



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**

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](https://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.

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 a status update relating to discussion from the Statewide Election Accessibility Needs Advisory Committee at the **June 20, 2024** meeting:

- **Accessible Electronic Ballots**
  - The demonstration ballot has been updated to allow voters to preview the ballot return options and practice the ballot return process. The demonstration ballot previously focused solely on allowing users to practice how to mark and review the electronic ballot.
  - The demonstration ballot landing page has been updated with a link to OE's "Voter Accessibility" page to provide more information about accessible voting options. The landing page previously had information on requesting an absentee ballot.
  - See link to the demonstration ballot: [Hawaii Accessible Electronic Ballot System](#)
- **Voting Accessibility Page**
  - The "Voters Requiring Assistance" page has been renamed to "Voter Accessibility". A link to the page is prominently displayed on OE's homepage, elections.hawaii.gov, as a featured button.
  - See link to the Voter Accessibility page: [Voter Accessibility](#)
- **Elections Accessibility Needs Advisory Committee Page**
  - A link to the Americans with Disabilities Act has been added to the "Additional Resources" section as requested by Vice Chair Gashel.
  - See link to the Election Accessibility Needs Advisory Committee page: [Statewide Elections Accessibility Needs Advisory Committee](#)
- **Tipsheet for Election Workers at Voter Service Centers**
  - The "Tips for Election Workers – How to Assist Voters with Disabilities" tipsheet was finalized by OE and shared with the respective County Clerks and County Election Administrators ahead of the 2024 Primary Election.
  - The tipsheet was published to the EANAC page, under the "Additional Resources" section.
- **Election Hotline Tally**
  - At the request of Vice Chair Gashel, OE has tracked the number of calls with subject matter relating to accessibility. Provided are the totals from the Primary Election to date:
    - Receiving assistance with the mail ballot: 45 calls

- Voting via an accessible electronic ballot: 10 calls
  - Voting via a ballot marking device at a voter service center: 3 calls
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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.