

From: dgabe808@gmail.com
To: [OE.Elections](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Statewide Elections Accessibility needs Advisory Committee meeting at 10 am today
Date: Wednesday, February 18, 2026 9:25:20 AM

To members of the state-wide elections accessibility needs advisory committee

I am writing this email because I have family obligations during the time of your meeting today precluding me from attending in person or by zoom or phone.

My name is Deborah Gabe. I am blind and have been since 1975. I am now 75 years old. I live in Kailua.

I was born in Honolulu, left when younger, and returned in 1980. I have voted in every election.

For many years, I went into the voting booth with a close friend or my husband who marked my ballots. I trusted them to mark my ballots as I instructed.

However, that was not a way to vote privately. We had to talk to communicate and probably everyone around us in nearby booths or walking outside our booth could listen to our conversation, and knew exactly who I was voting for.

I was thrilled when the Office of Elections began having talking/braille voting machines set up for blind people to vote. I brought my own earphones. I received training in how to use the machines from Anthony Akamine, who still works at the Office of Elections. At the time, I worked as an instructor at Ho'opono Services for the Blind in Honolulu. For several years, I taught many of our adult blind students how to use the machines as well.

However, the problem was that most of the time when I went to my polling place to vote using those machines, they often were not even plugged in yet. Furthermore, no election staff was present who knew how to turn on and set up the machines. And then my ride to the polling place was forced to wait for an elections staff member to be called and later arrive who knew how to turn on the machine.

I was even more thrilled when I heard that Hawaii would be starting to use a Vote by Mail method. And I would be able to receive my ballot electronically directly to my home laptop. My screen reading software (JAWS) read the ballot and instructions to me. I put on my earphones so that no neighbors could hear who I voted for, and filled out the ballot immediately and in total privacy.

I did not have to find a ride to and from the polling place. Neither my ride nor myself had to wait for someone to be called and arrive to turn on the machine.

I do not want to have our elections return to the old way, where everyone has to go to their polling place.

I think Voting by Mail is one of the best decisions my state government has made in a long time. It is such a good way for the blind to vote. Plus it is a great method for people who do not have transportation to a polling place, like myself.

I think our current Vote by Mail method is wonderful, especially when I compare it with other states' methods. I cannot think of any other ways to improve its accessibility for me.

Mahalo for having this meeting.

And I urge you to never let others dictate a change in our method of voting when it has been working fine for a number of years, especially if they have no evidence of fraud in our elections. And if they have no evidence of fraud in elections of numerous other states whose voting records have been examined.

Mahalo for letting me tell my story about voting in Hawaii. And keep up the great work.

Deborah Gabe

Cell: 808 754 2793

Email: dgabe808@gmail.com

Address: 180 Noke Street, Unit 3

Kailua, HI 96734