
HOUSE RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE OFFICE OF ELECTIONS TO CONVENE A WORKING GROUP TO EXAMINE THE FISCAL IMPACTS, POTENTIAL COST SAVINGS, ADMINISTRATIVE CONSIDERATIONS, AND BROADER POLICY IMPLICATIONS OF ELIMINATING PRIMARY ELECTIONS AND IMPLEMENTING RANKED-CHOICE VOTING IN GENERAL AND SPECIAL ELECTIONS.

1 WHEREAS, Hawaii's primary election system fails to engage a
2 majority of registered voters; and

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4 WHEREAS, in 2024, of the 839,618 registered voters in
5 Hawaii, only 271,345 voters participated in the primary
6 election, representing 32.3 percent turnout, compared to 522,236
7 voters, or 60.7 percent, who participated in the general
8 election; and

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10 WHEREAS, Hawaii's open primary system permits voters
11 registered with one political party to select another party's
12 ballot, thereby altering the traditional purpose of party
13 nomination processes; and

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15 WHEREAS, under the plurality system, candidates may be
16 elected without majority support when multiple candidates divide
17 the vote in crowded races; and

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19 WHEREAS, primary elections cost Hawaii taxpayers more than
20 \$5,000,000 to administer, including costs for staffing and
21 labor, facilities and equipment, printing and postage,
22 tabulation, and election logistics; and

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24 WHEREAS, ranked-choice voting is an electoral method used
25 for more than a century in countries such as Australia, Ireland,
26 and Malta, demonstrating long-term reliability and
27 effectiveness; and



1 WHEREAS, ranked-choice voting requires a candidate in a
2 single-seat race to obtain fifty percent of the vote plus one,
3 thereby ensuring majority support; and

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5 WHEREAS, ranked-choice voting mitigates the "spoiler
6 effect", allowing voters to rank candidates in order of
7 preference so that votes are not wasted and similarly positioned
8 candidates do not disadvantage one another; and

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10 WHEREAS, jurisdictions utilizing ranked-choice voting
11 report that more than ninety percent of voters help elect one of
12 their top three choices, voter turnout increases by five to
13 seven percent, and campaign discourse becomes less negative; and

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15 WHEREAS, the Legislature enacted Act 47, Session Laws of
16 Hawaii 2022, which established ranked-choice voting for special
17 federal elections and special elections to fill vacant county
18 council seats; and

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20 WHEREAS, eliminating primary elections and implementing
21 ranked-choice voting in general elections may expand voter
22 participation in candidate selection, reduce costs, and promote
23 a more representative and democratic electoral process; now,
24 therefore,

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26 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
27 Thirty-third Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session
28 of 2026, that the Office of Elections is requested to convene a
29 working group to examine the fiscal impacts, potential cost
30 savings, administrative considerations, and broader policy
31 implications of eliminating primary elections and implementing
32 ranked-choice voting in general and special elections; and

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34 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the working group is requested
35 to consist of the following members:

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37 (1) The Chief Election Officer, or the Chief Election
38 Officer's designee, who is requested to serve as chair
39 of the working group;
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41 (2) The Attorney General, or the Attorney General's
42 designee;



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(3) One member of the House of Representatives, to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives;

(4) One member of the Senate, to be appointed by the President of the Senate;

(5) Members representing political parties in the State, to be invited by the chair; and

(6) Members of the public with expertise in election administration and public finance, to be invited by the chair; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the working group is requested to:

(1) Conduct a comprehensive fiscal analysis comparing the current costs of administering primary and general elections with the projected costs of conducting a single general election utilizing ranked-choice voting;

(2) Evaluate the administrative, technological, and voter education requirements associated with statewide implementation of ranked-choice voting;

(3) Examine voter turnout data and electoral outcomes in jurisdictions that have adopted ranked-choice voting;

(4) Assess legal and constitutional considerations, including potential amendments to articles II and III of the Hawaii State Constitution;

(5) Analyze the projected impact of eliminating primary elections on political parties, candidates, and voter participation; and

(6) Develop recommendations regarding whether to propose constitutional amendments to:



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1 (A) Require ranked-choice voting in general and
2 special elections; and

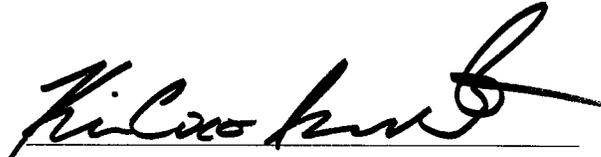
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4 (B) Eliminate primary elections; and

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6 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the working group is requested
7 to submit a report of its findings and recommendations,
8 including any proposed legislation, to the Legislature no later
9 than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session
10 of 2027; and

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12 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the working group shall cease
13 to exist on June 30, 2027; and

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15 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
16 Resolution be transmitted to the Attorney General and Chief
17 Election Officer.

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OFFERED BY: 
MAR 16 2026

