



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**

**MARCH 12, 2024 @ 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 and Determination of a Quorum**

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 January 12, 2024 meeting**

Vice Chair Gashel made a motion to approve the minutes for the meeting of January 12, 2024, which was seconded by Committee Member Keim, and

approved by the Committee.

IV. Discussion relating to the drafting process of county charter amendments

Glen Takahashi, City and County of Honolulu Clerk, provided an overview of the City and County of Honolulu's process for proposing amendments to the city charter. He shared that the process for this year's charter amendment questions started after the 2022 General Election as the city council started considering what they may place on the ballot.

Mr. Takahashi shared that the process to propose charter amendments is similar to how bills are passed and any proposed charter amendments must receive the mayor's approval. He explained that the resolutions are referred to committees where they further refine the language and how it is presented to voters. As of the meeting, there is one proposed charter amendment question approved by the mayor, and one awaiting approval. He added that it takes at minimum three months to pass a resolution, which then can be provided to the mayor's office for approval.

Mr. Takahashi emphasized that his office has an administrative role in the process, which includes translating the materials and working with the Library for the Blind to make the materials accessible. He further emphasized that the role of the Honolulu Clerk's office is not to provide education or interpretation of the charter amendment questions. Regarding resources, he added that there will be a digital voter guide available this year which will include an explanation of the charter amendment questions drafted by the Corporation Counsel. Additionally, information will be published on their website and print brochures will be available at satellite city halls.

Jon Henricks, Hawaii County Clerk, provided an overview of the process regarding Hawaii County's charter amendment questions. He explained that most proposals for charter amendment questions come through the county council's policy making duties. He shared the following: a bill requires three readings, six votes at each reading to make it through to the mayor, the mayor then would approve it as an ordinance, if approved it becomes a proposal to be placed on the ballot.

Mr. Henricks explained that the Hawaii County Clerk's office composes the ballot questions, and a team that includes the Corporation Counsel reviews the questions. He described that they consider if the language is simple, neutral, and that the question is complete and captures the matters that are most substantial.

Mr. Takahashi clarified that unlike Hawaii County, his office does not have a

role in drafting the questions. The ballot question is drafted by the city council and the question is included within the resolution that they eventually adopt. He explained that because the resolution goes through public hearings, the public has an opportunity to provide input or comment on the question throughout that process.

Chair Morrissey asked for clarification on what becomes a ballot question versus a bill. Mr. Henricks explained that the county charter is similar to a constitution and that everything in the charter has been voted on. He added that there is a higher threshold for charter amendment questions versus ordinances, providing the example that ordinances only have two readings. Mr. Henricks further discussed the difference between how votes are counted for charter amendment questions versus how votes are counted for constitutional amendment questions.

Mr. Takahashi and Mr. Henricks shared further insight including the rate of approval for ballot questions, voter fatigue, and whether the order of the questions on the ballot has an impact.

Chair Morrissey and Committee Members Keim and Nelson shared the importance of people knowing that the Committee exists, and offered their support and input as they have experience in writing and reviewing legislation. Mr. Takahashi suggested that the Committee consider putting it into statute that they are to be involved in drafting the language.

Committee Member Nelson joined the meeting at 1:37pm.

- V. Update from the Office of Elections on the status of the Committee's previous recommendations relating to voter education, outreach, and accessible voting

Anthony Akamine, Election Information Specialist, Office of Elections (OE), provided an update on the accessible electronic ballot. Mr. Akamine shared that OE reached out to the accessible electronic ballot vendor, Enhanced Voting, and confirmed that electronic ballots are compatible with braille devices.

- VI. Discussion relating to electronic ballot delivery and return process from the January 12, 2024 meeting report

Mr. Akamine provided an update on the accessible voting system. He shared that a demonstration ballot has been placed on OE's website via the Voters Requiring Assistance page. He explained that the website provides login information which the public can use to access the demonstration portal and practice using an accessible electronic ballot. Mr. Akamine confirmed that he

sent notice to the Committee about the demonstration ballot, however, he will resend.

VII. HB1976/SB2752 status update

Vice Chair Gashel provided an update on HB 1976. He shared that the bill was put together by the Committee and introduced by Senator San Buenaventura, Chair of the Health and Human Services Committee. The bill has passed both committees in the House of Representatives and is pending a hearing. He expressed that the bill has received good reception and expects it to pass.

VIII. Mailing of accessibility-related information before or with ballot

Vice Chair Gashel asked about broad dissemination of voter information to voters, stating that he feels that there should be broad dissemination about the accessible voting options. Vice Chair Gashel and Chair Morrissey discussed

Mr. Akamine shared that OE uses messaging tactics including social media and newsletters. He explained that in addition to individuals who subscribe to the newsletter, it is also sent to agencies that share within their own networks. Further, he shared that an upcoming newsletter will discuss accessible voting options, and he will share the newsletter with the Committee.

Nedielyn Bueno, Voter Services Section Head, OE, shared about OE's messaging tactics which include a media campaign and a forthcoming accessibility brochure. Ms. Bueno clarified that the media campaign for the 2022 Elections included language about accessibility options and reinforced that the media campaign for the 2024 Elections will include the same.

IX. 10 actions that will enhance the voter accessibility experience

Chair Morrissey recommended the agenda item to be moved to the next meeting.

X. General discussion on issues for voters with disabilities

Committee Member Nelson expressed that information about accessibility should be built into general voter education, and not be made separate.

Committee Member Keim shared that there were recent appointments for the county accessibility committees. She suggested that the Committee present

at the meetings for the county accessibility committees to present what they are doing.

XI. Adjournment

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