



EXPLORING RESOLUTIONS

During Session, we talk a lot about bills, but what about resolutions? Legislators introduce and hold hearings on resolutions as well as bills. Although resolutions don't become law, they do express the sentiment of the Legislature and may prove vital in moving your issue forward.

Resolutions may range from establishing an honorary designation for a day or perhaps a month, to requesting the formation of a task force or calling for a study of a particular issue. When a bill dies, a legislator may convert some aspect of the bill to a resolution. The deadline to introduce resolutions is typically later in the session.

Once introduced, resolutions are referred to committees in the same manner as bills, and, like bills, they need to move forward by certain deadlines to remain viable. Unlike bills, the titles of resolutions can change, along with their subject matter.

SR

Resolutions can be introduced as single chamber resolutions (their prefixes are SR or HR) which must pass one vote in the originating chamber, or as concurrent resolutions (prefixes are SCR or HCR) which must pass a vote in both chambers. Single chamber resolutions express the will and

HR

SCR

intent of either the Senate or the House, while concurrent resolutions express the will and intent of the entire legislature. Concurrent resolutions are often introduced in conjunction with identically-worded single chamber resolutions.

HCR

Unlike bills, resolutions do not carryover from one year to the next.

The structure of resolutions is very different than bills. While bills are written in sections, resolutions consist of a series of "Whereas" clauses with the broadest passages coming first, followed by more definitive statements, and ending with two or more "Be it resolved" clauses. The last clause specifies where the resolution is to be transmitted upon adoption.

This chart outlines some of the differences between bills and resolutions.

DIFFERENCES	
<u>Bill</u>	<u>Resolution</u>
Enacts law.	Does not have the force and effect of law, and thus cannot require action. Resolutions are used by the legislature or a single chamber to state its official position on an issue or to request action.
If not vetoed, can carryover from the first year of the biennium to the second.	Cannot carryover from one session to the next.
All bills must pass 3 readings (votes) on the floor of each chamber.	Concurrent resolutions have to pass 1 vote on the floor of each chamber. Single chamber resolutions do not cross over to the other chamber for approval – to be adopted, they must pass 1 vote in their originating chamber only.
Prefixes: HB = House bill SB = Senate Bill	Prefixes: HCR = House Concurrent Resolution SCR = Senate Concurrent Resolution HR = House Resolution SR = Senate Resolution
Once passed by the legislature, bills are enrolled to the Governor.	Resolutions are not enrolled to the Governor. Upon adoption, resolutions are transmitted to the individuals, officers, agencies, or other concerned parties cited in the resolution.

To find a list of resolutions introduced in the current session, click on the "[Reports and Lists](#)" button in the center of the Legislature's homepage (www.capitol.hawaii.gov).

Contact the Public Access Room (587-0478 or par@capitol.hawaii.gov) if you have questions or would like assistance.

Frequently Asked Questions on Resolutions



➤ **What does a resolution do? What are they good for?**

- While resolutions don't become law, they do express the sentiment of the Legislature and may prove vital in moving your issue forward. Resolutions have a wide range of uses: they can request a study or other course of action; request the formation of a task force or working group; establish an honorary designation for a day or month; or congratulate an individual or organization.
- Some legislators may choose to revive aspects of a dead bill into a resolution. In this respect, resolutions are valuable in keeping discussion on a particular subject moving forward.

➤ **What is the difference between an HR and HCR or SR and SCR?**

- The prefixes HCR or SCR refer to a "Concurrent Resolution," which expresses the will and intent of the entire legislature. The prefixes HR or SR denote a single chamber (House or Senate) resolution that expresses the will and intent of either the House or the Senate.
- Concurrent resolutions are often introduced in conjunction with identically-worded single chamber resolutions, in the hope that if the concurrent resolution fails to pass the second chamber, the single chamber resolution still stands.
- Single chamber resolutions may also be used to establish a chamber's rules, leadership positions, and committee assignments.
- There are some things that cannot happen without the adoption of a concurrent resolution by the Legislature. For example, the Legislature cannot regulate new professions or mandate new health insurance coverage without first adopting a concurrent resolution requesting the state auditor to conduct a review. Another example is that the State cannot sell state land or issue easements covering portions of the state's submerged lands without approval by the Legislature through the adoption of a concurrent resolution.

➤ **What needs to happen for a resolution to be adopted?**

- Like bills, resolutions are referred to committees (at least one, but maybe more) that they need to pass through. In addition, they need to be adopted by a vote on the chamber floor.
- A single chamber resolution (HR or SR) must pass through the committee(s) it was referred to and pass a vote on the chamber floor to be adopted. A concurrent resolution (HCR or SCR) must do the same in its originating chamber, and then crossover to the *non*-originating chamber and pass through whatever committee(s) it is referred to as well as pass a floor vote in that chamber to be adopted.
- And, of course, there are deadlines by which all of these things must happen.

➤ **How else does a resolution differ from a bill?**

- Not only can the subject matter of resolutions change, so can their titles. In other words, everything in it can change! (A bill's title cannot be changed.)
- The structure of resolutions is very different than bills. Resolutions consist of a series of "Whereas" clauses with the broadest passages coming first, followed by more definitive statements, and ending with two or more "Be it resolved" clauses. The last clause specifies where the resolution is to be transmitted upon adoption.
- Resolutions are not enrolled (sent) to the Governor. Upon adoption, resolutions are transmitted to the individuals, officers, agencies, or other parties cited in the resolution.
- Resolutions do not carryover from one session to the next. (Bills can carryover from the 1st year of the biennial session to the 2nd.)

The deadlines for resolutions come a lot later in session than for bills.