

# **Report on the Accessibility Impact of Voting by Mail**

April 23, 2026

Prepared by the Statewide Elections Accessibility Needs Advisory Committee

## **I. Introduction**

The Statewide Elections Accessibility Needs Advisory Committee (EANAC) held public meetings on December 10, 2025 and February 18, 2026 to receive testimony and discuss the value of Hawaii's statewide vote by mail system on accessibility. This report consolidates testimony and the Committee's discussions at both meetings, highlighting the role of voting by mail in providing convenient and equal access to voting for individuals with accessibility needs.

## **II. Background**

Hawaii transitioned to statewide voting by mail beginning with the 2020 Elections. With implementation, all registered voters are automatically mailed a ballot for every election at least 18 days before Election Day.

## **III. Testimony in Support of Voting by Mail**

The public was invited to provide testimony on the value of mail-in voting on accessibility. Written testimony submitted to the Committee is attached, and oral testimony is compiled below.

### **December 10, 2025**

Ann Silva Williams provided testimony sharing her positive experience as a blind voter in the general election, emphasizing the importance of having both a private and secret ballot, successfully using ballot tracking and accessible voting tools, and expressing concern over efforts to restrict such access without credible evidence of fraud.

Daintry Bartoldus, Executive Director of the Hawaii State Council on Developmental Disabilities, provided testimony voicing strong support for the continued use of mail-in ballots, emphasizing their importance in allowing individuals, especially those with developmental disabilities across the islands, to vote independently and at their own pace.

Nikhilananda, speaking on behalf of himself and the Green Party of Hawaii, provided testimony expressing strong support for universal mail-in voting due to its convenience and ability to increase voter participation, while also advocating for expanded in-person voting options and regular audits to ensure trust and transparency in the voting process.

Lou Erteschik, Executive Director of the Hawaii Disability Rights Center, provided testimony voicing strong support for mail-in voting, emphasizing its critical role in

improving accessibility for voters with disabilities, while also recommending more in-person polling places and audits to maintain trust in the system.

### **February 18, 2026**

Ann De Silva Williams provided testimony sharing her strong support for preserving private and independent voting and praised Hawaii's accessible electronic ballot option that allowed her to vote completely on her own in the 2024 Elections, as well as the ballot tracking system.

## **IV. Concerns Regarding Potential Restrictions on Voting by Mail**

Vice Chair Gashel expressed concern that in recent Elections Commission meetings, there have been discussions about returning to same-day in-person voting, and these discussions did not address the impacts of this on voters with disabilities. He stressed that eliminating or restricting voting by mail would adversely impact accessibility.

At the February 18, 2026 meeting, Vice Chair invited guest speakers Sanho Steele-Louchart and Stephanie Flynt to discuss the potential impacts of recently proposed federal election laws on accessible voting.

Sanho Steele-Louchart, Legal Program Coordinator, National Federation of the Blind, explained that the SAVE Act would require voters to present current photo identification and matching documentation to register, which creates significant barriers for people with disabilities. He explained that these requirements involve obtaining physical documents, completing inaccessible paperwork, and maintaining accurate records, which can be difficult and time consuming. He added that errors in voter files could lead to disenfranchisement, and that the proposed solutions, such as states sharing data with the Department of Homeland Security, remain uncertain. He concluded by stating that while the SAVE Act does not directly eliminate voting by mail, it would reduce the number of people eligible to vote by mail or remotely, which would disproportionately impact voters who rely on accessible voting options.

Stephanie Flynt, Public Policy Analyst, National Disability Rights Network, expressed concern that provisions in the MEGA Act could criminalize assisting voters with disabilities during the voting by mail process. She shared that the National Disability Rights Network and National Federation of the Blind are actively opposing these bills through the National Coalition on Accessible Voting and have issued statements summarizing their concerns.

## **V. Conclusion**

The testimony and discussion from the EANAC meetings on December 10, 2025 and February 18, 2026 show strong support for maintaining Hawaii's statewide vote by mail elections, as it is a cornerstone of election accessibility. Vote by mail, alongside

Hawaii's implementation of accessible electronic ballots, provides the most effective, equitable, and independent means for voters with accessibility needs to participate in elections.

# **Attachments: Written Testimony**

**From:** [Sue Cowing](#)  
**To:** [OE.Elections](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Testimony for meeting ID 896 9601 9844  
**Date:** Sunday, December 7, 2025 2:24:53 PM

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I attended in person the October meeting of the Hawaii Election Commission at which it was proposed to send a recommendation to the legislature that it ban mail-in voting and return to same-day in-person voting, In spite of the fact that at least four-fifths of the people who testified that day opposed banning vote-by-mail, the Commission nevertheless sent that recommendation. The Commission appears to be seriously out of balance and out of touch with the public. They seem be influenced more by a nationwide partisan push to ban voting by mail in the states that has two purposes: 1) to make it much more difficult to vote for millions of people, especially for certain target groups, and 2) by claiming voter fraud as their motivation, in order to undermine public confidence in elections. So yes, it would definitely be a good idea to change the law and make officers of the Statewide Elections Accessibility Needs Advisory Committee members of the Elections Commission.

My October testimony to the Elections Commission follows:

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Banning voting by mail here would be a giant leap backward.

Before Hawai'i first voted by mail in 2020, we had the worst voter turnout percentage of any state in the nation. But in 2020, 58% of registered voters voted, a sharp rise from 38.6% in the 2016 election. Similar results have occurred in other states when they adopted this method, though our increase was the most dramatic.

Compared to voting by mail from home, having to go back to in-person-only voting would make it more difficult for many in Hawai'i to vote at all: seniors, people with disabilities or lack of transportation, people who live in remote rural areas, people who work more than one job, people who don't have enough time or physical stamina to stand in long lines, pregnant women, parents of small children, full-time caregivers.

And where would they vote even if they could? The infrastructure of traditional polling places no longer exists here and would be very expensive to rebuild—the reservation and equipping of polling places throughout the state, the staff training to operate and coordinate them, the recruitment of volunteer poll workers, the increased complexity of collecting and tallying votes cast, and the massive task of educating the public on the location of their specific polling places. All this when the state budget is strained trying to buffer the loss of revenue and programs from the shut-down and the federal administration's budget cuts.

Banning vote-by-mail would clearly discourage and decrease election participation in Hawai'i. Why do it? States like Oregon and Arizona have used voting by mail safely and effectively as their primary method for years. No legal challenges, even in the contentious aftermath of the 2020 election, have found evidence of error or misuse that came anywhere near to affecting the election results in their states.

To ban voting by mail for all of us as a fix for as yet unproven irregularities would do us a serious injustice. Shouldn't a free society encourage and enable all its citizens to vote, rather than create obstacles to exercising that fundamental right?

**From:** [Eileen McCool](#)  
**To:** [OE.Elections](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Testimony for mail in voting  
**Date:** Sunday, December 7, 2025 2:30:20 PM

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Hi my name is Eileen McCool and I am writing to voice my opinion on the very important issue of mail in voting. People are busy, the elderly may be less mobile, the middle age parents have kids, jobs and meals to prepare and the disabled are sometimes restricted by their disability. Please keep the mail in option for voting. Let us please not go backwards but be progressive in our voting options! Please contact me for further info at [manoamist11@gmail.com](mailto:manoamist11@gmail.com)  
Thank you, Eileen  
Sent from my iPhone

**From:** [Rosemary Leyson](#)  
**To:** [OE.Elections](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] I Support Keeping Vote By Mail  
**Date:** Monday, December 8, 2025 3:25:18 PM

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Aloha,  
I am an Oahu resident and Kupuna living in Honolulu.

I want to support keeping Vote by Mail as a vital way for people like me, who is blind and disabled to fully participate in my civic duty.

Voting is very important to me and it would be a medical hardship to have to trek to the voting poll, cannot stand for long and wait in line, exposed to the weather and struggle with voting equipment.

This would be very stressful and be prone for errors as I struggle through the process.

Please keep the Vote By Mail.

Mahalo,  
Rosemary Leyson  
Registered Voter  
Honolulu, HI

**From:** [Barbara Sarbin](#)  
**To:** [OE.Elections](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Voting by mail in Hawaii  
**Date:** Tuesday, December 9, 2025 8:56:54 AM

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Aloha, I am writing to submit testimony here that voting by mail in Hawaii is essential and that any move to remove that service would be totally devastating to our ability to vote as residents. Please do not change anything about voting by mail in Hawaii, it is one of the many ways that the state of Hawaii shows that it cares about its community, including those who do not have access to transportation, and those who must work on Election Day. Hawaii's commitment to 'Ohana is shown in its voting by mail policy.

Mahalo,

Barbara Sarbin

PO Box 771

Na'alehu, Hawaii 96772

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** [Midgann Ries](#)  
**To:** [OE.Elections](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Vote by Mail  
**Date:** Tuesday, December 9, 2025 9:07:51 AM

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I am writing to express my views on vote by mail. It is so important that we continue to support this. It makes voting so much easier especially here on the Big Island. It isn't easy for those of us that are older to be able to get out and vote. Vote by Mail allows us to participate in our democracy and isn't that what it is all about.

We should want more people to vote not less. Please do not take this away from us. Being able to vote is just too important.

Midgann Ries

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** [Linda Morgan](#)  
**To:** [OE.Elections](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Voting by mail  
**Date:** Tuesday, December 9, 2025 10:49:52 AM

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Please support voting by mail. I deeply appreciate being able to vote by mail. I live in Ocean View, in the very rural district of Ka'u where early voting is not available. That leaves going to the polling place on election day. I'm 81 years old and standing in line to vote is difficult for me. I've never missed an election, as participating in elections is a necessary civic duty for me. Please support all of us for whom voting in person is difficult by continuing mail voting;

Additionally, eliminating voting by mail is being spearheaded by the most corrupt, criminal federal administration we've ever had. I'd hate to see my state bow down to this despicable federal government.

Sincerely,  
Linda J Morgan  
92-1819 Coral Parkway  
Ocean View, HI 96737

**From:** [Russell Robinson](#)  
**To:** [OE.Elections](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Mail in Ballots  
**Date:** Tuesday, December 9, 2025 10:53:14 AM

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The Republicans are steam rolling over all progress that makes our nation great.

The most recent and purely politically motivated action is to restrict voting access by any and all methods possible.

Vote by Mail is on the hit list. Please do not be swayed by the Republican voter suppression efforts so well documented around the nation.

Preserve our progress and let's keep moving forward in Hawaii.

Mahalo,

Russell Robinson  
Ocean View Voter

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“No one man can terrorize a whole nation unless we are all his accomplices.”  
—Edward R. Murrow

**From:** [Lani Twomey](#)  
**To:** [OE.Elections](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Why is Vote by Mail so important to me and Hawaii  
**Date:** Tuesday, December 9, 2025 11:00:00 AM

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I support continued use of Vote-by-Mail in Hawaii.

I was born and raised in Hawaii and have lived here for all of my adult life. I have also voted in every election here since I was able to register in 1969.

Having all this experience with voting, and also having actively participated in the elections process, I am a firm believer that VOTE BY MAIL in Hawai'i is absolutely the way to go for a number of reasons. Mail-In voting provides these benefits to us voters and to the State of Hawaii

- Removes significant barriers to voting in the polling stations such as having to work during the voting hours or not being able to drive to the polling stations.
- Gives voters the opportunity to make more informed decisions on ballot issues. It permits me time to research both issues and candidates prior to filling in my ballot.
- Permits voters to safely vote in the privacy of their own home. Recently there have been reports on the mainland of ICE agents stationing themselves outside of polling stations. This is intimidating for some voters to the point that they turn around and don't vote. Though I don't think we've seen that yet, ICE has been active in picking up people in our islands. Who knows what they would do at our polling stations if everyone had to do walk-in voting. I believe the majority of us here are hapa so I guess we're all suspicious in the eyes of ICE personnel.
- Permits family members to help their kupuna with the voting process. For example, reminding them to sign their completed ballot at the appropriate spot.
- Gives voters convenient, secure choices for turning in their completed ballots - mail back, drop in an official secure drop box or walk into one of the walk-in vote locations.

I'm appalled that election commissioners would possibly be advocating to rescind Hawai'i's VOTE BY MAIL law and intend to convey my support for this process to my own State Legislators.

There are ways to improve on VOTE BY MAIL such as adding more secure drop boxes and also adding more walk-in locations (perhaps allowing more rural/remote sites to be provided for shorter windows of time).

Mahalo for this opportunity to convey support for VOTE BY MAIL.

Please confirm receipt of this testimony.

Mahalo,  
Lani Twomey

Arlene (Lani) Twomey  
[lanitwomey@gmail.com](mailto:lanitwomey@gmail.com)  
354A Kaelepulu Dr, Kailua, HI 96734

(808) 256-0925

**From:** [duane sherman](#)  
**To:** [OE.Elections](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Vote by mail  
**Date:** Tuesday, December 9, 2025 11:09:53 AM

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As an 80 year old voter it seems to me that doing away with mail in voting does little to stop the very rare instances of fraudulent voting but would disenfranchise hundreds if not thousands of elderly and disabled citizens who are the most affected by government policy.  
Hawaii was right to establish mail in voting!

Duane Sherman

**From:** [Candy Casper](#)  
**To:** [OE.Elections](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Vote by Mail  
**Date:** Tuesday, December 9, 2025 11:58:15 AM

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Please ensure nothing happens to endanger our rights to vote by mail. It is critical to so many voters, especially in rural communities, like Ka'u, where my husband and I live. We also have many voters here who don't have access to transportation for voting. The bus is pretty much non-existent in areas like Ocean View, Discovery Harbour, Green Sands, and Mark Twain.

Mahalo,  
Candace Casper  
94-5765 Awa Pae Lp  
Naalehu HI

**From:** [Laurie Boyle](#)  
**To:** [OE.Elections](#)  
**Cc:** [Laurie Boyle](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Mail-in Voting Essential in Hawai'i  
**Date:** Tuesday, December 9, 2025 12:03:53 PM

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Dear Elections Representative,

I live on the Big Island have been voting by mail for multiple elections and have found it essential.

We don't have sufficient voter turnout if we have only election day voting. We don't have a representative voting population when rural voters, elderly, disabled voters and working people who are unable to cast a vote at their local precinct when they work 1.5 hours away. The access to vote would return to only those able to make it to the polls on voting day.

Please don't erode our voting rights further than they have been by a party determined to axe the voting rights act, disenfranchise voters and make it much more difficult in Hawai'i to vote.

Please vote to uphold our mail-in voting.

Mahalo

Kind regards,  
[LaurieBoyle@AlohaTherapies.com](mailto:LaurieBoyle@AlohaTherapies.com)

**From:** [Paul Montague](#)  
**To:** [OE.Elections](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Vote by Mail  
**Date:** Tuesday, December 9, 2025 12:50:04 PM

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Aloha,

I strongly urge the Statewide Elections Accessibility Needs Advisory Committee to continue on with Vote By Mail. This process allows more easy access for voting for many people who may find it difficult to get to the polls. I know that when we were caring for my mother at home, Vote By Mail was very convenient and we didn't have to find help to take care of her while we went to vote. Also, she was still wanting to vote, even though she was bedridden.

Thanks for keeping voting accessible and secure.

Sincerely,

Paul Montague  
PO Box 6534  
Ocean View, HI 96737  
808-313-0700

**From:** [Diana Van De Car](#)  
**To:** [OE.Elections](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Vote by mail  
**Date:** Tuesday, December 9, 2025 1:02:52 PM

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I urge you to resist the effort being made to remove the availability of Vote by Mail in Hawaii. Adequate safeguards were put in place when this process was created.

You could allow people the opportunity to vote in person should they wish to do so. But do not take away the convenience of Vote by Mail from the hundreds of people who need that convenience.

Thank you!

Diana Van De Car  
Sent from my iPhone

**From:** [Cathy Haber](#)  
**To:** [OE.Elections](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Mail in voting  
**Date:** Tuesday, December 9, 2025 1:33:07 PM

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Sent from my iPhone I support mail in voting using it for years do not feel there is any reason to change it safe and secure at police station location.

**From:** [karen bret harte](#)  
**To:** [OE.Elections](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] mail in elections  
**Date:** Tuesday, December 9, 2025 2:28:46 PM

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I am a resident of Maui, Hawaii. It is a travesty that Republicans are trying to take away our mail in ballots. We must stand up to this criminal party. There is plenty of proof that they tried to rig the Biden elections and no proof of election interference. Proof, evidence, convictions and unfortunately dismissed cases in the Biden elections, all Republicans.

Do not allow them to take away our mail in ballots.

Karen Bretharte

**From:** [Donna Anderson](#)  
**To:** [OE.Elections](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Keep vote by mail in Hawaii  
**Date:** Tuesday, December 9, 2025 2:48:28 PM

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I wish to voice my support for keeping vote by mail in Hawaii. We've been voting by mail for the last several years and we would like to continue voting by mail.

Thank you, Donna Anderson

Get [Outlook for Android](#)

**From:** [mary ann white](#)  
**To:** [OE.Elections](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Mail in ballots  
**Date:** Tuesday, December 9, 2025 3:02:30 PM

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To: Statewide Elections Accessibility Needs Advisory Committee

Please accept this letter in favor of mail-in ballots for the elections in the State of Hawaii.

This process works and provides every registered voter the much needed and respectful way of voting. To vote is our right as citizens of the United States

Thank You

Mary Ann White

Naalehu, HI 96772

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** [Howard Markowitz](#)  
**To:** [OE.Elections](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Mail-in voting  
**Date:** Tuesday, December 9, 2025 7:39:07 PM

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Mail-in voting Is popular and safe. Historically mail-in voting has been more popular than in-person voting, especially during the Covid pandemic. A true democracy in these highly technological times allows the public access to voting by mail.

Fraud has not been an issue, so the election commission must not be swayed by nefarious actors claiming mail-in voting is an issue.

Howard Markowitz  
Hawai'i Kai

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** [Jacqueline Cramer](#)  
**To:** [OE.Elections](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Keep mailing voting  
**Date:** Tuesday, December 9, 2025 7:58:43 PM

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I am writing to strongly recommend that the commission Keep mail in voting for Hawaiian voters.

Mail in voting allows access to voting by people who cannot get to the polls on one day, election day. There are many elders who cannot get around, people who are working and taking care of their families, and those who contend with transportation issues.

Mail in voting supports democracy.

Mail in voting Enables people to vote and have their voices heard. Mail in voting must be kept. I work full-time as a school teacher. Mail in voting helps me cast my vote and still focus on my work. I live really rurally and very far away from a Polling place. My elder neighbors use mail in voting to cast their votes.

Keep mail voting

Sincerely, Jacqueline Cramer

**From:** [Greg Guithues](#)  
**To:** [OE.Elections](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Mail-in ballots  
**Date:** Tuesday, December 9, 2025 8:05:48 PM

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Greetings Elections commission,

I am writing to register my request that mail-in ballots remain available. Many voters have transportation or scheduling challenges that could impact our ability to vote if early and mail-in voting is unavailable.

Thank you for your work,

-Greg Guithues.  
808-445-0300

**From:** [K Ez](#)  
**To:** [OE.Elections](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Please do not end VOTE BY MAIL!!  
**Date:** Wednesday, December 10, 2025 11:07:11 AM

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Please do not end VOTE BY MAIL!!  
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Mahalo!!!!!!!