



PATRICIA MORRISSEY
STATEWIDE ELECTIONS
ACCESSIBILITY NEEDS ADVISORY
COMMITTEE
CHAIR

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

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

SEPTEMBER 5, 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.

Also in attendance were Anthony Akamine and Nedielyn Bueno from the Office of Elections (OE), Candace Park from the Hawaii State Department of the Attorney General (AG), and Emily Wilkinson from the Hawaii Disability Rights Centers (HDRC).

III. Approval of minutes for the May 23, 2023 meeting

Vice Chair Gashel made a motion to approve the minutes for the meeting of May 23, 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

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

- Committee requested for OE to explore ways to streamline the ballot delivery and return processes and electronic authentication: Mr. Akamine reported that OE met with Enhanced Voting, the vendor for the electronic ballot delivery system, and conveyed the challenges shared by the public and the committee. OE and Enhanced Voting are exploring options to simplify the process including eliminating multiple logins and simplifying instructions.
- Committee requested for OE to connect with Tusk Philanthropies to learn about their mobile voting initiative: Mr. Akamine reported that OE connected with Tusk Philanthropies. Tusk Philanthropies provided a demonstration of their system, to which OE recognized similarities with the Enhanced Voting system. He shared that OE will continue working with Enhanced Voting.
- Committee requested for OE to request \$10,000 for the Elections Accessibility Needs Advisory Committee: Mr. Akamine reported that OE will work with the Committee to obtain its proposal for a budget which OE will assist in submitting on behalf of the Committee to the legislature.

V. Discussion on disability rights and voter education efforts

Emily Wilkinson, HDRC, was invited to share about her organization's efforts to provide voter education to the communities they serve. Ms. Wilkinson described that HDRC provides services to people with a wide variety of disabilities and provides advocacy for different communities including students.

She shared that they provide voter registration at the presentations they conduct and spread the message that it is important to vote. Additionally, HDRC participates in public events such as an event held at Fort Street

Mall twice per month. They will participate in other open markets closer to when the candidate debates occur.

Chair Morrissey asked if HDRC conducts candidate debates. Ms. Wilkinson responded that they do not but will discuss with her boss if it is something they can do. Chair Morrissey suggested that the Committee and HDRC work together to make ballot questions easier to understand.

Vice Chair Gashel asked that HDRC report any election issues they learn from their users to the Committee.

Committee Member Sheryl Nelson joined the meeting at 1:43 p.m.

VI. Discussion relating to mobile voting, electronic ballot delivery, and return process

Vice Chair Gashel shared that he believes that Enhanced Voting's system is developed for a PC and not for usability on mobile devices. He emphasized that OE first needs to streamline the existing electronic ballot process, but also keep the mobile phone usability in mind.

He continued that the system for the accessible electronic ballot should be designed to work with both desktops or laptops and on mobile devices. He further stated that he understands that his concerns about usability on mobile devices may not be addressed in time for the next election. However, he asked for a progress report from the vendor.

VII. General discussion on issues for voters with disabilities

Vice Chair Gashel shared that current Hawaii election law uses the phrase, "voters with special needs", and should be replaced to "voters with accessibility needs". He provided the example that the phrase appears in statutes regarding the electronic transmission of ballots. He asked that OE present the Committee with a bill that replaces the language to present at the next legislative session.

Further, Vice Chair Gashel shared that voters with accessibility needs should be addressed in all future public relations and outreach done by OE. He asked that OE staff provide an update on how this will be addressed in the next election.

Chair Morrissey asked about how they can get involved with generating the language for the ballot questions. Ms. Bueno clarified that OE does not write the language for the ballot questions, and that the questions are submitted to OE by the legislature and county councils. Chair Morrissey said she would like to offer the Committee's support in making the questions easier to understand.

Vice Chair Gashel provided input on the accessibility of the digital voter guide by sharing that the guide should be available in accessible PDF and accessible HTML formats.

VIII. Next meeting – date, time, topics to discuss

Chair Morrissey proposed a recurring meeting for the first Tuesday of every month at 1:30 pm through November 2024.

IX. Adjournment

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