

THE BEAT

Bills To Aid Voting Near Approval

One measure calls for automatic registration while a second establishes voting by mail.

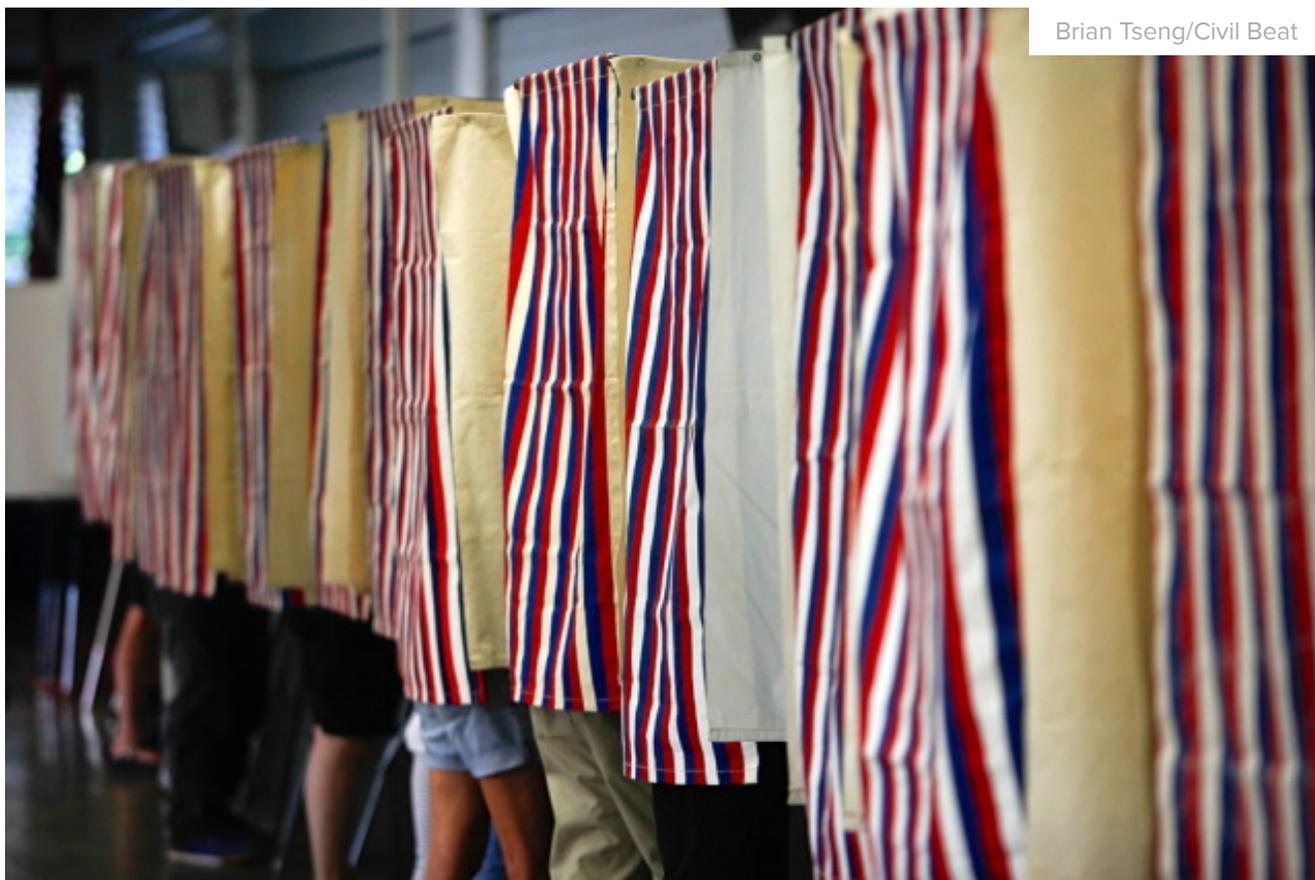
APRIL 24, 2016 • By Chad Blair   

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Up for conference committee hearing Tuesday afternoon are two measures that proponents say could improve voter turnout in Hawaii.

[House Bill 1653](#) would allow any person eligible to vote who applies for a new or renewed driver's license, driver instruction permit or state identification card to be automatically registered to vote if they are not already registered. The applicant could also decline to register to vote.

“This new election approach builds on other successful efforts to modernize the way we vote in Hawaii,” said Ann Shaver, League of Women Voters’ president, in a press release.



Manoa Elementary School voting.

[House Bill 401](#) calls for the Office of Elections to implement a voting-by-mail system that build on the absentee and permanent absentee voting programs. It would take place in 2018 to 2020.

Carmille Lim, executive director of Common Cause Hawaii, stated, “Automatic Voter Registration’ can unlock access to voting for an estimated 300 thousand Hawaii citizens who are eligible to vote but unregistered. Streamlining the voter registration process for all eligible voters is a step toward increasing voter participation in our state.”

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Andy Parx

While it might increase the actual number of votes, statistically it will drive down the rate of registered voter participation by creating a bigger pool of registered voters.

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