



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Higher Education
Tuesday, February 6, 2024, at 3:00 p.m.

By

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SB 2004 – RELATING TO ELECTIONS

Chair Kim, Vice Chair Kidani, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on the designation of each University of Hawai'i (UH) campus as a voter service agency and the designation of each UH campus as a voter service center. UH is supportive of all efforts to encourage people to vote, but these particular revisions may not be necessary.

Section 2 of the bill would be revised to designate each University of Hawai'i campus as a voter service agency as defined in the National Voter Registration Act of 1993. The National Voter Registration Act of 1993 identifies the following requirements for a voter service agency:

“Section 20506, (a)(4)(A) At each voter registration agency, the following services shall be made available:

- (i) Distribution of mail voter registration application forms in accordance with paragraph (6).
- (ii) Assistance to applicants in completing voter registration application forms, unless the applicant refuses such assistance.
- (iii) Acceptance of completed voter registration application forms for transmittal to the appropriate State election official.”

Given that all Hawai'i residents can register to vote online, accepting and transmitting paper copies of voter registrations would be a less-than-ideal requirement in the digital age. Thus, it is unclear what additional services UH would provide if designated as a voter service agency.

Furthermore, UH already provides voter registration information on its systemwide website: <https://www.hawaii.edu/offices/student-affairs/voter-registration/>. This website hosts information on registering to vote, including a link to the online voter registration

form. It also provides information about where on each campus a student interested in registering to vote by paper form would go or if they need additional voting information.

SB 2004 also amends Section 5(a) to provide that the University of Hawai'i will be a voter service center. According to the City and County of Honolulu website, now that the State has moved to mail-in ballots, existing voter service centers are designated at Honolulu Hale and Kapolei Hale. (See: <https://www.honolulu.gov/elections/voting/voter-service-centers.html>). Similar county-level services exist for other areas.

Creating a voter service center at each campus in the UH system may be unnecessary, given the statewide transition to mail-in ballots, and cause logistical issues. UH would need to identify dedicated facilities on each campus for the ten days required for such a service center, and it is not clear how these centers would be staffed or if the election offices need these additional facilities. Requiring additional voter service centers may cause county elections offices logistical and personnel challenges, especially if UH employees would be expected to staff the service centers.

Regarding Section 4 (a)(2) regarding the use of student identification as ID for the purposes of establishing identity to vote, please be advised that student ID cards do not include a signature or an expiration date and are issued not only to residents of the State of Hawai'i but also to out-of-state residents, exchange and international students, and adjunct affiliate faculty/staff.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this bill.