



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

OCTOBER 10, 2024 @ 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:

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 Vice Chair Gashel at 1:33 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 June 20, 2024 meeting

Committee Member Keim made a motion to approve the minutes for the meeting of June 20, 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

Raymund de Vega, Elections Specialist, Office of Elections (OE), shared the following update:

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 landing page has been updated with a link to OE’s “Voter Accessibility” page to provide more information about accessible voting options.

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.

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.

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

V. Discussion of accessibility, including alternate format ballot registration and use in the Primary Election
City and County of Honolulu Elections Division

Rhowell Ruiz, Assistant Elections Administrator, City and County of Honolulu Elections Division, shared a recap of the 2024 Primary Election. He shared the following figures: 696 voters requested an electronic ballot, 20 voters returned their ballot electronically, 177 voters returned their ballot via mail. He additionally shared that there are about 800 requests for an electronic ballot for the General Election.

Mr. Ruiz provided reminders ahead of the General Election regarding registering to vote and encouraged voters to sign up for ballot tracking

notifications. He shared the voter service centers are open beginning October 22 and encouraged voters not to wait until Election Day if voting in person and warned about long wait times.

Committee Member Keim asked if there has been discussion about sending electronic reminders to voters who receive their ballot electronically. She shared that she and her husband are unable to read the printed notices of voter registration that are sent.

Glen Takahashi, County Clerk, City and County of Honolulu Elections Division, responded that they will look into electronic notifications for the 2026 Elections, noting that it could be more challenging if the number of voters requesting an electronic ballot grows.

Lou Ann Blake, asked if there is any data that captures the number of people that attempted to use the electronic ballot and gave up. Vice Chair Gashel asked that OE find if that capability exists and report back to the Committee.

VI. Process of recruitment of Committee Member

Vice Chair Gashel shared that Committee Member Anand's term had ended in June, and they expressed they were not interested in being reappointed to serve on the Committee. He suggested the Committee do outreach to agencies to recruit people to apply, including outreach to Vocational Rehab and Independent Living.

Committee Member Keim recommended that the new member should be from a Neighbor Island, noting that all Committee Members are from Oahu.

Vice Chair Gashel asked OE staff to prepare a recruitment notice for the Committee to consider at the next meeting. The notice should include the Committee's mission, accomplishments, and information about applying for appointment.

Committee Member Keim made a motion that OE prepare the recruitment notice. The motion was seconded by Committee Member Nelson, and approved by the Committee.

VII. Discussion on how to facilitate understanding of constitutional and charter amendment questions

Mr. de Vega shared the 2024 General Election voter guide has been published, noting that it includes the constitutional and charter amendment questions and explanations of the questions provided by the State of Hawaii,

Department of the Attorney General and the respective County Corporation Counsels.

Vice Chair Gashel asked about OE's role regarding the ballot questions and explanations. Mr. de Vega clarified that OE's role is solely to publish the questions and explanations as provided.

Vice Chair Gashel stated that it is not something that can be addressed for the current election. Committee Member Keim made a motion to table the discussion until after the current election. The motion was seconded by Committee Member Nelson, and approved by the Committee.

VIII. Discussion on experience information to be gathered on accessibility of the upcoming General Election, including plans for a post-election survey

Committee Member Keim shared that the Primary Election was the first time she voted from a smart phone and expressed that it was an easy process. She proceeded to ask about plans for conducting a post-election survey.

Mr. Takahashi commented that because the Honolulu Elections Division has email addresses for those who have requested an accessible electronic ballot, they could explore gathering direct feedback from these individuals. Additionally, they can reach voters who may have signed up for an accessible electronic ballot erroneously, which will help with list maintenance.

Vice Chair Gashel shared that the Committee has an existing list of survey questions. He asked that OE include the questions from the survey conducted after the 2022 Elections, in the meeting packet for the next meeting.

IX. Discussion on funding for the Statewide Election Accessibility Needs Advisory Committee

Anthony Akamine, Elections Specialist, OE, shared that OE recommends that the Committee consider submitting a bill, as done in previous legislative sessions, if they are seeking funding for the Committee.

Vice Chair Gashel asked that the Committee be given an update at the next meeting on whether OE is prepared to support a bill similar to HB 1976.

X. General discussion on issues for voters with disabilities

Vice Chair Gashel provided feedback on his experience with using the voter guide. He expressed that the voter guide itself is accessible, however, he

experienced difficulty with the landing page that asks users for their island and residence address. He explained that he is able to successfully enter in his information when using his mobile device. However, he is not able to do so when using a Mac computer. He added that he experienced the same problem prior to the Primary Election. Committee Members Keim and Nelson shared a similar experience with difficulty using the landing page.

Vice Chair Gashel asked that OE provide an update to the Committee on the landing page issues they described. Mr. de Vega added that any voters experiencing similar issues can contact OE directly for further assistance. He shared that OE can directly send voters a link to the voter guide for their respective voting district.

XI. Discussion on possible future meetings

Vice Chair Gashel suggested the next meeting be held on December 2, 3, or 4, or the following week, in the afternoon. Mr. Akamine agreed to coordinate with the Committee members and OE staff to settle a date.

XII. Adjournment

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