



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**

JUNE 20, 2024 @ 1:00 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:

James Gashel, Vice Chair
Ramoda Anand
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 Vice Chair Gashel at 1:03 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 Chair Morrissey.

III. Approval of minutes for the May 7, 2024 meeting

Committee Member Keim made a motion to approve the minutes for the meeting of May 7, 2024, which was seconded by Committee Member Nelson, 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

Anthony Akamine, Election Information Specialist, Office of Elections (OE), shared the following update:

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 that 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 Honolulu City Bus 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.

Vice Chair Gashel commented that given the information OE gathered about getting the City Council involved, the Committee will need to work well in advance for the 2026 Elections. He added that in addition to providing the list of transportation services to hotline operators, he suggested that the resource also be posted to the Voters Requiring Assistance page. Regarding the accessible electronic ballot, Vice Chair Gashel requested written notice from OE when the system is ready.

- V. Status of HB 1976 relating to the Statewide Elections Accessibility Needs Advisory Committee. HB 1976 appropriates funds for the Statewide Elections Accessibility Needs Advisory Committee to gather information and provide outreach and voter education services for individuals with accessibility needs

Vice Chair Gashel shared that HB 1976 passed in the House and Senate, crossed over, and ultimately was not brought up by the Senate Ways and Means Committee and was not approved. He continued that the Committee

will need to decide if they will make the same request next during the next legislative session. He shared that the Committee should consider asking OE for funding.

Committee Member Keim added that the Committee should consider having their funding built into the budget of OE.

Committee Member Keim made a motion that discussion about the Committee's budget be added to the next meeting agenda and requested that OE staff who works with budget and policy be present. The motion was seconded by Committee Member Nelson, and approved by the Committee.

- VI. Review and discussion on proposed information sheet provided by the Committee to voter service center workers for use when assisting voters with accessibility needs

Committee Member Keim made a motion to approve the information sheet. The motion was seconded by Committee Member Anand, and approved by the Committee.

Vice Chair Gashel asked that OE distribute the finalized information sheet to the County Elections Divisions for use in the Primary and General Elections. He added that he recommends that the document also be posted to the Committee's page on OE's website.

Committee Member Keim asked if the document could also be posted to other places for voters to access. Vice Chair Gashel responded that the primary audience for the information sheet are voter service center volunteers so that wouldn't be needed.

- VII. Update on availability and accessibility of the Digital Voter Guide

Raymund de Vega, Elections Specialist, OE, shared an update on the Digital Voter Guide. He shared that the guide will include basic candidate information, candidate statements and photos, and basic voter education including deadlines, ballot drop box and voter service center locations, and information about accessible voting options.

Mr. de Vega continued that the voter guide will be available online at elections.hawaii.gov, and print copies will be available for viewing at all public libraries. Regarding accessibility, he shared that the Digital Voter Guide will use an accessibility widget, UserWay, which enables the guide to be screen reader accessible and meet the standards under Section 508 of the

Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines.

VIII. General discussion on issues for voters with disabilities

Vice Chair Gashel shared about an update to OE's website. He shared that on the homepage, there is now a link that reads "Voter Accessibility", which links to the Voters Requiring Assistance page. He suggested the page be renamed to "Voter Accessibility" rather than "Voters Requiring Assistance", given that the page includes information about voting independently.

He went on to recommend that links to the Americans with Disabilities Act be posted to the website. Regarding the accessible electronic ballot, he recommended that the language on the landing page be updated to reduce confusion about requesting an absentee ballot vs requesting an accessible electronic ballot.

IX. Discussion on possible future meetings

Vice Chair Gashel suggested that the next meetings be held in September and December. Vice Chair asked that the Committee be polled for Tuesdays and Thursdays.

X. Adjournment

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