



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**

**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.

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 **May 20, 2025** meeting:

- **Voting Statistics for Voters with Accessibility Needs**
  - Per Chair Morrissey's request, provided below are voting statistics from the 2024 Elections provided by the County Elections Divisions. The table combines the previously reported data.

	Hawaii		Maui		Kauai		C&C of Honolulu	
	Primary	General	Primary	General	Primary	General	Primary	General
<b>Requested an electronic ballot</b>	83	178	No data	190	0	63	693	901
<b>Voted via an electronic ballot</b>	16	82	4	38	0	5	20	109
<b>Voted via a mail ballot</b>	0	6	No data	No data	7	32	177	516
<b>Voted at a voter service center</b>	2	18	No data	No data	0	4	7	53

- **Request for Voter Contact Information**
  - Chair Morrissey instructed OE to relay the Committee's following request: For the County Elections Divisions to email voters who have requested an accessible electronic ballot, asking if the voters would be willing to share their contact information with the Committee for outreach purposes. Per Chair Morrissey's request, OE relayed the request to the counties. OE did not receive interest from the counties in participating.
  - Should the Committee conduct future surveys, OE recommends including a field for participants to provide their contact information for the Committee's use.
- **Accessibility Information and Candidate Filing**
  - Per the Committee's recommendations that OE increase awareness of accessible voting options and increase visibility of the EANAC during interactions with candidates, OE has made additions to the Candidate Manual.

- The manual will now include a “Voter Accessibility and Assistance” section that informs candidates about accessible voting options and provides information about the Committee and their duties.
- The manual is published online and available to all candidates at the start of the Candidate Filing period beginning on February 2, 2026. OE will share the manual with the Committee once finalized.

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The following is a status update relating to discussion from the Statewide Elections Accessibility Needs Advisory Committee at the **December 19, 2024** meeting:

- **Voting Statistics for Voters with Accessibility Needs**

- Per Committee Member Keim’s request, provided below are voting statistics from the 2024 Elections provided by the County Elections Divisions.

	Hawaii		Maui		Kauai		C&C of Honolulu	
	Primary	General	Primary	General	Primary	General	Primary	General
<b>Requested an electronic ballot</b>	83	178	No data	190	0	63	693	901
<b>Voted via an electronic ballot</b>	16	82	4	38	0	5	20	109

- **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.
- The Committee Vacancy Announcement was posted to [OE’s homepage](#) and the [EANAC page](#).

- **Accessibility Survey**

- OE created the survey using SurveyMonkey, and it can be found here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/TJ566BL>. The survey is available in English, Chinese, Hawaiian, Ilocano, and Tagalog, which you can select from the drop-down menu on the landing page.
- In January, the survey was posted on [OE’s homepage](#), under “News and Announcements”, and to the [EANAC page](#), also under “News and Announcements”.
- OE sent the survey to its disability partner organizations, requesting that they share it further with their networks.



- All counties agreed to send the survey to their respective lists of voters who have requested to receive an accessible electronic ballot. Hawaii, Maui, and Honolulu have sent out the survey. The timeline for Kauai is pending.
  - **Accessible Electronic Ballot**
    - 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.
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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
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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.

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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.