



**TESTIMONY OF
THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
KA 'OIHANA O KA LOIO KUHINA
THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE, 2026**

ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:

H.B. NO. 322, H.D. 1, RELATING TO VOTER REGISTRATION.

BEFORE THE:

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

DATE: Thursday, February 26, 2026 **TIME:** 2:00 p.m.

LOCATION: State Capitol, Room 308

TESTIFIER(S): Anne E. Lopez, Attorney General, or
Jung Min (Charles) Lee, Deputy Attorney General

Chair Todd and Members of the Committee:

The Department of the Attorney General provides the following comments on this bill.

The purpose of this bill is to improve Hawaii's voter participation rate by strengthening the State's automatic voter registration program. The bill updates the State's automatic voter registration framework for Department of Transportation (DOT) transactions and expands its application to additional transaction types, including instruction permits, provisional licenses, duplicate credentials, and renewals. Currently, voter registration is already integrated into driver's license and state identification card transactions, and applicants are provided the opportunity to register or decline as part of the application process.

Under this bill, the submission of an application for a new, renewed, or duplicated instruction permit, provisional license, driver's license, or state identification card would be deemed to authorize the examiner of drivers to collect and electronically transmit the applicant's information to election officials for voter registration or preregistration; provided the applicant is of sufficient age, provides a Hawaii residence address, and has "presented documentation demonstrating United States citizenship." Applicants may decline registration or preregistration through the return form process described in the bill following the mailing of notice by the county clerk. Additionally, the bill allows the Office of Elections to designate other state agencies to implement similar automatic

registration procedures if they already collect proof of citizenship or externally verify citizenship.

The Department is concerned that conditioning DOT transmission on documentary proof of citizenship may create federal preemption risk under the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) for registration used in elections for federal office. The NVRA's motor-voter provision is built around an attestation-based model: it requires an eligibility attestation signed under penalty of perjury, and it limits the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) registration portion to "only the minimum amount of information necessary" for election officials to assess eligibility and administer registration. 52 U.S.C. § 20504(c)(2)(B), (C).

That "minimum information" and attestation framework is problematic for this bill because the bill conditions transmission on additional documentary proof and record-based verification of citizenship status. This requirement could be challenged as exceeding what the NVRA permits in the motor-voter process for federal elections—particularly if the practical effect is to deny the automatic transmission pathway absent documentation. To reduce this risk, the Department recommends removing the bill's documentary-proof condition for DOT transmission and instead relying on the existing attestation-based process, coupled with a "negative screen" that prevents transmission only where the applicant presents documentation demonstrating a lack of United States citizenship.

The Department also notes an internal inconsistency that increases legal and implementation risk. Although the bill conditions DOT transmission on documentary proof and verification of citizenship (page 4, lines 14-15, and page 6, lines 1-2), it also states that "[n]othing in this section shall be construed to... [r]equire documentary proof of citizenship for voter registration or preregistration". (page 11, lines 14-18). To resolve this inconsistency, the Department recommends conforming the operative provisions to this limiting language by removing the documentary-proof condition from the DOT transmission authority, so the statute does not disclaim a proof requirement while effectively imposing one through the DOT automatic registration pathway.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments.

DEPARTMENT OF CUSTOMER SERVICES
KA 'OIHANA LAWELawe KUPA
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

ADMINISTRATION

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February 25, 2026

The Honorable Chris Todd, Chair
The Honorable Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair
and Members of the House Committee on Finance
State Capitol, Conference Room 308
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the House Committee on Finance:

SUBJECT: H.B. No. 322, H.D. 1 - Relating To Voter Registration
HEARING: Thursday, February 26, 2026, 2:00 p.m.

The City and County of Honolulu, Department of Customer Services (CSD), respectfully offers **comments** to H.B. No. 322, H.D. 1, which requires eligible applicants for instruction permits, provisional licenses, driver's licenses, and identification cards to be automatically registered or preregistered to vote unless the applicant opts out. Pursuant to Section 6-402 of the Revised Charter of the City and County of Honolulu, CSD Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) administers, among other things, the motor vehicle driver licensing and state identification card programs for the island of O'ahu. While CSD appreciates the intent of the proposed legislation, we have concerns regarding its application and its legal implications.

CSD supports efforts to increase voter participation, but has concerns regarding the operational and financial impacts the proposed legislation will have on the City and County of Honolulu.

The proposed legislation would require modifications to CSD DMV's information technology system, CSD DMV forms, and CSD DMV internal policies and procedures. Specifically, amendments to sections 11-15.5, 11-15.7, 286-107, 286-110, 286-111, 286-111.5, 286-117, 286-303, 286-303.5, 286-311, and 346-10, Hawaii Revised

Statutes (HRS), would introduce new responsibilities for CSD DMV, including but not limited to:

- Integrating automatic voter registration mechanisms into licensing and identification systems;
- Implementing changes to license renewals (section 286-107, HRS); instruction permits (section 286-110, HRS); applications for licenses, provisional licenses, instruction permits, limited purpose driver's licenses, limited purpose provisional driver's licenses, and limited purpose instruction permits (section 286-111, HRS); duplicate permits, provisional licenses, and licenses (section 286-117, HRS); and identification cards (section 286-303, HRS);
- Ensuring compliance with federal and state data privacy and security requirements; and
- Conducting staff training and public outreach to support implementation and administration of the revised voter registration process.

These additional responsibilities would be true statewide, as each county is responsible for administering licensing and identification programs. Additionally, the proposed legislation may have unintended consequences for Hawai'i's current licensing processes and require further clarification on implementation timelines and funding support from the state.

Given these significant operational considerations, we respectfully request the Legislature provide clear guidance on funding, resources and the necessary time available for implementation. CSD DMV urges the Legislature to consider the impact on county operations and, should this matter move forward, requests a phased approach to implementation that will allow for a reasonable and adequate amount of time for the counties to research and assess implementation requirements, staffing, funding requirements, information technology and other resource impacts, necessary updated administrative procedures, staff training, and good public outreach.

With these considerations in mind, CSD appreciates the opportunity to **comment** on H.B. No. 322, H.D. 1.

Sincerely,

/s/ Kimberly M. Hashiro
Director



**STATE OF HAWAII
OFFICE OF ELECTIONS**

802 LEHUA AVENUE
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. 322, HD 1
RELATING TO VOTER REGISTRATION

February 26, 2026

Chair Todd and members of the House Committee on Finance, thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on House Bill No. 322, HD 1. We appreciate the committee's efforts to expand access to voting and strengthen civic engagement.

This bill authorizes state agencies to implement automatic voter registration if designated by the Office of Elections and requires eligible applicants for instruction permits, provisional licenses, driver's licenses, and identification cards to be automatically registered or preregistered to vote unless the applicant opts out.

Our office supports the intent of the bill as it increases access to voter registration. We would defer to other government agencies and the county clerks regarding the further impacts on operations as well as the implementation.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on House Bill No. 322, HD 1.



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TESTIMONY
TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
ON HOUSE BILL NO. 322 HD1
RELATING TO VOTING

February 26, 2026

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

The Office of the City Clerk generally supports the intent of HB322 HD1. Under Hawai'i's vote-by-mail election system, voter registration has a direct and tangible relationship to voting because a ballot is mailed to every properly registered voter. Expanding voter registration opportunities directly supports voter access and participation. The measure is also consistent with the framework of the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (NVRA), which requires certain agency-based voter registration while authorizing states to designate additional agencies to expand access to registration services. See 52 U.S.C. § 20506(a)(3).

The City's primary concern is with the proposed implementation structure. Federal law already establishes centralized statewide voter registration database administration through the Help America Vote Act of 2002, which requires a single, uniform, official statewide voter registration list. In Hawai'i, this function is carried out through the State Office of Elections that administers the Statewide Voter Registration System's information technology and data transfer functionality.

Consistent with this framework, the Office of Elections should play a central role in coordinating participating agencies, managing data transmission standards and agreements, and receiving and initially processing agency data prior to import into the statewide voter registration system. This centralized role is particularly important because this initiative may create multiple potential points of data intake across participating state agencies, making statewide coordination essential to ensure uniformity, data integrity, and consistent implementation practices.

As currently drafted, the bill appears to create operational impacts for counties while providing limited authority for counties to manage agency participation or compliance. Counties have observed similar structural considerations in the existing driver licensing voter registration program, which also requires the electronic transfer of data. Based on the counties' experience in this context, data transfer functionality remains a challenge that has required significant and ongoing State-level interagency

coordination. Centralized statewide coordination may help support consistent implementation and avoid duplicating similar implementation challenges as additional agencies are designated to participate in data transfer activities.

Since this appears to be creating a new state program, a more effective structure would have the State Office of Elections coordinate directly with participating agencies, manage data transmission arrangements, and conduct statewide quality assurance functions, including the issuance of opt-out mailers. Counties would continue their existing role by processing the returned opt-out notices and any resulting voter record corrections, maintaining statewide uniformity and alignment with State law.

Finally, the bill does not provide funding for implementation. As currently drafted, program costs, including printing and mailing opt-out notices, appear likely to result in implementation costs without an identified appropriation. A state-administered structure would provide the Legislature with a clearer mechanism to directly support implementation costs and ensure consistent execution.

As a county agency, we are unable to provide an estimate of the program costs for “opt out mailers” since we are not certain how many state agencies might be designated and the number of transactions that each may perform in any given year.

For these reasons, the Office of the City Clerk supports the policy intent of HB322 HD1 and respectfully recommends clarifying centralized program administration through the State Office of Elections while preserving counties’ operational role in voter record maintenance and voter correspondence processing.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.





Hawai'i State Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer Plus Commission



Advocating for the Hawai'i LGBTQIA+ Community

Mailing Address: LGBTQ+ Commission, c/o The Department of Human Services,
P.O. Box 339, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96809-0339

Email: hawaiistatelgbtqpluscommission@gmail.com
Web: <https://humanservices.hawaii.gov/lgbtq-commission/>

February 24, 2026

House's Committee on Finance
Hawai'i State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Hearing: Thursday, February 26, 2026, at 2:00 PM

RE: **Strong Support for House Bill 322**

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi and fellow committee members,

I am writing in strong support of House Bill 322 on behalf of the Hawai'i State Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer Plus (LGBTQ+) Commission, which was established by the 2022 Hawai'i State Legislature to

“improve the State's interface with members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, plus community; identify the short- and long-range needs of its members; and ensure that there is an effective means of researching, planning, and advocating for the equity of this population in all aspects of state government.”

The Hawai'i State LGBTQ+ Commission respectfully submits strong support for House Bill 322, which authorizes state agencies to implement automatic voter registration (AVR) when designated by the Hawai'i Office of Elections and requires eligible applicants for instruction permits, provisional licenses, driver's licenses, and state identification cards to be automatically registered or preregistered to vote unless they opt out.

Free and fair access to the ballot is foundational to democracy. For LGBTQIA+ citizens, particularly transgender individuals, young people, Native Hawaiian māhū, people with disabilities, low-income residents, and those experiencing housing instability — bureaucratic barriers can function as disenfranchisement. Automatic voter registration is a commonsense modernization that reduces paperwork, increases accuracy of voter rolls, and ensures that eligible residents are not excluded from civic participation simply because they did not navigate a separate registration process.

LGBTQIA+ communities have historically faced discrimination that discouraged or obstructed participation in public life. Policies that proactively include people in the democratic process help counteract that legacy. AVR is especially impactful for young voters, including those preregistering when obtaining an instruction permit, creating a clear and seamless pathway into civic engagement. Given that LGBTQIA+ youth are disproportionately represented among those facing family rejection, housing instability, and economic hardship, reducing administrative hurdles to registration is both equitable and necessary.

Proudly established pursuant to Hawai'i Revised Statutes Chapter 369, as enacted through Act 41, Session Laws of Hawai'i 2022

HI State LGBTQ+ Commission Testimony in Support of HB 322

Importantly, House Bill 322 preserves individual choice through a clear opt-out provision. This balances accessibility with personal autonomy while strengthening the integrity and completeness of Hawai'i's voter rolls.

At a time when voting access is being restricted in many parts of the country, Hawai'i has the opportunity to lead by example — affirming that democracy works best when participation is broad, inclusive, and accessible.

If you or any member of your staff has any questions regarding my testimony you can reach me at hawaiistatelgbtqpluscommission@gmail.com.

Mahalo nui loa for your time and consideration,

Sandy Harjo Livingston (he/him/they/them)
Chair
[Hawai'i State LGBTQ+ Commission](#)

[Inclusive LGBTQIA+ Glossary](#)

The [Hawai'i State LGBTQ+ Commission](#) has this webpage and that is dedicated to understanding and being able to use the correct terms when talking about the rainbow community from māhū to LGBTQIA+ to QTPI+ to MVPFAFF+ and beyond. The list found on this page is not an exhaustive list and will be updated as appropriate.



Committee on Finance
Chair Chris Todd, Vice Chair Jenna Takenouchi
Thursday, February 26, 2026
Room 308 & VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE
HB 322 HD1 – RELATING TO VOTER REGISTRATION

TESTIMONY

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

Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Committee Members:

The League of Women Voters of Hawaii comments on HB 322 that would strengthen the State's automatic voter registration program.

The League of Women Voters of Hawaii (LWV) agrees with the premise of this bill, that it is important to expand our State's 2021 Automatic Voter Registration law. Hawaii has a significant number of unregistered, potentially eligible voters.¹

In its current form, this measure does not include an applicant's signature in the list of information an agency collects that is transmitted as voter registration information. An applicant's signature is critical to the voter registration process. This measure would have an impact on County clerks requiring careful coordination between participating State agencies and County clerks.

While the State Department of Transportation and other State agencies collect relevant voting data, including citizenship status, this does not include a determination of citizenship status, which the LWV thinks should continue to be left to the County clerks. We suggest amending this measure to make this clear, including not requiring state agencies to collect information about citizenship.

The existing Hawaii Automatic Voter Registration Law requires the Department of Transportation to affirmatively ask an applicant whether they would like to register to vote. The applicant must choose to vote or decline before the application is complete. The LWV finds this appropriate.

We support a modest appropriation to implement any expanded automatic voter registration program and defer to State and County officials for a recommended amount.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

¹In the 2024 General Election, Hawaii had 861,000 registered voters and a voting age population of 1,153,000. The 2024 percentage of registered voters declined from 2022 and from 2020.
<https://files.hawaii.gov/dbedt/economic/databook/2024-individual/08/080124.pdf>



HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
HB322 HD1 Relating to Voter Registration
February 26, 2026, at 2:00 PM, State Capitol CR 308 and Videoconference

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

Thank you for allowing me to testify in OPPOSITION to HB 322 HD 1 for the following reasons:

1. DMV customers should NOT have to Opt-Out. There is no presumption that every DMV customer wants to be automatically registered to vote. They should be given the option to Opt-In and provide proof of U.S. Citizenship with a valid government ID.
2. Registering to vote online creates no paper trail, raising the risk of election fraud due to insufficient security measures and lack of physical evidence.
3. There are concerns regarding privacy and data security when information is transmitted from the DMV to the County Clerk's offices. Systems are vulnerable to online hacking.
4. If not approached in a neutral manner, this could result in political bias, and participants might feel compelled to register or vote.
5. The expenses associated with buying and operating a digital platform will increase rapidly, and taxpayers will be responsible for covering these costs.

A key drawback of online voter registration is reduced public trust, which could worsen declining confidence in U.S. elections.

Solutions and Comments

1. No cost solution: Provide applicants with Voter Registration information
2. Implement the SAVE America Act
 - Require individuals to present an eligible photo identification document before voting.
 - Require states to obtain proof of citizenship – in person – when registering an individual to vote.
 - Require states to remove non-citizens from existing voter rolls.

For these reasons, please vote NO on HB322 HD1. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully submitted,
Jamie Detwiler, President, Hawaiian Islands Republican Women



February 24, 2026

House's Committee on Finance
Hawai'i State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Hearing: Thursday, February 26, 2026 at 2:00 PM

RE: **STRONG SUPPPRT for House Bill 322 HD 1**

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice-Chair Takenouchi and fellow committee members,

Pride at Work – Hawai'i is an official chapter of [Pride at Work](#) which is a national nonprofit organization that represents LGBTQIA+ union members and their allies. We are an officially recognized constituency group of the AFL-CIO that organizes mutual support between the organized Labor Movement and the LGBTQIA+ Community to further social and economic justice. We write in **strong support of House Bill 322**.

House Bill 322 authorizes state agencies to implement automatic voter registration (AVR), when designated by the Hawai'i Office of Elections, and ensures that eligible residents applying for instruction permits, provisional licenses, driver's licenses, or state identification cards are automatically registered or preregistered to vote unless they choose to opt out.

For working people, democracy must be accessible. Many union members juggle multiple jobs, caregiving responsibilities, and long shifts. Requiring a separate voter registration process creates unnecessary barriers that disproportionately impact low-wage workers, young workers, rural residents, and those without stable housing. Automatic voter registration is a simple, efficient reform that meets people where they already are — at the point of interaction with government services.

For māhū, LGBTQIA+ and QTPI+ workers, access to the ballot is not theoretical. It is directly tied to workplace protections, nondiscrimination laws, collective bargaining rights, healthcare access, and policies that protect transgender workers from discrimination. When barriers to voting exist, it is marginalized communities — including queer and trans workers — who are most likely to be left out of the democratic process.

AVR strengthens the accuracy of voter rolls, reduces administrative costs over time, and increases participation without mandating participation. The opt-out provision

Pride at Work – Hawai'i's Testimony in STRONG SUPPORT of Re: HB 322 HD 1

preserves individual choice while shifting the system toward inclusion rather than exclusion.

At a time when anti-worker and anti-LGBTQIA+ legislation is advancing in many parts of the country, Hawai'i can continue to lead by expanding access to democracy. Strong unions depend on strong civic engagement, and strong civic engagement depends on removing unnecessary obstacles to voter participation.

Pride at Work – Hawai'i respectfully urges the Committee to pass House Bill 322 HD 1.

In Solidarity,

Michael Golojuch, Jr. (he/him)

President

[Pride at Work – Hawai'i](#)



HA‘AHEO, ‘OHANA, KAULIKE, UI
Pride Family Justice Activate
WHERE PRIDE BECOMES POLITICAL POWER

Website: www.hokupac.org ♦ Email: info@hokupac.org

February 24, 2026

House’s Committee on Finance
Hawai‘i State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Hearing: Thursday, February 26, 2026 at 2:00 PM

RE: STRONG SUPPORT for House Bill 322 HD 1 - RELATING TO VOTER REGISTRATION

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice-Chair Takenouchi and fellow committee members,

This testimony on behalf of **HOKU PAC**, Hawai‘i’s LGBTQ+ political action committee dedicated to building queer political power and advancing policies that protect our communities. We write in **strong support of House Bill 322 House Draft 1**.

This measure authorizes state agencies, when designated by the Hawai‘i Office of Elections, to implement automatic voter registration (AVR) and requires that eligible applicants for instruction permits, provisional licenses, driver’s licenses, and state identification cards be automatically registered or preregistered to vote unless they opt out.

HOKU PAC was founded to advance the political power and civic engagement of Hawai‘i’s LGBTQIA+ community. We understand firsthand that political participation is not conceptual — it directly impacts whether our community has protections against discrimination, access to affirming healthcare, safe schools for māhū, LGBTQIA+ and QTPI+ youth, and equal treatment under the law.

Automatic voter registration is a proven, secure, and efficient way to modernize our elections system. It removes unnecessary bureaucratic hurdles that disproportionately affect young people, low-income residents, people experiencing housing instability, kūpuna who may have difficulty navigating paperwork, and transgender individuals whose documentation may not always align due to systemic barriers. By shifting from an “opt-in” to an “opt-out” system, House Bill 322 makes participation the default while fully preserving individual choice.

At a time when many states are restricting access to the ballot, often in ways that disproportionately silence marginalized communities, Hawai‘i has the opportunity to reaffirm its commitment to inclusive democracy. Expanding voter registration strengthens the legitimacy of our government and ensures that elected officials are accountable to the full diversity of our state.

Democracy works best when it is accessible. House Bill 322 is a practical, commonsense reform that expands participation, improves accuracy of voter rolls, and upholds the fundamental right to vote.

HOKU PAC respectfully urges the Committee to pass House Bill 322.

Paid for by HOKU PAC – Not Authorized by any Candidate or Candidate Committee



**House Committee on Finance
Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action (HAPA) Strongly Supports HB322 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 HB322 HD1. This measure strengthens Hawai'i's automatic voter registration system by moving from an opt-in to an opt-out model during qualifying transactions at the DMV — including instruction permits, provisional licenses, driver's licenses, and state IDs. When residents provide verified information to the State, including proof of U.S. citizenship, this bill ensures that information can be securely and efficiently used to register or preregister eligible voters unless they choose to decline.

HB 322 HD1 also allows the Office of Elections to designate additional state agencies to participate in automatic voter registration, as long as those agencies already collect and verify key information, including citizenship. This expands access responsibly by using existing, secure government records. It does not change who is eligible to vote, does not register non-citizens, and preserves every individual's right to opt out.

This bill reduces administrative errors, keeps voter rolls more accurate and up to date, and helps eligible residents stay registered when they move or update their identification.

We often say we want young people more engaged in our democracy. This bill makes that possible in a practical way. Research from the Center for American Progress found that automatic voter registration in Oregon registered more than 116,000 people who otherwise would not have registered. Forty percent of those registered through AVR were under age 30, compared to just 13 percent under the traditional system. That is what removing barriers looks like in real terms.

Across the country, automatic voter registration has increased participation among young voters, working families, and historically underrepresented communities, while also improving efficiency for election officials and reducing paperwork burdens.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge support for HB322 HD1.

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

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



FEBRUARY 26, 2026

HOUSE BILL 322 HD1

CURRENT REFERRAL: FIN

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Kris Coffield,
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David Negaard,
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Mireille Ellsworth,
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Director

Beatrice DeRego,
Director

Corey Rosenlee,
Director

Amy Zhao,
*Policy and Partnerships
Strategist*

POSITION: SUPPORT

Imua Alliance supports HB 322 HD1, relating to voter registration, which authorizes state agencies to implement automatic voter registration if designated by the Office of Elections; and requires eligible applicants for instruction permits, provisional licenses, driver's licenses, and identification cards to be automatically registered or preregistered to vote unless the applicant opts out.

Imua Alliance is a Hawai'i-based organization dedicated to ending all forms of exploitation, which necessitates strengthening access to democracy. Government should work for the public interest, not special interests.

Our democracy belongs to we, the people. At a time when our nation is experiencing extreme political turmoil and basic civil liberties—including the right to vote—are under assault, we must take steps in Hawai'i to safeguard democratic participation. Every eligible person should be able to register to vote in a convenient and secure way that is beneficial to new voters and administrators alike. Key voter registration improvements can elevate electoral confidence, save public funds, and preserve the voice of our community in determining the course of our society's future.

In 2021, Hawai'i established automatic voter registration to increase the state's historically low voter participation rates. Yet, the automatic voter registration system established by the legislature was an opt-in system that places responsibility for registration on individual voters, thereby failing to fully include the total potential population of new voters. This undermines the full impact of our automatic voter registration program, which is desperately needed to curb low voting rates. **In the 2024 primary election, for example, our state experienced its lowest turnout in 65 years, with only 32.1 percent of registered voters filling out a ballot.**

To improve those statistics, we must enact measures that strengthen the right to vote. This measure will make registration more efficient by empowering applications at public-facing state agencies—such as for Med-Quest licenses, permits, change of address forms, recertifications, or services offered by the state—to serve as “dual-purpose” voter registration applications, with the applicant being given the option to affirmatively declines (rather than being forced to affirmatively opt-in) to voter registration or preregistration.

This will change our automatic voter registration system from an “opt in” to an “opt out” model, which will guarantee that the intent of the program—to maximize democratic participation by making voter registration as “automatic” as possible—is fully effectuated, especially in light of other forward-thinking electoral programs that the state has undertaken, like mail-in voting.

We are especially hopeful that this proposal will strengthen democratic participation by enabling survivors of gender violence and sexual exploitation to engage more fully and safely in civic life. **Survivors frequently face barriers to participation—including trauma, fear of retaliation, economic instability, and distrust of institutions—that can silence their voices in public processes.** By removing structural obstacles to voter registration, this bill helps create a more inclusive democratic space. In this way, the bill enhances Hawai‘i’s democratic fabric by empowering historically underrepresented voices to participate with dignity and confidence in our civic processes.

Women, racial minorities, and members of the working class fought for years to obtain the right to vote. Sadly, we are seeing draconian efforts today to roll back those rights to entrench the power of autocratic regimes. We cannot allow these authoritarian actions to go unchallenged. We have a responsibility to fortify the voting franchise for generations to come.

With aloha,

Kris Coffield

President, Imua Alliance

HB-322-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 9:42:16 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
David Ball	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this legislation as a civic educator committed to strengthening Hawaii's democracy. Youth engagement in our civic processes is the wellspring of Hawaii's future civic health.

With aloha,

David Ball

Waialae-Kahala

HB-322-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 10:16:52 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nicholas Zehr	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in opposition to HB322. The goal of increasing civic participation is important. However, this bill shifts Hawai‘i from an opt-in system of voter registration to a default enrollment model that presumes consent unless an individual actively declines. Voting is a fundamental right, but it is also a deliberate civic act. Registration should reflect an individual’s clear and affirmative choice, not an automatic byproduct of obtaining a driver’s license, instruction permit, identification card, or public assistance.

HB322 requires broad data sharing between the Department of Transportation, county clerks, and other state agencies, including transmission of sensitive personal information such as partial Social Security numbers, digitized signatures, contact information, and citizenship status. Expanding automatic data transfers across multiple agencies increases cybersecurity risks and the potential for administrative error. Even with safeguards, large interconnected databases are attractive targets and vulnerable to mistakes that can undermine public confidence in election integrity.

The bill also treats silence as consent. Many residents, particularly young drivers, new immigrants navigating documentation, and individuals interacting with state services for non-political purposes, may not fully understand that their information will be transmitted for voter registration unless they act to opt out. Civic participation should be built on informed, affirmative engagement, not default enrollment.

Importantly, Hawai‘i already offers same-day registration and accessible online registration. The barrier to registration is not lack of opportunity but lack of trust and engagement. Strengthening civic education, transparency, and public confidence in elections would more meaningfully improve participation than expanding automatic enrollment through administrative channels.

Finally, automatic systems inevitably create edge cases involving residency changes, duplicate records, and citizenship verification inconsistencies. Even if rare, such errors can fuel skepticism and litigation, distracting from the shared goal of fair and secure elections.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to reject HB322 and instead pursue reforms that enhance participation while preserving individual consent, data privacy, and public trust. Mahalo for your consideration.

HB-322-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 6:55:55 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
B.A. McClintock	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this bill. Mahalo.

HB-322-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 12:11:54 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Philip Morgan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this bill. Support for new voters to be automatically enrolled as voters will help voters gain access especially in this time when there are forces looking to limit voter access. This bill will help to keep democracy strong.

HB-322-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 5:53:23 PM

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 HB322**, which would authorize state agencies to implement automatic voter registration when designated by the Office of Elections, including at driver's licensing offices. This bill is a straightforward, modern update to how we register voters—one that will strengthen democracy by making registration the rule, not the exception.

HB322 removes unnecessary barriers to the ballot. Under this bill, eligible applicants for instruction permits, provisional licenses, driver's licenses, and state ID cards would be automatically registered or preregistered to vote unless they choose to opt out. This shifts the default from "registration requires effort" to "registration is automatic unless you decline." For young people, for working families, for anyone who has ever missed a registration deadline or found the process confusing—this is transformative.

Automatic registration is both efficient and secure. It relies on information already provided to state agencies, reducing paperwork, eliminating duplicate data entry, and minimizing errors. It ensures that voter rolls are more accurate and up to date, because they draw directly from verified sources. And because the process is opt-out, it preserves every individual's right to choose whether to participate.

This bill strengthens democracy by making it work for everyone. Voter registration should not be a hurdle to clear; it should be a seamless part of interacting with your government. When we make it easier to register, we make it easier to participate. And when more people participate, our elections better reflect the will of the people.

States across the country have already adopted automatic voter registration with success. It is time for Hawai'i to do the same.

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

HB-322-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 7:21:08 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cheryl Rzonca	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose HB322. Voter registration should not be automatic. Please don't allow.

HB-322-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 12:17:18 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nani Brown	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

Let's make our democracy stronger by expanding access; making it truly automatic. I strongly support this bill.

Mahalo,

Nani Brown

HB-322-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 12:21:11 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 HB322 HD1**, which makes registering to vote easier and more efficient for everyone. Your information is shared securely between state agencies and election officials to ensure that voter registration is accurate and up-to-date. The system will not process your registration if you're not a U.S. citizen.

As a member of the Green Party, I recognize the importance not only of every person's right to vote but that our voting populace reflects our entire community in Hawai'i. By integrating voter registration into everyday interactions with state agencies, more people are likely to register to vote since it simplifies registering. The bill balances ease of registration with personal choice by allowing individuals to opt out easily if they prefer not to participate.

Please stand for democracy and **pass HB322 HD1!**

Mahalo for your consideration.

Jackie Keefe, Lahaina

HB-322-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 9:58:57 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Corinne Solomon	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose HB322 HB1

HB-322-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 12:23:10 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shannon Rudolph	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUPPORT

HB-322-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 12:41:20 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joell Edwards	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair 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 HB322.

In my years working on community outreach and campaigns, I have met many eligible voters who believed they were registered—only to discover outdated addresses or incomplete records when election time arrived. Others assumed they had registered through a government interaction but had not. In rural communities like ours on Kaua‘i, where residents may already face transportation and access barriers, even small administrative hurdles can suppress participation.

HB322 removes unnecessary friction. It simplifies the process while maintaining the integrity of our voter rolls through secure and accurate information sharing. Importantly, it preserves individual choice by allowing residents to opt out and includes safeguards to prevent the registration of non-citizens.

If we are serious about increasing voter participation, we must make registration seamless, accurate, and accessible. HB322 does exactly that—strengthening both participation and public confidence in our elections.

Mahalo for your consideration.

HB-322-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 12:56:07 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Susan Douglas	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TY!

HB-322-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 12:56:27 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:

Aloha, Chair Martin, Vice Chair Olds, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Georgia Hoopes, and I am writing in STRONG support of HB322, which expands Automatic Voter Registration (AVR) by integrating voter registration with state agencies, permits, programs, or services with "dual-purpose applications," allowing individuals to register to vote, update their voter information, or decline to register through a checkbox.

This reform simplifies the registration process, ensuring that more eligible residents can easily register to vote while maintaining the integrity of our voter rolls through secure and accurate information sharing. The bill also respects personal choice by allowing individuals to opt-out and safeguards to prevent the registration of non-citizens.

Mahalo!

Georgia Hoopes, Kalaheo

HB-322-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 1:38:25 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jessica Kuzmier	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, I'm writing in favor of this bill because I believe any policy that makes registering to vote easier is a win for all of us and our democracy. Mahalo.

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 322, HD1, RELATING TO VOTER REGISTRATION.

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 322, HD1, Relating to Voter Registration**. This bill authorizes state agencies to implement automatic voter registration if designated by the Office of Elections; and requires eligible applicants for instruction permits, provisional licenses, driver's licenses, and identification cards to be automatically registered or preregistered to vote unless the applicant opts out.

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 creation¹. 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?²

As an attorney and concerned citizen, I request that you **support HB322, HD1** as one mechanism by which we can protect the right to vote and access to that right. Many states already have automatic voter registration, and ensuring an engaged electorate by enhancing access to the vote is critical at this time.

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

Christine L. Andrews, J.D.

¹<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>

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