

PUBLIC ACCESS ROOM

A division of the Legislative Reference Bureau

NEWSLETTER

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Session Unfolds at Blinding Speed!

Feel like you're chasing moving targets? Always running late with getting your testimony in? Barely have time to get a grasp of what one deadline means before another one looms up ahead? You're not alone!



It's hard to describe or explain to the uninitiated but, despite how slowly some hearings move along, time moves awfully quickly at the Capitol! The Public Access Room (PAR) can help you navigate the fast pace as session days roll by and the deadlines come and go. It's hard to summarize all the questions we've been asked, but here are a few tips that may be useful in the days ahead.

- To see what's happening on Session Days in the House and Senate chambers, use the search box on the homepage (capitol.hawaii.gov) to find "Orders of the Day."
- To take a look at everything that's still alive after First Lateral or First Decking, use the "Deadline Tracking" feature (found on the [Reports and Lists](#) page).
- You can quickly view all the documents generated on any given day by using the "Daily Reports" feature (again on the [Reports and Lists](#) page).
- Do you know *what* happened, but want to understand *why*? While you won't always be able to determine that, sometimes all you need to do is ask! Not sure *who* to ask? Give PAR a call, and we'll try to steer you in the right direction.

Remember, PAR is here to help make things a little easier and provide you with the resources you need. Feel free to stop in, call, or email if you need help staying on course!

2015 Legislative Timetable

February

26th Mandatory 5-Day Recess Begins

March

- 4th Mandatory 5-Day Recess Ends
- 6th First Decking
- 12th First Crossover
- 13th Last day to introduce Substantive Resolutions
- 16th Budget Decking
- 18th Budget Crossover
- 19th Second Triple Referral Filing deadline
- 26th Holiday: Kuhio Day
- 27th Second Lateral
- 31st First Lateral for Concurrent Resolutions

April

- 3rd Holiday: Good Friday
- 9th First Crossover for Concurrent Resolutions
- 10th Second Decking
- 16th Second Crossover & Last day to disagree
- 20th Second Lateral for Concurrent Resolutions (House)
- 24th Constitutional Amendments: Deadline for final form
- 27th Second Crossover for Concurrent Resolutions
- 30th Last day to file Non-Fiscal Bills to deck for Final Reading

May

- 1st Last day to file Fiscal Bills to deck for Final Reading
- 7th Adjournment *sine die* (Session pau!)

In this Issue

- ☐ Day by Day... Session Unfoldspage 1
- ☐ 2015 Legislative Timetable..... 1
- ☐ Confirmation Hearings 2
- ☐ Recess Days 3
- ☐ Learning Sessions, PAR Hours 4
- ☐ Quotes from the File 4

Exercising its Power ... Senate Confirmation Hearings

The Senate's advise and consent role is rooted in the concept of "checks and balances" between the traditional three branches of government. There's a new Governor up on the 5th floor, and he's named his cabinet (the people he's chosen to lead each of the departments that make up the Executive branch). As a result, in addition to the legislation that will be debated and discussed at the Legislature, we are now witnessing Senate confirmation hearings for the Governor's appointments.

The Hawaii State Constitution ([Article V, Section 6](#)) specifies that each executive department is headed by a single executive who "shall be nominated and, by and with the advice and consent of the senate, appointed by the governor." In addition, numerous deputy directors will also undergo this Senate confirmation process.



Three Branches of Government

The [Senate Rules](#) specify how the Governor's nominations will be handled. Among other things, Senate Rule 37 states that:

- Appointments and nominations will be referred to the standing committee that has jurisdiction over the department.
- Public hearings will be held for all nominees and appointees prior to confirmation or consent by the Senate.
- The standing committee to which a nomination is referred must report to the Senate with a recommendation to advise and consent, confirm, or reject on or before the fifty-ninth day of the session.

The public is able to offer their testimony at these hearings. To find out if and when a nominee's appointment is scheduled for a hearing, go to the Legislature's website (capitol.hawaii.gov), click on the "[Reports & Lists](#)" button at center screen, and then select "Advise & Consent" in the column on the left. Next, either click on the link to view a [report showing all the nominations](#) or use the drop down menu to select the committee which has jurisdiction over the appointment you are interested in. Either way, once you have found the name or position you're interested in, note the "GM" (Governor's Message) number. Just like a bill or resolution number, you will use the GM number to view the measure's status sheet, add it to your measure tracking or hearing notification list, and offer testimony.

Note that in addition to the Department Directors and Deputies, numerous board and commission positions are also subject to approval by the Senate, as are numerous Judicial appointments. You can find those measures in the same manner as noted above.

Once a standing committee holds a hearing, it will vote and report to the full Senate its recommendation to confirm or reject the nominee. The nomination will then be scheduled for a vote by the entire Senate.

Let PAR know if you need help finding the GM you're interested in, using the website, or understanding the confirmation process.

RECESS at the CAPITOL?



**Recess days are days when the House and Senate do not convene in chambers.
But that doesn't mean that the members are out goofing around!**

Instead, they participate in committee hearings, informational briefings, and caucus meetings, and otherwise perform their legislative duties.

Recess is simply a period of time when the House of Representatives and Senate do not formally convene for floor sessions in their respective chambers. By their nature, recess days (along with weekends and holidays) are not included in computing the 60 legislative days in the Regular Session. While no business is conducted in either chamber on recess days, legislative offices do remain open and plenty of committee hearings take place.

It is [Article III, Section 10](#) of the Hawaii State Constitution which gives the Legislature the authority to assign recess days in any session via the adoption of a concurrent resolution by a majority of the members of each chamber. (This year's recess days were established by the adoption of [HCR1](#).)

In 1978, a constitutional amendment added a mandatory five-day recess period. This provision requires that each regular session be recessed for "not less than five days at some period between the twentieth and fortieth days of the regular session." ([Hawaii State Constitution, Article III, Section 10](#))

The Legislature often strategically sets recess days around important deadlines in the legislative timetable to allow more time for committee hearings and deliberation, and to provide the public opportunity to keep abreast of legislative activity. The money committees [House Finance (FIN) and Senate Ways and Means (WAM)] are typically quite busy during the five-day recess period. They often use that time to schedule the bulk of their hearings in order to move bills prior to the first decking deadline. Legislators may also choose to use the consecutive recess days to spend time in their communities and meet with constituents, providing updates and communicating on issues of interest. This extended recess period may be especially beneficial to neighbor island legislators.



Helpful Tip- On the Legislative Calendar, you can determine at a glance when the major 3rd and Final Reading days occur by looking for recess days that are scheduled one day apart, one on a Monday and the other on a Wednesday. These recess days allow the 48 hours required prior to 3rd and Final Readings, and also allow ample opportunity for legislators to caucus (meet with same-party colleagues) prior to those votes.

**7th Annual Art at the Capitol
First Friday
March 6, 2015★
4:30 - 7:00 p.m.**

#ArtAtTheCapitol

<https://www.facebook.com/artatthecapitolhawaii>

<https://www.youtube.com/ArtatTheCapitolHI>

** This just happens to be the First Decking deadline!*

*"Hawai'i State Capitol –
The Building of Our Hawai'i"*



A great "behind-the-scenes" event!

Learning Sessions

Standing Workshops

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

Tuesdays 12:00 -1:00 p.m.

Thursdays 5:00 - 6:00 p.m.

Please call (587-0478) or email (par@capitol.hawaii.gov) to sign up! Let us know your level of knowledge and experience, and we will do our best to tailor the workshop accordingly.

Group Workshops

Have a group you'd like to get involved? Contact us to set up a workshop specifically for your group. They're free (and we promise you'll learn something). We do get over to the neighbor islands during the interim, so let us know if you'd like to be included on the travel schedule. Meanwhile, we can work with technology to try to offer our teachings remotely.

Advanced and Subject Specific Workshops

Already know the basics? Interested in an advanced workshop? Give us a call! We've got numerous workshops that we are ready (or *almost* ready!) to offer:



Using the Legislature's Website
Advocating at the Capitol
Floor Sessions and Orders of the Day
Budget Basics
Odd Things Happen!
Conference Committees



Let us know if you have additional topics you'd like us to cover!

Online

Our standard workshop is available on our website (LRBhawaii.org/PAR) as a PowerPoint file, a .pdf document, and as a video. We are working to update the site with additional workshops in various formats, so that they are available to everyone statewide.

PAR Hours during Session

During Session (until May 7th), the Public Access Room (Room 401) has extended hours!

Monday - Friday, 7:45 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Quotes from the File . . .

"This time, like all times, is a very good one, if we but know what to do with it."

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

"You may delay, but time will not."

- Benjamin Franklin

"The important work of moving the world forward does not wait to be done by perfect men."

- George Eliot