



Committee on GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS
Chair Angus L.K. McKelvey, Vice Chair Mike Gabbard

Tuesday, February 4, 2025, 3:05 p.m. Conference Room 225 & Videoconference
SB 1031 — RELATING TO ADVISORY REFERENDUMS

TESTIMONY

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

Chair McKelvey, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Committee Members:

The League of Women Voters of Hawaii supports BILL SB 1031 and suggests amendments to the bill, which proposes to give Hawaii citizens the right to vote yes or no on questions from the Legislature, which are identified by passage of a concurrent resolution at the Legislature. The questions would appear on our General Election ballots, and the results of such a vote would be advisory only.

The bill places no limitation on the subject matter of such referendums, stating only that “the legislature may determine what subject matters are appropriate for referendum,” but thankfully limits a single referendum to one subject.

No limit is set on the number of such advisory referendums that could appear on the ballot, but we think having a limit is a good idea, to avoid the prospect of an overly long ballot. For example, having ten advisory referendum questions could confuse voters and add extra expense to production of a ballot. Three referenda maximum might be reasonable.

An important clarification we seek is whether this referendum is to apply to Hawaii’s statutory laws only. Voters already have a right to weigh in on proposed constitutional amendments after such proposed amendments are passed by the Legislature.

Is the measure also intended for bond issues (both general purpose and revenue bonds)? Issuance of these bonds is governed by our State Constitution, but our understanding is that voters do not currently have a role in issuing State bonds.

The advisory referendum offers a new way for Hawaii citizens to participate in government, which is a main goal of the League of Women Voters. However, we emphasize that voter education such as we already have through the office of elections online voter guide is important. We continue to support the addition of a “pro and con” analysis for all ballot questions that appear on the ballot.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

SB-1031

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 6:36:49 PM

Testimony for GVO on 2/4/2025 3:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
james wallace	Individual	Oppose	In Person

Comments: I oppose SB 1031 because that sounds a bit corrupt.Fix our voting system thats the one broken!!!!

SB-1031

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 9:54:32 AM

Testimony for GVO on 2/4/2025 3:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Andrew Crossland	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY OPPOSE this Bill which has been highly problematic in other States. I urge all members of the Committee to **VOTE NO** on this Bill.

SB-1031

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 10:02:48 AM

Testimony for GVO on 2/4/2025 3:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rosemarie Vailisale	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a citizen of the great United States of America and resident of Hawaii I exercise my rights to OPPOSE this bill.

SB-1031

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 10:45:00 AM

Testimony for GVO on 2/4/2025 3:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bradle Lindsey	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing to express my strong opposition to Senate Bill 1031 (SB1031), which proposes the implementation of non-binding advisory referendums. While the intention to gather public input on specific issues is commendable, this bill raises several concerns that warrant careful consideration.

Firstly, the introduction of advisory referendums could lead to confusion among voters. Non-binding referendums may create the impression that the results are legally binding, potentially misleading the public and undermining the democratic process. Additionally, the requirement for notice, certification, and reporting imposes an unnecessary burden on the Chief Election Officer and the state's resources.

Moreover, similar initiatives in other states have faced significant challenges. For instance, in Virginia, a similar bill led to the formation of a work group to study home instruction and religious exemption. However, the appointments to this work group were controlled by political appointees, raising concerns about the lack of representation for the homeschool community. This resulted in a partisan vote that could negatively impact homeschoolers and religiously exempt families.

In conclusion, while the goal of SB1031 to engage the public in the legislative process is laudable, the potential for voter confusion and the precedent set by similar bills in other states suggest that this approach may not be the most effective. I urge you to reconsider the implementation of non-binding advisory referendums and explore alternative methods to ensure public participation in the legislative process.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

SB-1031

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 10:58:14 AM

Testimony for GVO on 2/4/2025 3:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Richard Landford	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill

SB-1031

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 11:00:08 AM

Testimony for GVO on 2/4/2025 3:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shawna Landford	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I OPPOSE SB1031

SB-1031

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 11:03:51 AM

Testimony for GVO on 2/4/2025 3:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lora Santiago	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly OPPOSE SB1031.

SB-1031

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 12:24:10 PM

Testimony for GVO on 2/4/2025 3:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bart Burford	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This is proven problematic in other states.

I oppose

SB-1031

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 12:33:36 PM

Testimony for GVO on 2/4/2025 3:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joelle Seashell	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We need less Government and governing.

SB-1031

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 2:24:50 PM

Testimony for GVO on 2/4/2025 3:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dorinda Ohelo	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill.

SB-1031

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 2:35:12 PM

Testimony for GVO on 2/4/2025 3:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
J Pualani Vendiola	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill.

SB-1031

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 3:16:07 PM

Testimony for GVO on 2/4/2025 3:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
David E Shormann	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This bill is problematic in other states. Please present only legislation that perpetuates righteousness, our state motto.

SB-1031

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 3:19:05 PM

Testimony for GVO on 2/4/2025 3:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
L.C	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SB1031: Elections; Legislature; Advisory Referendums; Questions; Ballots

This will be confusing for the public unless there is a specific statement that voting for the non-binding advisory referendum is a means of gauging the public opinion and does not mean the the government will take any specific action. Also, publishing notices in the newspaper, libraries, and the office of the county clerk will mean that only a small segment of the population will even see the notice. There is a shift away from print media (where it is likely to be buried where no one will see it) and how many people will go the library or the county clerk's office to find out if there is notice that they should be aware of? As with the national trend, Hawaii shows a significant movement towards digital, social media, and broadcast sources for daily news consumption so publishing in the newspaper, library and clerks office demonstrates that the legislature does not really want the majority of the voters to be informed.

I oppose SB1031.

SB-1031

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 5:46:37 PM

Testimony for GVO on 2/4/2025 3:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lesha Mathes	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill. This has already proved problematic in other states. Leave well enough alone. Changes are not needed.

SB-1031

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 7:12:17 PM

Testimony for GVO on 2/4/2025 3:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marlies Lee	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Make things simple not complicated to understand

i oppose

Marlies Lee

SB-1031

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 8:12:03 PM

Testimony for GVO on 2/4/2025 3:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Robin D. Ganitano	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose SB1031 because this is problematic in other States for the Legislature to adopt any Concurrent Resolution as an advisory referendum to be voted on during any general election.

SB-1031

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 7:47:00 AM

Testimony for GVO on 2/4/2025 3:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer Cabjuan	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Oppose this bill

SB-1031

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 8:12:49 AM

Testimony for GVO on 2/4/2025 3:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Deven English	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In strong opposition of this bill

SB-1031

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 8:31:31 AM

Testimony for GVO on 2/4/2025 3:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sally Lee	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill. It is not in the best interest of the people of Hawaii

SB-1031

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 10:55:00 AM

Testimony for GVO on 2/4/2025 3:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Larry Duclayan	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Opposition to SB1031

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to Hawaii Senate Bill 1031 (SB1031). While the intent behind this bill is to propose non-binding advisory referendum questions to the people, I have significant concerns about several aspects of the proposed legislation.

1. Non-Binding Nature: The advisory referendum questions proposed by SB1031 are non-binding, meaning they do not have the force of law and are merely suggestions. This raises concerns about the effectiveness and practicality of such referendums. Without binding authority, the results may not lead to meaningful change or action, rendering the process potentially futile.

2. Voter Fatigue: Introducing non-binding advisory referendum questions during general elections could contribute to voter fatigue. Voters may become overwhelmed by the number of questions and issues presented, leading to decreased engagement and participation. This could undermine the democratic process and dilute the impact of important issues.

3. Potential for Misleading Information: Advisory referendums may present complex issues in a simplified manner, potentially leading to misleading or uninformed voting decisions. Voters may not have access to comprehensive information or the necessary context to make well-informed choices, resulting in skewed or inaccurate outcomes.

4. Resource Allocation: Implementing advisory referendums requires significant resources, including time, money, and administrative efforts. These resources could be better allocated to address pressing issues and implement concrete solutions that have a direct and tangible impact on the community.

5. Lack of Accountability: Non-binding advisory referendums do not hold elected officials accountable for implementing the results. Without binding authority, there is no guarantee that the outcomes of these referendums will be acted upon, leading to a lack of accountability and follow-through.

In conclusion, while the goal of engaging the public in the legislative process is commendable, I believe that SB1031 is not the right approach. The non-binding nature, potential for voter fatigue, misleading information, resource allocation, and lack of accountability make it an ineffective and potentially problematic piece of legislation. I urge you to consider alternative measures that more effectively engage the public and ensure meaningful participation in the democratic process.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Larry Duclayan

SB-1031

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 9:58:43 AM

Testimony for GVO on 2/4/2025 3:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jeffrey F Mizuno	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Text

SB-1031

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 12:54:58 PM

Testimony for GVO on 2/4/2025 3:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dawn O'Brien	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee & Leaders who Represent the People of Hawai'i~

TY for your aloha in this matter and all others!

I stand in strong opposition to this bill as it has caused a lot of confusion and cost in other states where it has been implemented. Also the wording is not clear as to what it would entail to benefit the people of Hawai'i which means it is designed not to benefit the people of Hawai'i but a few select, special interests. Therefore I encourage you to vote against this resolution.

Mahalo & Much Aloha Always,

Dawn O'Brien

Lifelong Hawai'i resident & taxpayer

President, H.O.P.E. HI, Inc.

Aloha Ambassador, *CHOOSE ALOHA* Program

SB-1031

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 12:58:22 PM

Testimony for GVO on 2/4/2025 3:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Laurie Langton	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I do not approve or support the legislature being given this power. Strongly oppose!

Thank you

SB-1031

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 1:47:56 PM

Testimony for GVO on 2/4/2025 3:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
James K. Rzonca	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill

LATE

SB-1031

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 3:49:40 PM

Testimony for GVO on 2/4/2025 3:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
TERI SAVAIINAEA	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Mc Kelvey and Government Operations Committee Members,

I oppose SB 1031.

Thank you,

Teri Kia Savaiinaea

District 45, Wai'anae Resident