



**STATE OF HAWAII
OFFICE OF ELECTIONS**

802 LEHUA AVENUE
PEARL CITY, HAWAII 96782

DWAYNE D. YOSHINA
CHIEF ELECTION OFFICER

**TESTIMONY OF THE
CHIEF ELECTION OFFICER, OFFICE OF ELECTIONS
TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
ON SENATE BILL NO. 2560
RELATING TO INSTANT RUNOFF VOTING**

February 9, 2006

Chair Ige and members of the Senate Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs, thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on Senate Bill No. 2560. The purpose of this bill is to:

- Provide for instant runoff voting for all county elections in which no primary election is held;
- Define "instant runoff method"; and
- Provide for method of voting, counting votes, and certifying results using the instant runoff method.

It is our understanding that "instant runoff voting" allows voters, at their option, to rank candidates in order of preference. If no candidate receives a majority of votes, the candidate with the least number of votes is eliminated and the votes for that candidate are transferred to their second choice candidate. This system works in races where there can only be one winner, i.e., mayoral, county prosecutor, and gubernatorial races.

The Office of Elections takes no position on the intent of Senate Bill No. 2560; however, we offer the following comments for your consideration:

1. ADDITIONAL COST FOR HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE PROGRAMMING

The unique method of counting may require additional programming/coding. If additional programming/coding is necessary, the vendor will be responsible for the additional programming/coding.

If necessary, this programming/coding may entail additional costs to the State. Monies would need to be appropriated should this bill be enacted.

It should also be noted that after the 2006 Elections the State's current contract for a voting and vote counting system will expire and the State will need to procure a new voting system for the 2008 Elections. At this time we do not know what the cost of that new voting system will be or if it would be able to accommodate "instant runoff voting".

2. NEW BALLOT DESIGN

The unique method of voting will require a new ballot design to support the instant runoff method of casting and tabulating votes. Again, this may incur additional costs to the state.

3. VOTER CONFUSION

The instant runoff voting method will likely cause initial voter confusion on Election Day. Currently, many voters do not understand Hawaii's single party primary and the difference between nonpartisan candidates and nonpartisan contests, e.g., Board of Education contests, County contests, and bipartisan Special Election contests. Adding instant runoff voting to the list will add to further voter confusion.

4. VOTER EDUCATION

Voter education will be required to inform and educate the voters and to minimize voter confusion. Funding will be required for voter education should this amendment be enacted.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on Senate Bill No.