

JAN 22 2021

A BILL FOR AN ACT

PROPOSING AN AMENDMENT TO ARTICLE II, SECTION 1 OF THE HAWAII
STATE CONSTITUTION TO ALLOW THE LEGISLATURE TO EXPAND THE
RIGHT TO VOTE.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that, although voter
2 turnout in Hawaii increased significantly in the general
3 election of 2020, it was on a steady downward trajectory in
4 recent previous elections. In 2016, Hawaii had the lowest voter
5 turnout in the United States. Only 38.6 per cent of registered
6 Hawaii voters cast ballots in the 2018 general election. This
7 represents a sharp decline in voter turnout over the years, as
8 approximately ninety-three per cent of registered voters cast
9 ballots in Hawaii's first gubernatorial election in 1959.

10 The legislature finds that equally important to expanding
11 voting and each citizen's responsibility to vote is the
12 responsibility to be educated and informed when voting.
13 Immigrants to the United States are required to pass a history
14 and civics citizenship test to attain citizenship and the right
15 to vote. Similar safeguards to ensure educated and informed
16 voting can allow younger voters to participate productively.



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1 The legislature further finds that voting is the
2 cornerstone of American democracy. Expanding the right to vote
3 and ensuring that voters are educated and informed by allowing
4 those fifteen years of age and older who pass a test of
5 citizenship to vote will not only increase voter turnout, but
6 will encourage civic engagement at a young age.

7 The legislature finds that voting at a young age creates
8 and empowers lifelong voters. Data shows that after an
9 individual votes once, he or she becomes a habitual voter.
10 Therefore, expanding voter rights to those fifteen years of age
11 and older who pass a test of citizenship will empower a new
12 generation of educated and informed lifelong voters.

13 The purpose of this Act is to propose an amendment to
14 article II, section 1, of the Constitution of the State of
15 Hawaii to allow the legislature to expand the right to vote to
16 those fifteen years of age and older who pass a test of
17 citizenship as prescribed by law.

18 SECTION 2. Article 2, section 1, of the Constitution of
19 the State of Hawaii is amended to read as follows:

20 "QUALIFICATIONS



1 **Section 1.** Every citizen of the United States who shall
2 have attained the age of eighteen years, have been a resident of
3 this State not less than one year next preceding the election
4 and be a voter registered as provided by law, shall be qualified
5 to vote in any state or local election[-]; provided that the
6 legislature shall have the power to allow citizens of the United
7 States who have attained the age of at least fifteen but less
8 than eighteen years and have passed a test of citizenship to be
9 qualified to vote as provided by law."

10 SECTION 3. The question to be printed on the ballot shall
11 be as follows:

12 "Shall the legislature have the power to expand voting
13 rights for state and local elections to citizens of the
14 United States wishing to vote who are fifteen years of age
15 but less than eighteen years of age, provided they pass a
16 test of citizenship as prescribed by law?"

17 SECTION 4. Constitutional material to be repealed is
18 bracketed and stricken. New constitutional material is
19 underscored.

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1 SECTION 5. This amendment shall take effect upon
2 compliance with article XVII, section 3, of the Constitution of
3 the State of Hawaii.

4

INTRODUCED BY:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Alan", written over a horizontal line.

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Report Title:

Voting; Hawaii Constitution; Amendment

Description:

Proposes an amendment to Article II, Section 1, of the Hawaii State Constitution to allow the legislature to expand the right to vote in state and local elections to those who are fifteen years of age or older who pass a test of citizenship as prescribed by law for those less than eighteen years of age.

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