

JAN 21 2022

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO VOTER REGISTRATION.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that voter turnout in the
2 State remains low and continues to decline. In 2016, Hawaii had
3 the lowest voter turnout in the United States. Only 52.7 per
4 cent of registered Hawaii voters cast ballots in the 2018
5 general election. This represents a sharp decline in voter
6 turnout over the years, as approximately ninety-four per cent of
7 registered voters cast ballots in the State's first
8 gubernatorial election in 1959.

9 Additionally, the State has a historically low rate of
10 voter registration. According to a 2016 estimate from the
11 United States Census Bureau, Hawaii had the lowest percentage of
12 registered voters in the country at 49.8 per cent, well below
13 the national average of 64.2 per cent. Therefore, of the
14 1,064,000 people in Hawaii who were qualified to vote in the
15 2016 election, 534,128 were not registered to vote.

16 The legislature further finds that voting at a young age
17 creates and empowers life-long voters. Data shows that after an



1 individual votes once, the individual often becomes a habitual
2 voter. Therefore, by facilitating the ability of those sixteen
3 years of age and older to preregister or register to vote, the
4 State will be empowering a new generation of lifelong voters.

5 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to increase voter
6 participation and encourage civic engagement in Hawaii's schools
7 by establishing a process for the automatic preregistration and
8 registration of public school- and charter school-enrolled
9 students who are at least sixteen years of age.

10 SECTION 2. Chapter 11, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended
11 by adding a new section to part II to be appropriately
12 designated and to read as follows:

13 "§11- Automatic voter preregistration and registration;
14 opt out. (a) Beginning January 1, 2023, any person who:
15 (1) Is enrolled in a public high school or public charter
16 school;
17 (2) Is otherwise qualified to preregister or register to
18 vote under this part;
19 (3) Is at least sixteen years of age; and
20 (4) Properly completes and submits a voter registration
21 affidavit,



1 shall be automatically preregistered or registered to vote as
2 provided in this section.

3 (b) Between January 1 and January 31 of each year, the
4 superintendent of education shall provide and may collect from
5 each public school student who is at least sixteen years of age
6 a voter affidavit containing the information required by section
7 11-15 to allow the student to preregister or register to vote or
8 to opt out of preregistering or registering to vote. The
9 superintendent of education may transmit the voter registration
10 affidavit to the clerk of the county in which the applicant
11 resides; provided that the superintendent of education shall not
12 maintain, scan, review, or copy any voter affidavit nor transmit
13 any information maintained by the department of education.

14 (c) Between January 1 and January 31 of each year, an
15 authorizer, as defined in section 302D-1, shall provide and may
16 collect from each charter school student who is at least sixteen
17 years of age a voter affidavit containing the information
18 required by section 11-15 to allow the student to preregister or
19 register to vote or to opt out of preregistering or registering
20 to vote. The authorizer may transmit the voter registration
21 affidavit to the clerk of the county in which the applicant



1 resides; provided that the authorizer shall not maintain, scan,
2 review, or copy any voter affidavit nor transmit any information
3 maintained by the state public charter school commission.

4 (d) The clerk shall determine whether the applicant is
5 currently preregistered or registered in the general county
6 register."

7 SECTION 3. Chapter 302A, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
8 amended by adding a new section to part II, subpart C, to be
9 appropriately designated and to read as follows:

10 **"§302A- Automatic voter preregistration and**
11 **registration.** The board and the superintendent, in consultation
12 with the office of elections, may adopt policies as necessary to
13 maximize and facilitate the preregistration and registration of
14 qualifying students to vote as provided in section 11- ."

15 SECTION 4. Chapter 302D, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
16 amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated
17 and to read as follows:

18 **"§302D- Automatic voter preregistration and**
19 **registration.** The commission, in consultation with the office
20 of elections, may adopt policies as necessary to maximize and



1 facilitate the preregistration and registration of qualifying
2 students to vote as provided in section 11- ."

3 SECTION 5. New statutory material is underscored.

4 SECTION 6. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2022.

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INTRODUCED BY:

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S.B. NO. 2296

Report Title:

Automatic Voter Preregistration or Registration; Department of Education; State Public Charter School Commission; Opt Out

Description:

Establishes a process, beginning on 1/1/2023 for automatically preregistering or registering public school- and charter school-enrolled students who are at least 16 years old to vote.

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

