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## Editorial | Letters

# Letters to the Editor

By [Star-Advertiser staff](#)

April 7, 2013

### Let voters register on Election Day

Miriam Hellreich's commentary, "[Hawaii doesn't need Election Day voter registration](#)," misses the mark (Star-Advertiser, Island Voices, April 3). Election Day registration does not ignore the mishaps of the 2012 elections, but is one of many efforts in response to it.

Citizens taking responsibility to exercise their freedom to vote should have convenient, accessible ways to do so — especially in Hawaii, with our worst-in-the-nation voter turnout. Voters in Maine, Minnesota and Wisconsin have had Election Day registration for almost four decades. More recently, North Carolina implemented it at early-voting locations in 2008 and saw a 7.5 point gain in voter turnout.

Nonpartisan studies have repeatedly found almost zero fraud in these states. Further, by allowing for Election Day registration, we would reduce the number of provisional ballots that would be cast, helping streamline the voting process for citizens and elections administrators.

Increasing voter turnout while reevaluating our existing processes is what we should strive for in our vibrant democracy.

### **Carmille Lim**

*Executive director, Common Cause Hawaii*

### How to write us

The Star-Advertiser welcomes letters that are crisp and to the point (~150 words). The Star-Advertiser reserves the right to edit letters for clarity and length. Please direct

comments to the issues; personal attacks will not be published. Letters must be signed and include a daytime telephone number.

**Letter form:** [Online form, click here](#)

**E-mail:** [letters@staradvertiser.com](mailto:letters@staradvertiser.com)

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**Mail:** Letters to the Editor, Honolulu Star-Advertiser, 7 Waterfront Plaza, 500 Ala Moana, Suite 210, Honolulu, HI 96813

### **Registration proposal honors democracy**

I agree that the lack of ballots and long lines at the polling sites is unfortunate. Such travesties require better polling management.

I disagree that same-day registration would result in massive voter fraud. I am from Minnesota and we have one of the highest voter turnouts and allow same-day registration. I have been an election judge and am happy to report voter fraud is next to nil in Minnesota.

Hawaii residents deserve the chance to vote, regardless of their registration status on Election Day.

**Brian R. Huffman**

*Minneapolis*

### **Federal furloughs won't save money**

Federal furloughs will not save taxpayers any money.

If the amount of work stays the same and nothing else changes, the cost of work stays the same. Delaying work for three weeks or 14 days saves nothing. Delays add costs.

Can Tripler Medical Center insist that no one get sick or injured or need medical treatment for 14 days while its workers are forced not to show up for work? Do ships in drydock at the shipyard repair themselves while workers are sent home without pay for 14 days? Will the Army's vehicles scheduled for maintenance resist breakage because workers are not available?

If someone believes furloughs will save money, they are not paying attention. After the furloughs, overtime will be used to catch up on the backlog, costing taxpayers more than any so-called furlough savings.

**Robert Lillis**

*President, IAM&AW Machinists Union Local Lodge 1998*

### **Some homeless don't want to be helped**

City Councilman Stanley Chang and other state and city officials are coming up with

many would-be solutions and proposing big money to help curtail our homeless problem.

The biggest problem is how to deal with the chronic homeless who do not want to be helped at all, period. These are the druggies, those with mental problems, who want to drink booze, smoke and not follow any rules whatsoever.

Officials propose tent-like shelters and places for those with vehicles to park overnight with security. These would need rules and compliance by those who use them.

The problem is: What do you do with the chronic homeless — and there are many — who do not want to comply or be helped? By law, you cannot force them to do anything. These individuals are plentiful and very visible, especially in Waikiki, where they hurt our economy.

Politicians should answer this question before moving forward.

### **Steven Burke**

*Aiea*

#### **Online courses will cut cost of education**

Norman Matloff, in an article criticizing MOOCs (massive open online courses), missed the entire point of why these courses will become an essential part of education ("Online courses too cursory," Star-Advertiser, March 27).

The cost of a college education has increased more than 7 percent per year over the last decade, while incomes and the overall cost of living have gone up far less than that.

For many middle-class families, the cost of a college education for their children can destroy the hope of a decent standard of living for the parents in retirement. A student who finances her education with loans is very likely to be condemned to decades of living hand-to-mouth trying to pay them off.

Instead of criticizing MOOCs, the education system should embrace them and provide ways to improve and smoothly incorporate them.

Use MOOCs to reduce time on campus to two years and cut the cost of a college education. Remember, MOOCs are in their infancy. Their quality will increase dramatically as experience with them increases.

### **Ron Miller**

*Waimanalo*

#### **Medications could have subdued killer**

The article, "Friends, kin noted Tucson slayer was armed, unhinged" (Star-Advertiser,

March 28), again brought into sharp focus the terrible plight of mentally ill people in our society.

Jared Loughner was fired from a clothing-store job, expelled from a community college and rejected by the armed forces, and had parents who experienced an unbridgeable communications gap with their son.

What Loughner needed was medical attention and medications to subdue the abnormal activity in his brain. He was obviously ill. Had all of this taken place in Hawaii, since he was not imminently dangerous, our statutes would have made it almost impossible to treat him.

In the name of protecting civil liberties, we have created a situation that, more often than not, finds more mentally ill people in jails and prisons than in a treatment program that would bring them back to the world the rest of us live in and allow them to truly enjoy their civil rights.

### **Ed Sullam**

*Waialae*

### **Our beautiful aina is being despoiled**

I recently went to a favorite spot to enjoy a quiet moment. I was surprised and disappointed to see warning signs for contaminated sewage in the water.

Previous news articles of sewage spills at various places and times came to mind and I wondered how and why this happens so often?

Our beautiful aina is a precious and sacred resource that should be protected and preserved. We have one ocean, and we are connected to it and the land. We need to take care.

The life of the land is perpetuated in righteousness.

### **Garner Shimizu**

*Moanalua Valley*

### **Keep Haiku Stairs closed to the public**

I would like to respond to James V. Pollock's letter ("[Charge fee for people who hike Haiku Stairs](#)," *Star-Advertiser*, March 31).

Apparently Pollock has not kept abreast of the problems with access to the Haiku Stairs. His idea to collect a fee and sign a waiver is a great one, but if the various agencies that own the land around the Haiku Stairs won't grant the access, the money is a moot point.

Further, testimony from the Hono-lulu police and fire departments that they would like

the Haiku Stairs removed further validates the position of area residents.

Hikers trespass because they can, as no one is enforcing the law.

**Rae Leong**

*Kaneohe*