

PUBLIC ACCESS ROOM
A division of the Legislative Reference Bureau

NEWSLETTER

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2012 Legislative Timetable

January

- 18th Opening Day
20th Non-Administrative Bill Package Cutoff
23rd State-of-the-State Address
Administrative Bill Package Cutoff
25th Bill Introduction Cutoff: Last day to introduce bills
31st Grants/Subsidies Cutoff

February

- 9th Triple Referral Filing deadline
17th First Lateral
20th Holiday: Presidents' Day
23rd to 29th: Mandatory 5-Day Recess

March

- 2nd First Decking
8th First Crossover
12th Budget Decking
14th Budget Crossover
Last day to introduce Substantive Resolutions
15th Triple Referral Filing deadline
23rd Second Lateral
26th Holiday: Kuhio Day
30th First Lateral for Senate Concurrent Resolutions

April

- 3rd First Lateral for House Concurrent Resolutions
5th Second Decking
6th Holiday: Good Friday
12th Second Crossover & Last day to disagree
13th First Crossover for Concurrent Resolutions
20th Constitutional Amendments: Deadline for final form
23rd Second Crossover for Concurrent Resolutions
26th Last day to file Non-Fiscal Bills to deck for Final Reading
27th Last day to file Fiscal Bills to deck for Final Reading

May

- 3rd Adjournment sine die (Session pau!)

Welcome to Session!

Welcome to the second half of Hawaii's biennial twenty-sixth legislature, marking the fifty-second year of Hawaii's statehood.

(It's also the twenty-second anniversary of the Public Access Room!)

Just a reminder, if you were following a bill that died in the 2011 session: All bills that were neither passed into law nor vetoed in the first year of the 2-year cycle can move forward from the place where they stopped last year. That's useful information as you prepare to track legislation in this session that's about to begin.

And with the re-design of the Legislature's website, tracking legislation has gotten a lot

(continued on page 4)

In this Issue: The New Website

Table with 2 columns: Article Title and Page Number. Includes 'Welcome to Session' (page 1), '2012 Legislative Timetable' (page 1), 'The Anatomy of a Bill' (page 2), 'Website: How to View All Bills and Descriptions' (page 2), 'New PAR Session Staff' (page 3), 'Get to know your deadlines: First Lateral' (page 3), 'Workshops' (page 4), and 'New PAR Hours!' (page 4).

The Anatomy of a Bill

Now is the time of year that you find yourself wading in and out of bill after bill. Here are a few fundamentals.



Bill Number: The designation of a bill is abbreviated by either "HB" for House Bill or "SB" for Senate Bill, depending on where it was introduced. The Clerk's office of the chamber of origin then assigns a bill number to each bill introduced, usually in the order in which it was received. The HB or SB designation, and the bill number assigned, remains unchanged during the bill's path through the legislature. If the bill itself is revised, that's noted by a new draft number (e.g., H.D.1, S.D. 2, etc.).

Title: "A Bill For An Act Relating To Emergency Health Powers" ... The "bill for an act" phrase means that if the bill passes the Legislature and becomes law, it becomes an "act" of law and receives an "act number." In fact, the Constitution of the State of Hawaii specifies that every law enacted must be introduced in the Legislature in the form of a bill (Article III, Section 14). The title of the bill must encompass the entire subject matter contained in the bill, and it is not changed or amended as the bill moves forward. The title is often intentionally broad to allow leeway for changes in the bill's content during the course of the session.

Sections: Bills are divided into sections. The first section may be a purpose section, which states the purpose of the bill and may describe the situation or problem that gives rise to the measure or describe the need for and intent of the legislation. Sections may specify the action mandated by the legislation, including clear instructions for changes to the Hawaii Revised Statutes. They may also provide definitions of terms, provide remedies and penalties, and specify how long the legislation will be in effect. Some bills will contain a "severability clause," which instructs the court that if one section of the act is found unconstitutional, the remainder of the act will remain intact, or a "savings clause," which means that the bill is not retroactive.

2nd to the last Section: If the bill provides for changes in statutory or constitutional material, the second to the last section typically will be the Ramseyer provision. This section explains that in the previous sections of the bill, all statutory material that is to be added is underscored, and all statutory material that is to be *repealed* is bracketed and stricken [~~like this~~]. (This ensures that if the bill is enacted there will be no confusion as to how the Hawaii Revised Statutes or state Constitution is amended.)

Last Section: The last section of the bill will provide the effective date – i.e., the date the law will take effect. This may be a specific date or may read, "This Act shall take effect upon its approval." In some cases, more than one effective date may be provided – for example, the act will take effect on one date, provided that section 3 will take effect on another date. [Note: So-called "defective dates" (a shorthand, though technically incorrect term, used to describe far future effective dates, such as "effective 2099") are sometimes used in order to facilitate further discussion. A so-called "defective date" does not render the measure invalid if enacted; it simply prevents the measure from taking effect for a long time and has the effect of making sure the bill does not take effect unless other issues are resolved, typically in conference committee.]

Website: How to View All Bills and Descriptions

Want to take a look at all the House and Senate bills that are introduced?

Go to the Legislature's website (www.capitol.hawaii.gov) and click on the "Bill Status Reports" icon. (It's one of those buttons in the center of the screen.)



Then, simply select either "House Bills Introduced" or "Senate Bills

Introduced" to view a table of the bills and their descriptions. It's an easy way to review the legislation being considered and to decide which bills you want to add to your measure tracking list. (Need help with that? Give PAR a call! We'll be happy to walk you through the process.)

New PAR Session Staff



Naomi Taga

Aloha! I'm Naomi Taga and I'll be one of two new faces here at the PAR. This is my first legislative session and I'm excited to see what these upcoming months have in store. When not in Room 401, you can find me searching for new adventures to write about, photograph, or just in general explore! My most recent memorable event was my time spent in Bangkok, Thailand working with urban refugees. I'll be graduating from the University of Hawaii Manoa with a degree in American Studies and Peace and Conflict Education this May. Afterwards, I hope to obtain my MA in Human Rights Law.

Hi, I'm Nina Talawva. I graduated from the University of Hawaii Manoa with a double major in Political Science and also Peace and Conflict Resolution Studies from the Matsunaga Peace Institute. I am currently a full-time graduate student at the Hawaii Pacific University working towards my Masters Degree in Global Leadership and Sustainable Development. This is my second session at the Hawaii State Capitol; I worked in the House last session. I am also currently an AmeriCorps volunteer and very active in service projects in the community. I chose to work at the Legislature because I am interested in how the legislative process works and how to become an effective agent of change for my community and Hawaii.



Nina Talawva

Get to Know your Deadlines: First Lateral

The implementation of deadlines throughout the session effectively reduce the number of pieces of potential legislation. Translated, that means that bills fall by the wayside and may "die" if they fail to meet a deadline.

The First Lateral deadline is one you won't find listed on the official legislative calendar. That's because it's considered an *internal* deadline – one that is set by each of the chambers to ensure timely movement of bills through their committees. The First Lateral deadline is the date by which a bill must reach the last committee to which it has been referred in the originating chamber.

The first thing to know is that the deadline has no effect on bills that were referred to just one committee – the bill is *already* in its last committee. But for bills that were referred to more than one committee, this deadline is crucial.

To meet the First Lateral deadline this year, all bills with multiple referrals must successfully pass out of earlier committees and be reported to their last committee by Friday, February 17th. That means that a bill needs to be reported out of its *second-to-last* committee and be filed for second reading by Thursday, February 16th. The next day, the bill can then pass second reading on the floor and move into its last committee for consideration.

If a bill does not reach its last committee by the First Lateral deadline, it is stopped from moving forward during the session.

(continued from page 1)

easier. Introduced by popular demand, there's now an incredibly useful "Measure Tracking" feature on the homepage.

Remember, too, that when you send in testimony or meet with your legislators or attend hearings, you are doing something really important: You are actively participating in our government's complicated and confusing and maddening and magnificent process. That's what keeps a representative democracy viable and strong. *THANK YOU!*

If you need help, give us a call or stop by the office. We've expanded our hours this session - we'll be open **8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Monday through Friday** for the duration of the legislative session. We really look forward to hearing from you.

Aloha,



We're honored to serve you.

Workshops

Learn more about the legislative process and how you can participate easily and effectively. Attend one of PAR's "We the Powerful" workshops – offered in the Public Access Room (Room 401)

Tuesdays 12 noon

Thursday 5:30 p.m.

Call (587-0478) or email (par@capitol.hawaii.gov) to sign up!
They're free (and we promise you'll learn something).

New PAR Hours!

During Session (January 18 – May 3), the Public Access Room (Room 401) has extended hours!

Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.



Quotes from the File . . .

"A man grows most tired while standing still."

- Chinese proverb

"Every individual matters. Every individual has a role to play. Every individual makes a difference."

- Jane Goodall

"Nobody can do everything, but everybody can do something."

- Unknown