

The Maui News

A quiet death for good cause

A bill that might have kick-started Hawaii's chronically low voter turnout died a quiet death Friday in the state Legislature.

House Bill 1401 would have mandated that all counties in Hawaii vote by mail in the 2020 elections.

According to a story in Civil Beat, the bill missed the deadline Friday for crossover in a conference committee. The story said that while the House and Senate appeared to agree the measure was a good idea, House leadership did not signal acceptance Friday.

That marks the third year in a row a vote-by-mail measure has failed to make it through the Legislature. It will have to wait another year.

According to Civil Beat, the bill was pushed by Common Cause Hawaii and the League of Women Voters and had received supporting testimony from the Office of Elections, the Office of Hawaiian Affairs and the county clerks of all four counties.

As we've noted here previously, we enjoy going to our polling place on Election Day — it, frankly, is a tradition that was drilled into us by our parents. However, we seem to be in a small minority. Across the United States — and across Hawaii — more and more people are voting by mail.

The alarming thing about Hawaii, though, is that too many people do not vote at all. It is not unusual to see voter turnout in the low 30 percentile in primaries. Even presidential elections see only about 50 percent of eligible voters take the time to cast a ballot.

HB 1401 sought to jack up participation by mailing a ballot to all eligible voters.

That, apparently, will have to wait another year. We urge backers to not give up — your cause is a noble one.

* Editorials reflect the opinion of the publisher.

COMMENTS

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Michael Mato

Some voters live out of state. Registered for two states. This would create a problem. Give up one state. Maybe allow them but have them pay tax to both states. HUH?

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