

## Hawaii: The State that Doesn't Vote

According to CNN, in 2008, Hawaii had the lowest voter turnout rates in the entire United States, with only a little over 48% of voters voting on Election Day. To put this into perspective, the best state had well over 75%, while the nation's average was just 61%. This has been a recurring problem as every year the percentage of voters who participate in elections drops. It is hard to even imagine that in 1959, when Hawaii first became a state, we were at the top of the nation with 84% for Primary Elections and 93% for the General. In a mere fifty years, Hawaii has dropped to half of that. The question now is, why and how can this be changed for future elections?

There are many reasons why Hawaii residents do not feel the need to vote; many of them are specific to the State of Hawaii. The number one reason is Hawaii's Democratic history. Only twice since statehood have Hawaii's electoral votes gone to Republican presidential candidates. Many feel like there is no choice to be made because Democrats have dominated the elections for decades. Another reason is the six hour time difference between Hawaii and Washington DC. This is a problem because by the time the polls open, the results for President are already predicted.

With unlimited resources, I propose that the Electoral College be abolished. The United States boasts about being a democracy in which each vote counts in Presidential elections. However, this is not the case when an Electoral College vote can override the popular vote in the state, or as mentioned before, the winner of the Presidential race is predicted before Hawaii even gets to vote. Doing away with the Electoral College would make Hawaii's vote matter as much as everyone else's. Another thing that could be done is to ease registration laws. Hawaii should consider giving first-time voters the opportunity to register at their polling places on Election

Day. By implementing this law, it could give those new to the system a chance to sign up and actually vote that very same day. Finally, I believe that our keiki should be educated in school on the voting process and why civic matters are important. They should understand how voting affects them. Teaching students about the world will better prepare them when they are able to participate in the election process themselves.

Clarence TC Ching serves as a role model to many because he grew up from humble beginnings with the desire to make a difference. With hard work and determination, Ching was able to live the American Dream. Part of fulfilling this dream is taking part in the election process. His legacy strives to educate keiki on the importance of education and civic participation and to help them understand their potential. Clarence T.C. Ching showed and what can be accomplished by having a dream.