



**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 JUDICIARY & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS  
ON SENATE BILL NO. 2239, SD 1  
RELATING TO VOTER REGISTRATION

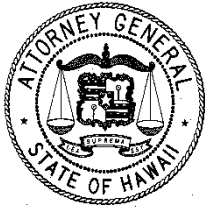
March 25, 2026

Chair Tarnas and members of the House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs, thank you for the opportunity to provide comments regarding Senate Bill No. 2239, SD 1. We appreciate the committee's efforts to expand access to voting and strengthen civic engagement.

This bill requires a person who applies for an identification card or driver's license to be automatically registered to vote unless the person affirmatively declines; and requires the name and address of a person who applies for an identification card or driver's license and is registered to vote to be automatically updated on the person's voter registration record unless the person affirmatively declines.

Our office supports the intent of this bill to increase access to voter registration. We would defer to the other government agencies and county clerks regarding impacts to operations as well as the implementation. We additionally want to highlight that the federal National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) requires that an applicant affirmatively attests to the qualifications to vote, which in Hawaii are, United State citizen, 16 years of age or older (must be 18 to vote), and a resident of the State.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on Senate Bill No. 2239, SD 1.



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

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**ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:**

S.B. NO. 2239, S.D. 1, RELATING TO VOTER REGISTRATION.

**BEFORE THE:**

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

**DATE:** Wednesday, March 25, 2026      **TIME:** 2:00 p.m.

**LOCATION:** State Capitol, Room 325

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

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Chair Tarnas and Members of the Committee:

The Department of the Attorney General provides the following comments.

This bill has changed substantially between introduction and Senate Draft 1. The original bill proposed to amend section 11-15.5, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), to allow certain state agencies to offer "dual-purpose applications" that would serve as both agency service applications and voter registration applications. The Senate Committee on Judiciary deleted that framework entirely. Senate Draft 1 instead amends sections 11-15.7, 286-111.5, and 286-303.5, HRS, to convert Hawaii's existing driver's license and state identification card voter registration system from an opt-in system to an opt-out system. Under Senate Draft 1, an applicant for a driver's license or state identification card would be automatically registered to vote unless the applicant affirmatively declines. An already registered voter's name and address changes on the application would also be automatically updated on the voter registration record unless the applicant affirmatively declines.

The Department notes the following concern.

Section 11-15, HRS, requires voter registration by affidavit with attestations of United States citizenship, age, and residency. The National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) similarly requires that a motor-voter application form include a statement specifying each eligibility requirement, an attestation that the applicant meets each requirement, and the signature of the applicant under penalty of perjury. See 52 U.S.C.

section 20504(c)(2)(C). Senate Draft 1 does not amend section 11-15, HRS, and does not specify how automatic registration through the driver's license or identification card application satisfies these state and federal attestation requirements. Under the current opt-in system, the applicant's affirmative choice to register and sign the form can be read as providing the required attestation under both state and federal law. Under the proposed opt-out system, an applicant registered by default may not have affirmatively attested to eligibility or signed a statement under penalty of perjury in connection with voter registration.

To address this concern, the Legislature may wish to consider amendments that require the driver's license or state identification card application form to include the attestations required by section 11-15, HRS, and 52 U.S.C. section 20504(c)(2)(C), paired with a clear and conspicuous notice that submission of the application without declining voter registration will result in automatic voter registration or, for an already registered voter, automatic update of the voter registration record.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments.



LATE \*Testimony submitted late may not be considered by the Committee for decision making purposes.

# 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

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March 24, 2026

House's Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs  
Hawai'i State Capitol  
415 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, HI 96813

Hearing: Wednesday, March 25, 2026, at 2:00 PM

**RE: Strong Support for Senate Bill 2239 SD 1**

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and fellow committee members,

I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 2239 SD 1 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 offers its strong support for SB 2239, which establishes automatic voter registration for individuals applying for a driver's license or state identification card, and ensures that voter registration records are updated unless a person affirmatively declines.

This measure is a critical step toward strengthening democracy in Hawai'i by removing unnecessary barriers to civic participation. Automatic voter registration is a proven, efficient, and secure method to increase voter engagement while improving the accuracy of voter rolls. By streamlining the process, SB 2239 ensures that more eligible residents—particularly those from historically underrepresented communities—can exercise their fundamental right to vote.

For māhū, LGBTQIA+, and QTPI+ individuals, access to fair and equitable participation in the democratic process is especially vital. Members of our community, particularly māhū, transgender, QTPI+ and nonbinary individuals, often face unique challenges when navigating identification systems due to discrepancies in personal documentation. By integrating voter registration with existing state processes and allowing individuals to

*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 SB 2239 SD 1

opt out if they choose, this bill reduces administrative burdens while respecting personal autonomy.

Additionally, automatic updates to voter registration records when individuals update their identification information will help ensure that voter rolls remain accurate and current. This is especially important for individuals who may move frequently or who are in the process of aligning their legal documents with their lived identity. SB 2239 supports both accessibility and integrity in our electoral system.

Hawai'i has long been a leader in expanding access to voting, and this measure continues that legacy by modernizing and simplifying voter registration in a way that benefits all residents. It reflects our shared commitment to an inclusive democracy where every eligible voice has the opportunity to be heard.

For these reasons, the Hawai'i State LGBTQ+ Commission respectfully urges the Committee to pass SB 2239 SD 1.

If you or any member of your staff has any questions regarding my testimony you can reach me at [hawaiistatelgbtqpluscommission@gmail.com](mailto:hawaiistatelgbtqpluscommission@gmail.com).

Mahalo nui loa for your time and consideration,

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

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### [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.

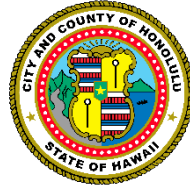
**LATE**

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

ADMINISTRATION

925 DILLINGHAM BOULEVARD, SUITE 257 • HONOLULU, HAWAII 96817  
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RICK BLANGIARDI  
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KIMBERLY M. HASHIRO  
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PO'O

MEGAN JOHNSON  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
HOPE PO'O

March 25, 2026

The Honorable David A. Tarnas, Chair  
The Honorable Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair  
and Members of the House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs  
State Capitol, Conference Room 325  
415 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs:

SUBJECT: S.B. No. 2239, S.D. 1 - Relating To Voter Registration  
HEARING: Wednesday, March 25, 2026, 2:00 p.m.

The City and County of Honolulu, Department of Customer Services (CSD) offers **comments** to S.B. No. 2239, S.D. 1, which requires eligible applicants for driver's licenses and identification cards to be automatically registered to vote unless the applicant affirmatively declines, and requires the name and address of a person who applies for an identification card or driver's license and is registered to vote to be automatically updated on the person's voter registration record unless the person affirmatively declines. 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 11-15.7, 286-111.5, and 286-303.5, 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 applications for civil identification cards and driver's licenses;
- 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 S.B. No. 2239, S.D. 1.

Sincerely,

*for* Kimberly M. Hashiro  
Director



MARCH 25, 2026

## SENATE BILL 2239 SD1

CURRENT REFERRAL: JHA

808-679-7454  
kris@imuaalliance.org  
www.imuaalliance.org  
@imuaalliance

Kris Coffield,  
*President*

David Negaard,  
*Director*

Mireille Ellsworth,  
*Director*

Justin Salisbury,  
*Director*

Eileen Roco,  
*Director*

Beatrice DeRego,  
*Director*

Corey Rosenlee,  
*Director*

Amy Zhao,  
*Policy and Partnerships  
Strategist*

### POSITION: SUPPORT

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Imua Alliance supports SB 2239 SD1, relating to voter registration, which requires a person who applies for an identification card or driver's license to be automatically registered to vote unless the person affirmatively declines; and requires the name and address of a person who applies for an identification card or driver's license and is registered to vote to be automatically updated on the person's voter registration record unless the person affirmatively declines.

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.**

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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 effectively change our automatic voter registration system from an “opt in” to an “opt out” model, guaranteeing 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



Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs  
Rep. David A. Tarnas, Chair and Rep. Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair  
Wednesday, March 25, 2026, 2:00 p.m.  
Conference Room 325 & Videoconference

SB 2239, SD1 – RELATING TO VOTER REGISTRATION

TESTIMONY

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

Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Committee Members:

**The League of Women Voters of Hawaii comments on SB2239 SD1 intended to** strengthen the State’s automatic voter registration program. We have a substantial number of unregistered, potentially eligible voters, and the percentage of those eligible to vote has apparently declined in recent years.<sup>1</sup> Those who support democracy, including the League of Women Voters of Hawaii, want to improve this situation.

This bill suggests a major change to Hawaii’s automatic voter registration program which is currently administered through the Department of Transportation. Applicants for instruction permits, provisional licenses, driver’s licenses, and identification cards would be automatically registered or preregistered to vote, ***unless the applicant affirmatively declines to register.***

This language is somewhat different than other “opt out” approaches. However, we believe an “opt in” approach is preferable because it places the responsibility for registration on the individual voter. The “opt out” approach proposed in this bill may strike some as coercive. Our view is that applicants should willingly attest that they wish to register to vote.

The last paragraph of Section 1 states that the “examiner of drivers shall not transmit any information .... if the applicant presents a document demonstrating a lack of United States citizenship.” We support the current statute which makes County Clerks responsible for determining citizenship for voter registration purposes, (not the Department of Transportation as described in this section).

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<sup>1</sup> In the 2022 General Election, the voting-eligible population was estimated at 1,046,736 people, yet our total turnout was only 423,443, some 40.5%. Source: <https://elections.hawaii.gov/election-results/https://election.lab.ufl.edu>

If the legislature chooses to pass this measure, requirements for successful implementation need further attention. Though not specified in this bill, we expect that County Clerks would incur expense to mail new registrants an “opt-out” verification card post registration. Modifications to information technology systems and internal policies and procedures would also be needed, as previously noted by the Honolulu Department of Community Services. Other counties would likely face similar issues. We recommend that estimates of these costs be collected, and an appropriation be included in this bill.

We acknowledge that Hawaii’s current automatic Motor-Voter–style opt-in process requiring affirmative consent and signature differs from the opt-out automatic voter registration systems that are used in more than 20 states and the District of Columbia. However, given the current Federal efforts to influence voter registration, we hope the Legislature will adopt an effective date and adequate financing to ensure effective implementation.

Regardless of the outcome of this measure, more voter education about how to register to vote is needed. Elections officials will play a vital role in keeping the public informed about any changes in registration procedures such as those contemplated in this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.



SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY and HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS  
SB 2239 SD1 Relating to Voter Registration  
March 25, 2026, at 2:00 PM, State Capitol CR 325 and Videoconference

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in OPPOSITION to SB 2239 SD1 for the following reasons:

1. Dual-purpose applications that include automatic voter registration lack a paper trail which increases the vulnerability of election fraud.

- SD1 reinforces the “automatic” OPT-IN provision of this bill, stipulating that applicants shall be registered to vote by default unless they explicitly choose to opt out. Additionally, address information will be updated automatically. It is important to consider whether the voter registration system has the capability to identify duplicate applications submitted under different addresses.

2. Privacy Concerns: Automatic voter registration raises concerns about data security and privacy by exposing voter information to malicious or unauthorized use as information is transmitted online.

3. It could strain resources and administrative capacities on state agencies, County Clerks, and the Office of Elections. While dual-purpose applications can save election officials money over time, switching from manual to automatic voter registration requires investing in certain startup costs

4. Is the County Clerk going to check for duplication of voter registration submissions? Individuals may be recipients of services from multiple state agencies such as DHS and DLIR.

5. Newly registered voters added to the database will worsen problems in the voter rolls, which already include names of deceased people and those who moved out of state, according to the Chief Elections Officer.

### **Recommended Solutions**

Implement the procedures defined in the SAVE America Act:

1. Require individuals to present an eligible photo identification document before voting.
2. Require states to obtain proof of citizenship – in person – when registering an individual to vote.
3. Require states to remove non-citizens from existing voter rolls.

Please vote NO on SB 2239 SD1. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully submitted,

Jamie Detwiler, President, Hawaiian Islands Republican Women



March 24, 2026

House's Committee on Health and Human Services  
Hawai'i State Capitol  
415 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, HI 96813

Hearing: Wednesday, March 25, 2026, at 2:00 PM

**RE: Strong Support for Senate Bill 2239**

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe 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 Senate Bill 2238 SD 1**.

Pride at Work – Hawai'i proudly stands in strong support of SB 2239, which would establish automatic voter registration for individuals applying for a driver's license or state identification card, and ensure voter registration records are updated unless a person affirmatively declines.

As an organization representing māhū, LGBTQIA+ and QTPI+ workers and their families across Hawai'i, we know that access to democracy is inseparable from economic justice. Working people, especially those in marginalized communities, often face unnecessary barriers to voter registration, including time constraints, frequent moves, and complicated bureaucratic processes. SB 2239 removes these barriers by meeting people where they already are: interacting with state services.

Automatic voter registration is a commonsense, efficient reform that strengthens participation while maintaining individual choice. By shifting from an "opt-in" to an "opt-out" system, this measure empowers more working people to engage in the democratic process without adding additional burdens to their already busy lives. At the same time, it respects personal freedom by allowing individuals to decline registration if they choose.

For LGBTQIA+, māhū, and QTPI+ workers, this bill carries additional significance. Many in our community, particularly māhū, QTPI+, transgender and nonbinary individuals, navigate complex systems when updating identification documents to reflect their names and identities. Ensuring that voter registration information is automatically updated alongside those changes reduces the risk of disenfranchisement and helps affirm the dignity and full participation of our community members in civic life.

Pride at Work – Hawai'i's Testimony in STRONG SUPPORT of Re: SB 2239 SD 1

SB 2239 also improves the accuracy of voter rolls, reducing outdated registrations and helping ensure smoother elections. A modern, efficient system benefits not only voters, but also the state agencies and election officials tasked with administering our elections.

At its core, this bill is about fairness. It recognizes that democracy works best when it is accessible to all, not just those with the time and resources to navigate outdated systems. Expanding voter registration strengthens the collective voice of working people and helps ensure that elected leaders are accountable to the full diversity of Hawai'i's communities.

For these reasons, Pride at Work – Hawai'i strongly urges the Committee to pass SB 2239.

In Solidarity,

Michael Golojuch, Jr. (he/him)

President

[Pride at Work – Hawai'i](#)



**H.O.K.U.**  
POLITICAL ACTION  
COMMITTEE

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

Website: [www.hokupac.org](http://www.hokupac.org) ♦ Email: [info@hokupac.org](mailto:info@hokupac.org)

March 24, 2026

House’s Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs  
Hawai‘i State Capitol  
415 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, HI 96813

Hearing: Wednesday, March 25, 2026 at 2:00 PM

**RE: STRONG SUPPORT for Senate Bill 2239 – Relating to VOTER REGISTRATION.**

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice-Chair Poepoe 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. HOKU PAC submits this testimony in unequivocal support of SB 2239 SD 1.

At its core, this bill is about whether our democracy reflects the people it is meant to serve. Right now, participation in our elections still depends too heavily on whether someone has the time, information, and stability to navigate a separate voter registration process. SB 2239 corrects that imbalance by making voter registration a standard part of engaging with government—simple, seamless, and expected—while preserving every individual’s right to opt out.

Hawai‘i’s communities are dynamic. People move, change jobs, transition in their identities, and rebuild their lives. Yet our voter registration system too often lags behind those realities. By automatically registering eligible voters and updating their information when they interact with the state through driver’s licenses or identification cards, this measure ensures that our election system keeps pace with the lives people are actually living.

For QTPI+, LGBTQIA+, and māhū individuals—especially those whose names or gender markers have changed—outdated records can create confusion, barriers, and, in some cases, discouragement from participating at all. SB 2239 helps eliminate those friction points. It affirms that participating in democracy should not require navigating unnecessary administrative hurdles or risking mismatched documentation.

This bill also reflects a broader principle: access should be the default, not the exception. When government systems are designed to include people automatically, participation grows, representation improves, and trust in public institutions is strengthened.

HOKU PAC believes that a healthy democracy is one where every eligible person is not just allowed, but enabled, to participate fully. SB 2239 SD 1 moves Hawai‘i closer to that vision in a practical, responsible, and forward-thinking way.

We respectfully urge the Committee to pass this measure.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in strong support.

**LATE**

## *Responsive* GOV ACTION

March 25, 2026

Re: Letter of Support for HB 322

Dear Chair Rhoads and Members of the Committee:

Responsive Gov Action is a non-partisan organization that works to identify and promote practical solutions that make government more efficient, accessible, and responsive to residents. We write this letter in strong support of HB 322. We respectfully urge this committee to adopt the House-passed language of HB 322 by substituting it into the current Senate bill, SB 2239. By aligning the Senate's action to match the House-passed version of HB 322, Hawaii can ensure a streamlined transition to a model that has already been adopted by 11 other states and Washington, D.C.

Despite improvements in Hawaii's election laws in recent years, there are still roughly 200,000 eligible but unregistered U.S. citizens in the state. Put another way, roughly 20% of Hawaii's eligible voter population is not currently registered. HB 322 provides a critical opportunity to add these eligible voters to the rolls in a secure and efficient manner.

Specifically, the House version of the bill would authorize the "examiner of drivers" to transmit voter registration information to county clerks in order to automatically and securely register people to vote if they have already presented all of the information needed to verify their voter eligibility. It would not require any other agency to implement automatic voter registration, instead merely permitting the Office of Elections to name other automatic voter registration agencies later on, in the event that future circumstances make it feasible for other agencies to adopt an automatic voter registration process.

Importantly, HB 322 does not create a new documentary proof of citizenship (DPOC) requirement. Instead, it simply utilizes the information already provided during a transaction—such as applying for a Real ID—to confirm citizenship without asking the individual to re-verify their citizenship status. In these cases, the DMV transmits only the minimum necessary data to the clerk—confirmation of citizenship, age, and residency—rather than the underlying citizenship documents themselves. For individuals whose citizenship is not clearly established by their provided documents, the option to attest to their status remains available. This ensures, for example, that someone applying for a Real ID at a Driver Licensing Center who presents a U.S. birth certificate, U.S. citizen passport, or naturalization certificate—and who is of sufficient age

to register or pre-register to vote—would be automatically sent to the county clerk for voter registration. They would be given an opportunity to decline registration through a post-transaction mailer, but they would not have to take any additional steps to be added to the voter rolls.

This bill also contains vital safeguards for non-citizens. Under the bill, if someone presents proof of non-citizenship—like a green card—during their transaction, they will not be asked whether they want to register to vote. This ensures that someone who is limited English proficient or just in a rush will not accidentally attempt to register to vote. This protects the individual from the severe criminal and immigration consequences that could result from a false attestation of citizenship.

Also importantly, the bill automates address updates for those who are already registered—so if someone goes into a Driver Licensing Center or updates their address online, their voter registration address is updated automatically. This will ensure vital election mail—including mail-in ballots—are sent to the right address.

Beyond these systemic improvements, HB 322 streamlines agency transactions by reducing the number of questions about voter registration that government agencies must ask applicants. Shorter transactions reduce lines and improve overall taxpayer satisfaction, and by extension contribute to significant time and cost savings for the State.

Our analysis of HB 322 indicates that Hawaii would see a net savings of approximately \$309,077 in the first year of implementation, even after accounting for up-front costs. Building on that initial return, we estimate that Hawaii can expect an ongoing net savings of roughly \$626,587 in off-years and \$1,363,907 in election years once this model is fully implemented. By registering voters and updating registrations during state agency transactions, this system reduces time spent manually processing paper forms, decreases undeliverable mail, and mitigates registration issues on Election Day—cutting unnecessary costs for election officials and taxpayers alike.

These changes also relieve the significant burden election officials face in processing paper voter registration applications and address updates and reduce the number of undeliverable mail ballots, saving election officials time. When Massachusetts implemented this system, it saw a 45% reduction in paper voter registration forms, and when Delaware adopted this system, it saw a 91% reduction in paper voter registration forms.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Comparison of the number of paper-based forms received in 2020 against the number of paper-based forms received in 2024. U.S. Election Assistance Comm.: EAVS Data Interactive: EAVS Voter Registration 2 -

This bill improves voter access and election security by registering eligible voters, making it easier to vote by mail, protecting non-citizens, reducing burdens on election officials, and saving taxpayer money. This is why eleven other states and Washington, D.C. have already adopted this system, and it has become the gold standard for automatic voter registration. We strongly encourage the committee to support it.

For more information or any questions, we can be reached at [info@responsivegovaction.org](mailto:info@responsivegovaction.org).

**SB-2239-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 1:58:35 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Victor K. Ramos	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strongly OPPOSE. This bill is inheretly wrong. This bill assumes that everyone obtaining their HDL is a citizen of this Nation.

**SB-2239-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 2:28:37 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/25/2026 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 SB2239, which strengthens Hawai‘i’s automatic voter registration system by shifting from an opt-in model to an opt-out model when eligible residents apply for or renew a driver’s license or state identification card. This bill also ensures that the name and address of an applicant who is already registered to vote is automatically updated unless the applicant affirmatively declines.

**The Problem: Hawai‘i’s Voter Turnout Crisis**

Hawai‘i has a well-documented problem with voter participation. More than half of the state’s registered voters have shown up for an election just once since 1998. Other than that, turnout never reached 43%, and was at its lowest during the most recent elections—just 32% in 2024. These numbers are not just statistics; they represent a democratic deficit that leaves our policies and priorities shaped by a fraction of the population.

Currently, Hawai‘i has an automatic voter registration system, but it follows an "opt-in" model. Eligible residents must choose registration when they apply for or renew their driver’s license or state ID. This places the burden of registration on individual voters, and too many eligible residents either forget to check the box or are unaware that the option exists.

**What SB2239 Does**

This bill makes two critical changes:

1. **Opt-Out, Not Opt-In:** The bill shifts Hawai‘i’s automatic voter registration system to an opt-out model. When eligible residents apply for or renew a driver’s license or state ID, they will be automatically registered to vote unless they affirmatively decline. This simple change removes an unnecessary barrier without forcing anyone to register against their will.
2. **Automatic Address Updates:** The bill requires that the name and address of an applicant who is already registered to vote be automatically updated on the voter registration record unless the applicant affirmatively declines. This ensures that voter rolls remain accurate and that voters do not lose their ability to participate simply because they moved.

## **Why This Matters**

Automatic voter registration is a proven, practical reform that strengthens democracy without compromising election integrity.

Importantly, this bill does not change who is eligible to vote. It **does not** register non-citizens. It does not remove any existing safeguards. It simply modernizes how eligible voters are added to the rolls using existing, verified government records.

## **Addressing Concerns**

Opponents may raise concerns about election security and integrity. But automatic voter registration is widely used across the country, and there is no evidence that it compromises election security. In fact, by ensuring that voter rolls are updated with accurate, current information from DMV records, it improves the accuracy and integrity of those rolls.

The bill also preserves voter choice at every step. No one is registered without their knowledge or against their will. The opt-out model simply shifts the default from "you must choose to register" to "we will register you unless you choose not to be."

## **A Step Toward a More Inclusive Democracy**

The purpose of SB2239 is to improve voter participation in Hawai'i. As the House Judiciary Committee report on a similar measure noted, "every eligible person should be able to register to vote in a convenient and secure manner that benefits both new voters and election administrators. Improving voter registration processes can help ensure state election systems remain secure and efficient, safeguard the integrity of votes, and reduce administrative costs."

When we make it easier to register, we make it easier to vote. And when more people vote, our government becomes more representative, more accountable, and more responsive to the needs of all Hawai'i residents.

SB2239 is a straightforward, common-sense reform that builds on the success of Hawai'i's existing automatic voter registration system. By shifting to an opt-out model and ensuring automatic address updates, it removes unnecessary barriers, improves the accuracy of voter rolls, and strengthens our democracy. I urge this committee to pass SB2239.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

**SB-2239-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 2:50:57 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
cheryl burghardt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I SUPPORT this bill SB 2239 SD1

Cheryl Burghardt

Nuuanu Oahu

**SB-2239-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 6:17:05 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry, COMMENT 2239 SB RELATING TO VOTER REGISTRATION.

IF ONE DOES NOT VOTE IN 2 CYCLE, WILL THAT INDIVIDUAL NAME BE REMOVED FROM THE VOTER'S REGISTRATION LIST?

I VOTE BECAUSE WOMEN FOUGHT TO GIVE ME THAT RIGHT!

**SB-2239-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 11:54:44 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Beth Anderson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support SB 2239. Voter turnout in our State is dismal. We need to do everything we can to make it easier to vote, and to be registered to vote.

Thank you.

**SB-2239-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/24/2026 11:55:03 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Christine L. Andrews, J.D.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I respectfully request your support of this pro-voting measure.

Christine Andrews, JD

**SB-2239-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/24/2026 10:22:21 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
John Terry	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on SB 2239.

I understand the intent of this bill is to increase voter participation and make registration more convenient. Civic participation is important, and we should encourage eligible citizens to vote. However, I oppose SB2239, having concerns about automatic voter registration and automatic updates to voter records, particularly regarding eligibility verification and the potential impact on the integrity of our election system.

One concern is that driver's licenses and state identification cards are issued to individuals who are legally present in the United States but are not U.S. citizens. These individuals may be lawful permanent residents, visa holders, or other non-citizens who are legally allowed to obtain a Hawai'i driver's license or state ID. If voter registration is automatic unless a person declines, the system must be extremely accurate in distinguishing between citizens and non-citizens. Any administrative error, data entry mistake, or system mismatch could result in a non-citizen being unintentionally registered to vote.

This creates two serious problems. First, a non-citizen who is mistakenly registered could unknowingly commit a crime by voting when they are not eligible to do so. Second, and just as important, even a small number of these errors can reduce public confidence in the accuracy and integrity of our voter registration system.

Voting is one of the most important rights and responsibilities of American citizenship. It is not just a convenience — it is a civic duty and a core part of what it means to be a citizen. Because of that, voter registration should be a deliberate act where a person affirms that they are a U.S. citizen and eligible to vote. An opt-in system, where a person clearly chooses to register and confirms their eligibility, helps protect both the individual and the integrity of the system.

When voter registration becomes automatic unless declined, the responsibility shifts from the individual to the government system. No system is perfect, and even small errors can have serious consequences, both legally and in terms of public trust.

This issue is not about discouraging voting. It is about making sure that voter registration is accurate, that only eligible citizens are registered, and that the voting rights of American citizens are protected and preserved. Public confidence in elections depends not only on access, but also on accuracy, integrity, and trust in the system.

I respectfully oppose SB2239 and suggest that if the Legislature wishes to make voter registration easier, it should do so in a way that still requires individuals to affirmatively opt in and confirm their eligibility, rather than being automatically registered unless they decline.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important issue.

Respectfully submitted,  
John Terry