

Yesterday I was on Jimmy Trujillo's KKCR program, Out of the Box, to talk about the upcoming Democratic Party of Hawaii's Party-Run Presidential Primary, also called the PPP. It appears listeners were confused about the Democratic Party of Hawaii's PPP, mixing it up with the State of Hawaii's Primary and General elections.

The most important distinction is the State of Hawaii's Office of Elections does not have a Presidential Primary. The Office of Election's Primary Election, which will end on Saturday, August 8, 2020, is limited to statewide races like Governor, Lieutenant Governor, U.S. Senate, U.S. House of Representatives, State Senate, State House, and non-partisan races like mayor, county council, Office of Hawaiian Affairs and Board of Education. Therefore, it is up to Hawaii's political parties to conduct either a presidential preference poll or primary. The results of this poll or primary determines how the Democratic Party of Hawaii's delegates to the Democratic national convention are apportioned. At the convention, a presidential nominee will be selected and that presidential candidate will be placed on the State of Hawaii's General Election ballot as the Democratic presidential nominee.

As Trump appeared to have no formidable challenger within the Republican Party of Hawaii's process, he will be placed on Hawaii's General Election ballot as the Republican presidential nominee.

The Democratic Party of Hawaii's History on PPP

In the past the Democratic Party of Hawaii (DPH) conducted "presidential preference polls". These preference polls were held at the precinct level allowing party members to caucus near or at their polling sites on one evening (Super Tuesday pre-2016) or on a Saturday. In the past 3 presidential election cycles (2008, 2012 and 2016), turnout was heavy and chaotic. In many cases it overwhelmed precinct volunteers. How the balloting was conducted left many not confident in the process as people were allowed to join the DPH at these caucus and it was a challenge to track if they were also registered voters and residents of the precinct they were voting in. For the 2020 elections, DPH leaders understood the need to improve and have a more participatory and secure process for these highly competitive Democratic presidential primaries.

For more than a year a DPH Committee has been devoted to researching, planning and submitting for approval by the Democratic National Committee a Delegate Selection Plan to guide its 2020 Party-Run Presidential Primary (PPP). The DPH Committee also had an important task to fundraise over \$250,000 to make the PPP a reality. These were not easy tasks. Here are the major features of the PPP:

- Must be a member of the Democratic Party of Hawaii & Hawaii registered voter
- Mail ballots
- Rank Choice Voting
- Walk-in, Same Day Registration & Voting on Saturday, April 4
- Contracted to an election management company to process/secure ballots

Member of the Democratic Party of Hawaii

Only members of the Democratic Party of Hawaii can participate in the PPP. Many people think they are already a DPH member because they happened to “pull” a Democratic ballot in the Office of Election’s Primary Election. The State of Hawaii/Office of Election’s Primary Election is an open primary, meaning that you do not have to be a member of a party to “pull” and vote on that party’s ballot, not so with the DPH’s PPP.

Mail Ballots

To participate in the DPH’s PPP you must be a member of the DPH and you must be a Hawaii registered voter. While the early deadline (February 18) to receive a mail ballot in the first mail-out has passed, there is still an opportunity to receive a ballot in a second mail-out if you join the DPH and are a registered voter by Sunday, March 8. If you miss the deadline you can still join the DPH and register to vote on-line, however, you must vote in person on Saturday, April 4, 2020. The first mailout of ballots should be during the first week of March.

If your mailing address has changed please notify the DPH and update your e-mail address as most notifications/communications are done electronically. **Return ballots must be mailed by Saturday, March 28, 2020.**

Rank Choice Voting

Rank Choice Voting (RCV) will be used to determine how many delegates each Presidential candidate will get. The purpose of this change is to be more inclusive and representative. RCV lets you rank your three (3) favorite candidates in order of preference. For example, if your favorite candidate has limited support (the least votes or does not meet the 15% threshold) your vote will still count for your next choice.

Walk-in, Same Day Registration

The PPP will culminate on Saturday, April 4, 2020 with walk-in, same day registration at selected locations throughout the State of Hawaii. You do not have to be a resident of the area you are voting in to participate. For the island of Kauai, the polling site will be at the Lihue Civic Center, Moikeha Meeting Rooms 2A/2B from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. You may also drop off your mail ballot at this location.

Election Management

While the polling site will be staffed with volunteers, the election management has been contracted to Merriman River Group (MRG) who is responsible for the processing and security of the ballots for an accurate count and will also have staff onsite.

Visit at DPH website at www.hawaiidemocrats.org or the Democratic Party of Kauai’s website at www.kauaidemocrats.org, or its FaceBook page for more information and additional details.