

MAR 16 2026

SENATE RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE BUREAU TO CONDUCT A STUDY TO DETERMINE THE NECESSARY STEPS TO REPLACE THE CHIEF ELECTION OFFICER WITH THE SECRETARY OF STATE, ELECTED BY VOTERS, TO OVERSEE ELECTIONS.

1 WHEREAS, in 1993, the United States Congress enacted the
2 National Voter Registration Act, which mandated that each state
3 designate a chief election official to oversee elections in that
4 state; and

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6 WHEREAS, each state has enacted its own legislation
7 relating to elections and, therefore, no two states have the
8 exact same election administration mechanisms, including
9 election boards or commissions, secretaries of state, and chief
10 election officers; and

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12 WHEREAS, duties of the chief election official or election
13 board vary, and in some states, their secretary of state
14 maintains additional duties outside of election oversight,
15 including but not limited to campaign finance regulation and
16 licensing in the State; and

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18 WHEREAS, in Hawaii, article IV, section 3, of the Hawaii
19 State Constitution, requires the Legislature to provide for a
20 Chief Election Officer of the State; and

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22 WHEREAS, pursuant to section 11-1.6, Hawaii Revised
23 Statutes, the Chief Election Officer is appointed by the State's
24 Elections Commission and the appointment is not subject to the
25 advice and consent of the Senate nor is the position elected by
26 voters; and

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28 WHEREAS, forty-seven states have the position of secretary
29 of state and thirty-three states elect their chief election
30 official; and

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32 WHEREAS, while decentralized and state-based election
33 systems are critical to adaptability and fraud prevention,
34 aligning Hawaii's elections procedures with other states would



1 promote better standardization within the states' voting
2 systems; now, therefore,

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4 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-third
5 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2026,
6 that the Legislative Reference Bureau is requested to conduct a
7 study to assess existing legal authority establishing and
8 governing the state official responsible for supervising
9 elections in the State and determine the necessary steps,
10 including legislation, that would be required to replace the
11 Chief Election Officer with a Secretary of State, elected by
12 voters, to oversee elections; and

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14 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Reference
15 Bureau is requested to submit a report of its findings and
16 recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the
17 Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of
18 the regular session of 2027; and

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20 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a certified copy of this
21 Resolution be transmitted to the Director of the Legislative
22 Reference Bureau.

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24
25 OFFERED BY: _____

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, written over a horizontal line.