

# Experts fear Hawaii's new voter registration law heightens fraud risk

By **Malia Zimmerman** - July 2, 2014



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**BY MALIA ZIMMERMAN** – HONOLULU — Hawaii has the lowest voter turnout in the nation, with just 44 percent of eligible Hawaii voters taking part in the 2012 election.

Lawmakers hope a new law signed by Democrat Gov. Neil Abercrombie on Monday changes that.

Experts, however, fear the voter registration law heightens the risk for voter fraud.

The law makes it legal for voters to register to vote – and to vote – on Election Day beginning in 2018 and appropriates \$100,000 to the Office of Elections for county implementation.

Abercrombie said he supports the bill because it removes barriers to voting.

"Our system of government depends on individuals exercising their right to vote, one of our most cherished duties as citizens," Abercrombie said.

Several states already permit same-day voter registration, including Colorado, Connecticut, Idaho, Iowa, Maine, Minnesota, Montana, New Hampshire, Wisconsin and Wyoming, as well as the District of Columbia.

While the legislation received little opposition in Hawaii, and got support from the League of Women Voters, same-day registration is highly controversial in mainland states, where experts have shown it leads to voter fraud.

Two authors of books on troubled elections said Hawaii's new law is a recipe for just that.

John Fund, a well-known journalist and author of two books on voter fraud, "Stealing Elections: How Voter Fraud Threatens Our Democracy" and "[Who's Counting? How Fraudsters and Bureaucrats Put Your Vote at Risk](#)," has documented the perils of same-day voting.

Same-day voting helped elect Minnesota's Al Franken to the U.S. Senate in 2008, when many people flooded into state as "volunteers" and voted, Fund said.

But other states have seen problems, Fund said, including Wisconsin.

"In 2004, [John Kerry](#) won Wisconsin over George W. Bush by 11,380 votes out of 2.5 million cast. After allegations of fraud surfaced, the Milwaukee police department's Special Investigative Unit conducted a probe. Its February 2008 report found that from 4,600 to 5,300 more votes were counted in Milwaukee than the number of voters recorded as having cast ballots," Fund said.

Absentee ballots were cast by people living elsewhere; ineligible felons not only voted but worked at the polls; transient college students cast improper votes; and homeless voters possibly voted more than once, he said.

"Much of the problems resulted from Wisconsin's same-day voter law, which allows anyone to show up at the polls, register and then cast a ballot. ID requirements are

minimal. The report found that in 2004 a total of 1,305 'same day' voters were invalid," Fund said.

The report was largely ignored, and just before the 2008 election the police department's Special Investigative Unit was ordered not to send anyone to polling places on Election Day, Fund said.

Hans von Spakovsky is a former U.S. Department of Justice civil rights prosecutor and Senior Legal Fellow at The Heritage Foundation. He co-authored "[Who's Counting? How Fraudsters and Bureaucrats Put Your Vote at Risk](#)" with Fund.

"There is no time for election officials to verify the accuracy of the voter registration information or to ensure that ineligible individuals like non-citizens are not registering and voting," von Spakovsky said.

The League of Women Voters-Hawaii, which lobbied for the bill in collaboration with Common Cause Hawaii and other civil groups as well as the bill's sponsor, state Rep. Kaniela Ing, a Democrat, say the new law makes it more convenient and accessible to register to vote in Hawaii.

"By this action, voters in Hawaii will be able to go to the polls in increasing numbers, thus changing the pattern of low voter turnout of recent years," said League President Ann Shaver. "Experience has shown that same-day voter registration is also effective in getting younger voters to the polls."

## Comments

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