

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**VOTE BY MAIL PASSES OUT OF CONFERENCE COMMITTEE. AFTER PASSING A FLOOR VOTE,
BILL WILL ADVANCE TO GOVERNOR IGE FOR APPROVAL**

(Honolulu, HI)— HB1401 HD1 SD1 CD1 enacting a Vote By Mail pilot program across Kauai County for all elections in 2020 passed out of conference committee today. After passing a floor vote, Vote By Mail will advance to Governor Ige for approval. The original intent of this measure was to establish statewide mail-in voting. Despite the modifications, however, voting rights advocates hail the change and are hopeful that initiating this pilot program is the first step in implementing Vote By Mail throughout Hawaii in the future.

“Vote By Mail will provide more convenience for young people, members of our local military, homebound seniors, and voters in rural areas who may not be able to visit the polls on Election Day. These citizens deserve ready access to the vote,” said Janet Mason, Legislative Committee Co-Chair for the League of Women Voters of Hawaii. “We acknowledge the Judiciary and Money Committees in both chambers who provided leadership for this reform and look forward to implementing statewide Vote By Mail following a successful Kauai launch,” she concluded.

States using a universal Vote By Mail system confirm an increase in voter participation and lower election administration expenses. Here at home, the Office of Elections predicts a cost savings of \$750 thousand per election cycle when Vote By Mail is implemented statewide. Under provisions of the bill voting in person will be possible at Voter Service Centers.

“We applaud legislators for recognizing Vote By Mail as a viable solution to restore balance to our democracy. With this bill the state is taking the first step toward reducing barriers to voting, but the legislature is far from the finish line when it comes to election modernizations. We will not relax our efforts until common sense reforms like Automatic Voter Registration and Vote By Mail are available to all eligible voters across Hawaii,” said Common Cause Hawaii Executive Director, Corie Tanida.

Common Cause Hawaii is a state chapter of the national Common Cause organization. Common Cause is a nonpartisan, grassroots organization dedicated to protecting and improving Hawaii’s political process and holding government accountable to the public interest. For more information, please visit hi.commoncause.org.

The League of Women Voters of Hawaii is a non-partisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. For more information, visit www.lwv-hawaii.com.

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