



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

DECEMBER 19, 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:

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 Vice Chair Gashel at 1:31 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.

III. Approval of written minutes from the October 10, 2024 meeting

Committee Member Nelson made a motion to approve the minutes for the meeting of October 10, 2024, which was seconded by Committee Member Keim, 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 – 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

Committee Member Keim asked that OE gather statewide data for the 2024 Primary and General Elections on the number of requests for an accessible electronic ballot, and the number of accessible electronic ballots that were received. The Committee agreed that the post-election survey be sent to voters who requested the accessible electronic ballot.

V. Discussion on Committee Member vacancy announcement

Mr. de Vega shared that a draft of the vacancy announcement was included in the meeting materials and read the draft to the Committee.

Committee Member Nelson suggested that use of the term “special needs” be replaced to “election accessibility needs”.

Vice Chair Gashel suggested that OE send the finalized vacancy announcement to its internal list of partner organizations.

Chair Morrissey made a motion to approve the announcement as revised, which was seconded by Committee Member Keim, and approved by the Committee.

Vice Chair Gashel commented that the Committee make an effort to recruit a member from the Neighbor Islands, further suggesting that OE distribute the vacancy announcement with the County Elections Divisions and the County Elections Accessibility Needs Advisory Committees. He also suggested that the announcement be posted on OE’s ‘Voter Accessibility’ page, and for it to be prominently featured on OE’s homepage.

Committee Member Nelson expressed that all Committee members should

also help to distribute the announcement. Vice Chair Gashel stated that he will contact the Office of the Governor to ask about the possibility of a prominent listing on their website.

VI. Discussion on conducting a survey on the accessibility of the 2024 Elections

Mr. de Vega shared that a draft of the survey questions was included in the meeting materials and noted that minor edits were made to the 2022 version to update dates and grammatical changes. He proceeded to read the draft to the Committee.

Committee Member Nelson suggested to remove the question regarding transportation as a barrier for voting. She shared that transportation is not within OE's jurisdiction. Committee Member Keim expressed that it is important to include the question in order to know the magnitude that transportation is an issue for voters.

Leelynn Brady, Access to Independence, shared that it appears that the previous survey is currently posted and asked whether people are still taking the survey. Vice Chair Gashel responded that the Committee has not actively checked for responses since early 2023.

Committee Member Keim made a motion to approve and use the survey as revised, which was seconded by Committee Member Nelson, and approved by the Committee.

Committee Member Morrissey made a motion for OE to pay for the one-time use of an online survey service, which was seconded by Committee Member Nelson, and approved by the Committee.

Donald Sakamoto, Chair for the City & County of Honolulu Elections Accessibility Needs Advisory Committee, commented that there should be phone access to the survey, highlighting that kupuna may need this service.

The Committee discussed several options, including Chair Morrissey stating that individuals who need assistance with completing the survey can connect to her through OE and she can help the individual complete the survey. The Committee asked if OE could provide similar assistance, and Mr. de Vega replied that it should be feasible. Vice Chair Gashel suggested that when distributing the survey, included is language that the survey can be completed online or by calling OE for phone assistance.

Committee Member Nelson left the meeting at 2:30 p.m.

Committee Member Keim made a motion to have OE staff contact the County Elections Divisions to request the email database available at the county level, which was seconded by Chair Morrissey, and approved by the Committee.

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

Anthony Akamine, Elections Specialist, OE, shared that OE will continue to consider recommendations made by the Committee and evaluate how it might be able to implement the recommendations.

Chair Morrissey expressed that she would like to host group activities for voters with disabilities on Oahu and Neighbor Islands, such as focus groups and meet and greets.

Mr. de Vega expressed that OE can consider funding the Committee's recommendations with the office's existing voter education and outreach budget. He suggested that the Committee provide OE with a comprehensive budget for their recommended projects.

Vice Chair Gashel asked the opinion of Reese Nakamura, Deputy Attorney General, Department of the Attorney General, on the Committee's options for communicating with one another rather than solely in a meeting. He asked Mr. Nakamura to provide a report on what communication would be permitted.

VIII. Report by OE staff on accessibility help, concerns, issues, raised by voters in the 2024 Elections, with Committee discussion to follow

Mr. Akamine shared the following voter questions and concerns:

Assistance with signing the mail ballot – Some asked how to assist a voter unable to sign their name. Mr. Akamine shared that guidance on this issue was shared in a news article.

Audio volume of ballot marking devices – There was a concern that the volume of the ballot marking devices at the voter service centers was too low. Mr. Akamine shared that once informed of the issue, OE reached out to the vendor. The vendor instructed voter service center employees to raise the volume before the voter accessed their ballot. Mr. Akamine shared his own experience at a voter service center, confirming that the employees raised the volume of the ballot marking device before he began voting.

Confirming the electronic ballot was received – Some voters expressed that

there was a delay when using the ballot tracking service, BallotTrax, to check if their voted ballot had been received. OE relayed to the voters to that the delay is expected, and helped confirm that their ballot had been received.

Practice using an accessible electronic ballot – Voters expressed wanting to see a demonstration ballot to familiarize themselves with voting.

Vice Chair Gashel asked if the electronic demonstration ballots are still available on OE's website. Mr. Akamine confirmed that the demonstration ballots are available, and that it will be updated to the 2026 Elections. Vice Chair Gashel commented that they should explore whether the post-election survey could be built into the demonstration ballot.

IX. General discussion on issues for voters with disabilities

Committee Member Keim suggested that the next meeting be held in mid-March, with the approval of all Committee members.

X. Adjournment

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