

## Where Do We Go From Here?

According to the Hawaii Office of Elections, this past general election yielded a record low 52.3% voter turnout rate. The reasons as to why people do not vote are numerous but the point remains the same, Hawaii lacks the same spirit of participation and social responsibility that other states foster. For example, Minnesota and Wisconsin have well over a 70% turnout which embodies and exemplifies their commitment to having a say. What can Hawaii do to encourage more people to take a stand? We need young people in Hawaii to embrace voting as a duty and privilege.

A two party system where Republicans and Democrats dominate is mainly to blame too. Over time, people have gotten caught up in their respective party's policies that candidates win solely on their party's association which means that many candidates elected into office are not always there for the right reasons. Many also do not believe their voice counts because Hawaii appears to vote one way, Democratic. This is essentially another reason for low voter turnout in Hawaii. Why waste your vote by voting for the opposition?

A no party system embodies the idea that everyone has independent beliefs and votes on issues that are independent of specific party ties. A number of initiatives can be passed to begin this trek towards a no party system, one of which begins with the ballot itself. When voting time comes around, candidates running for specific offices will be placed in their respective category, alphabetically. There will be "No" party assigned to their respective names. All candidates will run as equal opponents; which truly ensures that Democrats and Republicans do not have a monopoly on our political system.

In the past, I did not give November 4<sup>th</sup> much thought; however, I recently registered to vote in Hawaii. I proudly voted in this past General Election too. I felt it was my duty as an American citizen, a Hawaii resident and a female to actively participate. I want other young people in Hawaii to feel the same spirit of participation that I felt that first time I voted. I fear that if nothing is done regarding this issue, the numbers will continue to drop and the democratic process will slowly erode and decay.

Clarence TC Ching believed and supported our political process. He would definitely agree that more interest and education of young adults is needed to preserve the democratic process of being a good citizen. A push towards a no party system will be a long uphill battle but the ending effects will harbor a better, more virtuous political system that the entire State and Nation can be proud of.

#### Work Cited

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