

JAN 22 2026

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO VOTING.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the introduction of
2 the digital voter information guide beginning in 2024 has
3 greatly improved voter access to information about the issues
4 and candidates on the ballot in an election. However, a lack of
5 publicization and information about the voter guide has left it
6 underutilized. For example, the notice informing voters about
7 the digital guide was included only in small print at the bottom
8 of the ballot secrecy sleeve for the 2024 primary election. No
9 notice was required to be included alongside ballots for the
10 2024 general election, and it does not appear that one was. To
11 eliminate confusion about how to access the voter guide, and to
12 ensure that voters make the most of this excellent and essential
13 resource, clarification is needed.

14 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to improve voter
15 awareness and usage of the voter guide by clarifying the manner
16 in which the public is informed about the guide.



1 SECTION 2. Section 11-122, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
2 amended to read as follows:

3 **"§11-122 Digital voter information guide.** (a) The office
4 of elections shall:

5 (1) Prepare a digital voter information guide, which shall
6 be posted on the office of elections website in a
7 screen reader-accessible format for voters with
8 special needs who are unable to read standard print
9 due to disability;

10 (2) Provide a translation of the digital voter information
11 guide in Olelo Hawaii on its website; and
12 (3) Provide printed copies of the digital voter
13 information guide to all public libraries for viewing
14 by the public.

15 (b) The digital voter information guide shall include:

16 (1) A photograph and short statement of less than one
17 hundred fifty words for each candidate running for
18 public office, to be prepared by the candidate;
19 provided that the office of elections may uniformly
20 limit the number of words for the candidate statement
21 by applicable public office;



1 (2) The explanation drafted by the department of the
2 attorney general of each state constitutional
3 amendment that will be proposed to voters in the next
4 general election pursuant to section 11-118.5(b);
5 provided that the department of the attorney general
6 shall transmit the materials required by this
7 paragraph to the office of elections no later than
8 seventy-five days before the general election;

9 (3) A clear and concise explanation, drafted by the
10 appropriate county corporation counsel, for each
11 proposed county charter amendment, proposed
12 initiative, and proposed referendum issue; provided
13 that the respective corporation counsel shall:

14 (A) Translate the explanation into Olelo Hawaii and
15 any other languages required under the federal
16 Voting Rights Act, as specified by the office of
17 elections; and

18 (B) Transmit the materials required by this paragraph
19 to the office of elections no later than
20 seventy-five days before the general election; and



5 (c) The office of elections shall prepare and mail with
6 each ballot for a primary and general election a notice to
7 voters that a digital voter information guide is available on
8 the office of elections website[.] and in print at all public
9 libraries. The notice shall be included as a separate insert
10 printed in thirty-two-point font and enclosed with the ballot.
11 The notice shall be sent by electronic mail to all voters with
12 special needs who have registered to receive alternate format
13 ballots. The office of elections shall also maintain on its
14 website a banner, pop-up, splash page, or other similarly
15 conspicuous notice informing visitors about the availability of
16 the voter guide, explaining the different types of guides
17 available, and enabling access to the guide with a single click.
18 The notice shall be present whenever a current voter guide is
19 available on the website.

20 (d) The office of elections shall make the digital voter
21 information guide available to the public no later than



1 twenty-one days before the primary election, and no later than
2 fifty days before the general election.

3 [+] (e) Information made available over the Internet
4 pursuant to this section shall meet or exceed the most current,
5 ratified standards under section 508 of the federal
6 Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 794d), as amended, and the
7 Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 adopted by the World
8 Wide Web Consortium for accessibility.

9 [+] (f) Notwithstanding chapter 92F and any other law to
10 the contrary, the contents of subsection (b) shall not be
11 released to any requestor in whole or in part before the public
12 release of the entire guide."

13 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general
14 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$90,000 or so much
15 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2026-2027 for the
16 office of elections to print and insert an additional
17 instruction sheet into each mail ballot packet as required by
18 this Act.

19 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the office of
20 elections for the purposes of this Act.



1 SECTION 4. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed
2 and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

3 SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2026.

4

INTRODUCED BY: Karl Rhael



S.B. NO. 2453

Report Title:

Office of Elections; Voter Guide; Notice; Appropriation

Description:

Requires the Office of Elections to include a notice to voters that a digital and print voter information guide is available. Requires the notice to be in thirty-two-point font and enclosed as a separate insert with each ballot. Requires the Office of Elections to maintain a notice on its website providing certain information about the voter information guide. Requires the Office of Elections to make the digital voter information guide available to the public no later than twenty-one days before the primary election and no later than fifty days before the general election. Appropriates funds.

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

