

**PUBLIC ACCESS ROOM**

A division of the Legislative Reference Bureau

**N E W S L E T T E R**

Hawaii State Capitol ♦ 415 South Beretania Street ♦ Room 401 ♦ Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Phone: (808) 587-0478 ♦ Fax: (808) 587-0793 ♦ Email: [par@capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:par@capitol.hawaii.gov)**Legislative  
Timetable****January**

19<sup>th</sup> Opening Day.  
 21<sup>st</sup> Non-Administrative Bill  
 Package Cutoff.  
 24<sup>th</sup> State-of-the-State Address &  
 Administrative Bill Package Cutoff.  
 27<sup>th</sup> Last day for introduction of  
 bills.  
 31<sup>st</sup> Grants/Subsidies Cutoff.

**February**

18<sup>th</sup> First Lateral.  
 21<sup>st</sup> Holiday - Presidents' Day.  
 24<sup>th</sup>-March 2<sup>nd</sup> Mandatory 5-Day  
 Recess.

**March**

4<sup>th</sup> First Decking - last day to file  
 non-budget bills.  
 10<sup>th</sup> First Crossover.  
 16<sup>th</sup> Last day to introduce  
 substantive resolutions.  
 22<sup>nd</sup> Budget Decking.  
 24<sup>th</sup> Budget Crossover/Second  
 Lateral.  
 25<sup>th</sup> Holiday - Kuhio Day &  
 Good Friday.

**April**

8<sup>th</sup> Second Decking - last day to  
 file bills in non-originating body.  
 14<sup>th</sup> Second Crossover - last day to  
 disagree.  
 15<sup>th</sup> First Crossover for Concurrent  
 Resolutions.  
 22<sup>nd</sup> Deadline for final form of  
 constitutional amendments.  
 25<sup>th</sup> Second Crossover for  
 Concurrent Resolutions.  
 28<sup>th</sup> Last day to file non-fiscal bills  
 to deck for Final Reading.  
 29<sup>th</sup> Last day to file fiscal bills to  
 deck for Final Reading.

**May**

5<sup>th</sup> Adjournment Sine Die.

**CONTACT US:**

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**More goodies for you!**

Although we operate in tight quarters in the Public Access Room, we're still finding ways to expand the resources we can offer to our patrons. We've recently acquired some really good DVDs on government and politics. In the next couple of weeks, we'll have worked out our technical details so you can just come on in to view these excellent resources (if you're part of a group, please give us a call first so we can get ready for your visit).

You'll be able to use these DVDs to learn some good solid information about our *federal* system - the three branches of government, the Bill of Rights and the Constitution, the founding fathers of our country, and - for fun(!?) - how a bill becomes a law.

A series of three DVDs entitled *Just The Facts: Understanding Government*, clearly explains the three branches of government - Executive, Legislative, and Judiciary - and what role they play in our lives. Another of the DVDs in the *Just The Facts* series is about the Bill of Rights and the U.S. Constitution. It examines each amendment and gives a little history about why people, at the time that each amendment was made, felt the need to modify a document as crucially important as our Constitution.

To help us understand the who, what, where, when and how of the origins of the United States, the History Channel produced a film in 2000 that we were eager to acquire. *Founding Fathers* chronicles the lives of the brave people who literally risked "their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor" to create a new, untried form of government.



Remember waking up on Saturday mornings to *School House Rock*? One of the most popular three-minute animated shorts from *School House Rock* was *I'm Just a Bill*. Every time we use it in one of our legislative process workshops (yes we sometimes do), we're sure to get a laugh or two, and someone humming along. This is a wonderful learning tool for both children and adults on how a bill becomes a law.

We'll be continuing to build on this collection of informative DVDs. They'll be available during the interim too, and will be fine resources for groups or individuals to enjoy. So stop by and tune in. You'll be glad you did and so will we.

**This just in from our humor department:** "It's amazing that the amount of news that happens in the world every day always just exactly fits the newspaper." David Letterman

# “I’d Like to Offer my Testimony!”



Suppose someone’s just let you know that a bill you support is scheduled for a hearing before a House or Senate committee in two days. *Hooray!* That means the legislation is moving forward. **Since it involves an issue you feel strongly about, you think you’d like to offer your own perspective and arguments for the bill’s passage.** Ideally, you’ll come to the Capitol for the scheduled hearing, and present your oral and written testimony in person. But, let’s say you can’t do that... No problem! You can still be heard by sending written testimony.

Excellent...where to begin? Your excitement quickly turns to panic as a thousand and one questions arise...

*Whom do I address?*

*How do I let them know my views?*

*Will they take my testimony seriously?*

*Is there anything I should be sure to include?*

*Help!*

Take a deep breath. Relax. **The deadline for submitting written testimony is usually 24-hours prior to a hearing**, and help is at hand — there are great resources online that can guide you through the process. Let’s do a ‘walk-through’ to one right now – the Citizen’s Guide to Committee Testimony.

1. To begin, open your web browser and go to the State Legislature’s website: [www.capitol.hawaii.gov](http://www.capitol.hawaii.gov). Notice the list of topics – *lots of information here!* – but for now, **double click on the heading, “Legislative Information.”**



2. That will bring you to this page. FYI, this is where you can find out who’s your Senator or Representative, which hearings are being broadcast, and what different phrases and abbreviations mean. *But stay on task!* You’re interested in how to write testimony, and to find help with that, **double-click on “Citizen’s Guide.”**



3. Here, you'll find a nice letter inviting you to learn more about the ins and outs of the Hawaii legislative process. It's definitely worth your while to read through the whole thing, but we're on deadline! **Move the side scroll bar down so you can reach the bottom of the webpage.**



4. At the bottom of the webpage, you'll see a list of different topics you can jump to. **We're interested in Committee Testimony (the fifth point down), so select (double-click on) that topic.**



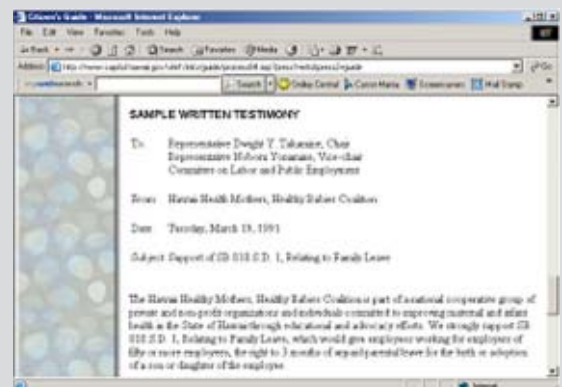
5. Now we get to the good stuff! **Print this out if you like – it will be a handy reminder of some important things to remember while preparing testimony.** And, rest easy, here's where you find the answers to your questions.

- **Address your testimony to the Chair, Vice Chair and members of the Committee.**
- **Definitely provide your own perspective or information to contribute to the debate.**
- **Your input is important – to keep it easy, and to make the best impression, follow the 'sample written testimony' format that appears at the bottom of the webpage (see next screen).**



6. Follow the sample written testimony format, and get to work. Before you even begin to present your perspective and arguments, **be sure you include:**

- **the bill number**
- **the hearing date, time, location**
- **whether your testimony is in support, against, or just commenting on the proposed legislation (Note: You can also support some parts of the bill, and oppose other parts – just try to be as clear and specific as possible in your remarks.);**
- **your name (sounds obvious – but it's amazing what people can leave out when they're in a rush!)**
- **your organization (if you're testifying as its representative or member);**
- **your contact information (if you're available for questions or to provide additional input).**



7. **Get the testimony written, and send it in as quickly as possible!** The committee clerks work with large volumes of paper, and need time to collate and prepare materials in advance of a hearing. Most important, testimony received prior to the deadline provides the legislators with an opportunity to review your input and possibly incorporate your viewpoint in their remarks.

- **Deadline to submit testimony is usually 24 hours in advance of a hearing.**
- **Keep it brief and concise — 1 page is great.**
- The hearing notice for your bill will provide delivery instructions – including the number of copies, whether or not they should be two- or three-hole punched, and where they should be delivered. (*You can find the hearing notice for a particular bill by going to: [www.capitol.hawaii.gov/site1/docs/hearing/hearing.asp?press1=docs&press2=hearing](http://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/site1/docs/hearing/hearing.asp?press1=docs&press2=hearing) and entering the bill number in Section 1.*)  
Note: If you need help finding a bill number or hearing notice, call us at the Public Access Room, and we'll be happy to assist you. We'll also be happy to photocopy and deliver your copies (we're in Room 401).
- **Send your testimony only once!** We know it's tempting to send it more than one way (by fax, electronically, etc.), especially when you feel strongly about an issue. Resist the urge! **Sending the same testimony more than one way does not help your cause – it simply wastes material resources and valuable staff time.**

8. Take a moment to **proof read!** Read through your testimony one final time to make sure it's clear and accurately presents your position. Check for typos. They happen to the best of us!

**Congratulations on getting involved and providing input to the legislative process!** Now that you know how simple it is, don't be a stranger. Everyone in the Public Access Room is available and ready to help – after all, we're your office at the Capitol. Come on in and feel welcome.

## March PAR Workshops

If you are interested in attending any of the scheduled workshops, please contact the Public Access Room at 587-0478. The workshops will be held in the Public Access Room (room 401 in the State Capitol) and seating is limited so sign up soon.

**Legislative Process** – Learn about the Legislative Timetable, Deadlines, Readings, Conference Procedures, and internal rules of the House and Senate.

**Useful Internet Sites** – Learn about the research tools available online including the legislature's website and the State government website.

**Reading and Understanding Legislative Documents** – Learn how to read and understand legislative documents including Orders of the Day, Hearing Notices, Bills and Resolutions, Referral Sheets, Journals and Governor's Messages.

### Workshop Schedule

Mar 1 Tu	Process	5:00 pm
Mar 3 Th	Internet	1:00 pm
Mar 8 Tu	Documents	5:00 pm
Mar 10 Th	Internet	1:00 pm
Mar 15 Tu	Process	1:00 pm
Mar 17 Th	Internet	5:00 pm
Mar 22 Tu	Documents	1:00 pm
Mar 24 Th	Process	5:00 pm
Mar 29 Tu	Documents	1:00 pm
Mar 31 Th	Process	5:00 pm

### FYI:

**March will be the last month for our regularly scheduled workshops. If you would like to have a workshop conducted for you or your group after that time, give us a call. If you can't come to our office, we will try to work out a time and place that will be convenient for you (groups only for this service, please). Mahalo.**