



PATRICIA MORRISSEY  
STATEWIDE ELECTIONS  
ACCESSIBILITY NEEDS ADVISORY  
COMMITTEE  
CHAIR

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

DRAFT MINUTES

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

MAY 7, 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  
Ramoda Anand

**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 Members Keim and Nelson.

III. Approval of minutes for the April 2, 2024 meeting

Vice Chair Gashel made a motion to approve the minutes for the meeting of April 2, 2024, which was seconded by Committee Member Anand, and approved by the Committee.

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

The agenda item was not addressed.

- V. Status of HB 1976

The Committee was unable to address the agenda item. Chair Morrissey shared that a complaint was filed with the Office of Elections (OE) regarding the agenda item and said that it will be discussed in the next meeting.

- VI. Review and discussion regarding the Department of Justice's updated voting guidance

Chair Morrissey shared that she had not read the guidance and suggested to postpone the review and discussion until the next meeting. Vice Chair Gashel said he will provide a presentation to the Committee about the topic in the next meeting.

- VII. Review and discussion about a resource to share information on how voting center works can assist voters with accessibility needs

Vice Chair Gashel expressed that the document was a good first draft. He recommended several revisions including: replacing "volunteers" with "workers" and recommend that the pamphlet include the phone numbers to the County Elections Divisions and OE.

Donald Sakamoto, Chair for the City & County of Honolulu Elections Accessibility Needs Advisory Committee, asked for the draft prepared by Chair Morrissey be read. Nedielyn Bueno, Voter Services Section Head, OE, read the document, which included information about how to assist voters in various situations including: providing assistance with long lines, drop off locations, and at the entrance of voter service centers.

Chair Morrissey said she would like to finalize and distribute the pamphlet in the next month so they are able to conduct a training soon. Vice Chair Gashel added that the Committee can make a YouTube video for the workers to supplement the pamphlet.

- VIII. Discussion about transportation assistance for voters with accessibility needs

Regarding the Committee's recommendation to provide transportation assistance for voters with accessibility needs, Chair Morrissey expressed that there are monetary issues given the bill to provide the Committee a budget

did not passed. She continued that there is a need to provide transportation to the voter service centers and suggested the following: Put out a notice to voters with accessibility needs that offers free rides to voter service centers. After their visit, the voter will submit proof to OE and OE will reimburse the cost of the ride up to \$15.

Anthony Akamine, Election Information Specialist, OE, shared that there may be an issue relating to providing incentives or money to vote. He shared he will discuss further with OE's legal counsel.

Chair Morrissey continued that she imagines that only a few people would use the service and anticipates that a maximum of \$2,500 would need to be available for the program. She commented that there would need to be deadlines for vouchers.

IX. Discussion on a Question & Answer resource material related to accessibility needs for Hotline use

Chair Morrissey lead the conversation by asking the Committee to brainstorm questions specifically about accessibility that OE's hotline should anticipate. Vice Chair Gashel responded that callers may ask about using an accessible electronic ballot including how to receive and send the ballot. Vice Chair Gashel said he will work with OE further.

Committee Member Anand left the meeting at 2:28 pm.

X. General discussion on issues for voters with disabilities

The agenda item was not addressed.

XI. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned once Committee Member Anand left the meeting as there was no longer quorum.

To: Statewide Elections Accessibility Needs Advisory Committee

From: Office of Elections

Re: Status Report Relating to Recommendations Received by the Statewide Elections Accessibility Needs Advisory Committee

The following is an update on the recommendations provided to OE regarding accessible voting:

- Enhanced Voting is focused on the live voting system for the Primary Election which includes updating the specific voting return options for accessible voters, UOCAVA voters, and 5-day voters.
- Enhanced Voting is addressing updates to the demonstration ballot which the public can use for practice with voting on an accessible electronic ballot. As part of the update, they are working on including the ability to practice returning a ballot within the Enhanced Voting system.
- The Committee recommended that OE consider options to provide free/reduced rides to voter service centers. To gather background of the feasibility of this effort, OE reached out to the City and County of Honolulu's Department of Transportation Services to inquire about waiving the bus fare for voters traveling to voter service centers. Their office shared that the process would need approval from the Honolulu City Council and that there is not sufficient time to go through the process.

In order to anticipate the transportation needs of voters heading into the Primary and General Elections, OE has begun compiling a list of groups/agencies that may offer transportation assistance to individuals with accessibility needs. This resource will be shared with OE staff and hotline operators to share with the public requesting help via email or phone.

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The following is a status update relating to recommendations to OE relating to accessible voting:

- OE is currently drafting language on instructions for voting and returning an electronic ballot. The instructions will be added to the electronic ballot delivery system portal.

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The following is a status update relating to discussion from the Statewide Election Accessibility Needs Advisory Committee at the **January 15, 2024** meeting:

- The committee provided the following recommendations to OE as it relates to accessible voting:
    - Recommend that the electronic ballot be compatible with braille refreshable display devices.
      - OE confirmed with Enhanced Voting, vendor of the electronic ballot delivery system, that the electronic ballot is compatible with assistive technology such as screen readers and refreshable braille displays.
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The following is a status update relating to discussions from the Statewide Election Accessibility Needs Advisory Committee at the **November 14, 2023** meeting:

- Enhanced Voting
    - Enhanced Voting and OE completed a demonstration ballot for the public to utilize practicing to mark the ballot. The demonstration ballot will be posted on the Office of Elections' website at [elections.hawaii.gov](https://elections.hawaii.gov).
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The following is a status update relating to discussions from the Statewide Election Accessibility Needs Advisory Committee at the **October 3, 2023** meeting:

- Outreach

The Office of Elections have secured voter education presentations and resource tabling with the following organizations:

- United Self Help
- Hawaii Youth Challenge Academy
- Active Senior Fair
- White Cane Walk and Vision Awareness
- Hope Services Hawaii
- East Hawaii Disability Forum
- Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program
- DOE Transition Coordinator quarterly meeting
- Access To Independence
- Access To Independence Youth

OE recently disseminated its first e-newsletter for the 2024 Elections to various groups and organizations. A link to subscribe to the Office of Elections' e-newsletter has been added to the Elections Accessibility Needs Advisory Committee webpage.

- Election laws referencing “voter with special needs”

The committee requested that OE review the election laws and identify statutes that include the term “voter with special needs” and look into amending the term to “voter with accessibility needs”.

In reviewing the state capitol’s website, which provides the text of all state statutes, OE identified HRS §§ 11-10.5, 11-10.6, 11-107, and 15-5 as referencing the term “voter with special needs.”

Of these statutes, HRS §§ 11-10.5 and 11-10.6, were changed to “voter with special needs” with the passage of Act 14, SLH 2023. The website is expected to be updated by the end of the year by the Revisor of Statutes with the updated language.

In regard to the remaining statutes, HRS §§ 11-107 and 15-5, they use the term “voter with special needs” to refer not only to voters who may have a disability but also to voters who have circumstances that would not otherwise allow them to receive and return a ballot by mail in a timely manner (e.g. a military, overseas, or similar voter who is out of the state). These voters are permitted to receive and return their ballot by electronic transmission. Given that these statutes are not solely specific to accessibility and there could be unforeseen consequences from amending them, we do not plan on submitting a bill regarding them.

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The following is a status update relating to discussions from the Statewide Election Accessibility Needs Advisory Committee at the **September 5, 2023** meeting:

- The committee recommended the Office of Elections to look at ways to streamline the ballot return process.

The Office of Elections is working with Enhanced Voting to streamline the electronic ballot delivery and return processes.

Receiving the electronic ballot – The voter will receive an email from their County Elections Division with instructions on how to access their electronic ballot using a link that will direct the voter to an online ballot delivery and return portal. The voter logs into the portal using credentials associated with their voter registration.

Marking the electronic ballot – Once the voter is logged on to the portal, the voter may choose to mark their ballot within the portal or mark offline using their own compatible device.

Returning the electronic ballot – After voting the ballot, the voter has the option to return their voted ballot through the portal. The voter will still have the option to return their voted ballot via email, mail or fax.

Demonstration HTML Ballot and Portal – The vendor is finalizing the HTML demonstration ballot that will be available to the public and incorporated within the office’s voter education efforts.

The Office of Elections is targeting to test the system in the coming weeks to review the workflow. The Office of Elections will continue to keep the committee apprised on its progress.

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The following is a status update relating to discussions from the Statewide Election Accessibility Needs Advisory Committee at the **May 23, 2023** meeting:

- The committee recommended the Office of Elections to look at ways to streamline the ballot return process.

The Office of Elections is working with Enhanced Voting to streamline the electronic ballot delivery and return processes.

Receiving the electronic ballot – The voter will receive an email from their County Elections Division with instructions on how to access their electronic ballot using a link that will direct the voter to an online ballot delivery and return portal. The voter logs into the portal using credentials associated with their voter registration.

Marking the electronic ballot – Once the voter is logged on to the portal, the voter may choose to mark their ballot within the portal or mark offline using their own compatible device.

Returning the electronic ballot – After voting the ballot, the voter has the option to return their voted ballot through the portal. The voter will still have the option to return their voted ballot via email, mail or fax.

Demonstration HTML Ballot and Portal – The vendor is finalizing the HTML demonstration ballot that will be available to the public and incorporated within the office’s voter education efforts.

The Office of Elections is targeting to test the system in the coming weeks to review the workflow. The Office of Elections will continue to keep the committee apprised on its progress.

The following is a status update relating to discussions from the Statewide Election Accessibility Needs Advisory Committee at the **February 15, 2023** meeting:

- Legislation relating to the Statewide Voters with Special Needs Advisory Committee.

Senate Bill 179 passed through the Legislature and has been enacted as Act 14 renaming the committee to the Statewide Elections Accessibility Needs Advisory Committee. Likewise, the name change also applies to the county committees renaming them to County Elections Accessibility Needs Advisory Committees.

The webpage has been updated with the new name.

The committee requested assistance from the Office of Elections to inquire with the County Elections Divisions regarding the number of alternate format ballot (AFB) voters.

There are about 300 voters that have requested to receive an AFB ballot statewide.

The committee requested for the Office of Elections to arrange for a representative who manages the electronic ballot process to attend a future meeting

The Office of Elections has arranged a meeting on May 19 with James Gashel and an Office of Election staff who manages the electronic ballot process.

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The following is a status update relating to discussions from the Statewide Voters with Special Needs Advisory Committee meeting on **December 7, 2022**.

- The committee requested assistance from the Office of Elections to disseminate the committee's 2022 Elections Voter Experience Survey.

The Office of Elections assisted in the dissemination of the 2022 Elections Voter Experience Survey to state departments, county agencies, organizations that work directly with persons with disabilities and special needs, and media. The following confirmed dissemination of the survey within their network via avenues such as newsletters and social media platforms.

- Hawaii State DD Council
- SPIN Network
- DVR/DHS service for the Blind
- Access To Independence



- Aloha Independent Living Hawaii
  - Hawaii Club House network
  - Hawaii SAAC Network
  - Lanakila Multi-purpose Senior center
  - Oahu Veterans Center
  - Maui Economic Opportunity Senior Group
- The committee requested assistance in drafting a bill to be submitted to the Legislature to consider amending the committee name from Special Needs Advisory Committee to the Statewide Voters Elections Accessibility Advisory Committee. Likewise, the bill also includes a request to amend the committee names for all four counties for consistency.

The Office of Elections drafted a bill that has since been introduced by both legislative bodies, House Bill 131 and Senate Bill 179.

- The committee agreed to have written meeting minutes to replace written summaries as its official record of meetings.

The Office of Elections will provide assistance in drafting minutes to serve as the committee's official record of meetings. The minutes from the December 7, 2022 meeting were forwarded to committee members for review and for approval at the February 15, 2023 meeting. Approved minutes will be posted to the Statewide Voters with Special Needs Advisory Committee webpage and the Office of Elections will keep on file all written minutes on behalf of the committee.

**TIPS FOR ELECTION WORKERS:**

*How to Assist Voters with Disabilities*

*Prepared by the Statewide Elections Accessibility Needs Advisory Committee for the State of Hawaii Office of Elections and County Elections Divisions*

**Introduction:** We know that most registered voters with disabilities, like other voters, will vote by mail or online from the convenience of their home or office. However, some voters with disabilities will choose to vote at a Voter Service Center. We also know that those working at Voter Service Centers will be trained in procedures and policies by the County Elections Divisions. This flyer is to assist these individuals in helping voters with disabilities who come to vote at Voter Service Centers. It includes practical tips for successfully engaging with individuals with disabilities and practical tips on making Voter Service Centers fully accessible to voters with disabilities. It is not comprehensive, but does address steps that can be taken in advance of voting and how to interact with people with varied disabilities when they come to vote, so the voting experience is safe, simple, efficient, and satisfying. Any worker, who encounters something they do not know how to address, can find a person and number to call on the back of this flyer.

**Most Important Point:** If you see an individual with a disability, DON'T ASSUME ANYTHING. Offer assistance, and if the person says "yes" to the offer, ask HOW you may help them.

**Curbside/Drive-Thru Voting:** Allow curbside or drive-thru voting.

**Long Lines:** When you see a person with a mobility or vision disability using a walker, wheelchair, scooter, or cane, offer to escort them to the front of the line, but do not insist.

**Drop Off Location:** Arrange for the drop off location to be curb-free or have a ramp.

**Entrance to Voter Service Center:** Pathway should be free of obstacles, at least 36 inches wide, step free, zero-degree threshold, and have someone available to open the door if the door cannot be automatically opened with a push button.

**Signage and Orientation:** Have easily readable signs for check-in, voting, questions, and restrooms as well as someone available to tell someone where check-in, voting, and restrooms are and to answer other questions. If asked, escort the person to the desired location.

**Number and Label the Areas Associated with Voting in Person:** By numbering and labeling the steps associated with voting in person an

individual will know what order to follow.

**Orientation to Ballot:** If requested, have someone available to share a sample ballot and indicate marking options.

**Demonstration of How to Use a Voting Machine with and without Accessible Features:** Have someone available to show how to use voting machines.

**Hard Copies of Ballots:** If requested, give a voter a hard copy of the ballot he/she completed. It could be a screenshot on the person's smart phone.

**Disability-Specific Suggestions.**

**Hearing:** If a person can't hear and has a smart phone, ask if it may be used to communicate or use a pad of paper and pen to communicate.

**Vision:** Have someone available to guide the person to a desired spot. Ask how to assist in guiding the person.

**Mobility:** Have available places to sit and to write. Spaces approaching and around voting machines should accommodate wheelchairs and scooters, provide privacy, and allow a seated person to reach machine controls.

**Understanding:** Allow a person who wants it, to have a person of his/her choice assist them in using a voting machine.

**Handouts and Wall Posters:**

Have handouts that explain in plain English the meaning of ballot amendments; have a handout that numbers the steps connected to voting in person. Post a large version of this sequence on a wall. Have pictures, names, and party of candidates in handouts and posted on walls.

**Support Animals and Guide Dogs:**

Let them accompany their owner throughout the voting experience. Do not interact with them. They are working animals not pets.

**Ensuring Independence and Privacy:**

The keys to a successful voting experience are independence and privacy. How these will occur will be determined by the individual voter.

**Avoid Physical Barriers:** Provide clear pathways that are at least 36 inches wide, and places to turn around easily in a wheelchair or scooter.

- Have spaces for check-in that are standard table height and could allow a person to sit.
- Have sturdy tables with chairs where a person may read or write.
- Have chairs with arms that do not tip over easily.
- Have available clipboards and pens.
- Have good lighting.
- Have non-slip, even flooring.

- Have all print material in audio form and Braille.
- Have floating volunteers who can secure paper when someone needs to write, give directions, or answer questions.

**Who to Contact if You Have a Question:****County Elections Divisions****County of Hawaii**

(808) 961-8277

**County of Maui**

(808) 270-7749

**County of Kauai**

(808) 241-4800

**City and County of Honolulu**

(808) 768-3800

**State of Hawaii, Office of****Elections**

(808) 453-8683

**AS A WORKER AT A VOTER SERVICE CENTER, YOU WILL BE SUCCESSFUL WHEN ASSISTING VOTERS WITH DISABILITIES IF YOU USE YOUR COMMON SENSE AND BE OPEN TO SUGGESTIONS FROM THESE VOTERS.**