



**STATE OF HAWAII
OFFICE OF ELECTIONS**

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SCOTT T. NAGO
CHIEF ELECTION OFFICER

August 14, 2013

To: Elections Commission

From: Scott T. Nago
Chief Election Officer

Re: STATUS OF OPERATIONS

Since our last meeting, the Office of Elections has been focused on the online voter registration project and preparations for the 2014 Elections.

Status of Online Voter Registration Project (Act 225, SLH 2012)

As reported at our last meeting, we have procured a professional services consultant to work with us on developing and designing a new statewide voter registration system (SVRS), with an online voter registration component, that will be able to communicate with the state driver license and state identification card databases that are maintained by the City and County of Honolulu's Department of Information Technology (DIT).

Given the counties and State's responsibilities regarding voter registration under state and federal law, the counties are an integral part of the development of such a system. With this in mind, we held a SVRS development kick-off meeting with the four counties, the consultant, and the Office of Elections on June 13, 2013. At that meeting, we began the discussion of determining what all interested stakeholders would want in terms of functionality of the SVRS.

Subsequently, our vendor has been working with our computer services section to develop a draft of the technical specifications of the SVRS, so as to facilitate further discussions with the county clerks, ICSD, and the City and County of Honolulu's DIT.

On-site meetings have been scheduled in each county this month to further discuss the unique end-user needs of each county, to further refine the requirements of the SVRS.

As the state driver license and state identification card databases are maintained by the City and County of Honolulu's Department of Information Technology, on behalf of the State Department of Transportation, a meeting is being held with the City to discuss the technical aspects of ensuring that any new SVRS will be able to communicate with those databases, so as to validate an online voter registration applicant's identity.

Additionally, we have obtained approval from the Comptroller that the Information and Communication Services Division (ICSD) has been authorized to dedicate staff to participate and consult in our development of the SVRS.

ICSD's input is necessary to ensure that whatever path we go down will be consistent with ICSD's resources and vision of how best to integrate the project with the state's overall information technology infrastructure. ICSD plans, coordinates, organizes, directs, and administers services to insure the efficient and effective development of systems. With that in mind, we need to understand what type of resources ICSD will be able to dedicate to the development and maintenance of the SVRS.

For example, depending on its staff and resources, ICSD may suggest they are able to provide technical support for certain types of programs or technologies that we may be considering. As such, the specifications for the project would need to be revised.

Additionally, there may be specific issues regarding the ability to host the SVRS with ICSD or privately that they would be in the best position to comment on, such as resources, cost, and technical issues.

Finally, as the SVRS will be a significant project in terms of funding and resources, we need to discuss whether the SVRS envisioned will require additional staffing for ICSD and/or the Office of Elections, in addition to other carrying costs. If so, this may require seeking authorization for additional personnel and funding, depending on the results of our discussions.

With this in mind, we have had discussions with the Department of Budget and Finance and the Department of Accounting and General Services to ensure that we follow the appropriate procedures, to the extent we need to pursue the authorization of additional personnel and funding.

Preparations for the 2014 Elections

The Office of Elections continues to prepare for the 2014 Elections. The following are a few highlights of that process.

1. Determination of Polling Places

The Office of Elections has been coordinating with the counties to make determinations as to whether any polling places should be closed and new ones opened based on input gathered from members of the Legislature and the general public. Input generally focuses on availability of parking and the distance that voters need to travel.

Part of this process includes obtaining confirmations from the various locations that serve as polling places to confirm that they will be available for the Primary and General Elections. To the extent they are not available we have to find comparable locations to establish the polling place. This has included having to do site visits to determine handicap accessibility, availability of parking, and general suitability of the location.

The determination of the exact polling places, impacts a variety of matters such as determining the most efficient route, time, and load schedule for the delivery and return of ballots and supplies on election day, in addition to the recruitment of precinct officials.

2. Determination of Training Locations

The Office of Elections has been obtaining confirmations from various facilities to serve as training facilities on various dates across the state for the training of precinct officials, voter assistance officials, precinct chairs, facility officials, trouble shooters, and control center operators. In situations in which a facility is no longer available we have had to research other facilities.

3. Review of Delivery and Collection Procedures

As part of the ongoing process of attempting to improve our delivery and collection procedures, staff reviewed the efficiency of the ballot seal control form (BSCF) which is utilized for documenting the chain of custody for ballots, precinct cans, DRE-Judge's Booth Controller, Voted Ballot Option Printers, and memory cards. This document is utilized by the delivery control team members, precinct chairs, and counting center staff. It was determined that the form should be revised. After discussion with the counties a new more user friendly form was approved.

In regard to precinct cans, in 2012, the precincts were each assigned two standard size precinct cans, given that the poll books took up more space than in previous years. As some election day officials were confused by the existence of

two precinct cans as opposed to one for a precinct, despite training on the matter, it was determined that we should simply go back to one precinct can. As such, we are now ordering larger precinct cans which will get rid of the need to have two precinct cans and the associated inventory control issues.

4. Updating of Manuals

As expressed in our last report, we updated our standard operating procedures based on our experience in the last election cycle. Similarly, we have been updating our manuals for precinct officials, voting assistance officials, precinct chairs, facility officials, trouble shooters, delivery and collection team members, control center operators, counting center staff, and official observers, based on what was learned from the last election.

5. Voter Outreach

Staff has been focused on voter outreach in the community as it relates to registering voters and providing voter education. This included attempts to develop working relationships with entities to encourage voter registration.

In regard to state government agencies, we are surveying all state departments to determine which ones may have recently qualified to be covered by the National Voter Registration Act. Specifically, the law requires the Chief Election Officer to “designate as voter registration agencies -- (a) all offices in the State that provide public assistance; and (b) all offices in the State that provide State-funded programs primarily engaged in providing services to persons with disabilities.” 42 § USC 1973gg-5(a)(2).

Under the federal law, these agencies will provide voter registration materials and assistance in voter registration, if necessary, in addition to completing collected applications for delivery to election officials. In the past, these programs were generally associated with the Department of Health and the Department of Human Services. However, it is possible in recent years that other state agencies may have taken on new programs that fall within the scope of the law. As such, the survey appeared appropriate to conduct.

In addition to the mandatory voter registration agencies, the Chief Election Officer may designate other offices within the State as voter registration agencies. This may include a variety of government offices, such as, but not limited to, post offices, libraries, schools, government revenue offices, and unemployment compensation offices. 42 § USC 1973gg-5(a)(3). Historically, we have tried to encourage such government offices to voluntarily agree to display voter registration applications for citizens to take to fill out and return to election

officials. Generally, most departments are willing to display the voter registration applications, and we receive requests to replenish their stock of forms when they run out.

In regard to the Department of Education, given its unique role that permits it to provide civics education as part of its curriculum and our laws allowing people to preregister to vote at the age of 16, we have tried to work cooperatively with them to utilize our Young Voter Registration Program (YVRP) to make voter registration available to all eligible students.

As previously expressed in our letter to Senator Les Ihara, Jr., which was also provided to the Elections Commission, the YVRP program involves the distribution of voter registration packets to high schools statewide. There is no restriction on the DOE's ability to develop its own program or curriculum by which it could distribute and collect voter registration forms.

We have been in discussions with DOE Educational Specialist Rosanna Fukuda about YVRP, and have reiterated our support and willingness to work with the DOE on the continued implementation of the program, or in the alternative, whatever they believe the civic education component might be more appropriate as it relates to the educational mission of the DOE.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (808) 453-VOTE (8683) or 1-800-442-VOTE (8683).