



The House Committee on Finance  
February 26, 2026  
Room 308  
2:00 PM

RE: **HB 1525 HD1, Relating to Elections**

Attention: Chair Chris Todd, Vice Chair Jenna Takenouchi, Members of the  
Committee

The University of Hawaii Professional Assembly (UHPA), the exclusive bargaining representative for all University of Hawai'i faculty members across Hawai'i's statewide 10-campus system, **supports HB 1525 HD1.**

UHPA strongly supports initiatives that strengthen our democratic processes and encourage civic engagement. As educators, we recognize the importance of an engaged, informed, and empowered citizenry.

HB 1525 HD1 takes critical steps to improve election accessibility by funding additional in-person voter service centers across all counties, ensuring the printing and mailing of voter information guides to all registered voters, and supporting public outreach campaigns. These measures are essential to ensure that all Hawai'i residents—including students, our faculty, and our broader campus communities—have equitable access to the ballot box and are well-informed about their voting options.

**UHPA supports the passage of HB 1525 HD1.**

Respectfully submitted,

Christian L. Fern  
Executive Director  
University of Hawaii Professional Assembly



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TESTIMONY  
TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE  
ON HOUSE BILL NO. 1525, HD1  
RELATING TO ELECTIONS

February 26, 2026

Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on HB1525, HD1. The following provides background information for the funding proposal for additional Voter Service Centers (VSCs).

The final day of voting in the 2024 general election involved longer than usual wait times across the voter service centers that appear to occur during presidential general elections. On Oahu, the final day servicing totaled roughly 8,000 of the 22,000 voters serviced over the thirteen (13) available in-person service days. Approximately 322,000 voters utilized the mail ballot process.

Hawai'i's transition to vote-by-mail, with in-person VSCs serving as an option and contact point for same-day voter registration interactions and independent voting for persons with disabilities has created requirements that differ significantly from the former polling place election model. Expansion must be evaluated in the context of the differences as there are certain operational realities affecting whether expansion can occur.

Traditional polling places (prior to 2020) operated on one day and served voters allocated among fixed geographic areas. In contrast, VSCs operate over multiple days, servicing any voter (regardless of voting residence, registration status etc.) across numerous districts (using approximately 140 available ballot styles). These requirements eliminated the inherent workload distribution previously afforded by precinct boundaries. It also substantially changed the demands on staffing, systems/technology, and management oversight.

While volunteers were used for traditional polling places, VSC staff undergo weeks of hands-on training and preparation to enable direct editing and access to the Statewide Voter Registration system. VSC operators perform critical functions that support election integrity and voter access such as eligibility verification, same-day voter registration, address updates, district assignment verification, ballot issuance/replacement, turnout recording, and assisting voters requiring language or accessibility services.

While we appreciate any financial assistance that the State is willing to appropriate, unfortunately, the primary determinant affecting expanding VSC operations is the availability of personnel that may be utilized as full-time election workers for a final day operational surge. The availability and release of any appropriation is also essential and needs to occur well in advance of the scheduled elections.

The Honolulu Elections Division (and at least two other counties) staff its mail balloting operation, places of deposit program, and service center operations through a contracted temporary staffing agency. The agency recruits and assigns workers and provides administrative, payroll and other human resource functions (e.g. benefits, time/attendance).

Since VSCs operate over multiple days, maintaining service continuity requires full-time staffing throughout the voting period. Staffing agencies continue to face challenges filling the available positions as turnover routinely occurs within the assigned workforce.

Please note that in addition to seasonally assigned workers, the Honolulu Elections Division also recruits and utilizes both direct contractors and a smaller cohort of one day 'stipended' volunteers (for duties that do not require a high level of training or specific procedural knowledge). The volunteers have typically been recruited from schools and community organizations.

To address staffing challenges for the 2026 elections, the City hopes that contracting with more than one temporary staffing agency will expand the labor pool and increase the number of available assignees, particularly for the processing roles affecting service throughput and wait times (experienced on the final day).

However, increasing the number of Voter Service Centers without the corresponding availability of the labor required may not produce the intended result of shorter wait times and smaller election day crowds. Understaffed VSCs are almost certain to require dispersing and diluting the remaining available staffing, potentially replicating or worsening current challenges. Additionally, factors such as late voter engagement, ballot length, political messaging, etc. have an unpredictable effect upon final day service totals.

A single-day expansion is also governed by the availability of suitable facilities, especially in certain regions of the island. While traditional polling places permitted the use of school facilities and some private locations, by contrast voter service centers operate for multiple consecutive days. This substantially limits the pool of viable sites that must also have adequate floor space (to accommodate voter circulation and queue management) as well as access to parking and secure network connectivity.

Under current assumptions, we estimate that operation of a single voter service center location in both the Primary and General elections would involve a recurring cost of roughly \$675,000, mostly associated with the labor required. This total should be multiplied by the number of sites envisioned.

In an effort to identify potential solutions to workforce constraints, we have evaluated the use of electronic pollbooks. We believe that a considerable investment, of perhaps \$1,000,000 for Honolulu alone, would be necessary to acquire electronic pollbooks and enable the State Office of Elections' vendor to integrate these devices with the statewide voter registration system. Beyond improving voter processing efficiency, electronic pollbooks could potentially lower the training threshold and technical skill level currently required of Voter Service Center workers, thereby expanding the available labor pool.

It should also be noted that prior efforts to employ these devices in other counties have failed due to system integration issues. As a result, we have been reluctant to pursue this supporting technology solution to assist with voter service center expansion. Finally, the use

of electronic pollbooks as supporting technology would also require refreshing devices approximately every six years to address technology lifecycle and obsolescence considerations.

We recognize that long voter lines can also delay the release of election results for interested stakeholders. Under current law, a delay at any single VSC, (whether at an existing location or an expansion site), will inevitably cause a delay in election results for the entire State, regardless of any overall success in reducing voter wait times. The Committee may wish to consider whether statutory adjustments allowing release of election results would more directly address this ancillary issue as most vote-by-mail jurisdictions release election results at a fixed time regardless of whether in-person voting activity continues beyond the closing hour.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.





**STATE OF HAWAII  
OFFICE OF ELECTIONS**

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PEARL CITY, HAWAII 96782  
elections.hawaii.gov

SCOTT T. NAGO  
CHIEF ELECTION OFFICER

TESTIMONY OF THE  
CHIEF ELECTION OFFICER, OFFICE OF ELECTIONS  
TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE  
ON HOUSE BILL NO. 1525, HD 1  
RELATING TO THE ELECTIONS

February 26, 2026

Chair Todd and members of the House Committee on Finance, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill No. 1525, HD 1. This bill appropriates funds to: (1) the counties for more voter service centers for in-person voting; (2) the Office of Elections to print and mail the digital voter information guide to all registered voters; and (3) the Office of Elections to support a public outreach and engagement campaign to encourage greater voter participation, including awareness and training to promote accessible voting options.

As it relates to Section 2 of the bill regarding the appropriation of funds to print and mail the digital voter information guide to all registered voters, we estimate it to cost \$2,074,913 for the 2026 General Election. This includes costs to print and mail the digital voter guide in 5 language versions – English, Hawaiian, Chinese, Ilocano, Tagalog as well as mailing services and postage:

Printing	685,617
<u>Mailing and Postage</u>	<u>1,389,296</u>
Total	<u>\$2,074,913</u>

We acknowledge there are benefits of adding funding to better inform and support the electorate. This is based on our response to House Concurrent Resolution 87 provided ahead of the 2024 Legislative Session. We would note that our estimates have been updated to assume over 868,000 active registered voters for the 2026 General Election. Additionally, we respectfully ask that this bill be related to the conduct

of the 2026 General Election only, as funding would not be available through this measure in time for the 2026 Primary Election.

The scope of distribution of the digital voter information guide determines the costs and can be adapted. For example, distribution to households using estimates by the U.S. Census without regard to whether an active registered voter resides at the address, would be \$1,371,183 for the 2026 General Election. In contrast, distribution to households with an active registered voter would adjust to \$984,093 for the 2026 General Election.

As it relates to Section 3 of the bill to appropriate funds to support a public outreach and engagement campaign to encourage greater voter participation, we would estimate this to cost \$178,000. This request includes:

Production	28,000
Ad Flight	150,000
Total	<u>\$178,000</u>

Similarly, given timelines, it would only be feasible to produce and run ads for the 2026 General Election. The appropriation could be adjusted to increase or decrease the amount of advertising to saturate the market. The estimate of \$150,000 is for a single advertising flight.

As reference, in the 2024 Elections we expended approximately \$441,000 on advertising to include a combination of television, radio, online, out-of-home, and newspaper from June through November, to provide voter registration and voting information during an election cycle.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill No. 1525, HD 1.

JON HENRICKS  
*County Clerk*



AARON BROWN  
*Deputy County Clerk*

*OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CLERK*

**Elections Division**  
*County of Hawai'i*  
*Hawai'i County Building*  
*25 Aupuni Street*  
*Hilo, Hawai'i 96720*

TESTIMONY OF JON HENRICKS  
COUNTY CLERK, COUNTY OF HAWAI'I  
TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE  
ON HOUSE BILL NO. 1525  
RELATING TO ELECTIONS

February 25, 2026

Chair Todd and members of the House Committee on Finance, thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on House Bill No. 1525. This bill in part appropriates funds to the four counties to open additional Voter Service Centers (VSC) for in-person voting on election day.

If HB 1525 is enacted this session, it is inferred that each county would open additional VSCs on Election Day for the 2026 Primary and/or General Elections. Hawai'i County would be unable to secure resources to operate one or more additional VSCs under that timeline. Funding would need to be established well in advance of any such expansion to secure a location, acquire equipment, hire personnel, and take all other actions necessary to ensure a successful and secure operation.

Timely availability of funds notwithstanding, Hawai'i County remains concerned that operating a VSC without at least one full-time, experienced elections staff person present at all times is not in the best interest of our voters. Voter Service Centers, by their statutory definition, are not polling places that can be effectively managed and operated by seasonal hires trained to provide services for just Election Day. Hawai'i County does not have any additional full-time, experienced staffers to manage an additional VSC.

Upon adoption of Act 136, Hawai'i County fully transitioned its Election Division to administer Elections by Mail. Hawai'i County invested in sophisticated equipment, including recurring annual software licensure fees, to securely process voted ballot packets. Our personnel have been trained and their position descriptions modified to best ensure a successful Elections by Mail program, which includes professional operations at a VSC. With all due consideration for voters who choose to vote in-person on Election Day, Hawai'i County reaffirms its position that under our Elections by Mail laws and program, the best and highest use of resources is for our voters to utilize the ballot that was created for and mailed to them.

In summation, Hawai‘i County serves every voter who casts his or her ballot at a VSC on Election Day with aloha and will never discourage their active participation in our democracy. However, this proposed expansion of services would encourage voters to vote in person at a VSC on Election Day. Doing so communicates to our voters that we are sliding back towards a polling place model, which could be inferred by some of our voters that voting by mail may be deficient or even ineffective. **Voting by mail is safe, secure, and effective.** The State and counties finite resources should be utilized to support voting by mail.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on House Bill 1525.



**House Committee on Finance  
Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action (HAPA) Strongly Supports HB1525 HD1  
Thursday February 26th, at 2pm; Conference Room 309**

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and members of the Committee,

Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action strongly supports HB1525 HD1, which appropriates funding to expand voter service centers, ensure statewide distribution of the voter information guide, and support voter outreach and engagement efforts.

A healthy democracy depends on meaningful access to voting and accurate information. While Hawai'i has made progress in expanding vote-by-mail, in-person voter service centers remain essential for many residents. This includes rural and neighbor island residents, elders, people with disabilities, language barriers, houseless voters, and those with limited or unreliable internet access. Expanding and adequately funding voter service centers helps ensure no community is left behind.

HB1525 HD1 also recognizes the importance of providing voters with clear, accessible, and unbiased election information. Mailing the voter information guide to all registered voters helps close information gaps and supports informed participation. Voters should not have to rely solely on online access to understand candidates, ballot measures, and election procedures.

Currently, not all voter service centers are open on election day, which leads to confusion and frustration. Voters often need these centers at the last minute because of failed signature verifications or ballots not being accepted, with notification arriving after the window to remedy the ballot has closed.

In addition, funding voter outreach and engagement is critical to increasing participation and strengthening public trust in the electoral process. We hope the BallotTrax software is highly promoted to voters. Civic participation does not occur automatically. Outreach is necessary to ensure voters understand their options, deadlines, and rights, especially in historically underrepresented communities.

HAPA is committed to advancing an inclusive, accountable democracy. HB1525 HD1 takes concrete steps toward that goal by investing in the infrastructure and outreach needed to support broad voter participation across the state.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge support for HB1525 HD1

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anne Frederick'.

Anne Frederick, Executive Director  
Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action

**HB-1525-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 9:40:11 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kealii Pang, Ph.D.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Dr. Kealii Pang, a resident of Kaimukī, O‘ahu. I am writing in strong support of H.B. No. 1525, H.D. 1.

While vote-by-mail has been a good step, in-person voter service centers remain essential for kūpuna, rural residents, those with disabilities, and voters without reliable internet. This bill provides funding to counties to open more centers on election day itself—addressing the confusion voters face when signature issues arise too late to fix.

I also support mailing the voter information guide to all registered voters. Relying solely on online access creates an information gap. A physical guide in every home ensures informed participation for all.

Finally, funding outreach and engagement is critical to building trust and ensuring voters understand their options. Civic participation does not happen automatically.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to pass H.B. 1525.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Kealii Pang, Ph.D.  
Kaimukī, O‘ahu

Testimony on SB 2728

## **Testimony in Opposition to HB 1525**

Chair and members,

My name is Ralph Cushnie, and I serve as a commissioner on the Hawai'i Elections Commission.

I support expanding in-person voter service centers in every precinct. Local, face-to-face voting improves access while preserving accountability. However, I oppose SB 2728 as written, particularly its continued expansion of mail voting without first correcting serious integrity failures in Hawai'i's election system.

The Chief Election Officer, Scott Nago, testified that the Office of Elections is now planning for over 868,000 active registered voters for the 2026 General Election.

This number does not align with publicly acknowledged data.

In an August 14, 2020 PBS interview with Daryl Huff on PBS Hawai'i, Mr. Nago stated there were nearly 100,000 bad registrations on the rolls out of roughly 800,000.

Since the 2020 Census, Hawai'i has experienced a net population loss of 22,447 residents. Yet during this same period, approximately 68,000 voters were added to the registration rolls on top of those acknowledged bad registrations.

That means the voter rolls have grown substantially while the population has declined.

These rolls have never been independently audited.

In addition, the federal government, through the United States Department of Justice, is currently suing Mr. Nago to compel the release of Hawai'i's voter registration list, which remains concealed despite serious concerns about inflation and accuracy.

At the same time, during the 2024 General Election, the State reported more than 19,000 ballots counted than were collected by Hawai'i County. This points to electronic ballot insertions occurring without a verifiable physical chain of custody.

The Office of Elections has never undergone a comprehensive external audit. The Elections Commission formally requested that the Legislature conduct one, and that request was ignored.

Before appropriating additional funds to expand mail-based election infrastructure, these issues must be addressed.

If mail voting is going to continue, ballots should be sent using accountable mail with individual tracking, not bulk mail. Preferably, Hawai'i should prioritize precinct-based voter service centers and move away from universal mail ballots entirely.

Elections must be verifiable, not merely convenient.

Right now, Hawai'i does not have verifiable elections.

Until the voter rolls are audited, ballot chain of custody is documented, and electronic insertions are eliminated, expanding mail voting only compounds existing risks.

For these reasons, I urge you to oppose SB 2728 in its current form and instead focus on:

- expanding in-person voter service centers statewide
- conducting a full independent audit of the Office of Elections
- cleaning the voter rolls
- restoring transparent physical accountability to every ballot

Sincerely,

Ralph Cushnie

Elections Commissioner

**HB-1525-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 7:27:21 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Julie Rivers	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear members of the committee, I am a strong supporter of this bill. Preventing state and county contractors from making political contributions ensures public funds are used for their intended purposes, not to sway political campaigns or decisions. There is enough corrupt activities going on with politics especially in the last 10 years in WA. You have the opportunity to close this loophole so that our elections are more transparent. Mahalo for this opportunity to testify.

**HB-1525-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 5:24:25 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Marcia Kemble	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Greetings Committee Members,

I am writing in strong support of HB1525.

In-person voter service centers are essential, especially for kūpuna, neighbor island and rural residents, people with disabilities, first-time voters, and anyone who needs to address ballot discrepancies.

Over the past two elections, people had to wait hours in line to vote or drive over an hour to reach their closest voter service center. Please help make it as easy and convenient as possible for people to vote!

HB1525 will ensure every vote is cast and all votes are counted.

Mahalo for your attention.

Marcia Kemble

Makiki

**HB-1525-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 8:01:26 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Judith White	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support!

**HB-1525-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 8:11:18 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Nancy D Moser	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In support

**HB-1525-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 9:08:36 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Tim Huycke	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB1525.

Eileen Cain  
720 Mahi'ai St., Apt. E  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96826-5635  
eileencaïn808@gmail.com  
February 24, 2026

Representative Chris Todd, Chair, Committee on **Finance**  
Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair,  
and Members of the Committee on **Finance**

### **Testimony in Favor of HB1525 HD1, Relating to Elections**

Passing this bill would make it as easy as possible for people of voting age in the islands to vote.

- Mailing out information to voters about the elections would show that government officials care about getting out the vote. It would tell voters that upcoming elections are important and their participation is important.
- Additional voter service centers would make it more likely that people would find it convenient to go and vote.
- Please fund any plan by the Office of Elections to reach out to voters and engage them.

**Please vote yes on HB1525 HD1.**

Mahalo,

Eileen Cain  
Mō'ili'ili, Honolulu, Hawai'i

**HB-1525-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 11:39:24 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Johnnie-Mae L. Perry	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry, Support

1525 HB RELATING TO ELECTIONS.

**HB-1525-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 1:14:51 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Roger Hamada	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In support of HB1525 HD1.

In times of apparent Administration efforts to disenfranchise groups of voters, please take these steps to encourage increased voter participation.

Thank you.

**HB-1525-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 7:00:30 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
James E Raymond	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you -- I am a member of Indivisible Windward.

**HB-1525-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 7:06:19 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jane Aquino	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**HB1525 will ensure every vote is cast and all votes are counted.**

Mahalo, Jane Aquino

**HB-1525-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 8:50:37 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lisa Gollin	Indivisible	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

*Dear Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,*

*I am in strong support of HB1525.*

*In-person voter service centers are essential, especially for kūpuna, neighbor island and rural residents, people with disabilities, first time voters, and anyone who needs to address ballot discrepancies.*

*Over the past two elections, people had to wait hours in line to vote or drive over an hour to reach their closest voter service center.*

*Voter participation in Hawai`i is pitifully low and civic engagement more critical than ever.*

*HB1525 will ensure every vote is cast and all votes are counted.*

*Mahalo,*

*Lisa Gollin, Honolulu*

**HB-1525-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 9:20:41 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mala Wingerd	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

**I am in strong support of HB1525.**

In-person voter service centers are essential, especially for kūpuna, neighbor island and rural residents, people with disabilities, first time voters, and anyone who needs to address ballot discrepancies.

Over the past two elections, people had to wait hours in line to vote or drive over an hour to reach their closest voter service center. Through no fault of their own many citizens do not have the resources to drive long distances to obtain voter services.

*We must make voting easier for ALL our citizens, whether we politically agree with them or not. This will not make voting less secure! If anything, it will make it more secure because people will be better equipped to determine if they are allowed to vote or not.*

**HB1525 will ensure every vote is cast and all votes are counted.**

Thank you for your consideration!

**HB-1525-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 9:32:57 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Younghee Overly	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you for this opportunity to support HB1525.

I'm a member of Indivisible Hawaii.

**HB-1525-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 10:53:01 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
David Cuthbert	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you for reading my testimony. Voter participation is the heart of American Democracy which makes this HB1525 an important part of the process.

David Cuthbert, Pahoia, Hawai'i

**HB-1525-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 11:12:58 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Sue C Cowing	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Tarnas and members of the committee:

I am strongly in favor of the measures in this bill. As a former U.S. History teacher and a member of Indivisible Hawaii, I believe that a greater voter turnout is essential to a healthy democracy. Hawaii's voter turnout is historically appallingly low, and this coming election is crucial to our future. Please help especially rural voters to have easier access to services and all voters to get reliable, unbiased information. Thank you!

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE  
Rep. Chris Todd, Chair  
Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair

HEARING:  
Wednesday, February 25, 2026 at 2:00 pm  
Conference Room 308 and Via Videoconference  
State Capitol

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 1525, HD1, RELATING TO ELECTIONS.**

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, my Rep. Miyake for Wailuku, Rep. Yamashita of Maui, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Christine Andrews and I am a long-time resident of Wailuku, Maui. I write to you today in **support of HB 1525, HD1, Relating to Elections**. This bill appropriates funds to the counties for more voter service centers for in-person voting; the Office of Elections to print and mail the digital voter information guide to all registered voters; and the Office of Elections to support a public outreach and engagement campaign to encourage greater voter participation.

I have been an attorney licensed in the State of Hawai'i for over 25 years. I have taken an oath to defend the Constitution and to uphold rule of law. I am deeply troubled by what I have seen over the course of the past year, egregious violations of the Constitution that the courts are standing against. A Minnesota judge recently said in a court ruling that Immigration and Customs Enforcement had violated 96 court orders in Minnesota alone in January, more than most federal agencies have since their creation<sup>1</sup>. The attacks on democratic principles by the federal executive branch are unprecedented.

Mark Elias, noted voting and elections attorney, has stated in a post to Democracy Docket:

The Republican Party is a party of vote suppressors and election deniers. This is no longer a flaw in some members of the GOP; it is the defining feature of the MAGA takeover. Undermining free and fair elections is the central tenet of Trumpism in 2025, and it will be the leading strategy of the GOP in 2026 and beyond....

For the next 11 months, we must approach each day with these questions: What can we do to protect free and fair elections? How can we counter what the GOP is doing? How can we advance the voting rights of every eligible citizen and ensure their ballots are accurately counted and elections properly certified?<sup>2</sup>

As an attorney and concerned citizen, I request that you **support HB1525, HD1** as one mechanism by which we can protect the right to vote and access to that right.

Mahalo nui for taking the threat to democracy and the right to vote seriously,

Christine L. Andrews, J.D.

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.npr.org/2026/01/31/nx-s1-5693175/judge-says-immigration-and-customs-enforcement-has-violated-96-court-orders-this-month-in-minn>

<sup>2</sup> <https://newsletters.democracymarket.com/-the-greatest-threat-to-democracy>

**HB-1525-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 11:28:01 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
William Caron	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and members of the committee,

I am writing in **strong support of HB1525**, which appropriates funding to expand voter service centers, ensure statewide distribution of the voter information guide, and support voter outreach and engagement efforts. This bill is a critical investment in the infrastructure of democracy itself—making voting more accessible, more informed, and more equitable for all Hawai‘i residents.

**Expanding voter service centers makes voting easier for those who need it most.** Working families, kūpuna, students, and rural communities often face significant barriers to participating in elections—long distances, limited hours, inflexible work schedules, or lack of access to reliable mail service. By increasing the number of voter service centers and expanding their hours, HB1525 ensures that every eligible voter has a place to register, update their information, cast a ballot, and get help if they need it. Voting should not be a test of endurance or privilege. This bill brings the ballot box closer to the people.

**Funding the voter information guide ensures voters have clear, accessible, and unbiased information.** In an era of misinformation and confusion, the official voter information guide remains a trusted, nonpartisan resource. It helps voters understand what—and who—they are voting on. But producing and distributing that guide costs money. HB1525 ensures that this essential resource reaches every household, in every community, so that no voter is left guessing.

**Supporting voter outreach ensures these investments are actually used.** Expanding centers and printing guides only matters if people know about them. Outreach and engagement efforts—especially those targeted at historically underrepresented communities—are what turn infrastructure into participation. HB1525 funds the work of connecting eligible voters to the resources this bill provides, closing the gap between what is available and what is accessed.

**Strong democracy requires investment, not just intent.** We often speak of voting as a right and a responsibility. But rights without access are hollow, and responsibility without support is a burden. HB1525 treats voting as what it should be: a system we build, maintain, and improve together.

I urge you to pass this bill. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.



**HB-1525-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 11:34:02 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Greg Kahn	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB1525 because I believe that enhancing Voter Service Centers and mailing candidate statements to voters will increase voter engagement and render a simplified process.

Mahalo,

Greg Kahn

Molokai, Hawaii

**HB-1525-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 11:59:30 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jessica Kuzmier	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, I am writing in support of HB1525 HD1. I feel we really need more in-person Voting Service Centers and I am glad that the Legislature is considering setting aside more funds to support this. Mahalo for your consideration.

**HB-1525-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 12:10:50 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jackie Keefe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jackie Keefe and I am in **strong support of HB1525**, which appropriates funding to expand voter service centers, ensures statewide distribution of the voter information guide, and supports voter outreach and engagement efforts.

As a member of the Green Party, I believe in the importance of democracy. Democracy relies on the ability of *everyone* to participate in our elections. Expanding the number of voter service centers and increasing their hours makes it easier for people to register, vote, and get help, especially for working families, kūpuna, and rural communities. Funding the voter information guide ensures voters have clear, accessible, and unbiased election information. Supporting voter outreach helps ensure these investments are actually used and that eligible voters know where, when, and how to participate.

In-person voter service centers are essential, especially for kūpuna, neighbor island and rural residents, people with disabilities, first time voters, and anyone who needs to address ballot discrepancies.

Over the past two elections, people had to wait hours in line to vote or drive over an hour to reach their closest voter service center.

HB1525 will ensure every vote is cast and all votes are counted.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify

Jackie Keefe, Lahaina

**HB-1525-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 12:13:04 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Nani Brown	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

In a time where democracy seems to be dying, it is important to expand and encourage voting and voting access. I am in strong support of this bill.

Mahalo,

Nani Brown

**HB-1525-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 12:21:17 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Shannon Rudolph	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**SUPPORT**

**HB-1525-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 12:44:37 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Joell Edwards	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Joell Edwards. I am a community advocate and Chair of the Kaua‘i Democratic Party, and I am submitting this testimony in my personal capacity in strong support of HB1525.

In-person voter service centers are essential—especially for kūpuna, neighbor island and rural residents, people with disabilities, first-time voters, and anyone who needs assistance resolving ballot discrepancies.

On Kaua‘i, the nearest in-person voter service center can be over an hour away depending on where you live. For residents on the North Shore and in other rural communities, that distance is not insignificant. It requires time off work, childcare arrangements, transportation, and in some cases navigating limited road access.

While Hawai‘i’s all-mail voting system has increased participation overall, we are also seeing increased attention and reliance on in-person voting services. As that demand grows, we must ensure there are adequate, accessible locations so voters are not discouraged by distance or delay.

HB1525 strengthens our democracy by expanding access points and ensuring that voters across all islands—especially rural communities—have meaningful, practical access to in-person services. No eligible voter should be prevented from participating because the closest center is too far away or lines are too long.

HB1525 will help ensure every vote is cast and all votes are counted.

**HB-1525-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 12:50:01 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Georgia L Hoopes	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

*Dear Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,*

*I am in strong support of HB1525.*

*In-person voter service centers are essential, especially for kūpuna, neighbor island and rural residents, people with disabilities, first time voters, and anyone who needs to address ballot discrepancies.*

*Over the past two elections, people had to wait hours in line to vote or drive over an hour to reach their closest voter service center.*

*{Insert additional comments here}*

*HB1525 will ensure every vote is cast and all votes are counted.*

*Mahalo,*

*Georgia Hoopes, Kalaheo*

**HB-1525-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 12:54:38 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Susan Douglas	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

*Dear Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,*

*I am in strong support of HB1525.*

*In-person voter service centers are essential, especially for kūpuna, neighbor island and rural residents, people with disabilities, first time voters, and anyone who needs to address ballot discrepancies.*

*Over the past two elections, people had to wait hours in line to vote or drive over an hour to reach their closest voter service center.*

*{Insert additional comments here}*

*HB1525 will ensure every vote is cast and all votes are counted.*

*Mahalo,*

**HB-1525-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 1:18:10 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Gregory Misakian	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the FIN Committee,

I currently serve as the President of the Kokua Council, Vice President of the Hawaii Alliance for Retired Americans (HARA), Director, Keoni Ana AOA, and was formerly a Waikiki Neighborhood Board Member from Jan. 2023 until June 2025. I'm also a member of the Good Government Caucus.

I am in strong support of HB1525 HD1. Our kupuna and all residents of Hawaii need to have access to voter service centers near where they live, and also day of election polling places. Voter Guides are also needed to ensure that voters understand what they are voting for.

Respectfully,

Gregory Misakian (as an individual)

**HB-1525-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 1:25:10 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Tara Gregory	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

While I do support Bill 1525 due to the importance of the following:

(1) The counties for more voter service centers for inperson voting; (2) The Office of Elections to print and mail the digital voter information guide to all registered voters; and (3) The Office of Elections to support a public outreach and engagement campaign to encourage greater voter participation.

Point #1 and #2 are good investments.

Point #3 may be best online.

I also want to make it very clear that our voter rolls have not been audited and it is important both at the local and federal level that Scott Nago is held acountable and the Elections Commission, and County Clerk's are as well. Before money is invested in sending out anything, wasted spending is sure to occur if the correct names and addresses of our voters are not addressed properly.

Mahalo. See you tomorrow.