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Voter registration in Hawaii has never been easier

[Richard Borreca](#)

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If you have a mirror, you can find out who can get you registered to vote in the upcoming state and federal elections.

Want to have your say on Donald Trump, Hillary Clinton or who should be running Honolulu's rail project?

Then register and vote.

To find your closest voter registrar, look in the mirror.

The state is making it increasingly [easy to register to vote](#) and, correspondingly, more difficult to say you didn't have time to register.

Basically all it takes is online access and either a state driver's license or state identification card.

Scott Nago, state chief election officer, explained in an interview this week that, basically, "it is on you."

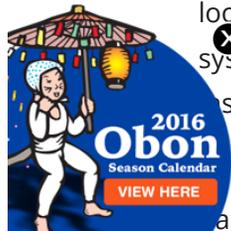
A new state law allows for qualified voters to register online. You can even go online via a smartphone to register.

Online registration has been available since last August, and since then the Elections Office has processed 30,000 transactions, Nago said.

Not all of the transactions were new voters, Nago said, because with the online

system, voters can go also change their voter information, like where they are registered to vote if they move, or request a permanent absentee mail-in ballot.

“If you have this idea that you want to register, now you don’t have to go look for a form; you just go online and it’s done,” said Nago. “Maybe if you spend your time looking for a form or the papers, your desire to register might go away. With this system, it is on you — you want to register and you didn’t, it is on you because it is now instantaneous.”



Some political parties are trying to increase voter numbers. The state Republican Party has a voter registration form on its web site and the Democrats are aggressively using voter registration as an important political tool.

“Our efforts directly helped to register over 500 new voters and overall we had a general increase of 4 percent in voters registered on Kauai,” according to Aria Juliet Castillo, president of the Kauai Young Democrats.

Castillo said her group had a lot of success by setting up a table at concerts and offering to help register voters on the spot.

“Many people still do not know that voter registration is available online,” Castillo said.

The website, 24/7 Wall Street, which rates states in various categories, ranked Hawaii last in voter turnout.

There are several different ways to measure voter turnout. If you look at the number of registered voters compared with those who showed and voted, either by mail or on election day, Hawaii is doing poorly.

In the 2014 primary election, just 41.5 percent of those registered voted.

Times have been worse: in 2008, the turnout was 36.9 percent.

Since 1998, Hawaii’s primary voter turnout has never topped 50 percent.

Interest in registration doesn’t always equal voter turnout but it is a start, and today, getting into the game has never been easier.

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