



STATE OF HAWAII
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FACTSHEET

MAJORITY ELECTIONS AND PLURALITY ELECTIONS

PLURALITY ELECTIONS

In the State of Hawaii, all federal, state, and most county elections (except City and County of Honolulu elections and County of Kauai elections) are decided by the candidate who receives the "plurality" of the votes.

Plurality is defined as:

"The number of votes cast for a candidate who obtains the greatest number of votes, though not a majority, in a contest of more than two candidates."

Thus, in the elections that are decided by plurality, the candidate who receives the most votes wins the election. In this type of election, the candidate does not need a certain percentage of the votes to be elected.

MAJORITY ELECTIONS

For the City and County of Honolulu Special Elections and the mayoral and prosecuting attorney contests in the County of Kauai, a candidate must receive a "majority" of votes cast for the office to be elected outright in the first special election. NOTE: County of Kauai Council members must receive at least 30 percent of all votes cast for all at-large council offices to be elected in the first nonpartisan election.

A majority is defined as:

"At least 50% of the votes plus one or a number greater than half of the total votes cast."

If no candidate receives a majority, a second special election is held in conjunction with the general election between the two candidates receiving the most votes. The candidate with the highest number of votes at this second special election is deemed elected. (See the FACTSHEET on Calculating a Majority for the City & County of Honolulu Special Elections for additional information.)

This Fact Sheet is intended for informational purposes only and should not be used as an authority on the Hawaii election law and candidate deadlines. Requirements and/or deadlines may change pending changes in legislation. Consult the Hawaii Revised Statutes and County Charters for more detailed and accurate requirements.

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