
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO ELECTIONS.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that under existing
2 election law, certain long-established political parties are
3 required to repeatedly petition to retain ballot access, despite
4 having demonstrated decades of consistent voter support. This
5 recurring requirement imposes unnecessary administrative and
6 financial burdens on these long-established political parties
7 and the office of elections, without advancing election
8 integrity or promoting voter participation.

9 The legislature further finds that uninterrupted ballot
10 qualification over extended periods demonstrates durable voter
11 support, organizational stability, and ongoing compliance with
12 election laws. Requiring political parties with decades of
13 continuous qualification to repeatedly petition for ballot
14 access is redundant and administratively inefficient.

15 For example, the Green Party of Hawaii first qualified for
16 ballot access in 1992 and has remained continuously listed on
17 the general election ballot for more than thirty-four years,



1 including successful qualification for the 2024 and 2026
2 elections.

3 The purpose of this Act is to promote fairness and equal
4 treatment among political parties, reduce unnecessary
5 administrative burdens on long-established political parties and
6 the State, recognize sustained voter support and organizational
7 stability, and ensure consistent, predictable, and
8 nondiscriminatory ballot access in Hawaii elections.

9 Specifically, this Act establishes a process by which any
10 political party continuously listed on the general election
11 ballot for twenty or more years shall be deemed continuously
12 qualified for ballot placement.

13 SECTION 2. Chapter 11, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended
14 by adding a new section to be appropriately designated and to
15 read as follows:

16 "§11- Continuous qualification of political parties;
17 exemption from petition requirements. (a) Notwithstanding any
18 other law to the contrary, any political party that has been
19 continuously qualified and listed on the general election ballot
20 for twenty consecutive years or more shall be deemed



1 continuously qualified for placement on the election ballot
2 without further petition requirements.

3 (b) The chief election officer shall certify a political
4 party's eligibility for continuous qualification under
5 subsection (a) based on historical ballot records.

6 (c) A political party deemed continuously qualified under
7 this section shall retain that status until the political party:

8 (1) Dissolves;

9 (2) Voluntarily withdraws from participation in the
10 election ballot; or

11 (3) Fails to comply with applicable organizational,
12 reporting, or filing requirements under this chapter
13 or other applicable law.

14 (d) Nothing in this section shall be construed to limit or
15 impair the authority of the office of elections or the chief
16 election officer to administer, enforce, or require compliance
17 with any election law, rule, filing requirement, or enforcement
18 provision unrelated to petition-based ballot qualification."

19 SECTION 3. Section 11-61, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
20 amended to read as follows:



1 "~~§11-61~~ [~~"Political party" defined.~~] Political party;
2 definition; disqualification. (a) [~~The term~~] For the purposes
3 of this part, "political party" means [~~any party which has~~
4 ~~qualified as a political party under sections 11-62 and 11-64~~
5 ~~and has not been disqualified by this section. A political~~
6 ~~party shall be~~] an association of voters that is united for the
7 purpose of promoting a common political end or carrying out a
8 particular line of political policy and [~~which maintains~~]:

9 (1) Maintains a general organization throughout the State,
10 including a regularly constituted central committee
11 and county committees in each county other than
12 Kalawao[-];

13 (2) Has qualified as a political party under section 11-62
14 or 11- ;

15 (3) Complies with sections 11-63 and 11-64; and

16 (4) Has not been disqualified by this section.

17 (b) Any party [~~which~~] that does not meet the following
18 requirements, or the requirements set forth in sections 11-62 to
19 11-64, shall be subject to disqualification:

20 (1) A party must have had candidates running for election
21 at the last general election for any of the offices



1 listed in paragraph (2) whose terms had expired[~~-~~
2 ~~This~~]; provided that this does not include those
3 offices [~~which~~] that were vacant because the incumbent
4 had died or resigned before the end of the incumbent's
5 term; and

6 (2) The party received at least ten per cent of all votes
7 cast:

8 (A) For any of the offices voted upon by all the
9 voters in the State; or

10 (B) In at least fifty per cent of the congressional
11 districts; [~~or~~]

12 (3) The party received at least four per cent of all the
13 votes cast for all the offices of state senator
14 statewide; [~~or~~]

15 (4) The party received at least four per cent of all the
16 votes cast for all the offices of state representative
17 statewide; or

18 (5) The party received at least two per cent of all the
19 votes cast for all the offices of state senate and all
20 the offices of state representative combined
21 statewide[~~-~~];



1 provided that this subsection shall not apply to any political
2 party deemed continuously qualified pursuant to section 11- ."

3 SECTION 4. Section 11-62, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
4 amended as follows:

5 1. By amending subsection (a) to read:

6 "(a) Any group of persons hereafter desiring to qualify as
7 a political party for election ballot purposes in the State
8 shall file with the chief election officer a petition as
9 provided in this section~~[]~~; provided that this section shall
10 not apply to any political party deemed continuously qualified
11 pursuant to section 11- . The petition for qualification as a
12 political party shall:

13 (1) Be filed ~~[not]~~ no later than 4:30 p.m. on the one
14 hundred seventieth day ~~[prior to]~~ before the next
15 primary;

16 (2) Declare as concisely as may be the intention of
17 signers thereof to qualify as a statewide political
18 party in the State and state the name of the new
19 party;

20 (3) Contain the name, signature, residence address, month
21 and date portion of the date of birth, and other



1 information as determined by the chief election
2 officer of currently registered voters comprising
3 [~~not~~] no less than one-tenth of one per cent of the
4 total registered voters of the State as of the last
5 preceding general election;

6 (4) Be accompanied by the names and addresses of the
7 officers of the central committee and of the
8 respective county committees of the political party
9 and by the party rules; and

10 (5) Be upon the form prescribed and provided by the chief
11 election officer."

12 2. By amending subsection (d) to read:

13 "(d) Each group of persons desiring to qualify as a
14 political party, having first qualified as a political party by
15 petition under this section, and having been qualified as a
16 political party for three consecutive general elections by
17 petition or pursuant to section 11-61(b), shall be deemed a
18 political party for the following ten-year period. The ten-year
19 period shall begin with the next regularly scheduled general
20 election; provided that each party qualified under this section
21 shall continue to field candidates for public office during the



1 ten-year period following qualification. After each ten-year
2 period, the party qualified under this section shall either
3 remain qualified under the standards set forth in section 11-61,
4 qualify pursuant to section 11- , or requalify under this
5 section [~~11-62~~]."

6 SECTION 5. Section 12-21, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
7 amended to read as follows:

8 "**§12-21 Official party ballots.** The primary or special
9 primary ballot shall be clearly designated as such. The names
10 of the candidates of each party qualifying under section 11-61
11 [~~or~~], 11-62, or 11- and of nonpartisan candidates may be
12 printed on separate ballots, or on a single ballot. The name of
13 each party and the nonpartisan designation shall be distinctly
14 printed and sufficiently separate from each other. The names of
15 all candidates shall be printed on the ballot as provided in
16 section 11-115. When the names of all candidates of the same
17 party for the same office exceed the maximum number of voting
18 positions on a single side of a ballot card, the excess names
19 may be arranged and listed on both sides of the ballot card and
20 additional ballot cards if necessary. When separate ballots for



1 each party are not used, the order in which parties appear on
2 the ballot, including nonpartisan, shall be determined by lot.

3 The chief election officer or the county clerk, in the case
4 of county elections, shall approve printed samples or proofs of
5 the respective party ballots as to uniformity of size, weight,
6 shape, and thickness [~~prior to~~] before final printing of the
7 official ballots."

8 SECTION 6. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed
9 and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

10 SECTION 7. This Act shall take effect upon its approval;
11 provided that the requirements under section 11- , Hawaii
12 Revised Statutes, may be satisfied by a political party based on
13 appearances on previous general election ballots.

14
INTRODUCED BY:



JAN 20 2026



H.B. NO. 1716

Report Title:

Elections; Political Parties; Qualification; Ballot Placement

Description:

Establishes a process by which any political party continuously listed on the general election ballot for twenty or more years shall be deemed continuously qualified for ballot placement.

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

