

# Implementing Elections by Mail

November 15, 2024

This report has been prepared by the Office of Elections pursuant to Act 136, Session Laws of Hawaii 2019.

For additional information or questions, please contact the Office of Elections by emailing [elections@hawaii.gov](mailto:elections@hawaii.gov) or by calling (808) 453-VOTE (8683) or toll-free 1-800-442-VOTE (8683).

## 2024 ELECTIONS CALENDAR

Thursday, February 1	Pick up nomination paper from the Office of Elections or County Elections Division (HRS §12-2.5)
Thursday, February 22	Deadline for qualified political parties to file their party rules and officers (HRS §§11-63 & 11-64)  Deadline for new political parties to file their petition to qualify to field candidates for the 2024 Elections (HRS §11-62)
Tuesday, June 4	Last day to file nomination papers with the Office of Elections or County Elections Division (HRS §12-6)
Wednesday, June 5	Deadline to withdraw candidacy for any reason to the Office of Elections or County Elections Division (HRS §11-117)
Wednesday, June 12	Deadline to file objections to a nomination paper with the Office of Elections, County Elections Division, or Circuit Court (HRS §12-8)
Friday, June 21	Deadline to submit a request to withdraw from the Primary Election for reasons of ill health to the Office of Elections or County Elections Division (HRS §11-117)
Wednesday, June 26	Deadline for Clerk's Offices to mail ballots to overseas voters (52 USC §20302 & HRS §15D-9)
Saturday, July 20	Deadline for qualified political parties to submit names of voter service center watchers for the Primary Election to the County Elections Division (HRS §11-77)

Tuesday, July 23	<p>Voters start receiving Primary Election mail ballot packet at least 18 days prior to the election (HRS §11-102)</p> <p>Places of deposit may open as early as the mailing of ballots, as determined by the County Elections Division (HRS §11-109)</p>
Monday, July 29	<p>Voter service centers open and same day voter registration for the Primary Election (HRS §§11-15.2 &amp; 11-109)</p>
Wednesday, July 31	<p>Deadline to submit paper Voter Registration Application for the Primary Election to the County Elections Division. (HRS §11-24). Paper applications must be postmarked to your County Elections Division by this date. After this date, applicants may continue to register for the Primary Election using the Online Voter Registration System or at a voter service center (HRS §11-15.2)</p>
Saturday, August 3	<p>Deadline to request an absentee mail ballot for the Primary Election from the County Elections Division (HRS §15-4)</p>
Wednesday, August 7	<p>Deadline for a nonpartisan candidate to file a presidential petition to appear on the General Election ballot (HRS §11-113(c)(2))</p>
Saturday, August 10	<p>PRIMARY ELECTION (HRS §12-2)</p> <p>Voter service centers and places of deposit close. Voted ballots must be received by the County Elections Division by 7:00 pm. (HRS §§11-104 &amp; 11-131)</p>
Monday, August 19	<p>Deadline to cure a deficient return envelope for the Primary Election with the County Elections Division (HRS §11-106)</p>

Thursday, August 22	Deadline to submit Constitutional Amendment questions, County Charter Amendment questions, and County Initiative questions to the Office of Elections (HRS §11-119)
Friday, August 23	Deadline to file complaint on contests for cause in the Primary Election with the Hawaii State Supreme Court (HRS §11-173.5)
Friday, September 6	Deadline for qualified political parties to certify nominees for president and vice president (HRS §11-113(c)(1))
	Deadline to submit names and addresses of nominees for president elector and alternates to the Office of Elections (HRS §14-21)
Monday, September 16	Deadline to submit a request to withdraw from the General Election for reasons of ill health to the Office of Elections or County Elections Division (HRS §11-117)
Friday, September 20	Deadline for Clerk's Offices to mail ballots to overseas voters (52 USC §20302 & HRS §15D-9)
Wednesday, October 16	Deadline for qualified political parties to submit names of voter service center watchers for the Primary Election to the County Elections Division (HRS §11-77)
Friday, October 18	Voters start receiving General Election mail ballot packet at least 18 days prior to the election (HRS §11-102)
	Places of deposit may open as early as the mailing of ballots, as determined by the County Elections Division (HRS §11-109)

Tuesday, October 22	Voter service centers open and same day voter registration for the General Election (HRS §§11-15.2 & 11-109)
Monday, October 28	Deadline to submit paper Voter Registration Application for the General Election to the County Elections Division. (HRS §11-24). Paper applications must be postmarked to your County Elections Division by this date. After this date, applicants may continue to register for the Primary Election using the Online Voter Registration System or at a voter service center (HRS §11-15.2)
Tuesday, October 29	Deadline to request an absentee mail ballot for the General Election from the County Elections Division (HRS §15-4)
Tuesday, November 5	GENERAL ELECTION (State Constitution, Article II, Section 8)  Voter service centers and places of deposit close. Voted ballots must be received by the County Elections Division by 7:00 pm. (HRS §§11-104 & 11-131)
Wednesday, November 13	Deadline to cure a deficient return envelope for the Primary Election with the County Elections Division (HRS §11-106)
Monday, November 25	Deadline to file complaint on contests for cause in the General Election with the Hawaii State Supreme Court (HRS §11-174.5)
Tuesday, December 17	Electoral College (3 USC §7 & HRS §14-26)
Wednesday, March 5, 2025	Deadline to determine political party disqualifications (HRS §11-65)

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>2024 ELECTIONS CALENDAR .....</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS .....</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>EXPENSES .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>VOTER EDUCATION .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Media Campaign .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Voter Outreach.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Digital Voter Guide .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>2024 PRIMARY ELECTION .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Opening of Candidate Filing.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Issuance of Joint Election Proclamation with County Clerks .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Close of Candidate Filing.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Ballot Proofing.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Military and Overseas Ballots.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Official Observers' Test .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Ballot Mailing to the General Public and the Beginning of Voting.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Ballot Tracking Service .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Validation of Return Identification Envelopes.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Statewide Observers' Test.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Opening of Counting Centers.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Primary Election Day and Election Results.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Primary Election Contests .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>2024 GENERAL ELECTION .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Ballot Questions .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Presidential and Vice Presidential Candidates .....</b>	<b>15</b>

<b>Ballot Proofing</b> .....	<b>15</b>
<b>Military and Overseas Ballots</b> .....	<b>15</b>
<b>Official Observers' Test</b> .....	<b>16</b>
<b>Ballot Mailing to the General Public and the Beginning of Voting</b> .....	<b>16</b>
<b>Ballot Tracking Service</b> .....	<b>16</b>
<b>Validation of Return Identification Envelopes</b> .....	<b>16</b>
<b>Statewide Observers' Test</b> .....	<b>17</b>
<b>Opening of Counting Centers</b> .....	<b>17</b>
<b>General Election Day and Election Results</b> .....	<b>17</b>
<b>General Election Contests</b> .....	<b>19</b>
<b>Electoral College</b> .....	<b>19</b>
<b>Political Party Disqualification</b> .....	<b>20</b>
<b>CONCLUSION</b> .....	<b>20</b>

## INTRODUCTION

The mission of the Office of Elections is to provide secure, accessible, and convenient election services to all citizens statewide. Its goals and objectives are to (1) conduct honest and efficient elections; (2) encourage participation in the electoral process; (3) protect voter rights; and (4) promote elections. In furtherance of this, it conducts candidate filing; prints, counts, and tabulates ballots; and provides voter education. In accomplishing this, it works in coordination with the county clerks, who oversee voting by mail and in person, along with voter registration.

Historically, elections operated primarily under a polling place model that included opportunities for absentee voting. With the public's successful experience with absentee mail, absentee walk locations, and special elections by mail, the Legislature ultimately passed Act 136, Sessional Laws of Hawaii 2019, which migrated the State away from the prior polling place model to the current elections by mail model. The Act required prior to the convening of the Legislature in 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, and 2025 the submittal of a report addressing the following:

- (1) The office's progress in implementing this Act;
- (2) A summary of the office's discussions with the county clerks to determine areas of joint implementation of this Act;
- (3) A summary of the expenditures required to implement this Act and a comparison of those expenditures with the expenditures required to conduct elections or election-related activities before the enactment of this Act;
- (4) Any additional resources the county clerks or the office may require to implement this Act;
- (5) Any developments in assistive technology that may be implemented by the State, the counties, or nonprofit associations to ensure that persons with disabilities are not, on the whole,



disadvantaged by implementation of this Act, including the costs associated with such technology;

- (6) Any difficulties encountered in the implementation of this Act;
- (7) Specific steps taken and recommendations necessary to prevent fraud and ensure the integrity of the election process; and
- (8) Any other findings and recommendations, including any proposed legislation necessary to clarify and make consistent chapters 11, 12, 15, 15D, 16, and 19, Hawaii Revised Statutes, in light of the transition to statewide elections by mail.

Our prior *Implementing Elections by Mail* reports have addressed the above requirements by providing the following: (1) an extensive background on the history of voting in our state; (2) a statutory review of Act 136, SLH 2019; (3) a discussion of the planned implementation of elections by mail, including the sharing of responsibilities with the counties and fiscal matters; (4) a summary of the execution of elections by mail, against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, that occurred for the 2020 Elections; (5) a summary of the execution of elections by mail for the 2022 Elections, following the delay in the completion of the reapportionment process due to COVID-19's impact on the ability of the U.S. Census Bureau to provide the relevant population data in a timely manner; and (6) a detailed discussion of the post-election auditing process associated with the migration to elections by mail and the new voting system. Those reports were submitted to the Legislature on November 6, 2019, December 31, 2019, November 20, 2020, November 18, 2021, November 18, 2022, and October 26, 2023. This report builds off the foundation of those earlier reports and focuses on the execution of the 2024 Elections.

## **EXPENSES**

With the shift to elections by mail, the main expenses are the mailing house, postage, and the voting and vote counting system. The expenses for the election are prorated between the State and the four counties.

All expenses related to elections by mail involving both state and county offices, or involving both federal and county offices, unrelated to voter registration, shall be divided in half between the State and the counties. To the extent that a particular expense is shared statewide, each county shall pay a proration of expenses as a proportion of the registered voters at the time of the general election. The counties shall separately be responsible for expenses associated with voter registration.

HRS § 11-110(a)(1).

The reconciliation of the expenses associated with an election cycle occurs in the first six months of the odd-numbered calendar year that follows the general election. This is necessitated by the State and the counties needing to be invoiced after the election by their vendors for the goods and services received, make payment to those vendors, and internally calculate staffing costs attributable to the conducting of the 2024 Elections. Additionally, it is impacted by the end of the fiscal year for the State and counties being June 30, 2025, and the need to resolve any accounting matters by that time. The State and the counties will go through the prorations process at the conclusion of the 2024 election cycle.

The table below, provided in our last report, reflects the expenditures to conduct the 2018 Elections, the last elections before the enactment of elections by mail – which followed a different expense-sharing structure, the cost of the 2020 Elections, which included CARES Act funding, and finally the 2022 Elections.

	<b>2018 Elections Expenses</b>	<b>2020 Elections Expenses</b>	<b>2022 Elections Expenses</b>
<b>Early Voting</b>	219,072	269,306	396,543
<b>Election Day Officials</b>	527,510	179,958	263,588
<b>Facilities</b>	59,640	1,110,330	90,943
<b>Mailing Services &amp; Envelopes</b>	143,349	479,670	94,533

<b>Places of Deposit</b>	0	228,754	67,749
<b>Postage</b>	415,662	1,615,429	658,282
<b>Proclamations</b>	70,200	20,475	56,708
<b>Shipping &amp; Delivery</b>	225,657	10,429	54,298
<b>Staffing</b>	1,414,838	1,398,838	1,205,153
<b>Supplies &amp; Equipment</b>	192,549	168,363	319,980
<b>Travel</b>			15,912
<b>Voter Education</b>			790,331
<b>Voting &amp; Vote Counting System Contract</b>	3,209,000	2,990,000	3,895,187
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$6,477,477</b>	<b>\$8,471,552</b>	<b>\$7,909,207</b>

As a note, the cost of facilities fluctuated with COVID-19 as we needed to lease the Hawaii State Convention Center in 2020 to serve as a counting center for social distancing reasons. Additionally, the cost of the voting system contract went up in 2022 as the voting system was upgraded and mailing house services were incorporated into the contract. Further, beginning in 2022, we included travel and voter education categories into the table as those categories were not directly accounted for in prior tables.

We previously noted that there were some fluctuations in the categories as the State and counties have been revisiting how to categorize matters that overlap or that had not previously been explicitly accounted for in the past. There were also some fluctuations associated with expenditures for capital equipment, such as ballot drop boxes, that do not naturally need to be repeated the following election cycle. As revisions to the elections by mail model have occurred, such as the expansion of voter service centers, there have been additional expenses.

We expect that the expenses for the 2024 Elections will be largely like the 2022 Elections, except for the new expense of the digital voter information guide.

## **VOTER EDUCATION**

Voter education requires coordination with the counties. Specifically, the State was responsible for the voter education program on a statewide basis, while the counties were generally responsible for any voter education or similar matters that were specific to their county (e.g. advertisements that only addressed their county), with the exception of a targeted campaign that the State and the County of Maui conducted for voters impacted by the 2023 wildfires.

## **MEDIA CAMPAIGN**

Our office continued our partnership with the marketing agency we worked with previously for the 2020 and 2022 Elections. As part of the voter education campaign, their services included designing collateral materials, such as voter registration applications and election brochures that we use for voter education. Additionally, the marketing agency assisted in the development of our media campaign, producing our radio, television, digital and print ads to help raise awareness about important election dates and deadlines.

Messaging for the 2024 Elections covered voter registration, guidance on voting by mail, and ballot tracking. In an effort to combat mis- and disinformation, the media campaign also placed an emphasis on promoting the Office of Elections as an official source of election information.

With the 2024 Elections approaching, in March 2024, we followed up on a previous media campaign that we had coordinated with the County of Maui to address Maui residents who were displaced by the August 2023 wildfires. The campaign in late 2023 had involved alerting residents to update their mailing address to ensure that their 2024 mail ballots would be successfully delivered.

Beginning in June 2024, the media campaign alerted voters to register to vote or confirm that their existing registration was up to date. In July, voters were informed to expect their mail ballot and were encouraged to sign up for our ballot tracking service. As Election Day approached, in late July and early August, the campaign shifted to remind voters to return their ballot, as well as provide information about same day voter registration. A similar campaign was executed for the General Election from September through November.

## **VOTER OUTREACH**

Our office continued to conduct voter education presentations and participated in community events to raise awareness about voter registration, elections by mail, and accessible voting options. We worked with community partners to reach a diverse group of audiences, including college students, voters with accessibility needs, and senior citizens. Our office conducted several presentations for disability groups that allowed attendees to practice voting using the accessible ballot marking device that is deployed at voter service centers.

A monthly newsletter was produced that covered various election and voting topics that included candidate filing and ballot access, voting by mail, voting options for voters with disabilities, and tips and reminders for voters when casting their ballot. The newsletters were posted on our website and distributed to various groups, organizations, and government agencies to disseminate within their network. Additionally, voters could sign up on our website to receive these resources.

## **DIGITAL VOTER GUIDE**

As a result of Act 115, SLH 2023, we published our first voter guide for the 2024 Primary and General Elections. Candidates had an opportunity to submit a statement and photo during the candidate filing process. On a related note, Act 177, SLH 2023, required our office to generally include a candidate's legal name wherever their requested ballot name appeared. Given this, the voter guide, in addition to any candidate filing report, was required to include not only the candidate's ballot name but also their legal name.

The guide also included basic voter education, including information on ballot return deadlines, ballot drop boxes and voter service centers, same day voter registration, and information about accessible voting options. The General Election edition additionally

included explanations of the constitutional and charter amendment questions provided by the Attorney General and the county attorneys.

We produced the voter guide in two formats, online at [elections.hawaii.gov](https://elections.hawaii.gov), and in print at all Hawaii State Public Libraries. The digital voter guide allowed users to view their specific sample ballot and candidates by entering in their residence address. To meet the accessibility requirements of Act 115, SLH 2023, the digital voter guide used an accessibility widget called UserWay. The widget allowed users to adjust their page settings for specific disability profiles including for individuals who are motor impaired, color blind, visually impaired, or dyslexic. Additionally, the voter guide was available in Chinese, Hawaiian, Ilocano, and Tagalog.

## **2024 PRIMARY ELECTION**

### **OPENING OF CANDIDATE FILING**

Candidate filing opened on February 1, 2024. The Office of Elections provided candidate filing services for federal, state, and county offices. Given that the Office of Elections is based on Oahu, the county clerks on the neighbor islands provided candidate filing services not only for county offices, but also for federal and state offices. The City and County of Honolulu provided candidate filing services for its county offices.

Beginning with the 2024 Elections, candidates are provided the opportunity to submit a short statement and photograph, to be included in the voter guide. Additionally, our office is required to provide the candidate's legal name in the voter guide and associated reports.

### **ISSUANCE OF JOINT ELECTION PROCLAMATION WITH COUNTY CLERKS**

On May 10, 2024, a joint election proclamation was issued by the Chief Election Officer and the county clerks establishing the time, place, and manner for the upcoming elections, including the designation of the voter service centers and places of deposits and their days and hours of operation.

## **CLOSE OF CANDIDATE FILING**

Candidate filing closed on June 4, 2024. Candidates had until the following day on June 5, 2024, to withdraw for any reason. In the end, there were 279 candidates who had filed for one of the over 100 seats that were up for election this year, excluding President and Vice President, which involved a separate process that will be addressed later in this report. HRS § 11-113. A total of 257 of the initial 279 candidates provided statements and photographs for inclusion in the digital voter guide. For those who did not, a simple statement was included in the voter guide indicating no statement or photograph was submitted.

## **BALLOT PROOFING**

The ballot proofing process for the various ballot types started shortly after the close of candidate filing and the ballot types were provided for viewing by the candidates and political parties. There were over 240 ballot types to be proofed covering the unique combination of contests for each district/precinct that voters were entitled to vote on. Additionally, the associated programming of the voting system, which is tied to ensuring these ballot types can be accepted and read by the voting system, had to occur.

## **MILITARY AND OVERSEAS BALLOTS**

The proofing and finalization of the ballots had to be done in a timely manner to ensure compliance with the deadline in the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA) and its state counterpart to transmit ballots at least 45 days in advance of an election. The deadline this year was June 26, 2024.

## **OFFICIAL OBSERVERS' TEST**

The Official Observers' Test, a logic and accuracy test of the voting equipment deployed to the voter service centers, was conducted in each county between July 6, 2024, and July 13, 2024. Test ballots were marked by Official Observers, who created their tally of expected results. The test ballots were then run through the voting equipment, which produced the tabulated results. The Official Observers' tallies were subsequently reconciled against the tabulated results from the voting equipment. Having confirmed the voting equipment counted the ballots logically and accurately, the Official Observers witnessed the sealing of the voting equipment for the Primary Election.

## **BALLOT MAILING TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC AND THE BEGINNING OF VOTING**

Following the Official Observers' Test, election officials focused on the mailing of ballots to the public, so they could be received at least 18 days prior to the Primary Election, as required by statute. Specifically, election officials are required to "mail a ballot package by non-forwardable mail to each registered voter [,]" except for those who are "identified as having an outdated or non-deliverable mailing address." HRS § 11-102(b).

Voters were mailed a ballot package that included (1) a ballot for the voter's assigned district/precinct, (2) the voter's personalized return identification envelope; and (3) a secrecy sleeve. Both sides of the return identification envelope were important to the overall process. On the front side was the address of the county clerk and the United States Postal Service (USPS) information reflecting the permit number and letting the voter know that no postage was required to return the ballot by mail. The back side of the envelope is personalized with information from the statewide voter registration system, such as the voter's name, address, a unique identifier printed out and in the form of a barcode, and an affirmation statement that they sign when returning the ballot. The barcode was intended to facilitate the tracking of the sending and the eventual return of the ballot.

These items were enclosed in a standard windowed envelope. The orientation of the return identification envelope within the standard windowed envelope was such that the voter's mailing address and the barcode faced outwards for mailing house and USPS purposes.

Coordination between the Office of Elections, the county clerks, USPS, and the mailing house vendor was required to accomplish the mailing of these ballot packages for all four counties. Ballots were delivered to USPS for mailing on July 18, 19, and 22, 2024, for the City and County of Honolulu given the volume of ballots involved. Ballots for the neighbor island counties were delivered to USPS on July 17 and 22, 2024.

Places of deposit, depending on the county or the specific location within the county, opened as early as July 18, 2024, for voters to drop off their return identification envelope containing their ballot, if they chose not to return it by mail. Additionally, voter services centers providing accessible voting opportunities, again depending on the



county or the specific location within the county, opened as early as July 29, 2024, for voters who wished to vote in person.

### **BALLOT TRACKING SERVICE**

This election year was the second involving the implementation of BallotTrax, a ballot tracking service. The barcode printed on the voter's personalized return envelope facilitates the tracking of ballots on an individual basis and the ability to provide such a service to the public.

Generally, new users of BallotTrax needed to go to our website to sign up. Voters who signed up during the prior 2022 election cycle were automatically provided the same service this year and did not need to sign up again. The County of Maui chose to sign up all its voters for the service, with the option for individual voters to opt out.

The tracking service provided voters with the opportunity to receive text, email, or voice alerts letting them know where their ballot was in the voting process. These alerts included informing a voter that their ballot had been mailed to them and informing the voter that their ballot had been accepted for counting or if there was an issue. For example, a voter could be notified that there was an issue with their signature on their return ballot envelope that needed to be cured within five business days of the election, so it could be counted. HRS § 11-106.

### **VALIDATION OF RETURN IDENTIFICATION ENVELOPES**

With the transmission of ballots and the ability for voters to immediately return them in return identification envelopes, the counties began to receive return identification envelopes shortly after the ballots had been sent out.

The county clerks after taking custody of the return identification envelopes checked each envelope into the statewide voter registration system by scanning the barcode on the envelope associated with the voter. This typically involved using ballot sorting equipment. If everything was in order and the signature matched, then the return identification envelope would be considered validated, and the statewide voter registration system updated with that information, thus preventing the voter from being issued or returning another ballot. If the signature did not match or the voter forgot to

sign, the county clerks would reach out to the voter to cure the issue. Voters were required to cure the deficiency within five business days of the election. HRS § 11-106.

### **STATEWIDE OBSERVERS' TEST**

On July 27, 2024, the Statewide Observers' Test was held using the counting center voting equipment and tabulation application. The test was conducted simultaneously in all 4 counting centers across the state. It included, among other things, verifying a statewide compilation report of the results from the 4 counting centers.

### **OPENING OF COUNTING CENTERS**

Beginning as early as July 30, 2024, depending on the county, counting centers began to process return identification envelopes ballots that had been validated by the county clerks. While this process involved scanning the ballots into the voting system, not until the day of the Primary Election was a tabulation report compiled with any results. The detailed process concerning the operations of the counting center is addressed in the 2024 Counting Center manual consisting of 224 pages that is provided to each of the Official Observers who observe the process. It can be found at <https://elections.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024-Counting-Center-manual.pdf>.

The timing of when return identification envelopes are transferred to the counting center, along with the ballots and the associated voting equipment that contains the vote data from the voter service centers, is relevant for any discussion regarding the eventual issuance of election results on election day and during the post-election process.

As a starting point, other than on election day, there is at least a day between receipt of the return identification envelope and their availability as validated to the counting center for processing. By the day of the election, there are four main groups of items that need to be processed that day or during the post-election process. First, there are the return identification envelopes that were received by the county clerk prior to election day that had not already been transferred to the counting center (e.g. return identification envelopes received up to a few days prior to the election that needed to be validated). Second, there are election day return identification envelopes (e.g., those that are received in the mail prior to the close of voting and those that are dropped off by the close of voting at places of deposit or with the county clerk), which are validated and transferred to the counting center later in the day or the following day. Third, there are

the ballots and the associated voting equipment that contain the votes of voters who voted in person at a voter service center, which are delivered on election day to the counting center. Fourth, there are the remaining ballots that were received prior to the close of voting on election day but that the county clerks need up to five business days after the election to validate or to otherwise work with the voter to cure any deficiency that might exist, such as a failure to sign the return identification envelope or the signature not matching what is on file.

The intersection of the first three categories on election day and the day immediately afterward causes the results for the election, with the exception of cured ballots and other ballots that needed additional time to be validated, depending on the county, not being able to be issued until the evening of the day following the election. As previously noted, the fourth category of ballots reflect the return identification envelopes validated up to five business days after the election and are the final ballots counted and added to the results.

## **PRIMARY ELECTION DAY AND ELECTION RESULTS**

On August 10, 2024, the day of the Primary Election, the voter service centers, places of deposit, and offices of the county clerk had relatively few issues.

In terms of the counting centers, election results in the form of summary reports were published on website of the Office of Elections at <https://elections.hawaii.gov/election-results/> from the close of voting on the day of the Primary Election to the final ballots being counted on August 19, 2024. A total of 4 statewide summary reports were issued. Additionally, county summary reports were published on the website each time ballots were counted at a counting center. At the conclusion of the counting process, in addition to the previously mentioned summary reports, a statewide precinct detail report and a statement of votes cast report were posted, along with certified text files of the statewide summary report and statewide precinct detail report.

The first 3 reports, as will be detailed below, were issued within 24 hours of the close of voting, along with county-specific reports.

The first statewide report entitled “PRIMARY ELECTION 2024 – State of Hawaii – Statewide, August 10, 2024, SUMMARY REPORT, Report 1” was printed on August 10,

2024, at 7:05:17 p.m. and published after the voter service centers statewide were confirmed to be closed on the Office of Elections' website. This report included most ballots that had been validated and provided to the counting centers up to that day prior to the close of voting. Each counting center issued its own county report reflecting the results in their county. Similarly, a County Summary Report 1 was issued for each county to reflect its specific results. The Statewide Summary Report reflects the results of all the County Summary Reports together.

The second statewide report entitled "PRIMARY ELECTION 2024 – State of Hawaii – Statewide, August 10, 2024, SUMMARY REPORT, Report 2" was printed on August 10, 2024, at 10:17:57 p.m. and published that day on the Office of Elections' website. This report included most voter service center ballots that had been counted at the voter service centers and additional ballots received by mail and places of deposit. Similarly, a County Summary Report 2 was issued for each county to reflect its specific results.

The county report identified as "PRIMARY ELECTION 2024 – State of Hawaii – County of Hawaii, August 10, 2024, SUMMARY REPORT, Report 3" was printed on August 10, 2024, at 10:44:53 p.m. and published that day on the Office of Elections' website.

The county report identified as "PRIMARY ELECTION 2024 – State of Hawaii – County of Maui, August 10, 2024, SUMMARY REPORT, Report 3" was printed on August 11, 2024, at 1:29:27 a.m. and published that day on the Office of Elections' website.

The county report identified as "PRIMARY ELECTION 2024 – State of Hawaii – County of Hawaii, August 10, 2024, SUMMARY REPORT, Report 4" was printed on August 11, 2024, at 3:25:07 a.m. and published that day on the Office of Elections' website.

The county report identified as "PRIMARY ELECTION 2024 – State of Hawaii – County of Kauai, August 10, 2024, SUMMARY REPORT, Report 3" was printed on August 11, 2024, at 4:36:16 a.m. and published that day on the Office of Elections' website.

The county report identified as "PRIMARY ELECTION 2024 – State of Hawaii – City & County of Honolulu, August 10, 2024, SUMMARY REPORT, Report 3" was printed on August 11, 2024, at 7:18:19 a.m. and published that day on the Office of Elections' website.

The third statewide report entitled “PRIMARY ELECTION 2024 – State of Hawaii – Statewide, August 10, 2024, SUMMARY REPORT, Report 4” was printed on August 11, 2024, at 7:15:28 a.m. and published that day on the Office of Elections’ website. It was entitled “Report 4” as that corresponded to the last county report number (i.e. “Report 4”) for Hawaii that was issued at 3:25:07 a.m., while the other counties had only issued Reports 1 to 3. In conclusion, the Statewide Summary Report 4 accounted for County Summary Reports 1-3 for Maui, Kauai, and Honolulu, along with County Summary Reports 1-4 for Hawaii.

After Statewide Summary Report 4, a review of the results was conducted to see if any recounts had been triggered under HRS § 11-158. No recounts were triggered.

With the initial tabulation of ballots completed, there remained the counting of additional ballots that had been received by the deadline and would need to be validated by the county clerks within five business days of the election to be counted, along with the post-election audit. This validation process included the ability for voters to cure any deficiencies with their return identification envelopes flagged by the county clerks, such as missing signatures or signatures not matching what was on file. The deadline was August 19, 2022 (Monday), due to August 16, 2022 (Friday) being a state holiday.

The post-election process of counting these validated return identification envelopes was concluded on August 19, 2024. The final statewide report entitled “PRIMARY ELECTION 2024 – State of Hawaii – Statewide, August 10, 2024, SUMMARY REPORT, Final” was printed on August 19, 2024, at 7:09:02 p.m. and published that day on the Office of Elections’ website. Similarly, a County Summary Report Final was issued for each county to reflect its specific results. This was followed by the post-election auditing process.

## **PRIMARY ELECTION CONTESTS**

Two pro se election contests citing HRS § 11-173.5 were filed with the Hawaii Supreme Court. The law provides that the deadline was thirteen days after the election. As such, the deadline was August 23, 2024. The first was filed before the Primary Election took place and challenged the format of the ballot. The second was filed after the statutory deadline and appeared to take issue with results of one of the contests for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs. Both cases were dismissed by the Hawaii Supreme Court.

## **2024 GENERAL ELECTION**

Similar milestones to those of the Primary Election existed for the General Election.

### **BALLOT QUESTIONS**

The deadline for the submittal of state and county ballot questions was August 22, 2024. Questions associated with proposed constitutional amendments and county charter amendments were submitted by the Legislature and each of the four counties.

Consistent with state law, the Attorney General and the attorneys for the four counties prepared written explanations of the ballot questions that were added to the voter guide for the General Election.

### **PRESIDENTIAL AND VICE-PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES**

In accordance with HRS § 11-113, candidates for President and Vice President are traditionally nominated by a recognized political party that is otherwise qualified to appear on the ballot. The deadline this year was September 6, 2024. However, the same statutes provides that a political party or group not otherwise qualified to have candidates on the primary or general election ballots could petition with a requisite number of signatures for their candidates for President and Vice President to appear on the ballot. The deadline this year for the petition was August 7, 2024. Ultimately, no petition was filed and 6 of the recognized political parties had candidates for President and Vice President for purposes of the ballot. These candidates with their candidate statements and photographs were added to the voter guide for the General Election.

### **BALLOT PROOFING**

The ballot proofing process for the various ballot types associated with the General Election had to wait for the receipt of the final ballot questions to permit the ballot types to be produced. As with the Primary Election, the voting system needed to be programmed to ensure the ballot types could be accepted and read by the voting system.

### **MILITARY AND OVERSEAS BALLOTS**

Ballots were transmitted to military and overseas voters at least 45 days prior to the General Election. This year the deadline was September 20, 2024.

## **OFFICIAL OBSERVERS' TEST**

The Official Observers' Test for Oahu and the sealing of the voting equipment for its voter service centers were conducted on September 28, 2024. Likewise, the same occurred on October 2, 3, and 5, 2024, for Maui, Kauai, and Hawaii, respectively.

## **BALLOT MAILING TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC AND THE BEGINNING OF VOTING**

Mail ballot packets associated with the City and County of Honolulu were delivered on October 15-17, 2024, to USPS for mailing. Neighbor island mail ballot packets were delivered to USPS on October 16-17, 2024.

Depending on the county or the specific location within the county, places of deposit opened as early as October 16, 2024, for voters who wished to drop off their return identification envelope containing their ballot, as opposed to returning it by mail. Similarly, depending on the county or the specific location within the county, voter service centers providing accessible voting opportunities opened as early as October 22, 2024, for voters who wished to vote in person.

## **BALLOT TRACKING SERVICE**

Voters who were signed up for the Primary Election automatically continued to receive ballot tracking services for the General Election, along with new voters who had signed up for the service prior to the General Election. With the increase in voter turnout, the email alerts were helpful in immediately servicing the public with relevant information about the status of their ballot. Ahead of the General Election, over 89,000 voters had been signed up for ballot tracking alerts.

## **VALIDATION OF RETURN IDENTIFICATION ENVELOPES**

As with the Primary Election, the counties began to receive return identification envelopes shortly after the ballot packages had been sent out and began the validation process. The county clerks reached out to the voters whose signatures did not match up or who had forgotten to sign to cure the issue. Voters had until November 13, 2024, the fifth business day after the General Election, to cure the issue. HRS § 11-106.

## **STATEWIDE OBSERVERS' TEST**

The Statewide Observers' Test of the counting center voting equipment and tabulation application was conducted on October 19, 2024, across the state at all 4 counting centers.

## **OPENING OF COUNTING CENTERS**

Depending on the county, as early as October 21, 2024, counting centers began to process return identification envelopes ballots that had been validated by the county clerks. As with the Primary Election, while this process involved scanning the ballots into the voting system, not until the day of the General Election was a tabulation report compiled with any results.

## **GENERAL ELECTION DAY AND ELECTION RESULTS**

The day of the General Election, November 5, 2024, saw higher voter activity than the Primary Election, with certain voter services centers experiencing long lines.

The counting centers processed ballots and election results in the form of summary reports were published on website of the Office of Elections at <https://elections.hawaii.gov/election-results/> from the close of voting on the day of the General Election to the final ballots being counted on November 13, 2024. Like the Primary Election, county summary reports were published on the website each time ballots were counted at a counting center. Finally, a statewide precinct detail report and a statement of votes cast report were posted, along with certified text files of the statewide summary report and statewide precinct detail report, at the conclusion of the counting process.

The first statewide report entitled "GENERAL ELECTION 2024 – State of Hawaii – Statewide, November 5, 2024, SUMMARY REPORT, Report 1" was printed on November 5, 2024, at 11:41:05 p.m. and published after the voter service centers statewide were confirmed to be closed on the Office of Elections' website. It included the majority of the validated return identification envelopes provided to the counting centers prior to the close of voting. A corresponding County Summary Report 1 was issued for each county to reflect its specific county results. To clarify, the Statewide Summary Report reflects the results of all the County Summary Reports together.



The second statewide report entitled “GENERAL ELECTION 2024 – State of Hawaii – Statewide, November 5, 2024, SUMMARY REPORT, Report 2” was printed on November 6, 2024, at 12:26:44 a.m. and published that day on the Office of Elections’ website. It included most voter service center ballots that had been counted at the voter service centers and additional ballots associated with return identification envelopes received by mail and places of deposit. A County Summary Report 2 was issued for each county to reflect its specific county results.

The county report identified as “GENERAL ELECTION 2024 – State of Hawaii – County of Maui, November 5, 2024, SUMMARY REPORT, Report 3” was printed on November 6, 2024, at 6:00:05 a.m. and published that day on the Office of Elections’ website.

The county report identified as “GENERAL ELECTION 2024 – State of Hawaii – County of Kauai, November 5, 2024, SUMMARY REPORT, Report 3” was printed on November 6, 2024, at 6:07:53 a.m. and published that day on the Office of Elections’ website.

The county report identified as “GENERAL ELECTION 2024 – State of Hawaii – [City and County] of Honolulu, November 5, 2024, SUMMARY REPORT, Report 3” was printed on November 6, 2024, at 8:25:41 a.m. and published that day on the Office of Elections’ website.

The county report identified as “GENERAL ELECTION 2024 – State of Hawaii – County of Hawaii, November 5, 2024, SUMMARY REPORT, Report 3” was printed on November 6, 2024, at 10:40:51 a.m. and published that day on the Office of Elections’ website.

The county report identified as “GENERAL ELECTION 2024 – State of Hawaii – County of Kauai, November 5, 2024, SUMMARY REPORT, Report 4” was printed on November 6, 2024, at 12:19:34 a.m. and published that day on the Office of Elections’ website.

The county report identified as “GENERAL ELECTION 2024 – State of Hawaii – [City and County] of Honolulu, November 5, 2024, SUMMARY REPORT, Report 4” was printed on November 6, 2024, at 7:29:16 a.m. and published that day on the Office of Elections’ website.

The third statewide report entitled “GENERAL ELECTION 2024 – State of Hawaii – Statewide, November 5, 2024, SUMMARY REPORT, Report 4” was printed on November 6, 2024, at 7:29:58 a.m. and published that day on the Office of Elections’ website. It was entitled “Report 4” as that corresponded to the last county report number (i.e. “Report 4”) for the City and County of Honolulu that was printed at 7:29:16 a.m. and for the County of Kauai that was printed at 12:19:34 a.m., while the other counties had only issued Reports 1 to 3. In conclusion, the Statewide Summary Report 4 accounted for County Summary Reports 1-3 for Hawaii and Maui, along with County Summary Reports 1-4 for Kauai and the City and County of Honolulu.

After Statewide Summary Report 4, a review of the results was conducted to see if any recounts had been triggered under HRS § 11-158 for the initial tabulation of results. A recount was determined to be applicable for the State Representative, District 39 contest. The recount was conducted on November 7 and 8, 2024, with the results being exactly the same as had been reported in Statewide Summary Report 4.

After the initial tabulation of ballots was completed, there remained the counting of the additional ballots that had been received by the deadline to vote and would need to be validated by the county clerks within five business days of the election, along with the post-election audit. To the extent the county clerks found deficiencies with a voter’s return identification envelope, such as a missing signature or it not matching what was on file, the voter had the ability to cure the deficiency by the fifth business day after the election. The fifth business day deadline was November 13, 2024 (Wednesday), due to November 11, 2024 (Monday) having been a state holiday.

On November 13, 2024, the post-election process of counting these validated return identification envelopes was completed. The final statewide report entitled “GENERAL ELECTION 2024 – State of Hawaii – Statewide, November 5, 2024, SUMMARY REPORT, Final” was printed on November 13, 2024, at 6:51:06 p.m. and published that day on the Office of Elections’ website. Correspondingly, a County Summary Report Final was issued for each county to reflect its specific results. As of the date of this report, the post-election audit is currently in process.

## **GENERAL ELECTION CONTESTS**

The deadline to file an election contest with the Hawaii Supreme Court regarding the elections results is 4:30 p.m. on November 25, 2024. HRS § 11-174.5.

## **ELECTORAL COLLEGE**

As this is a presidential year, the presidential electors will convene at the State Capitol on December 17, 2024, at 2:00 p.m. to vote for President and Vice President.

## **POLITICAL PARTY DISQUALIFICATION**

With the ending of the 2024 General Election, the State calculates and determines which political parties obtained the requisite number of votes in certain contests to remain qualified. HRS §§ 11-161 and 11-65. The deadline for this determination is March 5, 2025. Disqualified political parties will then be able to begin gathering signatures to petition to qualify as a political party for ballot purposes for the 2026 election cycle. HRS § 11-62.

## **CONCLUSION**

This is the third election cycle of elections by mail (i.e. 2020, 2022, and 2024). With that experience, election administrators and voters have successfully transitioned to elections by mail. While there will always naturally be improvements and adjustments in how elections by mail are conducted in the future, the foundation of elections by mail has been firmly set.

## Executive Branch

In reaching its recommendations for the “executive salaries,” the Commission reviewed the compensation of county executives (i.e., mayors, deputy managing directors, department directors, deputy department directors, prosecuting attorneys) for the City and County of Honolulu, Hawai‘i County, Maui County and Kaua‘i County. *The Book of the States 2018* edition was reviewed to determine how other jurisdictions compensated their respective governors, lieutenant governors, and comparable department directors.

After reviewing the materials cited above and additional information, the Commission determined that pay equity and compensation levels need to be addressed for executive salaries if the State is to recruit and retain qualified executives to the executive branch of government. It is important to remember that the governor, lieutenant governor, administrative director, department directors, deputy directors, et al., administer programs that affect the health and welfare of our residents, and which have annual budgets that collectively exceed \$14 billion per year. The State needs to recruit and retain the “best and brightest” for these positions because of the daily impact these positions have on our State.

Executives in the public service are expected to work extended hours; participate in community service events, forums and meetings; be accessible on a 24-hour, 7-day-a-week basis for emergency situations; and exercise effective leadership in addressing emergency and crisis situations. Many could easily secure higher paying jobs in the private sector but instead chose to take on these high impact, high profile, demanding and time-limited jobs because of their commitment to public service. It was also noted by the Commission that directors and deputy directors are generally at the top of their professions, often with graduate degrees (including JDs, MDs, Masters’, PhDs in various fields) and several years of specialized experience qualifying them for the positions. Because of these reasons, it can be very difficult to attract and recruit for director and deputy director positions.

Externally, there are no comparable positions in the other jurisdictions in Hawai‘i to match the governor, lieutenant governor, and attorney general positions since they are unique with their statewide scope and responsibility. However, comparison with the City and County of Honolulu Mayor, managing director, and prosecuting attorney show all three State positions are paid below these three City jobs.

To address the issue of pay equity and compensation level, the following recommendations are made by the Commission (see Figure 1).

- Effective July 1, 2019 and July 1, 2020, increase the governor’s salary by 4% each year;

- Effective July 1, 2019 and July 1, 2020, increase other executive branch salaries and salary ranges by 5% each year;
- Effective July 1, 2021; July 1, 2022; July 1, 2023; July 1, 2024, increase the salaries and salary ranges of all positions by 2.5% each year.
- Section 26-52, HRS, provides that if the adjutant general, Department of Defense salary conflicts with the pay and allowance fixed by the tables of the regular army or air force of the United States, the latter shall prevail in setting the salary. Therefore, the Commission recommends that the salaries and future salary increases for the adjutant general and deputy adjutant general be set by the pay and allowance tables of the regular army or air force of the United States for officers of comparable rank and time in service over the period covered by this Commission’s recommendation.

**Figure 1 - Executive Salary Recommendations**

Position	No. of Pos	7/1/2019	7/1/2020	7/1/2021	7/1/2022	7/1/2023	7/1/2024
Governor	1	165,048	171,648	175,944	180,348	184,860	189,480
Lieutenant Governor	1	162,552	170,676	174,948	179,316	183,804	188,400
<b>Tier 1</b> Admin. Director of the State, Attorney General, Director of Budget and Finance	3	162,552	170,676	174,948	179,316	183,804	188,400
<b>Tier 2 Dept. Directors</b> DAGS, DBEDT, DCCA, DHHL, <b>DHRD</b> , DHS, DLIR, DLNR, DOA, DOH, DOT, PSD, TAX	13	154,812	162,552	166,620	170,784	175,056	<b>179,436</b>
<b>Tier 1 Deputy Dept. Directors</b> Attorney General, Budget and Finance	2	141,420 - 149,544	148,488 - 157,020	152,196 - 160,944	156,000 - 164,964	159,900 - 169,092	163,896 - 173,316
<b>Tier 2 Deputy Dept. Directors</b> DAGS, DBEDT, DCCA, DHHL, DHRD, DHS, DLIR, DLNR, DOA, DOH, DOT, PSD, TAX	24	134,676 - 142,416	141,408 - 149,532	144,948 - 153,276	148,572 - 157,104	152,292 - 161,028	156,096 - 165,048

The chief election officer shall be paid a salary not to exceed eighty-seven per cent of the salary of the director of human resources development. HRS §11-1.6(e).

179,436 x 0.87 = **\$156,109 (recommended)**

# **PUBLIC TESTIMONY**

**From:** [OE.Elections.Commission](#)  
**To:** [Jamie Detwiler](#); [OE.Elections.Commission](#)  
**Cc:** [Ralph Cushnie \(EC\)](#)  
**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] Hawaii Elections Commission Testimony - January 15, 2025  
**Date:** Monday, January 13, 2025 7:51:00 AM

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Hi Jamie,

This is to confirm that we have received your request and that you will be added to the list of individuals to provide oral testimony.

Thank you,

Office of Elections  
[elections.commission@hawaii.gov](mailto:elections.commission@hawaii.gov)  
(808) 453-VOTE (8683)

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**From:** Jamie Detwiler [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, January 10, 2025 5:02 PM  
**To:** OE.Elections.Commission <[elections.commission@hawaii.gov](mailto:elections.commission@hawaii.gov)>  
**Cc:** Ralph Cushnie (EC) [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Hawaii Elections Commission Testimony - January 15, 2025

Aloha Chair Curtis, Elections Commission Commissioners, and Office of Elections,

Please reference my attached written testimony for the Elections Commission meeting on January 15, 2025.

I would like to also testify by Zoom. Please note that I have a commitment on January 15, 2025 at the Hawaii State Legislature Opening Day but I will make every effort to attend by Zoom. I will raise my Zoom hand if I miss my turn to testify. Thank you for your understanding.

Respectfully,  
Jamie Detwiler

**TESTIMONY**  
**Hawaii Elections Commission**  
**January 15, 2025**

Aloha Chair Curtis and Members of the Hawaii Elections Commission,

I would like to testify regarding Agenda Items VIII and VII:

**VIII. Biennial Evaluation of the Operations of Elections and Report to the Legislature, Pursuant to HRS § 11-8.5 and Action**

As an Official State Counting Center Observer, we were given the opportunity to physically observe the transport of Mail-in and Dropbox ballots. We observed the incoming Dropbox ballots at the Honolulu County Signature Verification Center on October 25, 2024. On another day, we also observed outgoing ballots from the Signature Verification Center to the State Counting Center at the Hawaii State Capitol.

**CONCERNS:** Violation of HAR §3-177-453 - Accountability and security of ballots and HAR §3-177-61 Security of ballots and election supplies.

It is also important to note that if we wanted to observe the Signature Verification process in action, we would have to contact the Honolulu County Elections supervisor to schedule a future date to observe. We were also told that we would have to observe by watching a tv screen in a separate conference room located in a different room where the Signature Verification process is taking place.

**Drop Box Ballots Observation:** While a group of State Counting Center observers were being briefed by Mr. Rex Quidilla, Honolulu County Elections Administrator, we observed two Honolulu City and County vans arrive with secured containers filled with Dropbox ballots. When the containers were brought to the tables, the lock device was cut by wire cutters and the ballots deposited on the table where workers sorted them. I asked Mr. Quidilla about the Chain of Custody document showing the number of ballot envelopes picked up at each location and then verified upon arrival at the Signature Verification Center. He said we don't have time to count the ballot envelopes at each pick up location as there are 19 locations on the island of Oahu and they have multiple pick-ups throughout the day. He said we don't have the manpower to do that. He also said that Corinne (Solomon) has that information. I said, "I am not Corinne."

**Violation:** HAR §3-177-453 - Accountability and security of **ballots**. The number of ballots picked up at each location were not counted and logged. Upon arrival at the Signature Verification Center, the ballots were not counted.

(b) The clerk shall maintain **a complete and current count** of all marksense ballots issued, spoiled, and received in their county. The accounting of marksense ballots by the clerk shall be recorded on forms prescribed by the chief election officer.

**Mail-in and Dropbox Ballots location transfer observation:** During another observation visit to the Signature Verification Center, we were asked to sign a document verifying the number of mail trays (containing various amounts of ballot envelopes) in the locked transport cage. We were asked to verify the lock ID number and number of trays. I asked how many ballot envelopes are in each tray as they appeared to be different in quantity. The Signature Verification Center employee said that observers are only verifying the number of trays being transported. We signed the observer log verifying the number of trays (not ballot envelopes).



**Violation:** HAR §3-177-453 - Accountability and security of **ballots** (not mail trays)  
(b) The clerk shall maintain a complete and current count of all marksense **ballots** issued, spoiled, and received in their county. The accounting of marksense ballots by the clerk shall be recorded on forms prescribed by the chief election officer.

**Election Observer De-briefing on 11/25/24:**

I respectfully discussed these concerns with Mr. Scott Nago and his staff. Mr. Nago said that is a Honolulu County Elections Division issue. I asked if they would convey these concerns to them.

I also brought up concerns regarding Senior Election Observer Coordinators and their unprofessional, condescending, and bullying treatment of some Observers. I also noted a Senior Observer saying disparaging remarks, “stupid MAGA voters at the Kapolei Voter Service Center waiting until the last minute to vote. I hope it rains on them.” Mr. Nago and Ms. Tenn said they would address these concerns. These Senior Observers should not air their bias and should not be allowed to serve in that role in the future.

**VII. Performance Evaluation and Consideration of Salary Adjustment of the Chief Election Officer, Pursuant to HRS §§ 11-7.5(5) and 11-1.6(e), and Action, If Appropriate**

In review of these violations, the Chief Elections Officer should NOT receive a salary increase.

While these violations described are occurring at the County level, the State Chief Elections Officer has responsibility over the State Elections.

**HAWAII ADMINISTRATIVE RULES REFERENCE:**

**HAR §3-177-453 - Accountability and security of ballots**

- (a) The chief election officer or designated representative shall maintain a complete count of marksense ballots. All ballots shall be safeguarded to prevent mishandling or misuse.
- (b) The clerk shall maintain a complete and current count of all marksense ballots issued, spoiled, and received in their county. The accounting of marksense ballots by the clerk shall be recorded on forms prescribed by the chief election officer.

**HAR §3-177-61 Security of ballots and election supplies.**

- (a) The procedure or ensuring the security of a container used to store or transport ballots, voter verifiable paper audit trails, vote data storage media, and other sensitive election materials shall be as follows:
  - (1) Made of suitable materials to prevent breakage or tampering;
  - (2) Securable using a nonreusable seal;
- (b) A record shall be maintained to list the seals used to secure such containers and to provide an accurate chronological posting of seals used during the opening and closing of each container. A section for witnesses' signatures shall also be provided.
- (c) Election officials shall make periodic checks of the seals on such containers to ensure that no tampering has occurred. [Ef UL] (Auth: HRS § 11- 4) (Imp: HRS § § 11-109, 11-152)

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jamie Detwiler