



**STATE OF HAWAII  
OFFICE OF ELECTIONS**

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SCOTT T. NAGO  
CHIEF ELECTION OFFICER

December 6, 2018

To: Elections Commission

From: Scott T. Nago  
Chief Election Officer

Re: Status of Operations

More than 3,500 Election Day Officials and government agencies worked together to conduct a secure, accessible, and convenient election for their community. Over 398,000 voters cast their ballot in the 2018 General Election on Tuesday, November 6. Of those voters, 56% cast their ballot prior to Election Day compared to 44% who voted at their polling place.

### **POLLING PLACES**

In the 2018 Primary Election, we reported issues related to construction at multiple polling places and we faced similar issues in the General Election. Due to asbestos at Crestview Community Center, over 2,300 voters of 35-04 were moved to Central Oahu Regional Park, Aquatics Center Room. This required special dispensation from the Department of Parks and Recreation and the land donors. We mailed these voters a notice on September 19, 2018 that their polling place had changed, and posted signs at Crestview Community Park directing voters to their proper polling place. Additionally, flooding at Puueo Community Center following the tropical storms in August required us to relocate the polling place to Haaheo Elementary School. We mailed a letter on September 24, 2018 to approximately 1,700 voters of 01-07, notifying them of the polling place change.

### **POLL WATCHERS**

Poll Watchers are appointed by qualified political parties prior to each election. The deadline to submit the names of Poll Watchers for the General Election was Saturday, October 27, 2018 at 4:30 p.m. Following the deadline, we verify that the Poll Watchers are registered voters, notify the Precinct Chairpersons, and

create badges to ensure access to the polling place. Only one Poll Watcher of the represented political party may be present in a polling place at a time. We only received appointments from the Hawaii Republican Party to serve as Poll Watchers for the 2018 General Election. A candidate of the Hawaii Republican Party attempted to appoint Poll Watchers but was not allowed to do so as, pursuant to State law, names may only be provided by a qualified political party. Additionally, the Democratic Party of Hawaii did not meet the deadline.

## **POLLING PLACE OPERATIONS**

Teams of volunteers at the polling place assist voters and ensure the security and integrity of the election. Prior to the polls opening, Precinct Officials conduct a series of checks to accept custody of ballots and supplies, update the poll book, and verify that there are no votes recorded on the voting equipment. When the polls open, the first voter verifies that the ballot box is empty before it is locked and secured.

Throughout the day, as voters arrive, they are directed to the check-in station to receive a ballot. Each voter is instructed to confirm their registration and sign the poll book to indicate that they received and cast a ballot. Voters are then directed to a voting booth to make their selections. If a voter makes an error while voting, they may spoil their ballot and receive a new one. The voter must surrender the spoiled ballot and may be issued only one ballot at a time. Spoiled ballots are collected and secured by the Precinct Chairperson.

Voters who cast a paper ballot deposit it in the eScan voting equipment to be counted. If there is an incident with the eScan voting equipment, the Precinct Chairperson notifies the Control Center for assistance to troubleshoot the device, and if needed, deploy a Technician to the polling place. The Precinct Chairperson notifies voters that they may wait for the eScan to be repaired, or deposit their voted ballot in the emergency ballot bin so that voting is not interrupted. Additionally, Precinct Officials may be instructed to pack and secure voted ballots contained in the ballot box if the eScan must be replaced.

Polling place supplies and equipment are packed and secured to be transported to the Counting Center after the close of polls. At the Counting Center, officials conduct audits to ensure the accuracy and integrity of the vote counting system. Teams of volunteers conduct manual audits by hand-counting voted ballots and verifying the totals with the computer-generated result reports. Teams of volunteers also conduct poll book audits to count the number of voters who received and cast a ballot at each polling place. The result of the poll book audit is verified with the turnout on the result reports to ensure that all voted ballots have been accounted for. Following the election, Election Officials conducted a second audit of the poll books to confirm the results.

Throughout the electoral process, the inventory of ballots is strictly managed and controlled. Ballots are inventoried, secured, and tracked from packing through storage following the election. At the close of polls, Precinct Officials inventory the number of unissued ballots before the containers are secured and transported to the Counting Center. Following the election, Election Officials reconcile the ballot inventory based on the number of voted ballots, unissued ballots, as well as spoiled ballots and provisional ballots, to ensure the security and integrity of the election.

On Election Day and through our post-election audits and reconciliations, we have not found any evidence of fraud or errors that would suggest our election has been tampered with.

### **REGISTRATION AFFIDAVIT FORMS**

Election Day registrants complete a *Registration Affidavit Form* that Precinct Officials use to confirm the voter is at the correct polling place. The completed form is forwarded to the Clerk's Office to enter into the statewide voter registration system. *Registration Affidavit Forms* are also used to update voters' registration on Election Day if they have moved.

*Registration Affidavit Forms* are packed in each precinct supply box and the quantity is based on the number of registered voters assigned to the polling place. Precinct Troubleshooters, who support and monitor five to seven polling places on Election Day, are also supplied with extra *Registration Affidavit Forms* to restock any of their polling places that may run low.

There was one incident at 44-01 Waianae Intermediate School which needed to be restocked with *Registration Affidavit Forms*. At approximately 4:30 p.m. on Election Day, we received a call stating that the Precinct Troubleshooter replenished *Registration Affidavit Forms*. At 6:05 p.m. and 6:07 p.m., there were two reports received indicating that both the polling place and the Precinct Troubleshooter were out of *Registration Affidavit Forms*. The Precinct Troubleshooter went to 43-05 Maili Elementary School and 44-02 Makaha Elementary School to obtain blank *Registration Affidavit Forms*, and returned to 44-01 Waianae Intermediate School. Approximately 16 voters at 44-01 were affected by the delay. However, since they were in line before the polls closed, they were allowed to vote.

We have identified that this issue stemmed from reassigning a Precinct Troubleshooter's route on the morning of the election before the polls opened. There are 23 Precinct Troubleshooter volunteers who report to the State Capitol to check in and receive their assignment, and then drive to their assigned polling places on their route. Due to an unforeseen absence, two routes servicing polling places in leeward Oahu were reassigned to cover the additional polling places. However, these routes were only allocated supplies for one route since

they were already in the field. As a result, the Precinct Troubleshooter did not have sufficient *Registration Affidavit Forms* to support each of the assigned polling places. For future elections, we will ensure that Precinct Troubleshooters are first assigned to the farthest routes on Election Day, so we can split routes nearest the State Capitol as a contingency, as well as ensure the Precinct Troubleshooters have an adequate amount of supplies due to reassignments.

### **ABSENTEE MAIL DROP OFF**

State law allows voters to drop off their absentee mail ballot “to any polling place within the county in which the voter is registered and deposited by a precinct official in the ballot box before the closing of the polls on any election day” to be counted. HRS §15-9. Throughout the day, absentee mail ballots are received and secured by the Precinct Chairperson. Upon the close of polls, secured voted absentee mail ballots are transported to the Counting Center. Counting Center Officials accept custody and forward the voted absentee mail ballots to the Clerk’s Office.

The Clerk’s Office also collects voted absentee mail ballots from a final pick up coordinated with the post office prior to the close of polls. The Clerk’s Office is then responsible for validating the voted absentee mail ballots for counting, by matching the signatures and receiving the ballots in the statewide voter registration system.

Validated absentee mail ballots are forwarded to Counting Center Officials to open and count. Absentee mail ballots are opened in multiple steps. First, the return envelopes are cut open, and the secret ballot envelope is removed from the return envelope to ensure voters’ right to secrecy. The work area is cleared of return envelopes before manually opening the secret ballot envelope. Secret ballot envelopes are pull apart envelopes to ensure it is not accidentally damaged upon opening, and no ballot remains when it is discarded. Voted ballots are collected, flattened, and packed to forward to the scanners for counting.

We have always anticipated that these absentee mail ballots will be the last processed and reported on Election Night. As the number of absentee mail ballots dropped off at the polling places and the final post office pick up increases, so does the time required to process and count. Additionally, we also consider the time required to transport and receive supplies and equipment from the polling places. The table below identifies the percent of ballots reporting in each release of result reports on Election Night. All polling places were reporting by Report 4 at 11:23 p.m., while the subsequent results are reporting the final absentee mail ballots. For the 2020 Elections, we will remind voters of the mailing deadlines.

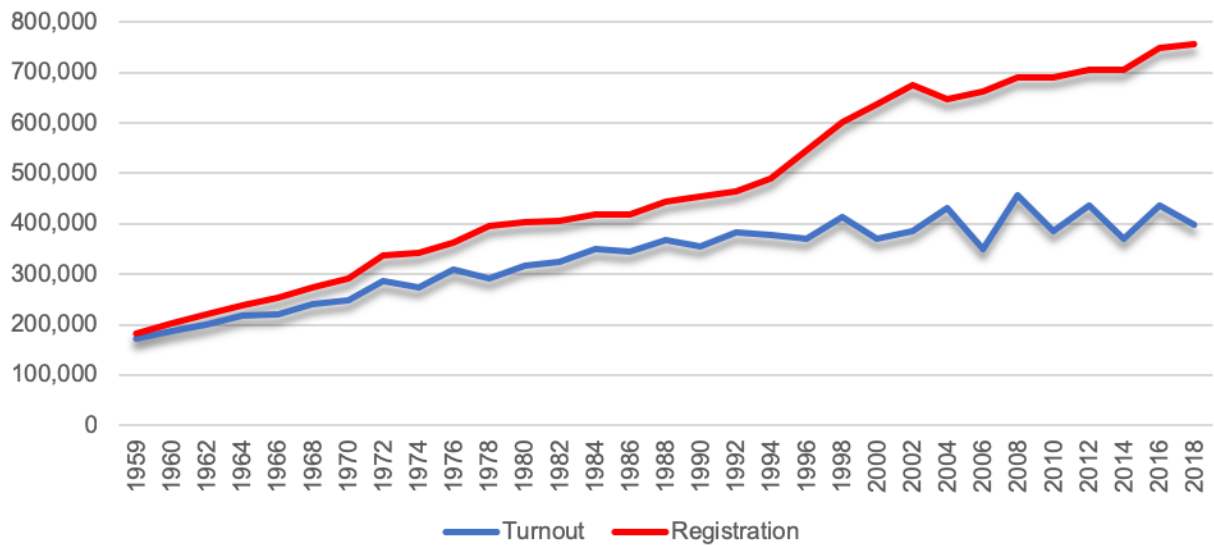
Statewide Percent of Results Reporting

	<b>Report 1 6:10 pm</b>	<b>Report 2 8:08 pm</b>	<b>Report 3 9:36 pm</b>	<b>Report 4 11:23 pm</b>	<b>Election Night Final</b>
<b>Absentee</b>	91.9%	94.0%	94.3%	95.4%	100.0%
<b>Precinct</b>	0.0%	16.6%	99.2%	100.0%	100.0%
<b>Total</b>	51.5%	60.0%	96.5%	97.4%	100.0%

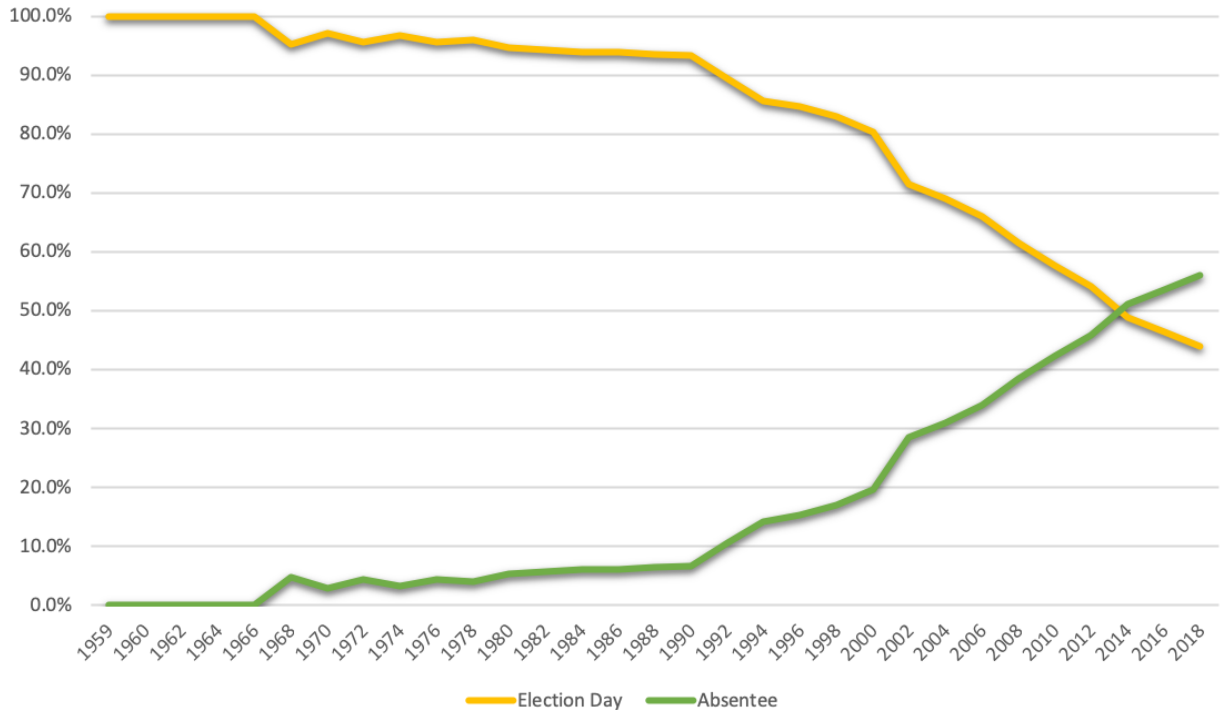
**SUMMARY**

Overall, we are continuing to see an increase in registration and early voting. None of this would be possible without the assistance we receive from volunteers and government agencies. Each person serves a critical role in providing secure, accessible, and convenient election services for each voter. Going forward, we will continue to review and refine our procedures to ensure voters and volunteers have a smooth experience.

General Election Registration and Turnout



### General Election Absentee and Polling Place Turnout



Following each election, we complete payroll and receive supplies and equipment shipped from the Counties to our office for storage. We also conduct debriefs with volunteers, vendors, and the Counties, and begin our preparations for the 2020 Elections. We are working with the County of Kauai to plan for the vote by mail pilot program which includes developing a special voter education campaign. We are submitting a report of our plan and progress to the Legislature pursuant to Act 182 SLH 2018.

For the 2019 Legislative Session, we will be submitting three bills for consideration. One bill is to implement automatic voter registration by requiring applicants to affirmatively decline registration when submitting an application for a driver license or state ID. A second bill is to remove the last four digits of a voter's Social Security Number as a requirement when signing a candidate's nomination paper to address privacy concerns. Another bill would allow voters with special needs to request an accessible absentee mail ballot.

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