



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**

May 20, 2025 @ 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 Chair Morrissey at 1:30 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 December 19, 2024 meeting

Vice Chair Gashel made a motion to approve the minutes for the meeting of December 19, 2024, which was seconded by Chair Morrissey, 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:

Voting Statistics for Voters with Accessibility Needs – Per Committee Member Keim's request, OE compiled voting statistics from the 2024 Elections provided by the County Elections Divisions. He shared that the details can be found in the meeting materials.

Committee Vacancy Announcement – In January, OE sent the Committee Vacancy Announcement to their disability partner organizations, the County Elections Divisions, and the County Elections Accessibility Needs Advisory Committees. Additionally, the announcement was posted to OE's homepage and the EANAC page.

Accessibility Electronic Ballots – The demonstration ballot has been updated for the 2026 Elections. Voters can find the link and login information to access the demonstration ballot by visiting the Voter Accessibility page.

Chair Morrissey asked that OE gather data on the number of voters who requested an electronic ballot but voted another way. Mr. de Vega said that it will be included in the status update for the next meeting.

Chair Morrissey further requested that the County Elections Divisions contact voters who have asked for an accessible electronic ballot, seeking permission for the Committee to obtain their contact information. Mr. de Vega expressed that voter contact information is typically not used in this way and described that the counties may also share this concern.

Chair Morrissey suggested that to minimize the responsibility of the counties, the Committee would draft the email for counties to send to voters asking if they are interested in sharing their contact information. Mr. de Vega said that OE can share this request with the counties, stating that it is ultimately up to their offices to participate.

Vice Chair Gashel commented that in addition to the notice of voter registration mailers that the County Elections Divisions send, the Committee should encourage the counties to send an email to voters who requested an

accessible electronic ballot to notify them that they will be getting an electronic ballot in the next election.

V. Report on the 2024 Elections Accessibility Survey

Mr. de Vega shared that OE created the Elections Accessibility Survey on SurveyMonkey, and it was available in Hawaiian and in the federally required languages Chinese, Ilocano, and Tagalog.

He continued that the survey was posted to OE's homepage and the Committee's page in January. Additionally, OE sent the survey to their disability partner organizations, asking that they share it with their networks. He noted that in February, the Assistive Technology Resource Center included a blurb and link to the survey in their newsletter.

Regarding the Committee's request to ask the County Elections Divisions to send the survey to voters who have requested an accessible electronic ballot, the Hawaii County, Maui County, and Honolulu Elections Divisions have sent the survey to its respective lists. Kauai County also earlier agreed to sending the survey, however, their timeline for doing so is still pending.

Mr. de Vega then shared the findings of the survey, noting that a report of the responses could be found in the meeting materials.

Chair Morrissey shared that she suspects the reason for low response to questions 2 and 3 were because people thought it did not apply to them, and said that she would look into making the questions clearer. Additionally, she recognized that the survey received more than double the responses compared to the previous survey, noting that there is a community that they should connect with.

Chair Morrissey asked about other organizations that shared the survey. Anthony Akamine, Elections Specialist, OE, responded that the survey was shared by the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) and Special Parent Information Network (SPIN).

Committee Member Keim asked that for future efforts regarding distributing the survey, OE share their list of partner organizations, and that OE request confirmation from organizations that they have received the survey. Additionally, she requested that OE inquire about these organizations' newsletters.

VI. Discussion relating to permitted communication between Committee Members outside of scheduled meetings

Item 6 was discussed after Item 7.

Vice Chair Gashel made a motion to enter into an executive session, which was seconded by Chair Morrissey, and approved by the Committee.

After returning from executive session, Chair Morrissey shared that the Committee discussed the ability for members, consistent with the Sunshine Law, to have conversations outside of regular scheduled meetings.

VII. General discussion on issues for voters with disabilities

Chair Morrissey asked the Committee members how the Committee can be involved in the process for voters to learn more about candidates.

Vice Chair Gashel responded that many voters may not be aware of the voter guide that OE published for the 2024 Primary and General Elections, further stating that the voter guide is accessible.

Mr. de Vega provided context about the candidate filing timeline, and described that after the candidate filing deadline, the candidate statements must be translated into Chinese, Hawaiian, Ilocano, and Tagalog. He expressed that although the candidate filing deadline ends in June, the translations are a timely undertaking. He added that the electronic version of the guide is available in line with when ballots arrive at homes 18 days before the election.

Vice Chair Gashel expressed that he understood the constraints in publishing the voter guide earlier, adding that the Committee can still build awareness of the resource early.

Chair Morrissey suggested that once OE knows who the candidates are, they should send a list of the candidates to voters and mention that the voter guide will be forthcoming. Mr. de Vega shared that OE generates a candidate report beginning in February. The candidate report lists the individuals that have requested nomination papers and the individuals that have filed for candidacy.

Chair Morrissey asked if the Committee is permitted to ask candidates to share their stance on disability issues when they develop their campaign materials. Mr. de Vega responded that regarding the voter guide, OE would

not want to influence what candidates include in their candidate statement. He explained that the candidates receive the same guidelines when submitting their statement, and they are free to use it however they wish.

Committee Member Keim asked whether OE includes information about the Committee in communications with candidates. Mr. de Vega expressed confusion, sharing that he did not understand the connection between the Committee and the candidate filing process or the voter guide. Committee Member Keim responded that mentioning the Committee in print will make the Committee more visible.

Vice Chair Gashel acknowledged that OE likely has policies that ensure the office is neutral on issues. He clarified that in any information shared with candidates, he suggests that OE can point out that there is a committee to help meet accessibility needs. Mr. de Vega restated that he does not think information about the Committee would be relevant in relation to candidate statement guidelines, however, he agrees that it would be beneficial for candidates to know about the Committee generally.

Vice Chair Gashel made a motion to request that in its communications with candidates beginning with the 2026 Elections, that OE include information about accessibility needs in voting and refer candidates to the Statewide Elections Accessibility Needs Advisory Committee so that candidates are alerted to respond to accessibility needs as part of their campaigns.

Reese Nakamura, Deputy Attorney General, Department of the Attorney General, interjected during the motion, suggesting that the Committee reserve these issues for a later meeting as an agenda item. Mr. Nakamura suggested that the Committee consider not taking a vote on the motion because the agenda item is a brainstorming action, and that the public should have an opportunity to weigh in on the topic.

Chair Morrissey expressed frustration over the constraints of the Sunshine Law.

Vice Chair Gashel shared that he understood that the Committee must comply with the Sunshine Law. He emphasized to Chair Morrissey that the motion should be made to vote on in a future meeting because the public hasn't had enough notice. He admitted it is a constraint, but he stated that it is a part of complying with the Sunshine Law.

VIII. Adjournment

Vice Chair Gashel suggested that the next meeting be held on either July 22 or 23, with the approval of all Committee members.

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