RES23-136
Testimony

MISC. COMM. 324

EXECUTIVE MATTERS AND LEGAL AFFAIRS (EMLA)

EXECUTIVE MATTERS AND LEGAL AFFAIRS (EMLA)

Meeting

Meeting Date: Jun 20, 2023 @ 01:00 PM

Support: 1

Oppose: 0

I wish to comment: 2

Name:	Email:	Zip:
lynne matusow	lynnehi@aol.com	96817
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	I wish to comment	Jun 14, 2023 @ 08:53 PM

Testimony:
You have missed the point. the swearing in ceremony is set for the end of this month. what you need to do is have a revote. since the commission, to save money, went from paper ballots to electronic voting the participation rate has fallen off each election. my area has more residents, more high rises, and yet the highest number of votes was around 200, when one year it was over 700. one year a person who came in 6th out of nine positions had over 550 votes. the commissioners must extend the current term for at least two months while a redo is conducted. i have read the civil beat stories. disgusting. this is worse than when chair waters challenged a council election because votes were received and tabulated after the deadline and a new election was ordered. the then council appointed Mike Formby, who is now managing director, as an interim councilmember. i am surprised that the city/commission has not been sued because of the irregularities. as a former 27 year neighborhood board member i am disgusted. the people of oahu deserve better, not this disgraceful election.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Greg Knudsen	knudsen123@gmail.com	96825
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	I wish to comment	Jun 16, 2023 @ 05:11 PM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Flora Obayashi	of8@hawaii.edu	96744
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Jun 19, 2023 @ 11:11 AM

Testimony:
I am concerned that my Kahalu‘u ahupua‘a neighborhood no longer has a voice in Sub-district 3 of Kahalu‘u Neighborhood Board #29(KNB #29). I currently hold one of three seats in Sub-district 3 with a term that ends on June 30, 2023. . The other two incumbents are Rocky Kaluhiwa residing in Heeia ahupua‘a, and Art Machado residing in the Iuiu subdivision. I reside on the Wailau peninsula speaking also for the Lulani Drive and Okana Road neighborhoods.

Reporting the election results Jarret Machado (Arts grandson and living in the same household as incumbent Art Machado) garnered 60 votes. Rocky Kaluhiwa of He‘eia won 56 votes. Art Machado and I (Flora Obayashi) tied for the third seat with 53 votes each. The fifth candidate, Melodie Aduja who lives in my neighborhood, received 34 votes.

The Neighborhood Commission Office notified me that Executive Secretary Lloyd Yonenaka drew Art Machados name in the tiebreaker drawing witnessed by Senator Brenton Awa. Therefore I lost the seat speaking for matters related to the Wailau, Lulani, and Okana Road neighborhoods.

My concern is that there is no one on the board in the upcoming two-year term residing in my neighborhoods. On the other hand there are two board members - Art Machado and his grandson, Jarrett Machado residing in the same household - will present an outsize influence for the Iuiu subdivision neighborhood on matters that come before KNB #29

I believe this circumstance of two board members from the same household controverts the purpose and mission of the neighborhood board system which is to provide diverse input to federal, state and municipal government officials from local citizens residing within a distinct board area.

I believe that corrective action should be taken to limit one member from each household to run for office to promote diversity of input to policymakers and the community.

June 16, 2023

Honolulu City Council
Executive Matters and Legal Affairs Committee
Meeting of June 20, 2023

Re: RES23-136
Urging the Neighborhood Commission Office and the Department of Information Technology to Provide an Update on the Status of Neighborhood Board Election Procedures

As a resident of Hawaii Kai, and as a 22-year member of the Hawaii Kai Neighborhood Board testifying in my private capacity, I question the integrity of the 2023 Neighborhood Board elections, particularly the sub-district 11 race in Hawaii Kai.

It is a huge red flag that only 31 votes were tallied in sub-district 11. Since 2005, the sub-district had vote totals from 107-191. Both candidates have cited voter difficulties in that race. No one is to blame; everyone has occasional computer problems. But it's up to the Neighborhood Commission Office to recognize that there was a serious problem and to provide an acceptable solution. I have submitted a formal complaint to the NCO to address and correct this matter.

A further implication that should deeply concern the Honolulu City Council is the faith and confidence citizens have for any and all City-conducted elections. If this matter is not resolved satisfactorily, how will voters be confident about the fairness and accuracy of any City election – online, mail-in, or in-person voting?

I have served on the Hawaii Kai Neighborhood Board since 2001. In my at-large position, I received a high of 2,605 votes in 2003 with regular paper ballots. After the NCO switched to mail-in and online voting, I have seen the board elections getting less and less City attention, and subsequently suffering a drastic drop in public participation. This lack of City priority undermines the neighborhood boards as a vehicle for grass-roots participation and diminishes the public's overall trust and involvement in their government and with their elected officials.

There was a critical article in Civil Beat on June 7 questioning the election results (https://www.civilbeat.org/2023/06/computer-glitches-are-causing-concerns-over-the-integrity-of-oahus-neighborhood-board-elections/). A previous Civil Beat article on April 25 questioned the implications of Neighborhood Commission employees making

a concerted effort to gain positions on neighborhood boards (https://www.civilbeat.org/2023/04/conflict-of-interest-neighborhood-board-employees-are-running-for-seats-on-the-boards/).

Below is my published response to the June 7 Civil Beat article:

> The Hawaii Kai Neighborhood Board, where I've served since 2001, is one of the most active boards within a highly engaged community. Some issues have attracted hundreds of residents at our meetings. Our past elections have generated competitive races and relatively high vote totals. It's inconceivable that the Sub-District 11 race tallied only 31 total votes, the lowest of any Oahu contests. The incumbent reported during the election period that her constituents were having trouble casting their online votes – and the city response was inadequate.
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> The Neighborhood Commission Office, which is responsible for overseeing the boards and conducting the elections, is also responsible for promoting the biennial elections. Therefore, less promotion equals less work and expense. Election participation, by design, has been drastically shrinking for years. Yet, that same city office (part of the Mayor's Office) encouraged nine of its 13 employees to seek positions on the boards, which often deal with issues critical of city and Neighborhood Commission policies. Eight of those nine were elected. How will their employer react if they vote against their own office or any city position?

While I support the intent of RES 23-136, which is to have the Neighborhood Commission Office and Department of Information Technology investigate the election irregularities and to report back to the City Council, the resolution does not demand corrective measures. A revote seems necessary for the Hawaii Kai sub-district 11 election and any other races that experienced technical failures, and deliberate actions are needed to restore voter confidence in City-conducted elections.

Aloha,



Greg Knudsen
Member, Hawaii Kai Neighborhood Board
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