

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 ♦ URL: www.hawaii.gov/lrb/par



2008 Legislative Timetable

January

- 16th Opening Day
- 18th Non-Administrative Bill Package Cutoff
- 21st Holiday: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- 22nd State-of-the-State Address & Administrative Bill Package Cutoff
- 23rd Bill Intro Cutoff: last day to introduce bills
- 31st Grants/Subsidies Cutoff

February

- 15th First Lateral (bills)
- 18th Holiday: Presidents' Day
- 21st -27th Mandatory 5-Day Recess
- 29th First Decking: last day to file non-budget bills

March

- 6th First Crossover (bills)
- 10th Budget Decking
- 12th Budget Crossover
- 12th Last day to introduce Substantive Resolutions
- 20th Second Lateral (bills)
- 21st Holiday: Good Friday
- 26th Holiday: Kuhio Day
- 28th First Lateral for Concurrent Resolutions

April

- 4th Second Decking (bills): last day to file bills in non-originating body
- 10th Second Crossover (bills) & last day to disagree
- 11th First Crossover for Concurrent Resolutions
- 18th Constitutional Amendments: deadline for final form
- 21st Second Crossover for Concurrent Resolutions
- 24th Last day to file Non-Fiscal bills to deck for Final Reading
- 25th Last day to file Fiscal bills to deck for Final Reading

May

- 1st Adjournment Sine Die

CONTACT US!

Public Access Room
 Phone . (808) 587-0478
 Fax (808) 587-0793
 TTY (808) 587-0749
 Email ... par@capitol.hawaii.gov

Neighbor Islands (Toll Free)

Hawai'i... 974-4000, ext. 7-0478
 Maui 984-2400, ext. 7-0478
 Kaua'i 274-3141, ext. 7-0478
 Moloka'i/Lana'i...(800) 468-4644, ext. 7-0478
 (Fax from neighbor islands using ext. 7-0793)

RSS Feeds... "Real simple!?"

COMPARISON OF MEASURE TRACKING METHODS...

We hear a lot of talk around the Capitol these days about using RSS feeds to receive web content. How can you decide if subscribing is right for you? We'll help you look at some pros and cons of different ways of tracking measures on pages 2 and 3.

Take heart -- each method is relatively easy to set up, and the websites' instructions are pretty straightforward. You can also refer to our RSS instructions, available on the "Information Sheets" page of our website, www.hawaii.gov/lrb/par.

Sometimes, Extraordinary Measures require Ordinary Means

*Taking the mystery out of preparing testimony -- easily, quickly and simply.
 See page 4...*

Learn Something New!

Sign up for a PAR WORKSHOP

The Public Access Room hosts a series of workshops for the public on a number of topics that pertain to the Legislature. Workshop descriptions and times are listed below. Please contact the Public Access Room at 587-0478 or par@capitol.hawaii.gov to sign up.

March Workshop Schedule

Process	Tuesdays	1:00p
Documents	Tuesdays	5:00p
Internet	Wednesdays	1:00p
Process	Wednesdays	5:00p
Documents	Thursdays	1:00p
Internet	Thursdays	5:00p

Legislative Process – Learn about the session timetable, deadlines, readings, referrals, hearings, conference procedures, House and Senate rules, and how to follow it all.

Useful Internet Sites – Learn about the research tools available on-line, including how to best use the websites of the Legislature, State government, Legislative Reference Bureau and the Public Access Room. Also get tips on how to keep track of all of those measures you're interested in!

Reading and Understanding Legislative Documents – Learn how to read and understand a wide variety of legislative documents including Orders of the Day, Hearing Notices, Bills and Resolutions, Referral Sheets, Committee Reports, Journals and Governor's Messages. We'll also familiarize you with Session Laws and the Hawaii Revised Statutes.

Quote

"No matter what side of the argument you are on, you always find people on your side that you wish were on the other."

- Jascha Heifetz, violinist (1901-87)



PROS and CONS



of some easy Methods to Keep Track of your Bills...

The Non-RSS Route: ROUTINELY LOOK UP STATUS SHEETS ON THE LEGISLATURE'S WEBSITE

Using this method, you open the status sheets to view the measures' most recent activity.

Pros

- Reassurance of viewing each separate status sheet for activity
- It reminds you of the status of each of the measures - perhaps prompting you to additional advocacy (for example, "They've still not scheduled this for a hearing!")
- On your own computer, you can bookmark a webpage that lists all your bills – making routine checks for updates faster and easier (if you don't know how to do this, call PAR and we'll walk you through)
- You can check from any computer (if you have the list of measures handy)
- Not too time consuming if tracking a small number of bills

Hawaii State Legislature
www.capitol.hawaii.gov
Bill Status

Cons

- If checking from a bookmarked webpage, to add a new measure requires redoing the initial set up or bookmarking a new page
- To check from any other computer, you need to have the list of measures handy
- You might forget to check one or more of the sheets in the rush to get other things done
- You don't learn about a new feature that may be useful in any number of areas besides monitoring legislative activity

USE THE BUILT-IN RSS FEATURE OF YOUR BROWSER

(for this example, Explorer 7.0)

Using this method, you open and refresh your browser's list of feeds and can see at a glance which status sheets have changed.

Pros

- Quick and easy to add or delete measures from your tracking list at any time
- Fast, at-a-glance viewing of which items have changed - just "refresh all" and see what appears in bold type
- It's so easy you may want to track measures of marginal or potential interest
- No having to copy and paste website addresses to another page
- You can adjust how frequently the browser checks for updates
- You can choose your own name for each subscription (for example, HB1's status sheet can be titled "HB1 Status" or you may want to add language to identify it by subject or introducer); you can organize feed lists into different folders, identify items of special interest
- You learn something new that may be helpful in other areas



Cons

- Unable to access your list easily in this way from other computers
- If you want to email the updated information to others, you'll need to cut and paste the information into your message
- Initial discomfort with a new way of doing things

SUBSCRIBE TO A WEB-BASED RSS READER SERVICE

(for this example, www.google.com/reader)

Using this method, you sign into a site and can see at a glance which status sheets have changed.

Pros

- You'll be able to access and modify your subscription list from any computer
- Fast viewing of changes that have occurred
- Quick and easy to add or delete measures from your tracking list at any time
- So easy you may want to track measures of marginal or potential interest
- Easy to email updated information to others
- The reader service checks pages approximately once an hour for updates
- You can choose a name for each subscription (for example, "HB1 Status" or you may want to add language to identify it by subject or introducer); you can organize feed lists into different folders, identify items of special interest
- Learn something new that may be helpful in other areas



Cons

- You'll have to sign in to the service to view list
- To subscribe, you must copy and paste website addresses to another page
- Initial discomfort with a new way of doing things

SUBSCRIBE TO A RSS-TO-E-MAIL SERVICE

(for this example, www.feedblitz.com)

Using this method, you'll receive an email whenever a status sheet changes.

Pros

- You don't have to remember to check a list (though you *do* have to remember to check your email)
- It's easy and quick to email updated information to others
- You can flag the Feedblitz update messages so that you can review them at a later time
- So easy you may want to track measures of marginal or potential interest
- Easy to add or delete measures from your tracking list
- More familiar environment
- Learn something new that may be helpful in other areas



Cons

- You receive updates in the midst of a distracting environment (that is, in the midst of all the other email messages you receive and whenever the service perceives an update), not necessarily when you want to focus on legislative issues
- Free services generally only check for updates once a day -- you may have to pay for more frequent service
- Initial discomfort with a new way of doing things

DOWNLOAD A FEED READER TO YOUR COMPUTER

(for this example, www.feedreader.com)

Using this method, you can customize the program to best meet your needs.

Pros

- You can customize to your needs and have the program interact with your browser
- It can operate simultaneously with other RSS systems

Cons

- You'll need to download the program to your PC
- Learning curve to understand how program operates and how to customize (we're still on that curve!)

“Yikes! They’ve got to be kidding!” ... “Oh, this is such a good idea!”

Sometimes, Extraordinary Measures require Ordinary Means

Have your voice heard! Here's a simple 1-2-3 guide to preparing written testimony.

You’ve never testified before, but there are two interesting bills scheduled for a committee hearing next week. You’d be thrilled to see one of them passed... but the other one starts your blood to boiling when you just *think* of it passing. So you’ve resolved to weigh in on the issues. And you've got to move quickly! How to proceed?

Initially, the task of submitting testimony on a bill to a House or Senate committee may seem imposing. Newcomers often think it requires a technical prowess and understanding of the legislative process that only professional lobbyists or ardent advocates possess. In reality, though, with just a handful of pointers, **writing and submitting testimony for a legislative hearing can be as straightforward as having an opinion and expressing it.**

1 Pull identifying information from the hearing notice and include it in your testimony so that it will get to where it needs to go, so that the committee members will know what you’re commenting on.

- Clearly **identify the bill** under consideration, for example, “SB12” or “HB3111 HD2”. *If the bill number has draft suffixes (the HD, SD or CD designations) be sure to include them – list it as it is shown on the hearing notice.*
- Note the **day and date of the hearing** (*found on the hearing notice*) to make sure that the testimony gets to the correct people.
- **Address the testimony to the Chair of the Committee and its members.** *You don’t have to list them all... “To Chair _____ and the Committee on _____” will work just fine. The chairs’ and committees’ names appear at the top of the hearing notice.*

2 Include your name and contact information at the top or bottom of the page, so that it stands out clearly.

3 State your position up front – “I am strongly in favor of...,” or “I am in opposition to...,” or “I support this measure with amendments.”

4 Try to keep it concise. A position summed up in one page or less is ideal. Start with the facts or reasons most significant to your position, followed by any other supportive information. Keep the issue in focus. Lastly, if the testimony is somewhat lengthy, it wouldn’t hurt to restate your position on the bill in your closing.

5 Get it in on time! Written testimony should be submitted at least 24 hours in advance of the hearing or it will be considered late. (How late testimony is handled is up to the Committee Chair, so get it in as soon as you can if you’ve missed the 24 hour window.) At the bottom of the hearing notice, you’ll find instructions on how to deliver your testimony – you can email it to the address listed, or fax it in, or hand carry it to the office address noted. **These instructions vary by hearing notice, so always double check!** *Do not submit your written testimony more than once or by more than one method — this may cause confusion and delay.*

6 If in doubt, call PAR! *How vexing to have your comments go unheard because of an incorrect bill number, the wrong email address, or hesitation caused by confusion! We’ll be happy to help you find the information you need, and to explain any part of the process that appears mysterious or puzzling.*

Remember – by adhering to these simple guidelines and making the decision to add your voice to the dialogue on a particular issue or bill, your straightforward communication could make a difference – maybe for years to come. And you’ll be able to know you did your part.... After all, to quote Marian Wright Edelman, “A democracy is not a spectator sport.”

For further instruction on preparing committee testimony, go to <http://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/site1/info/guide/process04.asp> where the Citizen's

Guide offers a written testimony outline and sample.