonpartisan political advocacy organization that currently boasts over 150 local members. On behalf of our members, we offer this testimony <u>in support of HB 1027</u>, relating to elections.

Lapses in election law produce unforeseen consequences. This bill seeks to rectify problems that may stem from inappropriate handling of ballots by candidates, professional employers, agents of such employers, and agents of unions. Hypothetically, an eager or unscrupulous candidate could resort to mishandling a ballot in order to ensure his or her electoral success, offering to assist in the completion of ballots or, in the case of absentee votes, confiscating completed ballots and mailing them in on his or her own. While we believe that such incidents, if occurring, are extremely rare, we nonetheless feel that safeguarding against such abuses is one of the primary functions of the State Legislature, which must be vigilant in protecting the integrity of our state's system of representative government. We note that elderly or disabled voters would be particularly susceptible to manipulation or intimidation and, in turn, inappropriate or illegitimate ballot assistance. Thus, this measure can be said to protect the enfranchisement of the state's most vulnerable voters, guaranteeing that their perspectives, experiences, and interests are accurately voiced in electoral processes.

That said, we urge the committee to consider adding agents of candidate committees, noncandidate committees, and ballot issue committees to the list of organizations prohibited from inappropriately assisting with or mishandling a voter ballot or absentee ballot. Noncandidate committees include so-called "independent expenditure committees," more commonly known as "Super PACs," which are gaining undue influence on elections at both the local and federal levels, thanks to recent Supreme Court decisions like *Citizens United*. Ballot issue committees, on the other hand, include electioneering groups formed to target specific

ballot questions, such as constitutional amendments. We believe that these groups, along with candidates and candidate committees, should be prevented from inappropriately handling ballots in a manner that may fraudulently influence elections, thereby protecting against a candidate potentially using a third party to commit illicit electoral acts. Accordingly, we suggest that the committee revise page 1, lines 15-18 to read: "The voter's employer or agent of that employer, agent of the voter's union, a candidate for any office that is listed on that ballot, **agent of a candidate committee**, **agent of a noncandidate committee**, **or agent of a ballot issue committee**, shall not provide assistance." Similarly, page 2, lines 12-15 should be amended to read: "(c) Violation of this section by an employer or agent of **a noncandidate committee**, or **agent of a noncandidate committee**, or **agent of a candidate committee** who violates this section shall constitute election fraud as provided under section 19-3." Additionally, page 4, lines 1-4 should be amended to read: "and that the voter's employer or agent, agent of **a noncandidate committee**, or **agent of a ballot** issue **committee**, agent of a noncandidate committee, or agent of a ballot issue committee who violates this section shall constitute election fraud as provided under section 19-3." Additionally, page 4, lines 1-4 should be amended to read: "and that the voter's employer or agent, agent of **a noncandidate committee**, or **agent of a ballot** issue committee, agent of a noncandidate committee, or agent of a ballot."

Finally, we note that page 8, lines 9-10 mistakenly cite "voter assistance laws of section 11-319," a nonexistent subsection of HRS Chapter 11. This citation should be corrected to read: "voter assistance laws of section 11-139."

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill.

Sincerely, Kris Coffield *Legislative Director* IMUAlliance

DATE: Monday, February 25, 2013

- TO: Rep. Sylvia Luke, Chair Rep. Scott Y. Nishimoto, Vice Chair Rep. Aaron Ling Johanson, Vice Chair House Committee on Finance
- RE: Testimony in SUPPORT of House Bill 1027 House Draft 1, Relating to Elections Hearing on Monday, February 25, 2013 at 1:30 PM in Room 308

Dear Chair Luke, Vice Chair Nishimoto, Vice Chair Johanson, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Robert Donald Peel, MSc and I **support HB1027 HD1**, which was amended and strengthened by the House Committee on Judiciary.

With the Governor's request to move to an all-mail voting system, we must build stronger internal controls to safeguard our democracy. HB1027 HD1 begins to address our historical and very real issues of voter intimidation and voter fraud.

If we are to believe that the election process is worth having, then it is incumbent upon the Legislature to protect that process now.

Thank you for allowing me to testify in SUPPORT of HB1027 HD1.

Sincerely,

Ja Pal

DATE: Monday, February 24, 2013

- TO: Rep. Sylvia Luke, Chair Rep. Scott Y. Nishimoto, Vice Chair Rep. Aaron Ling Johanson, Vice Chair House Committee on Finance
- RE: Testimony in SUPPORT of House Bill 1027 House Draft 1, Relating to Elections Hearing on Monday, February 25, 2013 at 1:30 PM in Room 308

Dear Chair Luke, Vice Chair Nishimoto, Vice Chair Johanson, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Lynn Koseki and I **support HB1027 HD1**, which was amended and strengthened by the House Committee on Judiciary.

With the Governor's request to move to an all-mail voting system, we must build stronger internal controls to safeguard our democracy. HB1027 HD1 begins to address our historical and very real issues of voter intimidation and voter fraud.

If we are to believe that the election process is worth having, then it is incumbent upon the Legislature to protect that process now.

Thank you for allowing me to testify in SUPPORT of HB1027 HD1.

Sincerely, Lynn Koseki

DATE: Monday, February 25, 2013

- TO: Rep. Sylvia Luke, Chair Rep. Scott Y. Nishimoto, Vice Chair Rep. Aaron Ling Johanson, Vice Chair House Committee on Finance
- RE: Testimony in SUPPORT of House Bill 1027 House Draft 1, Relating to Elections Hearing on Monday, February 25, 2013 at 1:30 PM in Room 308

Dear Chair Luke, Vice Chair Nishimoto, Vice Chair Johanson, and Members of the Committee:

I support HB1027 HD1, which was amended and strengthened by the House Committee on Judiciary. I do not believe there will be any significant cost to enacting this legislation and hope your committee realizes the importance of legislation that will strengthen the confidence in our voting/electoral processes.

As a concerned constituent, I also look forward to further legislation that will continue to strengthen our communal confidence in the system as well as open the process more fully to ensure our elections are legitimate in both deed and perception. Anything that addresses voter fraud and intimidation can only serve to strengthen the process.

If we are to believe that the election process is worth having, then it is incumbent upon the Legislature to protect that process now and forever.

Thank you for allowing me to testify in SUPPORT of HB1027 HD1.

Sincerely. John D. Ellis

DATE: Monday, February 24, 2013

- TO: Rep. Sylvia Luke, Chair Rep. Scott Y. Nishimoto, Vice Chair Rep. Aaron Ling Johanson, Vice Chair House Committee on Finance
- RE: Testimony in SUPPORT of House Bill 1027 House Draft 1, Relating to Elections Hearing on Monday, February 25, 2013 at 1:30 PM in Room 308

Dear Chair Luke, Vice Chair Nishimoto, Vice Chair Johanson, and Members of the Committee:

My name is ANNA KOSEKI and I **support HB1027 HD1**, which was amended and strengthened by the House Committee on Judiciary.

With the Governor's request to move to an all-mail voting system, we must build stronger internal controls to safeguard our democracy. HB1027 HD1 begins to address our historical and very real issues of voter intimidation and voter fraud.

If we are to believe that the election process is worth having, then it is incumbent upon the Legislature to protect that process now.

Thank you for allowing me to testify in SUPPORT of HB1027 HD1.

Sincerely, Anna Koseki

DATE: Monday, February 24, 2013

- TO: Rep. Sylvia Luke, Chair Rep. Scott Y. Nishimoto, Vice Chair Rep. Aaron Ling Johanson, Vice Chair House Committee on Finance
- RE: Testimony in SUPPORT of House Bill 1027 House Draft 1, Relating to Elections Hearing on Monday, February 25, 2013 at 1:30 PM in Room 308

Dear Chair Luke, Vice Chair Nishimoto, Vice Chair Johanson, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Jack Hinano Delgado and I **support HB1027 HD1**, which was amended and strengthened by the House Committee on Judiciary.

With the Governor's request to move to an all-mail voting system, we must build stronger internal controls to safeguard our democracy. HB1027 HD1 begins to address our historical and very real issues of voter intimidation and voter fraud.

If we are to believe that the election process is worth having, then it is incumbent upon the Legislature to protect that process now.

Thank you for allowing me to testify in SUPPORT of HB1027 HD1.

Sincerely,

Jack Hinano Delgado

DATE: Monday, February 24, 2013

- TO: Rep. Sylvia Luke, Chair Rep. Scott Y. Nishimoto, Vice Chair Rep. Aaron Ling Johanson, Vice Chair House Committee on Finance
- Testimony in SUPPORT of House Bill 1027 House Draft 1, Relating to Elections RE: Hearing on Monday, February 25, 2013 at 1:30 PM in Room 308

Dear Chair Luke, Vice Chair Nishimoto, Vice Chair Johanson, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Jerald Eubank and I support HB1027 HD1, which was amended and strengthened by the House Committee on Judiciary.

With the Governor's request to move to an all-mail voting system, we must build stronger internal controls to safeguard our democracy. HB1027 HD1 begins to address our historical and very real issues of voter intimidation and voter fraud.

If we are to believe that the election process is worth having, then it is incumbent upon the Legislature to protect that process now.

Thank you for allowing me to testify in SUPPORT of HB1027 HD1.

Sincerely, Jeruld C. Ec

DATE: Monday, February 25, 2013

- TO: Rep. Sylvia Luke, Chair Rep. Scott Y. Nishimoto, Vice Chair Rep. Aaron Ling Johanson, Vice Chair House Committee on Finance
- RE: Testimony in SUPPORT of House Bill 1027 House Draft 1, Relating to Elections Hearing on Monday, February 25, 2013 at 1:30 PM in Room 308

Dear Chair Luke, Vice Chair Nishimoto, Vice Chair Johanson, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Cassidy Cavanah and I **support HB1027 HD1**, which was amended and strengthened by the House Committee on Judiciary.

With the Governor's request to move to an all-mail voting system, we must build stronger internal controls to safeguard our democracy. HB1027 HD1 begins to address our historical and very real issues of voter intimidation and voter fraud.

If we are to believe that the election process is worth having, then it is incumbent upon the Legislature to protect that process now.

Thank you for allowing me to testify in SUPPORT of HB1027 HD1.

Aloha,

Cassidy Cavanah

DATE: Monday, February 25, 2013

- TO: Rep. Sylvia Luke, Chair Rep. Scott Y. Nishimoto, Vice Chair Rep. Aaron Ling Johanson, Vice Chair House Committee on Finance
- RE: Testimony in SUPPORT of House Bill 1027 House Draft 1, Relating to Elections Hearing on Monday, February 25, 2013 at 1:30 PM in Room 308

Dear Chair Luke, Vice Chair Nishimoto, Vice Chair Johanson, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Jacob Miyasato and I **support HB1027 HD1**, which was amended and strengthened by the House Committee on Judiciary.

With the Governor's request to move to an all-mail voting system, we must build stronger internal controls to safeguard our democracy. HB1027 HD1 begins to address our historical and very real issues of voter intimidation and voter fraud.

If we are to believe that the election process is worth having, then it is incumbent upon the Legislature to protect that process now.

Thank you for allowing me to testify in SUPPORT of HB1027 HD1.

Sincerely,

Jacob Miyasato

DATE: Monday, February 24, 2013

- TO: Rep. Sylvia Luke, Chair Rep. Scott Y. Nishimoto, Vice Chair Rep. Aaron Ling Johanson, Vice Chair House Committee on Finance
- RE: Testimony in SUPPORT of House Bill 1027 House Draft 1, Relating to Elections Hearing on Monday, February 25, 2013 at 1:30 PM in Room 308

Dear Chair Luke, Vice Chair Nishimoto, Vice Chair Johanson, and Members of the Committee:

My name Edmund H. Oshiro and I **support HB1027 HD1**, which was amended and strengthened by the House Committee on Judiciary.

With the Governor's request to move to an all-mail voting system, we must build stronger internal controls to safeguard our democracy. HB1027 HD1 begins to address our historical and very real issues of voter intimidation and voter fraud.

If we are to believe that the election process is worth having, then it is incumbent upon the Legislature to protect that process now.

Thank you for allowing me to testify in SUPPORT of HB1027 HD1.

Sincerely,

Edmund H. Oshiro

DATE: Saturday, February 23, 2013

- TO: Rep. Sylvia Luke, Chair Rep. Scott Y. Nishimoto, Vice Chair Rep. Aaron Ling Johanson, Vice Chair House Committee on Finance
- RE: Testimony in SUPPORT of House Bill 1027 House Draft 1, Relating to Elections Hearing on Monday, February 25, 2013 at 1:30 PM in Room 308

Dear Chair Luke, Vice Chair Nishimoto, Vice Chair Johanson, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Beau Rowland and I **support HB1027 HD1**, which was amended and strengthened by the House Committee on Judiciary.

With the Governor's request to move to an all-mail voting system, we must build stronger internal controls to safeguard our democracy. HB1027 HD1 begins to address our historical and very real issues of voter intimidation and voter fraud.

If we are to believe that the election process is worth having, then it is incumbent upon the Legislature to protect that process now.

Thank you for allowing me to testify in SUPPORT of HB1027 HD1.

Sincerely,

Beau Rowland

DATE: Monday, February 24, 2013

- TO: Rep. Sylvia Luke, Chair Rep. Scott Y. Nishimoto, Vice Chair Rep. Aaron Ling Johanson, Vice Chair House Committee on Finance
- RE: Testimony in SUPPORT of House Bill 1027 House Draft 1, Relating to Elections Hearing on Monday, February 25, 2013 at 1:30 PM in Room 308

Dear Chair Luke, Vice Chair Nishimoto, Vice Chair Johanson, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Jeri Velasco and I **support HB1027 HD1**, which was amended and strengthened by the House Committee on Judiciary.

With the Governor's request to move to an all-mail voting system, we must build stronger internal controls to safeguard our democracy. HB1027 HD1 begins to address our historical and very real issues of voter intimidation and voter fraud.

If we are to believe that the election process is worth having, then it is incumbent upon the Legislature to protect that process now.

Thank you for allowing me to testify in SUPPORT of HB1027 HD1.

Sincerely, Jeri Velasco

DATE: Monday, February 24, 2013

- TO: Rep. Sylvia Luke, Chair Rep. Scott Y. Nishimoto, Vice Chair Rep. Aaron Ling Johanson, Vice Chair House Committee on Finance
- RE: Testimony in SUPPORT of House Bill 1027 House Draft 1, Relating to Elections Hearing on Monday, February 25, 2013 at 1:30 PM in Room 308

Dear Chair Luke, Vice Chair Nishimoto, Vice Chair Johanson, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Kevin Velasco and I **support HB1027 HD1**, which was amended and strengthened by the House Committee on Judiciary.

With the Governor's request to move to an all-mail voting system, we must build stronger internal controls to safeguard our democracy. HB1027 HD1 begins to address our historical and very real issues of voter intimidation and voter fraud.

If we are to believe that the election process is worth having, then it is incumbent upon the Legislature to protect that process now.

Thank you for allowing me to testify in SUPPORT of HB1027 HD1.

Sincerely, Kevin Velasco

DATE: Monday, February 25, 2013

- TO: Rep. Sylvia Luke, Chair Rep. Scott Y. Nishimoto, Vice Chair Rep. Aaron Ling Johanson, Vice Chair House Committee on Finance
- RE: Testimony in SUPPORT of House Bill 1027 House Draft 1, Relating to Elections Hearing on Monday, February 25, 2013 at 1:30 PM in Room 308

Dear Chair Luke, Vice Chair Nishimoto, Vice Chair Johanson, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Penny Enomoto, and I **support HB1027 HD1**, which was amended and strengthened by the House Committee on Judiciary.

With the Governor's request to move to an all-mail voting system, we must build stronger internal controls to safeguard our democracy. HB1027 HD1 begins to address our historical and very real issues of voter intimidation and voter fraud.

If we are to believe that the election process is worth having, then it is incumbent upon the Legislature to protect that process now.

Thank you for allowing me to testify in SUPPORT of HB1027 HD1.

Sincerely, Penny Enomoto

FINTestimony

From:	mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent:	Saturday, February 23, 2013 9:46 AM
То:	FINTestimony
Cc:	write.to.kathleenlee@gmail.com
Subject:	Submitted testimony for HB1027 on Feb 25, 2013 13:30PM

HB1027

Submitted on: 2/23/2013 Testimony for FIN on Feb 25, 2013 13:30PM in Conference Room 308

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Kathleen Lee	Individual	Support	No

Comments: DATE: Saturday, February 23, 2013 TO: Rep. Sylvia Luke, Chair Rep. Scott Y. Nishimoto, Vice Chair Rep. Aaron Ling Johanson, Vice Chair House Committee on Finance RE: Testimony in STRONG SUPPORT of House Bill 1027 House Draft 1, Relating to Elections Hearing on Monday, February 25, 2013 at 1:30 PM in Room 308 Dear Chair Luke, Vice Chair Nishimoto, Vice Chair Johanson, and Members of the Committee: My name is Kathleen Lee, and I am in strong support of HB1027 HD1, which was amended and strengthened by the House Committee on Judiciary. With the Governor's request to move to an all-mail voting system, we must build stronger internal controls to safeguard our democracy. HB1027 HD1 begins to address our historical and very real issues of voter intimidation and voter fraud. If we are to believe that the election process is worth having, then it is incumbent upon the Legislature to protect that process now. Thank you for allowing me to testify in STRONG SUPPORT of HB1027 HD1. Sincerely, Kathleen Lee

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing , improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

Do not reply to this email. This inbox is not monitored. For assistance please email <u>webmaster@capitol.hawaii.gov</u>

DATE: Monday, February 24, 2013

- TO: Rep. Sylvia Luke, Chair Rep. Scott Y. Nishimoto, Vice Chair Rep. Aaron Ling Johanson, Vice Chair House Committee on Finance
- RE: Testimony in SUPPORT of House Bill 1027 House Draft 1, Relating to Elections Hearing on Monday, February 25, 2013 at 1:30 PM in Room 308

Dear Chair Luke, Vice Chair Nishimoto, Vice Chair Johanson, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Susan Eubank and I **support HB1027 HD1**, which was amended and strengthened by the House Committee on Judiciary.

With the Governor's request to move to an all-mail voting system, we must build stronger internal controls to safeguard our democracy. HB1027 HD1 begins to address our historical and very real issues of voter intimidation and voter fraud.

If we are to believe that the election process is worth having, then it is incumbent upon the Legislature to protect that process now.

Thank you for allowing me to testify in SUPPORT of HB1027 HD1.

Sincerely,

Ausan huband.