Wrapping things up...

Folks coming to the Public Access Room (PAR) these days present a wide array of questions and agendas.

Some wait anxiously, hoping their bill will emerge from conference committee in a form that pleases them. Some work on resolutions being heard in their final committees. And some are already beginning to debrief with colleagues, planning their strategies and setting up their working groups for the interim.

It's rather amazing that in just a few weeks, the 2010 Regular Session will be over.

And we'll be having our usual farewell potluck just a day before its conclusion – join us if you can for PAR's Adjournment Sine Die Celebration on Wednesday, April 28th, at 4:00 p.m. (Details on page 4.) We hope to see you here!

Meanwhile, we hope you'll find this newsletter informative and helpful. Never hesitate to write or call – the PAR is your office at the Capitol, and we'll be happy to assist you.

End of Session...

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As we move toward adjournment of the 25th session of the Hawaii State Legislature on April 29, 2010 (“Session Pau Day!”), a huge range of emotions are evident all around us – exhaustion, relief, elation, and frustration among them, depending on whether or not our hopes and dreams and goals for legislation have been realized.

Practically speaking, the process of moving measures through the Legislature reflects the reality that “many are called but few are chosen.” Of the several thousand pieces of legislation introduced over the course of the Legislature’s last two years, a few hundred will become acts of law, or will be adopted as resolutions.

What happens, though, to the measure left behind? Well, at the close of this Legislature’s two year cycle, all bills that failed to pass are completely terminated. This allows next year’s legislative session – the 26th – to start fresh with a “clean slate” of measures.

So in 2011, newly introduced Senate and House bills will start with a new number series – SB1 and HB1. Those that do not pass or get vetoed next year will still be alive for consideration during the 2012 session. In that 2012 session, the numbering will take up where it left off the previous year (though the next number in the sequence isn’t always used – for instance, the last House bill introduced in 2011 might be numbered HB1895, but in 2012, they might start with HB2000, just for the sake of clarity).

Resolutions are a bit different – all ‘leftover’ resolutions (those that fail to pass in any given session) expire at the end of that session – they never carry over. Thus the first Senate Concurrent resolution introduced in any session will always be numbered SCR1.

Keeping track of what ‘session’ we are in can sometimes take more mindfulness than we can muster. Maybe this will help – While the rule is that odd numbered years herald the start of a new legislative two-year cycle and even numbered years t he end, it might be easier to think in terms of the elections. The year following a regular election is always the beginning of one of those two-year cycles when bills can ‘carry over’ from the odd-numbered year to the even-numbered one which will follow.

And the year after that, a new series begins.

Like we said… at the end, we see a new beginning.

What to do with the Interim?

We’ve said it before, we’ll say it again. The interim (the time between regular sessions) is crucial to getting things accomplished during session. As we considered saying it all again, it occurred to us that we could start by pointing out some past PAR Newsletter articles we’ve published. So here’s a handy list to get you started.


Find these and other newsletter articles on PAR’s website: http://hawaii.gov/lrb/par
PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

According to Article XVII, Section 3 of the Constitution of the State of Hawaii (see inset below), the legislature may propose amendments to the constitution. Two different approaches exist; timing is one factor which dictates the approach to be followed:

- In the first alternative, the governor must receive at least ten days’ written notice, from either or both chambers, prior to final reading, of the final form of the proposed amendment. Additionally, the proposal must obtain a two-thirds vote on final reading in each chamber during the course of any single legislative session.
- Alternatively, a proposed amendment passes, with or without written notice to the governor, if the proposal receives a majority vote on final reading in each chamber during two successive legislative sessions.

In either scenario, such a bill would not be enrolled directly to the Governor. Rather, voters in the next general election would have the final say on whether the bill is enacted into law.

Prior to the election, the proposed constitutional amendments would be entered in the legislative journals and published once in each of four successive weeks, in at least one newspaper of general circulation, within two months immediately prior to the next general election. The full text of the proposals must also be available at each polling place on the day of election.

A proposed amendment to the constitution is considered ratified at a general election if a majority of those voting on the particular amendment vote affirmatively, and if the number of voters making up that majority constitutes at least 50 per cent of the total votes cast at the general election.

As of this writing (April 15, 2010), three bills proposing amendments to the constitution are still under consideration:
- HB2376 HD3 SD2 (Proposing Amendments to the Constitution relating to the Board of Education);
- SB2570 SD1 HD2 (Proposing an Amendment to Article X, Section 2 of the Hawaii Constitution, to Change the Board of Education from an Elected Board to an Appointed Board); and
- SB2807 SD2 HD2 (Proposing an amendment to Article VII, Section 6, of the Hawaii Constitution, Relating to the Tax Rebate Requirement).
We Are Non-PARtisan About Everything Except PARtying
(and we have great opinions about that!)

Please join the Public Access Room (PAR)
and the other divisions of the Legislative Reference Bureau (LRB)

In Celebrating the Adjournment Sine Die
of the 25th Session of the Hawaii State Legislature (only one day early).

We will, of course, serve our “almost famous punch” and provide the never-to-be missed “cheap crackers and rich conversation,” so much a part of PAR’s tradition, along with whatever a Potluck at PAR may provide.

So Please, Come One, Come All!!
Wednesday, April 28th at 4:00 p.m.
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 401

No RSVP needed – come with a dish, or just bring your appetite!

Questions?? Call 587-0478.

Quotes from the File . . .

"Absurdity, n.: A statement or belief manifestly inconsistent with one’s own opinion."  - Ambroise Bierce

"To find a fault is easy; to do better may be difficult."  - Plutarch

...and our personal favorite...

"The thing about democracy, beloveds, is that it is not neat, orderly, or quiet. It requires a certain relish for confusion."  - Molly Ivins

"Escaping the Net," by Suzanne Marinelli