

July 11, 2011 Charter Commission Meeting – Molokai

Aloha commissioners, my name is Barbara Haliniak testifying as a member of this community not representing any organizations.

I'm asking the Charter Commission not to fix what is not broken. Molokai needs to continue to have our voices heard from a councilmember who lives and have a heartbeat of this island.

Here's why;

From July 1, 2001 to my retirement in October 2009, as president of the Molokai Chamber of Commerce, I have had to call upon our state senator to assist us in a number of transportation issues only to hit a dead end road, in other words, no response. During my eight and a half years as the president, I can't ever recall receiving emails to solicit input or to provide testimonies for senate bills affecting businesses, nor can I recall the same from our house representative. Why? One can only assume that the voter count on this island is not as significant as Maui, thus Molokai and Lanai votes would unlikely affect their bid for reelection. It's the numbers game.

In 2007, our state senator and house representative visited my office briefly. At this meeting, I inquired about the status of the pending worker's compensation bill. Our senator asked if the bill was a senate or a house bill. I was stunned that he didn't know it was a senate bill that would adversely affect the cost of doing business. If we can't count on our senator to be alert to bills passing through the legislature affecting small businesses, then who can we count on?

In 2008 when TSA required that all persons needing access to Hawaii ports must possess a transportation workers identification certification (TWIC) badge; Molokai and Lanai were left out of this certification process. Although, our state senator wrote a letter to the TSA's office in Arlington, VA, asking TSA to set up a temporary office on Molokai and Lanai, he did not follow-up on his request nor did he return my emails or calls to his senate office. Because of this lack of response, as the chamber president, I had to research the vendor and through our negotiations, was able to get a commitment from Lockheed Martin's local office. For Molokai businesses, the 180 badges processed amounted to approximately \$45,000 in transportation cost savings, not factored into this savings are employees wages for travel and certification time at an off island location. A significant savings for both Molokai businesses and consumers.

Because of this lack of enthusiasm from our state legislative representatives, we lack a voice to represent us at the state level. These legislators are voted in by the district they represent which consist of Molokai, Lanai, Kahoolawe and East Maui. Think about it, where are our votes to make the difference?

These are just some of the reasons why county council district voting would NOT work for Molokai and Lanai.

Rec'd 071111 - Pub - Haliniak Testimony

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Ken Fukuoka

COUNTY COUNCIL
COUNTY OF MAUI
200 S. HIGH STREET
WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAII 96793
www.mauicounty.gov/council

July 5, 2011

Joshua Alike Kalaunui Stone, Chair
Maui County Charter Commission
Department of the Corporation Counsel
Wailuku, HI 96793

Dear Chair Stone and Members of the Committee:

SUBJECT: DISTRICT VOTING

Thank you for this opportunity to express my opposition to the proposed charter amendment advocating District Voting for Maui County.

A district-voting system to elect County Council members will not benefit the people of Molokai and Lanai. To know this requires a clear understanding of how the various proposals for a district-voting system will affect the people of these unique islands.

The proposal that seems the most popular is to establish nine single-member districts, in which a single member is elected by the majority of voters in a geographic district to represent the district on the Council. Single-member district voting has been established in the City and County of Honolulu and the County of Hawaii. These counties each consist of one island, whereas the County of Maui encompasses four separate islands.

Under a single-member district voting system, Maui County would be divided into nine geographical districts, established by a reapportionment commission. Because Federal law requires that each person's vote have approximately equal weight in all elections (the one-person/one vote requirement), the population of each district must be substantially equal. Because the populations of Molokai and Lanai are significantly less than the island of Maui, neither could be established as a separate district; they would have to be joined with other areas of the island of Maui. Molokai and Lanai simply do not have big enough populations to establish as separate districts. To do so would violate Federal law. Therefore, under a single-member district voting system, it is likely that a resident of Maui would become the Council representative for the residents of Molokai or Lanai. I do not see how a person who lives on Maui could have a realistic understanding of the day-to-day concerns and issues that face the residents of Molokai or Lanai.

Rec'd 7/11/11 - Pub - Ella Alcon for Danny Mateo

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We have already seen how canoe-districts are not practical and do not work, as evidenced by our state house and senatorial districts. A common comment by the residents on Molokai is we rarely see our state legislators. Certainly, they keep no regular hours or an office on our island that allows for one-on-one meetings. As a practical matter, due to Council and Committee meeting scheduling as well as flight schedules, I spend my week on Maui, scheduling regular meetings on Molokai with concerned citizens on the weekend. Would a Council member based on Maui Island be able to offer the same level of representation and service to the residents of Lanai and Molokai? I think not.

There is no doubt that district voting would provide benefits to candidates. Supporters argue that candidates would run in small regions, reducing campaign costs and perhaps encouraging more qualified individuals to run for office. However, such benefits would not apply to candidates who live on Molokai or Lanai. These candidates would still have to campaign on Maui as well as Molokai and Lanai requiring additional costs for travel and accommodations.

There are other proposals for district voting; however, under any district-voting proposal, Molokai and Lanai could not be its own district, separate from other areas of Maui County. For this reason, I do not support district voting in any form.

Respectfully,



DANNY A. MATEO
Council Chair

DAM:aas

cc: Molokai Council Office

Community Contribution

A Modest Proposal for Molokai Self-Governance

Having observed the governance of Molokai from Maui over the past several years, one wonders how the highly detailed rules, codes, forms and other "red tape" for a community of over 150,000 people can be rationally and even fairly applied to a geographically, economically, and culturally separate rural community of 7,000 people. At the risk of being labeled a malcontentious outsider, I can state that my previous home town of 2,000 people would never accept all the rules, codes, forms and "red tape" of the city of 200,000 people that is twenty miles away. Making all the rules of Maui County fit Molokai is the proverbial square peg and round hole. The permitting decisions for Special Management Areas, buildings, businesses, etc. are essentially made on Maui and, where applicable, are presented to the Molokai Planning Commission where the rules can get in the way of common sense and delay worthy local projects. Maui county officials interpret their rules and, having so many detailed rules, they can find a reason to deny anything if they are so inclined; just witness the SMA process for the Molokai veteran's project. The same officials can call a proposed palatial west end estate a Molokai "farm dwelling" and a medical clinic a "philanthropic institution" but as the words "veteran's center" did not appear in the "rule" it was not approved. And what were the "rules" that delayed Paddlers Inn from starting back up the way it had been operating before? And then there are two Maui County depts. who cannot agree on "fire flow" for the veteran's project. Rules and codes are necessary but they should be reasonably and locally interpreted and applied.

So here is my modest proposal: First develop an expeditious process that is unique to Molokai for all permits (SMA, building, business, etc.). Second develop a simple and expeditious process to address variances and appeals to the Maui County rules here on Molokai. (Do you know that there is not one Molokai representative on the present Maui County Board of Variances and Appeals?) One could expand the responsibility of the Molokai Planning Commission for this purpose. Finally, to give oversight in case things get too far astray from the Maui County rules, create oversight by the Maui County Council for any variance granted on Molokai but require that 2/3rd of the Maui County Council agree to overturning any variance granted on Molokai and that it be done quickly (within 30 days) or the Molokai decision will stand. Think about it. If you agree, send this along to our Maui County Council members.

David Hafermann

edd 071111 - Pub - Haferman Testimony

Maui County Charter Commission Members
July 11, 2011

Leave the current voting system as is.

Although it doesn't work well, because Maui can out vote Molokai on our own representative, and I understand that the Federal law prohibits Molokai from having its own representative. Therefore, I would rather see the current system, because whether Molokai likes our representative or not, at least the representative lives here. That is what is important is to ensure a representative lives in their district. At least we on another island can have face-to-face conversations with the representative, which would not happen if we were a part of a larger Maui district. A local person is more accountable when they have to face people when they are here. It is too easy to happen where a rep doesn't come to Molokai, as other political representatives have proven at other levels of government. It is inconvenient to come to Molokai. The planners complain coming for the Planning Commission. We know we have not many flights, they are expensive, and many delays. Therefore a Maui rep would rarely show their face. I don't want to use Skype to talk to my representatives. So using technology is not an answer to support new voting districts.

Until Molokai can have their own rep in the future, leave the current system alone.

Cheryl Corbiell
Molokai Resident

Rec'd 7/11/11 - Pub - Cheryl Corbiell Testimony

July 11, 2011

Dear Members of the Charter Commission:

My name is Kimberly Svetin, a resident of Kaunakakai. I was raised on Molokai for 18 years, from 1969-1987 and resided on the mainland and Neighbor Islands from 1987-2005. I returned in 2005 to Molokai to raise my two sons with my husband.

I work full-time and pay taxes as an individual and as an owner of several companies. As one of the owners of Molokai Drugs, a 76-year-old Molokai-based business, I ask that you keep the Council voting district as is. Unlike other County governments on Oahu and Hawaii, our district includes four islands—Maui, Molokai, Lanai and Kahoolawe. The City and County of Honolulu and the County of Hawaii (Big Island) have established single-member district voting. This type of county government works because there is only one geographical area, or island.

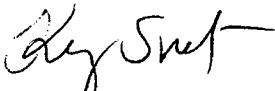
Maui County includes four islands with different needs and situations.

For our Molokai residents, the current voting system has worked. As a taxpayer, I feel my voice has been heard by the entire County because of the representation of Molokai Council members such as the late Patrick Kawano and our current councilman, Danny Mateo.

Our concerns and suggestions have been brought to the entire County very successfully because of the representation we had had for Molokai. In the event that a single-member district voting system is established, it is very likely that a resident of Maui, which has a much larger population, would become the Council representative for the residents of Molokai. I, professionally, do not see how someone who has never lived on Molokai would have a true understanding of the issues that face our Molokai residents.

Please call or email me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Kimberly Mikami Svetin
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July 11, 2011

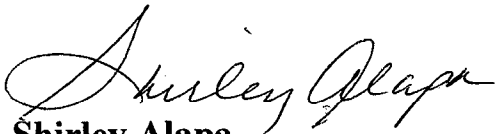
TO WHOM IT CONCERNS

**I WANT THE PRESENT METHOD OF REPRESENTATION TO
REMAIM THE SAME ON MOLOKAI. Council -At -Large seat.**

**We have a better chance of directing our issues and concerns and also
"kudos" for a good job if our rep. lives here and we can talk to him on a
1-800 on Maui. We are more likely to know his family and friends.**

Make NO changes to the County Charter.

Sincerely,


Shirley Alapa

Rec'd 0711 - Pub - Alapa Testimony