



August 15, 2016 | ☀️ 88° | 🚗 Check Traffic

Top News

Hawaii sinks to record low voter turnout

By Gregg K. Kakesako

Posted August 13, 2016

August 13, 2016

Updated August 14, 2016 12:11am



GREGG KAKESAKO / GKAKESAKO@STARADVERTISER.COM

Precinct worker Jo Ann Yamazaki, left, helps voter Delmond Won with instructions at Manoa Elementary School.

Update 12:10 p.m.:

With the final results of the night released, it's official: Hawaii set a record low for voter apathy in a primary election on Saturday, when only 34.7 percent of registered voters

bothered to cast ballots. In all, 251,959 people voted. The previous low for a primary election was set in 2008, when 36.9 percent of registered voters cast ballots. Some 246,070 people voted in the 2008 primary.

Update 10:38 p.m.:

Hawaii is on pace tonight to set a record for voter apathy in a primary election, with only 31.4 percent of registered voters bothering to cast ballots. In all, 228,017 people voted. The previous low for a primary election was set in 2008, when 36.9 percent of registered voters — or 246,070 people — cast ballots.

Update 7 p.m.: Only eight polls on Oahu remain open one hour after the scheduled poll closing time, election officials said. They plan to release the first early results of the evening after the last poll closes.

Update 6:45 p.m.: State election officials said 18 polling sites on Oahu and Hawaii island remained open about 40 minutes after the scheduled 6 p.m. closing time. The last polls are expected to close at 7 p.m. and the first printout of returns should be released around 7:30 p.m.

All of the polling sites on Kauai and Maui were closed.

The first printout is expected to include 109,000 mail-in and walk-in ballots.

Previous coverage

Voter turnout was running behind the 2014 primary election based on a sampling of the state's 233 polling places and the number of people who took advantage of absentee and early walk-in voting, according to a state election official.

The state elections office projected that voter turnout was 27 percent as of 3 p.m., compared with 33 percent at the same time in the 2014 primary, according to spokeswoman Nedielyn Bueno. In the 2014 primary election, only 41.5 percent of the state's 697,033 registered voters cast a ballot.

On Maui, County Clerk Danny Matteo was hoping that voting would pick up in the afternoon.

-
- [View the candidates](#)
 - [Early, absentee voting on Oahu mixed](#)
 - [Today's primary election at a glance](#)
-

Kauai County Clerk Lyndon Yoshioka said based on the number of calls to the Lihue election control center, "it's quiet here. Things are running smoothly."

The state's 233 polling places from Hanalei on Kauai to South Point on the Big Island opened without any major problems, according to Bueno. No major problems were

reported by the state elections office.

Bueno said there was a problem with a paper ballot scanner just before the polls opened at 7 a.m. at Maunawili Elementary School. A troubleshooter was dispatched and a replacement machine put into operation, she said.

Some 19,215 of the state's 726,9401 registered voters had cast ballots by the close of business Thursday when early walk-in and absentee voting.

On Oahu that means 9,928 of the city's 483,076 registered voters have cast their ballots, according to the elections office, down from about 10,500 in 2014.

For the neighbor islands, state elections officials reported that 4,838 of the Big Island's 109,690 registered voters have voted; 2,101 of Maui County's 91,139 registered voters have cast their ballots; and 2,348 of the Garden Island's 43,036 registered voters have taken advantage of early walk-in and mail-in voting.

Among the two dozen voters at Manoa Elementary School this morning were attorney Robin Leong and a medical technician Cory Yutaka, who had to wait about 15 minutes to vote.

Robyn Loudermilk, who is running the Manoa precinct voting operation for the first time, said she could have used another three to five precinct workers.

"We try our best," said Loudermilk, noting there were about 10 people working at the Manoa precinct who are paid \$85 for a shift that could run more than 12 hours. "We have a couple of old-timers who really help the newcomers in coming up with the best way to keep the flow of voters going."

On Maui, County Clerk Matteo said this morning that his office was still trying to hire precinct workers.

"We have 500 now," Matteo said, "Fully manned, we should have 600. I think it is a problem statewide.

Keone Anderson, who moved to Manoa from Waikiki more than a year ago, ran into a small problem even after reporting an address change online: her name was not listed on the pollbooks at the Manoa precinct. However, Anderson was issued a provisional ballot and allowed to vote.

Yutaka, who has been the first to vote at Manoa school during the last three elections, said, "It is very important to vote. There is a lot of power in voting."

Leong, 60, a lifelong Manoa resident, added, "I have voted here since I was 18."

Leong, however, will only use paper ballots. "I don't trust electronic voting," Leong said. "I believe in paper ballots."

Leong predicted a spirited race between Democratic incumbent Isaac Choy and newcomer Dale Kobayashi in today's Democratic state House primary.

There are 16 uncontested races in the state Senate and House, and all but one of the unopposed candidates are Democrats.

Polls opened at 7 a.m. and close at 6 p.m. but elections officials say anyone in line at 6 p.m. will be allowed to vote.

Polling places are listed on the state elections office website, elections.hawaii.gov.

In the 2014 primary election Tropical Storm Iselle forced the closure of two voting precincts in Puna which resulted in voting extended for six additional days.