



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**

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.

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 Elections Accessibility Needs Advisory Committee at the **October 10, 2024** meeting:

- **Accessible Electronic Ballots**
 - Vice Chair Gashel asked OE to identify whether the accessible electronic ballot system, Enhanced Voting, captures the number of people that attempted to use the electronic ballot and gave up. We have confirmed that login attempts are not tracked.
 - **Election Hotline Tally**
 - OE has continued to track the number of calls with subject matter relating to accessibility. Provided are the totals from the last meeting (October 10, 2024) to date:
 - Receiving assistance with the mail ballot: 77 calls
 - Voting via an accessible electronic ballot: 25 calls
 - Voting via a ballot marking device at a voter service center: 14 calls
-

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

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.

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.
-

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.
-

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.

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.

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.

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.

Statewide Elections Accessibility Needs Advisory Committee Vacancy Announcement DRAFT

The Statewide Elections Accessibility Needs Advisory Committee currently has one vacant position.

Committee Overview

The Statewide Elections Accessibility Needs Advisory Committee operates within the Office of Elections and consists of five members appointed by the governor. Committee members serve a four-year term.

Qualifications

Each member shall identify as a voter with special needs arising from physical disabilities including visual and hearing impairments that require an accommodation to vote.

Responsibilities

The role of the Committee is to ensure equal and independent access to voter registration, casting of ballots, and all other election services. The Committee shall meet annually to review election procedures, services, and technology and access to information, and shall make recommendations to the Office of Elections.

Highlights of efforts by the Committee include:

- Advising on the development of the accessible electronic ballot, which allows voters with print disabilities to receive and return their ballot electronically.
- Creating a tip sheet for voter service center staff on how to interact with voters with accessibility needs.
- Assisting the Office of Elections with creating educational resources including a newsletter on voting options for voters with disabilities.

To learn more about the Committee, visit the Statewide Elections Accessibility Needs Advisory Committee page. [Click here to visit the Statewide Elections Accessibility Needs Advisory Committee page.](#)

Apply for the Position

If you are a voter with accessibility needs arising from a disability and have an interest in serving, visit the Boards and Commission website to apply. [Click here to visit the Board and Commission website.](#)

For further assistance with the application process, you may contact the Boards and Commission directly at 808-586-0034 or at boards.commissions@hawaii.gov.

Statewide Elections Accessibility Needs Advisory Committee Post-Election Survey DRAFT

Survey Title:

Experiences of Voters with Disabilities

Introduction:

In 2021, the Hawaii state Legislature passed legislation to create the Statewide Voters with Election Accessibility Needs Advisory Committee and a committee in every county in Hawaii. The statewide committee, in collaboration with the county committees, intends to conduct a survey of voters with accessibility needs. We define such an individual as an individual with a disability, who has a physical or mental impairment which affects the individual in registering to vote and/or in casting a ballot privately and independently whether by mail or at a voter service center.

This survey will help committee members at all levels learn about the experiences voters with disabilities have had in the last election and things they would like to see changed, so they can vote more easily in future Hawaii elections. Please take a few minutes to read the survey and give your answers. We would like the survey to be completed by people with disabilities. Please share with all those you know about disabilities who are of voting age, 18. We have one goal and that is to help the Office of Elections of the State of Hawaii do the best job to ensure accessibility to voters with disabilities in all future elections.

Questions:

1. County
 - A. County of Hawaii
 - B. County of Maui
 - C. County of Kauai
 - D. City and County of Honolulu

2. Did you vote in either the August 10, 2024 Primary Election or the November 5, 2024 General Election in Hawaii?
 - A. Yes
 - B. No

3. If you did not vote, was it due to your disability?
 - A. Yes
 - B. No

4. If yes, what was the reason or reasons? Select all that apply.
 - A. I needed help to register to vote
 - B. I did not receive a ballot in the mail
 - C. I wanted to vote in person, but could not get a ride to the voter service center

- D. I could not read the ballot
- E. I had no one to help me fill out the ballot
- F. I could not mail the ballot
- G. Other

5. Choose the option listed below that best describes the method you used to vote in the 2024 Elections.

- A. I voted by mail
- B. I voted in person at a voter service center with an accessible ballot marking device
- C. I voted in person at a voter service center with another person to mark my ballot
- D. I voted through an accessible electronic ballot using my computer or smart device
- E. Other

6. In preparation for casting your vote in future elections, what kind of help would you like? Make as many choices as you would like.

- A. Help with registering to vote
- B. Transportation
- C. Getting information about candidates
- D. Learning more about the ways I may vote
- E. Reading the ballot
- F. Filling out the ballot
- G. Submitting the ballot
- H. Confirming that my ballot has been received and counted
- I. Other

Closing:

Thank you for completing the survey. If you would like to know more about the Statewide Elections Accessibility Needs Advisory Committee, go to this link:

<https://elections.hawaii.gov/about-us/boards-and-commissions/elections-accessibility-needs-advisory-committee/>.