

Legislature Trying Again for Election-Day Voter Registration

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by **Dave Smith**

Updated Thursday, Feb. 20.

The House Finance Committee on Wednesday unanimously passed HB2590, without any changes.

The next step is a third floor vote for the measure, which if approved would then be sent over to the Senate.

Posted 12:35 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 19:

State lawmakers are again looking to institute election-day voter registration in Hawaii.

A [bill](#) that would have done that last year passed both the House and the Senate, but with different wording from each body.

Despite meeting six times, a conference committee made up of members of both the House and Senate [could not reach an agreement](#) on the final language for House Bill 321.

A new bill that surfaced this legislative session attempts to work out the problems that killed the effort in 2013.

[House Bill 2590](#) has passed the House Judiciary Committee, and will be taken up by the House Finance Committee at a hearing scheduled for 3 p.m. today.

Currently, prospective voters must register 30 days before an election.

Supporters of same-day registration say the change is critical to improving Hawaii's anemic voter turnout.

Maui Rep. Kaniela Ing, one of the primary sponsors of both the 2013 and 2014 versions of the same-day registration bill, agrees.

"While there are various reasons people do not vote, arbitrary registration deadlines should not be one of them," Ing said in a statement. "We need to modernize our archaic election processes and make voting as easy and simple as possible.

"Many young people have only had one or two election cycles to contemplate registering, yet by the time they are engaged and informed enough to make a sound decision, it is too late to register," Ing added.

In 2013, election officials from all of the counties expressed concern about the cost and logistics of having to designate a clerk at each polling place to handle election-day

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Nona Beamer Film Tribute

@ Volcano Art Center, Niaulani Campus

Filmmaker Linda Kane's 'Nona Beamer: A Legacy of Aloha,' 6:30 p.m. Q&A with the filmmaker following the screening. Admission \$5; call 967-8222 for information.

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@ Basically Books

Librarian and archivist Helen Wong Smith discusses 19th century Hawaiian scholars and historians, free at 11:30 a.m. Call 961-0144.

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Hilo's own Ben Kaili performs songs from his new slack key guitar album, "Huanan,i" a 2014 Na Hoku nominee, free at 2 p.m. Call 961-0144.

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registrations.

In response, the Senate gutted the House version of the bill and inserted language allowing for registration at absentee polling places. However, those close 10 days before election day.


The bill introduced this year allows registration at both absentee polling places and at voting precincts on election day.

It also contains a section providing funding to the counties for additional costs of providing registration clerks at each precinct.

The bill contains requirements for documentation necessary for same-day registration regarding identification of the voter and confirmation of residency.

A suggestion by Gov. Neil Abercrombie in 2012 that [Hawaii consider all-mail voting](#) apparently has not gained much traction, as there does not appear to be any such bills up for consideration during the current session.

Abercrombie's comments were sparked by problems with delayed openings of polling places on the Big Island in that year's primary election.

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