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**Editorial | Our View**

# Voting easier than ever, so please do it

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This state's odd voting pattern has many analysts scratching heads.

Voter registration is going up, but actual voting is going down.

What is that about?

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The deadline to sign up for the general election polling passed Monday, and more than 740,000 people had registered. That's roughly 35,000 more people than in the previous two cycles, including the last presidential general election of 2012.

But so far there's been no surge of Hawaii residents eager to exercise their voting franchise. Isle voters set a dismal record for low turnout in the August primary

election, when only 34.7 percent showed up at the ballot box.

Hawaii had its share of primary-election enthusiasts — the presidential challenger, Sen. Bernie Sanders, excited Democrats here as much as in other states. There weren't enough of them, though, to boost the turnout figures. Such results are widely ascribed to voter apathy, but what's puzzling is that apathetic people usually don't bother registering, either.

One possible conjecture is that voters start the election cycle with some enthusiasm but lose interest, worn down by the bitterness of campaign rhetoric and convinced that their vote wouldn't matter.

However this statistical anomaly happened, it would be wise for dispirited voters to step back and adjust their attitudes.

An individual may feel powerless standing alone. But it doesn't take more than a handful of votes in each precinct to add up into a margin that has spelled victory, or defeat, in many races through the years. The Bush/Gore race of 2000 was only the most noteworthy among them.

In the statewide races in Hawaii, this has not seemed very evident — congressional and gubernatorial races in general elections have been lopsided victories, historically. But in state House races, for example, numerous state representatives have squeaked past their opponent by a handful of votes. These are votes, critical to local interests, that should not be thrown away.

There is really no legitimate excuse to do so. To their credit, lawmakers have worked in recent years to make voting as easy as possible.

Hawaii voters have alternatives that enhance the convenience of voting. Ballots can be cast by mail and by stopping off at early-voting sites, if personal schedules on Election Day, Nov. 8, make voting a chore. And the state will launch same-day registration in 2018, allowing people to sign up and vote on Election Day.

There are grounds for frustration with the current election season. Locally, the most consequential race for Honolulu mayor is set within the contentious context of the troubled rail project. And there's never been a presidential race as ugly as the current standoff between Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump. So much mud has been flung, voters understandably long to wash their hands of it.

But as interminably vexing as this election has become, it's also clearly one of the most important decision points in years, both locally and nationally. On Nov. 8, voters have the right and responsibility to do their part, and decide.