



PATRICIA MORRISSEY
STATEWIDE ELECTIONS
ACCESSIBILITY NEEDS ADVISORY
COMMITTEE CHAIR

**STATE OF HAWAII
STATEWIDE ELECTIONS ACCESSIBILITY
NEEDS ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

MINUTES

**REGULAR MEETING OF THE
STATEWIDE ELECTIONS ACCESSIBILITY
NEEDS ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

MAY 23, 2023 @ 1:30 PM

Pursuant to Section 92-3.7, Hawaii Revised Statutes, the Statewide Elections Accessibility Needs Advisory Committee will be meeting remotely using interactive conference technology. Members of the public may have participated in the meeting via Zoom.

Committee Members in Attendance:

Patricia Morrissey, Chair
James Gashel, Vice Chair
Kathryn Keim
Sheryl Nelson

PROCEEDINGS

I. Call to Order

The regular meeting of the Statewide Elections Accessibility Needs Advisory Committee was called to order by Chair Morrissey at 1:30 p.m.

II. Roll Call

All members of the Statewide Elections Accessibility Needs Advisory Committee were present at the meeting with the exception of Committee Member Anand.

III. Approval of minutes for the February 15, 2023 meeting

Vice Chair Gashel made a motion to approve the minutes for the meeting of February 15, 2023, which was seconded by Committee Member Keim, and approved by the Committee.

IV. Report on the status of recommendations made to the Office of Elections by the Committee

Anthony Akamine, Election Information Specialist, Office of Elections (OE), provided a status report on the Committee's recommendations:

- Committee requested for OE to inquire with the County Elections Divisions regarding the number of Alternate Format Ballot (AFB) voters: Mr. Akamine shared that there are about 300 voters that have requested to receive an AFB statewide.
- Committee requested for OE to arrange a representative who manages the electronic ballot process to attend a future meeting: OE arranged a meeting on May 19, 2023 with Vice Chair Gashel and OE staff to discuss the electronic ballot process.

Donald Sakamoto, Chair for the City & County of Honolulu Elections Accessibility Needs Advisory Committee, asked about the status of obtaining a budget for the Committee which was discussed and voted on in the previous meeting. Chair Morrisey said that a budget had not been passed and that they can talk offline with the Office of Elections about accessing funds for conducting events in the future.

V. Legislation relating to the committee name change

Chair Morrisey thanked OE and those who provided testimony during the legislative session for helping to get the Committee name change accomplished.

Vice Chair Gashel mentioned that the terminology "voters with special needs" still appears across election statutes and has spoken to Senator Rhoads about these concerns. Vice Chair Gashel asked that OE identify the statutes that still use the terminology.

Mr. Sakamoto asked if the name of the Honolulu Committee has been changed similar to the Statewide Elections Accessibility Needs Advisory Committee.

Vice Chair Gashel relayed that Senator Rhoads suggested that the language change could be addressed in a future bill.

VI. Discussion on the electronic ballot delivery process, ballot return, and electronic authentication

Committee Member Nelson joined the meeting at 1:56 p.m.

Chair Morrissey shared that she spoke to a representative of the National Disability Rights Network when she attended the Pacific Rim Conference. Regarding the electronic ballot delivery process, her contact suggested that voters be issued a code to simplify the process.

Vice Chair Gashel described the existing process of voting through an AFB, and that although the process is straightforward, some may find it to not be user-friendly given that voters do it so infrequently. He shared that the process should be simplified and suggested that the authentication website should automatically create an email directed to the voters' County Elections Division, so that users need only to attach their voted ballot and send.

Keenan Kinimaka, Computer Services Section Head, OE, said that the office is looking into the recommendations that Vice Chair Gashel shared at their meeting.

Chair Morrissey suggested that the voter should be issued a code when they request an AFB. The voter then would write the code at the top of the ballot and send it back to their County Elections Division. She stated that Massachusetts uses this model.

Nedielyn Bueno, Voter Services Sections Head, OE, clarified that verification is needed at the point of returning the voted ballot, similar to when someone signs their ballot return envelope.

Mr. Sakamoto shared that when he recently voted in the Neighborhood Board Elections, that the following steps took place: he was mailed a ballot, entered the verification code he was issued, and verified that he was not a robot. He said that process was simple.

Bryan Mick shared that he ran Neighborhood Board Elections during the transition from paper to electronic voting. He explained that voter authentication was done through a unique passcode and the last four digits of the voter's Social Security Number.

VII. Discussion relating to mobile voting

Vice Chair Gashel introduced Jocelyn Bucaro to present on the technology her company developed for voting on a smart phone or tablet.

Jocelyn Bucaro, Director of Mobile Voting, shared that their company's purpose is to increase participation and accessibility in elections, and that they are interested in balancing accessibility with security to be sure that no one is impersonating a voter.

She continued to provide the following description of the application that her company has developed: Voters must install the app on their device, then choose their state and county, and provide their first and last name, birth year, and either the last four digits of their Social Security Number or their zip code. The app then confirms that the voter is eligible to vote. The voter then chooses their return preference, either by digital return or physically, which requires a printer. If the voter chooses digital return, the voter is then sent a one-time five-digit code. The voter then receives their ballot and marks it on their screen. After voting, the ballot is encrypted and the voter can verify the encryption, and the ballot can be submitted from the device.

Ms. Bucaro added that the app has the option for requiring the voter to sign an affidavit and has the capability to allow voters to voice their signature.

Mr. Sakamoto asked about the cost and if the app could use facial recognition for the authentication process. Ms. Bucaro responded that the app does not currently have facial recognition technology, and that there are no costs for licensing. She continued that costs come from customer support and crowd hosting.

Committee Member Keim made a motion to request OE to work with Mobile Voting to conduct a beta test, which was seconded by Vice Chair Gashel, and approved by the Committee.

Ms. Bucaro shared that the application is ready and looking for beta pilot partners to run a mock election. Mr. Kinimaka clarified that these discussions regarding mobile voting must first be introduced to the County Elections Divisions before further action.

Committee Member Keim requested that the topic of mobile voting remain on the next agenda.

VIII. Discussion on issues for voters with accessibility needs

Mr. Sakamoto asked that the other county Committees should be asked to participate in the Statewide Elections Accessibility Needs Advisory Committee meetings. Chair Morrisey said that she will reach out to the other chairs.

Chair Morrisey suggested that the Hawaii Disability Rights Center should participate in a future meeting to learn about what they have done regarding voter education and discuss how the Committee can partner with them. She additionally shared that the survey facilitated by the Committee had only received two additional responses since the last meeting.

Committee Member Keim suggested that language be included on the mail ballot to inform voters of their option to request an AFB. She continued that it may be counterproductive to the voter in that current election but could be helpful for future elections.

Mr. Sakamoto offered to connect Chair Morrisey with his media contacts to increase awareness and suggested that she be a guest on Honolulu Star-Advertiser's Spotlight series and other media opportunities.

IX. Adjournment

Chair Morrisey suggested that the next meeting be held on September 5, 2023, and that a meeting also be held sometime in October 2023.

Committee Member Keim made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Vice Chair Gashel, and approved by the Committee.