

MAR 11 2022

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE OFFICE OF ELECTIONS TO ESTABLISH A WORKING GROUP
TO CONDUCT A STUDY ON THE IMPLICATIONS OF CHANGING THE
MINIMUM VOTING AGE IN HAWAII TO EXPAND VOTER PARTICIPATION.

1 WHEREAS, Hawaii once boasted the highest voter
2 participation in the United States during the early years of
3 statehood; and

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5 WHEREAS, in 1971, the minimum voting age in Hawaii was
6 changed from twenty to eighteen years of age; and

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8 WHEREAS, since 1971, the young people of Hawaii have been
9 given more responsibility in the labor workforce, paying of
10 taxes, and driving a car, all before the right to vote; and

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12 WHEREAS, in recent years, Hawaii's voter turnout has been
13 the lowest in the United States for the presidential elections
14 between 2008 and 2016, where voter turnout dropped from forty-
15 nine percent to 42.5 percent in 2016; and

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17 WHEREAS, the enactment of Act 136, Session Laws of Hawaii
18 2019, which requires all state elections to be conducted by
19 mail, was intended to increase voter turnout and accessibility;
20 and

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22 WHEREAS, in the first all-mail-in ballot election in the
23 State, there was a record turnout of 69.6 percent, or 579,784
24 registered voters, who participated in the 2020 general
25 election; and

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27 WHEREAS, despite the significant turnout in the 2020
28 general election, 30.4 percent, or 252,682 registered voters,
29 did not cast a ballot for the 2020 general election; and
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1 WHEREAS, just as many adults are unprepared to make
2 informed decisions to vote, many younger citizens are prepared
3 to participate but are unable to engage in the process; and
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5 WHEREAS, expanding the voting population to include Hawaii
6 residents who may be younger than eighteen years old may address
7 some of the longstanding issues with Hawaii's historically low
8 voter turnout; now, therefore,
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10 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-first
11 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2022, the
12 House of Representatives concurring, that the Office of
13 Elections is requested to establish a working group to study the
14 implications of changing the minimum voting age to increase
15 voter participation; and
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17 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the working group is requested
18 to address the following issues:
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- 20 (1) The pros and cons of a lower voting age;
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- 22 (2) The experiences of countries, states, and
23 municipalities that have changed the minimum voting
24 age below eighteen years old;
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- 26 (3) Whether a changed voting age should apply to all
27 elections conducted in the State or only to certain
28 elections; and
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- 30 (4) Necessary processes and considerations, if any, on
31 changing the minimum voting age in Hawaii; and
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33 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the working group is requested
34 to include the following members:
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- 36 (1) The Chief Election Officer, who shall serve as the
37 chair;
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- 39 (2) The Dean of the William S. Richardson School of Law,
40 University of Hawaii;
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- 42 (3) The Superintendent of the Department of Education; and



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(4) At least one member of the community representing an organization that promotes civic engagement, expanded voting rights, and good government; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the chairperson of the working group is requested to invite student representatives from public and private schools across the State; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the working group is requested to submit a report on its findings, recommendations, and proposed legislation, if necessary, to the Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2023; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Chief Election Officer; Dean of the William S. Richardson School of Law, University of Hawaii; and Superintendent of the Department of Education.

OFFERED BY: 

