

# Representation by District versus At Large Representation

Research / Overview of  
Election of Single Council Districts versus  
At-Large Representation  
& related Reapportionment Issues

presented by  
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## At-Large vs District Elections Pros & Cons

- **election at large – tends to centralize power** (especially in a county where voter turnout may be low)
- **election by district – spreads power to that district**

# Representation by District versus At Large Representation

## HISTORY:

9 charter amendments on the 1996  
Ballot for Kauai Voters. Only one  
passed regarding non-partisan  
County elections.

## Representation by District versus At Large Representation

Proposal 1 – Effective 1998 shall Council members be selected by districts, with one member residing in and elected from each of five districts, which shall be established by an apportionment commission to be appointed in 1997, and two members elected at-large, and shall 2001 and every tenth year thereafter be a reapportionment year? (1996 wording)

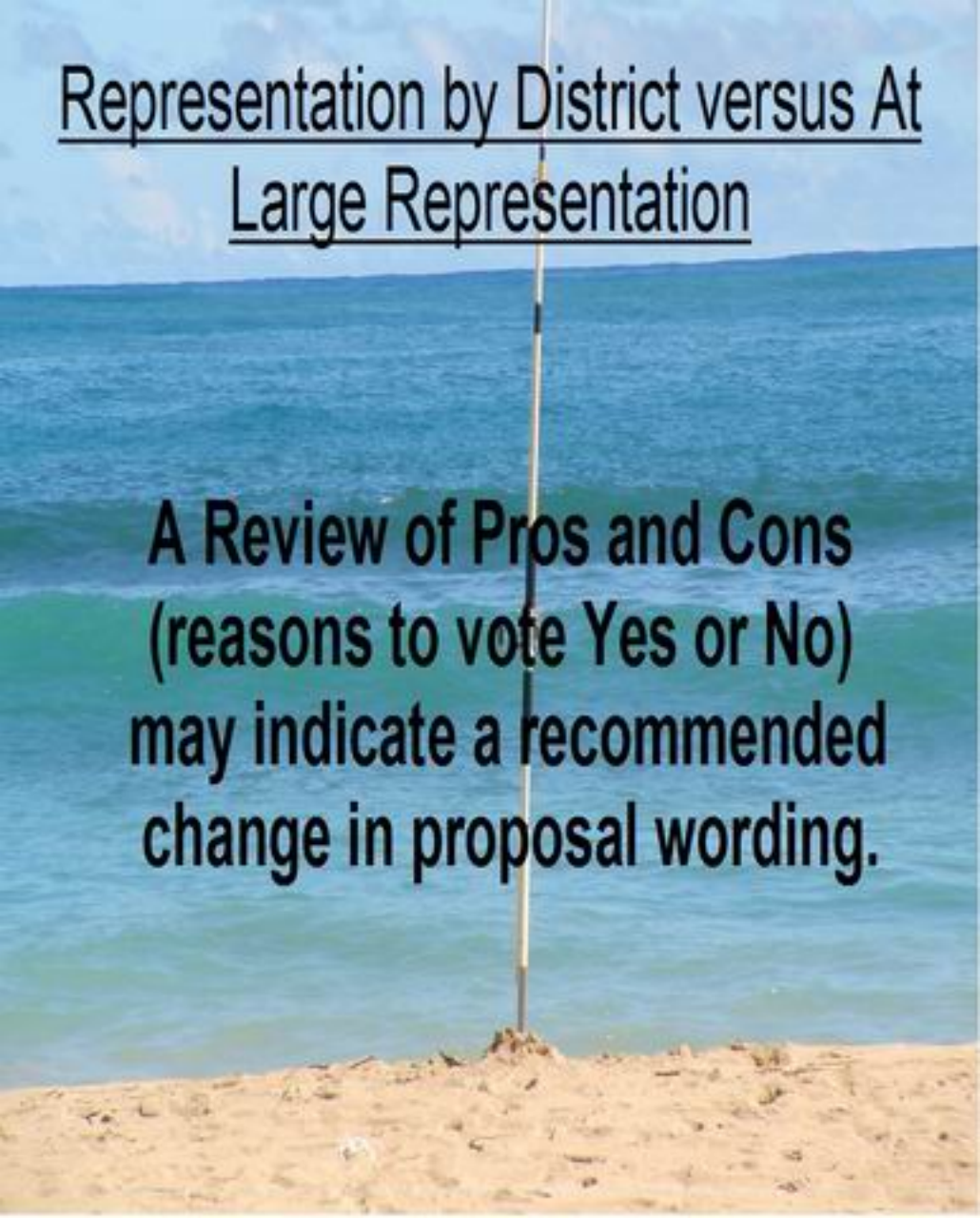
**Failed: 44% no; 38.8% yes; 17 blank**

Wording on 1996 ballot for what a  
“Yes Vote” means:

1. Designates a council member to go to for help and to hold responsible for district problems
2. Encourages resident candidates, popular among neighbors who know him/her best, to run for office
3. Reduces cost of campaigning by reducing representative area and number of voters affected in campaigning

Wording on 1996 ballot for what a  
"No Vote" means:

- 1. Kauai is small enough in area and number to retain all at large representation**
- 2. Districting promotes provincialism and consequent pork barrel and log rolling politics**
- 3. Centers election to district candidates and lessons county wide concerns**



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**A Review of Pros and Cons  
(reasons to vote Yes or No)  
may indicate a recommended  
change in proposal wording.**

Wording on 1996 ballot for what a  
“Yes Vote” means:

1. Designates a council member to go to for help and to hold responsible for district problems

**However – What if the person elected is not the voter's preference?**



Wording on 1996 ballot for what a  
“Yes Vote” means:

2. Encourages resident candidates, popular among neighbors who know him/her best, to run for office.

Research shows that challengers may have a slightly better chance in district elections. It is argued that districts better represent minorities, both ethnic & preference. However, it is possible that some minorities may be too dispersed among several districts to have enough votes to win an election.

Wording on 1996 ballot for what a  
“Yes Vote” means:

3. Reduces cost of campaigning by reducing representative area and number of voters affected in campaigning

**Studies show campaign costs are often lower than those running at large.**

Wording on 1996 ballot for what a  
“No Vote” means:

- 1. Kauai is small enough in area and number to retain all at large representation**
- 2. Districting promotes provincialism and consequent pork barrel and log rolling politics**
- 3. Centers election to district candidates and lessons county wide concerns**

Wording on 1996 ballot for what a  
"No Vote" means:

1. Kauai is small enough in area and number to retain all at large representation

**2004 estimate = 61,929 (US Census)**  
**5.9% growth in 4 years (2000 to 2004)**  
**If this growth is considered a factor,**  
**then district apportionment must**  
**first be considered carefully.**

Wording on 1996 ballot for what a  
"No Vote" means:

2. Districting promotes provincialism and consequent pork barrel and log rolling politics

**Research has indicated that local government spending does rise because district reps feel they must bring \$ back to "their" voters. Fights over limited resources result. Term limits and nonpartisan elections help reduce this.**

Wording on 1996 ballot for what a  
"No Vote" means:

**3. Centers election to district candidates and lessons county wide concerns**

**Without districting, it is true government tends to centralize. Rural areas generally have fewer public resources, compared to Lihue.**

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**QUESTION:**

Shall we consider a compromise  
between  
District Representation  
and  
At-Large Representation  
that allows positives of both  
yet reduces negatives?

**STATE OF HAWAII**  
**ELECTION MAP**  
 Islands of Kauai and Niihau  
 County of Kauai



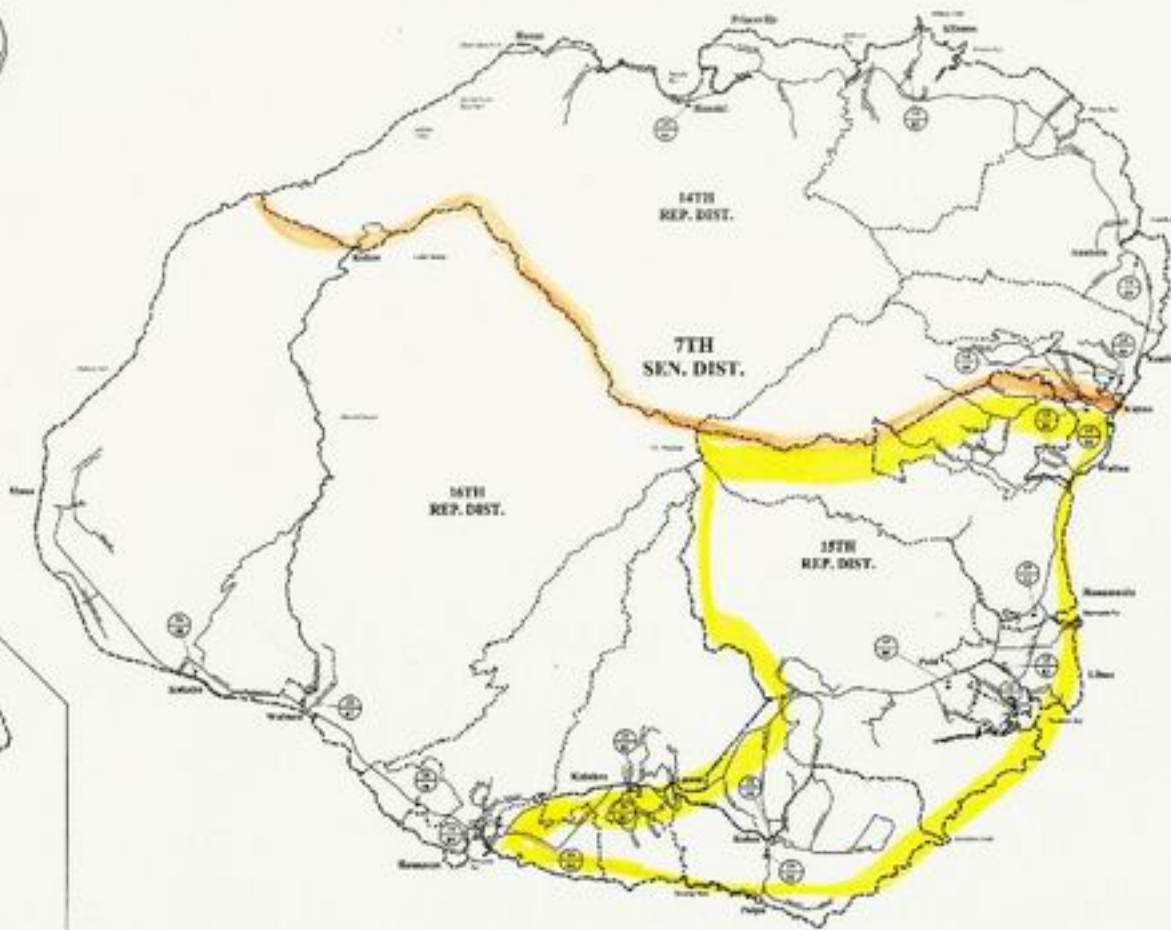
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICTS: PORTION OF 2ND  
 SENATORIAL DISTRICTS: 7TH  
 REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICTS: 14TH-15TH

OFFICE OF ELECTIONS

May 2002  
 2nd. Rev. 2000

**LEGEND**

- Interstate Highway
- State Highway
- Town Boundary
- Polling Place
- Representative District



**POLLING PLACES**

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Aiea Beach Community Center</li> <li>2. Aiea High School</li> <li>3. Aiea Middle School</li> <li>4. Aiea Senior Center</li> <li>5. Aiea Town Hall</li> <li>6. Aiea Town Office</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. Aiea Town Office</li> <li>8. Aiea Town Office</li> <li>9. Aiea Town Office</li> <li>10. Aiea Town Office</li> <li>11. Aiea Town Office</li> <li>12. Aiea Town Office</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>13. Aiea Town Office</li> <li>14. Aiea Town Office</li> <li>15. Aiea Town Office</li> <li>16. Aiea Town Office</li> <li>17. Aiea Town Office</li> <li>18. Aiea Town Office</li> </ul> |
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Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990





# Representation by District versus At Large Representation

## SUGGESTION:

- a. Use the 3 districts reapportioned for Kauai state representatives: #14 (North); #15 (Central); #16 (South/West) as the 3 county district council reps
- b. Keep 4 at-large council reps so majority allows for betterment of entire island perspective

## Representation by District with At-Large Representation Majority

Proposal 1 – Effective 2008 shall Council members be selected by districts, with one member residing in and elected from each of three districts, which shall be established by an apportionment commission to be appointed in 2007, and four members elected at-large, and shall 2011 and every tenth year thereafter be a reapportionment year?

# Representation by District versus At Large Representation

**A complete set of  
references/research materials for this  
topic has been provided to the Kauai  
County Charter Review Commission.**