

STAND. COM. REP. NO. 2822

Honolulu, Hawaii

MAR 05 2026

RE: S.B. No. 2480
S.D. 1

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President of the Senate
Thirty-Third State Legislature
Regular Session of 2026
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Judiciary, to which was referred S.B. No. 2480 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO ELECTIONS,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to:

- (1) Allow voters in a primary or special primary election to vote for any candidate for any office without regard to the voter or candidate's political party preference; and
- (2) Advance the top two candidates in a primary or special primary election, regardless of political party, to the general election.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from Indivisible Hawai'i and forty individuals.

Your Committee received testimony in opposition to this measure from the Libertarian Party of Hawaii, Green Party of Hawai'i, Hawaiian Islands Republican Women, and five individuals.

Your Committee received comments on this measure from the League of Women Voters of Hawaii and two individuals.



Your Committee finds that several states use an electoral system that allows all candidates from all parties to compete in the primary election. Following the primary election, the top two candidates, regardless of political party, compete in the general election. Expanding the primary election to include all candidates from all parties would expand voter choice and encourage voters to select the candidate rather than the party. This measure will improve voter engagement and ensure that elections are more inclusive and competitive.

Your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Repealing the requirement that a voter in any primary or special primary election shall be entitled to vote only for candidates of one party or only for nonpartisan candidates in accordance with the voter's selection of party ballot, to conform to amendments made by this measure;
- (2) Inserting an effective date of March 22, 2075, to encourage further discussion; and
- (3) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity and consistency.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Judiciary that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of S.B. No. 2480, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 2480, S.D. 1, and be placed on the calendar for Third Reading.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Judiciary,



KARL RHOADS, Chair



