

February 2, 2026

Submitted to the Hawaii State Senate
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

Honorable Senator McKelvey, Chair
Honorable Senator Gabbard, Vice Chair

Re: SB2849, RELATING TO PUBLIC MEETINGS

Dear Chair McKelvey and Members of the Committee,

I would like to very strongly support SB 2849 , requiring certain information to appear at the beginning of public meetings. This bill will benefit people who rely on text to speech programs, as the necessary information of the meeting is placed at the beginning of the agenda followed by a list of topics for the meeting.

This inclusive approach to public meetings is critical to Blind people who use braille to access information about public meetings and individuals who struggle with understanding the English language in general. Please vote to support this important bill.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Eleanor Macdonald

OFFICE OF INFORMATION PRACTICES

STATE OF HAWAII
NO. 1 CAPITOL DISTRICT BUILDING
250 SOUTH HOTEL STREET, SUITE 107
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813
TELEPHONE: 808-586-1400 FAX: 808-586-1412
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To: Senate Committee on Government Operations

From: Carlotta Amerino, Director

Date: February 3, 2026, 3:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 225

Re: Testimony on S.B. No. 2849
Relating to Public Meetings

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this bill, which would (1) require that the agenda listing items to be considered, and other statutorily required information, appear at the beginning of a board's notice of a meeting under the Sunshine Law, part I of chapter 92, HRS; and (2) require all meeting notices to also include a statement of where a board packet may be viewed. The Office of Information Practices (OIP) offers comments.

The purpose clause of this bill makes clear that its intent is to require that a Sunshine Law board's agenda list items to be considered at a meeting appear before all or most of the other information included in the meeting notice. However, the proposed amendment to subsection 92-7(a) of the Sunshine Law's notice provision does not actually accomplish this. This subsection includes a long list of information required to be included in every meeting notice, and as such is already the primary contributor to the extensive "non-substantive" text raised as a concern in this bill's purpose clause. The amendment proposed by this bill would add to that list of statutorily required information a new requirement that the information be listed at the beginning of the notice, but would not specify the order in which the

various pieces of required information must be listed. Thus, it would appear to require that all information required by subsection 92-7(a) appear in the meeting notice before any information required by another Sunshine Law provision (such as the remote meetings section) or any information that is not statutorily required, which would mean that information such as contact information for testimony, instructions for requesting an auxiliary aid or service, or the newly added instructions for viewing a board packet could still come before the agenda of items to be considered. Possibly the proposed amendment could instead be read to require that the information must be listed on the meeting notice in the same order it is listed in subsection 92-7(a); however, that interpretation would mean that the entire agenda of items to be considered must appear on the notice before the time, date, and place of the meeting, which many members of the public would likely find distinctly unhelpful.

If this Committee wishes to set out the order in which the list of required information for a meeting notice must appear in a meeting notice, OIP respectfully suggests this bill should be amended to clearly require that the information be in a specific order, and clearly indicate what that order of information is. However, OIP notes that a failure to satisfy the Sunshine Law's notice requirement can and often does result in cancellation of a board's meeting. OIP asks that this Committee consider whether the public benefit of requiring all meeting notices to list the statutorily required information in a specified order would outweigh the inefficiencies caused by meeting cancellations whenever a board's meeting notice included all statutorily required information, but failed to list it in the correct order.

Finally, regarding this bill's proposal to add a new piece of statutorily required information by requiring all meeting notices to state where "the board packet" may be viewed, OIP notes that boards are not required to use a board

packet in the first place, and a board that does use a board packet is not required to have it ready at the time it files its meeting notice, since a board packet is not part of the meeting notice and has a different deadline and process (including notification to people on the board's mailing list) to be made available to the public. Many boards do use board packets regularly and include information about when and where the board packet can be viewed in their meeting notices. However, making this information a statutory requirement could be a problem for those boards that do not routinely use board packets. At the time a board prepares its meeting notice, it may not yet know if it will want to distribute materials before a meeting – in other words, to use a board packet. The sensible thing for such a board to do, even if it doesn't really expect to send out a board packet, would be to list board packet viewing information on the agenda just in case so it can still have one if needed. In other words, this requirement could result in members of the public trying to find a non-existent board packet. Because of this potential for confusion, OIP believes it is preferable to leave board packet viewing information as a voluntary element of a meeting notice, rather than mandating its inclusion. However, if this Committee does wish to add this new meeting notice requirement, OIP recommends amending it to account for boards that do not plan to use a board packet for the meeting, by adding "if applicable," at the beginning of the new language on bill page 2, line 20.

Thank you for considering OIP's testimony.



Senate Committee on Government Operations

Tuesday, February 3, 2026, 3 PM Hearing in Conference Room 225 on
SB 2849, Relating to Public Meetings

TESTIMONY

Douglas Meller, Legislative Committee, League of Women Voters of Hawaii

Chair McKelvey, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Committee Members:

The League of Women Voters of Hawaii supports SB 2849. The League believes board meeting notices should inform the public where they can review paper and electronic copies of board packets. Unless this might jeopardize passage, perhaps SB 2849 should also amend Sec. 92-7.5, Hawaii Revised Statutes, to establish a deadline for timely public access to electronic copies of board packets.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



Senate Committee on Government Operations
Honorable Angus L.K. McKelvey, Chair
Honorable Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair

RE: Testimony in Support of S.B. 2849, Relating to Public Meetings
Hearing: February 3, 2026 at 3:00 p.m.

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee:

My name is Ben Creps. I am a staff attorney at the Public First Law Center, a nonprofit organization that promotes government transparency. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in **support** of S.B. 2849.

S.B. 2849 reflects best practice for preparing agendas. The most important part of an agenda is the agenda. But many boards provide lengthy “boilerplate” instructions and non-substantive meeting information at the beginning of a meeting notice. (Exemplar attached.) While that can be frustrating for anyone, we have heard consistent concerns that it is particularly difficult for individuals using assistive “screen reading” technology.

Clear and accessible meeting notices are critical to effective public participation. By standardizing and prioritizing the placement of substantive agenda items, S.B. 2849 reduces barriers to access and helps ensure that all members of the public can quickly find the information they need.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify in support of S.B. 2849.



BOARD OF NURSING
Professional and Vocational Licensing Division
Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs
State of Hawaii

AGENDA

Date: Thursday, February 5, 2026

Time: 9:00 a.m.

In-Person Meeting Location: Queen Liliuokalani Conference Room
HRH King Kalakaua Building
335 Merchant Street, 1st Floor
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Virtual Virtual Videoconference Meeting – Zoom Meeting (Use link below)

Participation: <https://dcca-hawaii-gov.zoom.us/j/88396626059?pwd=gBQymLb89Tdiku5H8cTsa6mMPSF9ur.1>

Phone: (669) 900 6833

Meeting ID: 883 9662 6059

Passcode: 565987

AGENDA: The agenda was posted on the State electronic calendar as required by Hawaii Revised Statutes (“HRS”) section 92-7(b).

If you wish to submit written testimony on any agenda item, please submit your testimony to nursing@dcca.hawaii.gov or by hard-copy mail to Attn: Board of Nursing, P.O. Box 3469, Honolulu, HI 96801. We request submission of testimony at least 24 hours prior to the meeting to ensure that it can be distributed to the Board members.

INTERNET ACCESS:

To view the meeting and provide live oral testimony, please use the link at the top of the agenda. You will be asked to enter your name. The Board requests that you enter your full name, but you may use a pseudonym or other identifier if you wish to remain anonymous. You will also be asked for an email address. You may fill in this field with any entry in an email format, e.g., *****@***mail.com.

Your microphone will be automatically muted. When the Chairperson asks for public testimony, you may click the Raise Hand button found on your Zoom screen to indicate that you wish to testify about that agenda item. The Chairperson will individually enable each testifier to unmute their microphone. When recognized by the Chairperson, please unmute your microphone before speaking and mute your microphone after you finish speaking.

PHONE ACCESS:

If you cannot get internet access, you may get audio-only access by calling the Zoom Phone Number listed at the top on the agenda.

Upon dialing the number, you will be prompted to enter the Meeting ID which is also listed at the top of the agenda. After entering the Meeting ID, you will be asked to either enter your panelist number or wait to be admitted into the meeting. You will not have a panelist number. So, please wait until you are admitted into the meeting.

When the Chairperson asks for public testimony, you may indicate you want to testify by entering “*” and then “9” on your phone’s keypad. After entering “*” and then “9”, a voice prompt will let you know that the host of the meeting has been notified. When recognized by the Chairperson, you may unmute yourself by pressing “*” and then “6” on your phone. A voice prompt will let you know that you are unmuted. Once you are finished speaking, please enter “*” and then “6” again to mute yourself.

For both internet and phone access, when testifying, you will be asked to identify yourself and the organization, if any, that you represent. Each testifier will be limited to five minutes of testimony per agenda item.

If connection to the meeting is lost for more than 30 minutes, the meeting will be continued on a specified date and time. This information will be provided on the Board’s website at: <https://cca.hawaii.gov/pvl/boards/nursing/board-meeting-schedule/>.

Instructions to attend State of Hawaii virtual board meetings may be found online at: <https://cca.hawaii.gov/pvl/files/2020/08/State-of-Hawaii-Virtual-Board-Attendee-Instructions.pdf>.

1. Roll Call, Quorum, Call to Order – HRS §92-3 Open Meetings and HAR §16-89-70 Oral testimony
2. Chair’s Report
 - a. Announcements
3. Approval of the Open and Executive Session Minutes of the December 4, 2025, Meeting

The Board may enter Executive Session to consult with the Board’s attorney on questions and issues pertaining to the Board’s powers, duties, privileges, immunities, and liabilities in accordance with HRS section 92-5(a)(4) to review the executive session minutes.

4. Education Committee to Share Outcomes from Meetings on November 6 and December 4, 2025

The Education Committee focused primarily on review of faculty applications, review of annual reports, new programs, and revision to programs.

5. Legislative Liaison

The Board will discuss, identify, and vote on a Legislative Liaison for the 2026 legislative session. This is to ensure timely communications between the EO and Board Members throughout the legislative session when testimonies are required from the Board of Nursing.

6. Executive Officer's Report

- a. 2026 Legislative Session

EO will report on the bills that the Board is tracking as of February 5, 2026.

- b. National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) Annual Midyear Meeting

EO will share updates on who is attending the Midyear Meeting to represent the Board. The meeting will take place on March 17-19, 2026, in Phoenix, AZ.

7. Reports:

- a. Hawai'i State Center for Nursing – Laura Reichhardt, Executive Director
- b. Hawai'i American Nurses Association – Elizabeth Kahakua, Executive Director
- c. Hawai'i Association of Professional Nurses – Jeremy Creekmore, President

8. Applications:

The Board may move into Executive Session in accordance with HRS §92-4 and §92-5(a)(1) and (4) "To consider and evaluate personal information relating to individuals applying for professional or vocational licenses cited in section 26-9 or both;" and "To consult with the Board's attorney on questions and issues pertaining to the Board's powers, duties, privileges, immunities, and liabilities;" (Board will vote in Open Meeting.)

- a. Ratification Lists

- b. Nurse License Applications
 - i. Shem Migosi Kenyanya (RN by endorsement)
- 9. Settlement Agreement(s)
 - a. Christina Saysamphan
 - b. Shawn K. Bannister
- 10. Next Meeting:
 - Date: Thursday, March 5, 2026
 - Time: 9:00 a.m.
 - In-Person: Queen Liliuokalani Conference Room
King Kalakaua Building, 1st Floor
335 Merchant Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
 - Virtual: Zoom Meeting
- 11. Adjournment

01/28/2026

If you need an auxiliary aid/service or other accommodation due to a disability, contact the Board of Nursing at 1-844-808-DCCA (3222) or nursing@dcca.hawaii.gov preferably by two (2) business days prior to the scheduled meeting or as soon as possible. Requests made as early as possible have a greater likelihood of being fulfilled. Upon request, this notice is available in alternate/accessible formats.

National Federation of the Blind of Hawaii
Testimony submitted by James Gashel, legislative chair

Senate Government Operations (GVO) Committee

Thirty-third legislature, 2026 regular session
February 3, 2026, 3:00 pm, hearing on SB2849

Good afternoon chair McKelvey, vice chair Gabbard, and members. I am James Gashel, National Federation of the Blind (NFB) of Hawaii, legislative chair, requesting an amendment and supporting SB2849. The purpose of this Act is to require certain information to appear at the beginning of notices for public meetings.

This bill seeks to give priority in public meeting notices to the most substantive items by requiring their listing at the beginning of the notice. Priority items include all agenda items; the date, time, and place of the meeting; information on in-person and electronic access to board packets; information needed to submit testimony; and instructions on how to request an auxiliary aid, service, or accommodation. The point is that these items are to be placed at the beginning of the notice and not obscured by various administrative matters that may also appear within the notice.

Aside from requiring the specified order, which definitely does make sense, National Federation of the Blind of Hawaii requests an amendment to require "all print and electronic notices to include tagged headings for quick section by section navigation within the notice." This tagging will support better access for everyone to obtain the desired portion of any notice required.

Tagging documents for readability is a standard publishing procedure; definitely not rocket science. Tagging notices for better navigation is clearly in the public interest by facilitating access to information for everyone. Mahalo for your consideration.

LATE

SB-2849

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 8:19:48 AM

Testimony for GVO on 2/3/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sherry Shimizu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Date: February 3, 2026

To: Members of the COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

Senator Angus L.K. McKelvey, Chair

Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair

Re: Support for Senate Bill 2849

Dear Chair McKelvey and Members of the Committee,

I apologize for the lateness of this testimony and am writing to express my strong support for SB2849, a bill that will significantly improve access to public meeting agendas for individuals with disabilities, particularly those who rely on text-to-speech programs.

The Problem: Procedural rules and detailed instructions that appear before the actual list of topics make it necessary for individuals to listen to multiple pages of non-relevant information before finding the content they need to decide whether or not to attend the meeting.

The Proposed Solution: SB2849 seeks to address this issue by requiring that the essential meeting details such as the list of topics, meeting location, and instructions about how to request an accommodation be placed at the beginning of the agenda.

This Is Important: When the most relevant information is buried behind several pages of procedural rules, it becomes a significant barrier to participation. Text-to-speech programs are vital tools for people with vision disabilities.

Please pass SB2849 in order to enhance the accessibility and inclusivity of public meetings

Thank you for your time and consideration of this imperative matter.

Sincerely,
Sherry Shimizu

PETER L. FRITZ

PLFLEGIS@FRITZHQ.COM

LATE

Subject: Testimony in Support of SB2849

To the Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Government Operations Committee:

My name is Peter Fritz. I am an attorney, an individual with a disability, former chair of the Disability and Communications Access Board, former chair of the State Rehabilitation Council, and advocate for disabled individuals like me. I am testifying in support of Senate Bill 2849. This bill amends Section 92-7 of the Hawaii Revised Statutes regarding the structure of public meeting notices.

Agencies often place administrative and procedural provisions before topics that will be discussed at a meeting. For individuals who use text to speech software or assistive technology, this structure requires navigating through pages of text to reach the meeting topics. As a user of screen reading software, I have encountered agendas where information about how to request an accommodation was located on page nine. This placement makes it difficult for individuals with disabilities to request assistance within the required deadlines. The list of topics to be discussed may appear on page four of an agenda.

Section 2 of Senate Bill 2849 requires that the following information appear at the beginning of the notice:

- The agenda of items to be considered;
- The date, time, and place of the meeting;
- The physical and internet locations of the board packet;
- Contact information for the submission of testimony; and
- Instructions on how to request an auxiliary aid, service, or accommodation.

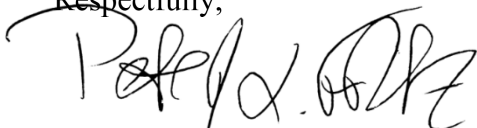
The proposed change ensures that information is available to the public first. This bill will assist individuals with mobility impairments, Parkinson's, benign tremors, and quadriplegia as well as those who use screen readers by reducing the amount of text they must navigate to find information. This requirement is consistent with the guidance of the Office of Information Practices to state boards suggesting the grouping of information in agendas.

This change will benefit members of the public because they can go directly to the list of topics that will be discussed at the meeting rather than searching through pages of procedural rules. This list often appears after procedural rules.

I request that the committee pass Senate Bill 2849 to establish a standard for the organization of public meeting notices.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,



Peter L. Fritz