



PATRICIA MORRISSEY
STATEWIDE VOTERS WITH SPECIAL
NEEDS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
CHAIR

**STATE OF HAWAII
STATEWIDE VOTERS WITH
SPECIAL NEEDS ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

MINUTES

**REGULAR MEETING OF THE
STATEWIDE VOTERS WITH
SPECIAL NEEDS ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

DECEMBER 7, 2022 @ 1:30 PM

Pursuant to Section 92-3.7, Hawaii Revised Statutes, the Statewide Voters with Special 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
Kathryn Keim
Sheryl Nelson

PROCEEDINGS

I. Call to Order

The regular meeting of the Statewide Voters with Special Needs Advisory Committee was called to order by Vice Chair Gashel at 1:35 pm.

II. Roll Call

All members of the Statewide Voters with Special Needs Advisory Committee were present at the meeting with the exception of Committee Member Sheryl Nelson.

III. Discussion and possible action regarding voter survey

Committee Member Nelson entered the room at 1:41 pm.

Chair Morrissey provided a summary of the 34 responses to the voter survey received since it became available on November 11. She stated that she reached out twice to her sources in state government, and interviewed with Hawaii Public Radio, to help promote and increase participation in the survey. Chair Morrissey said that her goal was to obtain 100 responses and wants to leave the survey open until January. Committee Members Anand and Gashel agreed that the survey should remain open until January.

- IV. Discussion of efforts made by the committee and Office of Elections to alert the public to the voter survey

Anthony Akamine, Election Information Specialist, Office of Elections (OE), reported that OE posted the voter survey to the OE website. He added that OE also shared the information with a variety of stakeholders statewide for them to share with their networks. These stakeholders included the Special Parent Information Network (SPIN), the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), the Adult Mental Health Division Clubhouses, and Ho'opono Services for the Blind.

- V. Discussion to request county committees to assist in promoting the voter survey

Donald Sakamoto, Chair for the Honolulu Voters with Special Needs Advisory Committee, reported that he voted electronically, and because he did not have a signature on file, his nephew helped him print the waiver, scan, and send back to the Honolulu Elections Division. He said that he also signed up for BallotTrax, and received confirmation that his ballot had been received and validated. He also provided praise for the pop-up voter service center locations. Regarding the voter survey, Mr. Sakamoto stated that he has spread the word to his contacts on the City Council, the Legislature, the neighborhood board, the media, and other organizations with help from Susie Chun Oakland.

Vice Chair Gashel asked if OE could issue a press release about the voter survey, to which Mr. Akamine agreed that they could.

Committee Member Keim made a motion that the Statewide Voters with Special Needs Advisory Committee recommend that OE engage in a standard public relations campaign, including radio, television, and social media, regarding the voter survey, which was seconded by Committee Member Anand, and approved unanimously by the Committee.

Vice Chair Gashel asked for public testimony.

Mr. Sakamoto stated that communication is key in getting the word out, then next is to organize and find solutions.

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

Mr. Akamine provided a status report on the Committee's recommendations:

- Committee recommendation to include accessible voting information with OE's general marketing and voter education materials: Information on accessible voting is included with OE's outreach materials (voter education presentations, Hawaii Votes video series, Hawaii Votes brochure, explainer video, news/press releases, editorial pieces submitted to government agencies and community groups statewide, social media, General Election print ads). OE will continue to implement similar tactics and include accessibility information in future marketing ads.
- Committee recommendation to improve the user experience when voting on the electronic ballot: OE has brought the issue to its vendor and will continue to work with them to explore options to implement in the 2024 Elections.
- Committee recommendation for OE to assist with the distribution of the voter survey: OE has posted the survey to the OE website, shared it with the Voters with Special Needs Advisory County Committees, and reached out to agencies statewide who shared the survey with their networks.
- Committee recommendation for OE to ask the Legislature for an amendment that would change the Committee name from the Statewide Voters with Special Needs Advisory Committee to the Statewide Elections Accessibility Needs Advisory Committee: OE is working on drafting a bill for the Legislature to consider. Chair Morrissey requested that OE share the draft bill for the Committee to review, and offered to bring it to Senator Rhoads for assistance with drafting the language. Committee Member Keim made a motion that at each future meeting of the Statewide Voters with Special Needs Advisory Committee, the following agenda item

be included: “progress report on implementation of committee recommendations,” and that report is sent to the Committee in writing at the time the agenda is posted, which was seconded by Committee Member Anand, and approved unanimously by the Committee.

VII. Discussion on voter experience with voter registration and voting in the 2022 Elections

Vice Chair Gashel stated that regarding voting electronically, there is an extensive number of steps involved in submitting the ballot, but the system does work well, and he had an easy time voting in the General Election. He added that he signed up for BallotTrax and was able to track the status of his ballot, but that OE and the Committee need to do a better job of promoting the service.

Chair Morrissey said that according to the survey responses, most people vote by mail and enjoy doing so. She expressed concern that the language of the charter amendment questions is difficult, and suggested that the Committee meet with those who write the questions to help draft the language so it is more accessible.

Committee Member Keim reported that she had the easiest experience with accessible voting, but said there are steps specific to identity verification and the secrecy waiver that take a lot of additional work. She added that ballot return instructions are provided but could be made clearer, but overall had a positive voting experience.

Mr. Sakamoto testified that he agreed with Committee Member Keim that the voting instructions could be improved, especially for older voters, but was glad that the electronic ballot is available.

VIII. Report from the County Special Needs Advisory Committees

Mr. Sakamoto stated that he would like to collaborate with the Statewide Voters with Special Needs Advisory Committee after the voter survey has closed.

IX. Discussion of potential amendments to legislation relating to the Statewide Voters with Special Needs Committee

Discussion occurred during agenda item VI.

X. Discussion on issues for voters with special needs

The Committee had no further discussion for this agenda item.

XI. Adjournment

Chair Morrissey and Vice Chair Gashel agreed that they would consider holding the next Statewide Voters with Special Needs Advisory Committee meeting sometime in February after the voter survey is closed in January.

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