



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**

FEBRUARY 15, 2023 @ 10:00 AM

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
Kathryn Keim

PROCEEDINGS

I. Call to Order

The regular meeting of the Statewide Voters with Special Needs Advisory Committee was called to order by Chair Morrissey at 10:03 a.m.

II. Roll Call

All members of the Statewide Voters with Special Needs Advisory Committee were present at the meeting with the exception of Committee Members Anand and Nelson.

III. Approval of minutes for the December 7, 2022 meeting

Vice Chair Gashel made a motion to approve the minutes for the meeting of December 7, 2022, which was seconded by Committee Member Keim, and approved by the Committee.

IV. Discussion of efforts made by the Committee and Office of Elections to alert the public to the voter survey and possible action

Chair Morrissey reviewed the 64 survey responses:

- 54 participated in the last election
- Reasons for not voting:
 - Being out of state
 - Did not like candidates
 - Did not know how to get information about candidates
- Method of voting for future elections:
 - 41 will vote by mail
 - 11 will go to a voter service center
- Request help with:
 - Transportation
 - Getting information about candidates
 - Confirming their ballot was received and counted

Chair Morrissey stated that solutions need to be found to address challenges for visually impaired individuals. She said that she would like to administer a survey before the next primary election, and that more needs to be done before then to increase participation.

Committee Member Keim provided options for getting the word out that may not require a budget, including editorial community sections in newspapers, radio interviews, and PSAs.

Vice Chair Gashel suggested that more outreach and marketing should be done so voters are aware of accessible voting options. He asked for the number of individuals who request to receive an electronic ballot via the *Voter Registration Application*. Anthony Akamine, Election Information Specialist, Office of Elections (OE), clarified that this information would need to be obtained from the County Elections Divisions. Vice Chair Gashel requested that OE retrieve these numbers from the County Elections Divisions, and Chair Morrissey added that she would also like these voters' email addresses so the Committee can contact them directly to complete the survey.

Donald Sakamoto, Chair for the Honolulu Voters with Special Needs Advisory Committee, recommended that the Committee get the word out about the survey through sources such as local publications, neighborhood boards, county committees, and other organizations.

V. 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 for OE to assist with the distribution of the voter survey: OE disseminated the survey to state departments, county and community disability organizations, media outlets, and senior and veteran groups, who in turn passed the information on through their social media and 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 drafted bills HB 131 and SB 179 to address this request. HB 131 was heard today, and SB 179 will be heard tomorrow.
- Committee recommendation for OE to write formal minutes for the Committee meetings: OE has started to generate minutes, which are posted to the OE website.

VI. Discussion on legislation relating to the Statewide Voters with Special Needs Advisory Committee

Vice Chair Gashel reported that HB 131 was heard this morning, and decision making will be at 11:30 a.m.

VII. Discussion and possible action relating to electronic voting

Vice Chair Gashel stated that he would like the Committee and OE to discuss ways to make the electronic voting process more user-friendly. Chair Morrissey requested that a vendor representative be invited to attend a future meeting to aid in this discussion.

Vice Chair Gashel recalled meeting with OE regarding the authentication system for the return of the ballot, and said that this process needs to be streamlined.

Mr. Sakamoto requested that the County Elections Divisions be invited to attend future Committee meetings for discussions about improving the electronic ballot return.

VIII. Discussion on Charter Amendments

Chair Morrissey asked what the process is for charter amendments to get onto the ballot. Mr. Akamine explained that OE places the language for the ballot as it is received from the counties. Chair Morrissey suggested that the county departments responsible for charter amendment questions be invited to future Committee meetings to discuss the process of formulating the language, and that the Committee request to assist with drafting the language for the charter questions.

Mr. Sakamoto agreed that the Committees should work with the counties and be involved with the process of drafting the language for the charter questions.

IX. Discussion on issues for voters with special needs

Chair Morrissey discussed encouraging youth to vote, an initiative for a “buddy system” for people who may be isolated and not have knowledge of Hawaii’s election process, and partnering with Hawaii Disability Rights Center.

Vice Chair Gashel made a motion to request that a \$10,000 budget for the Committee be considered at OE’s next budget request, which was seconded by Committee Member Keim, and approved by the Committee.

X. Adjournment

Chair Morrissey suggested that the Committee aim for Tuesday, March 21 at 10:00 a.m. for the next meeting.

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