
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO A REGULAR SESSION REVIEW WORKING GROUP.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

- 1 SECTION 1. (a) The legislature notes that House
2 Concurrent Resolution No. 138, H.D. 1, S.D.1 (2024) (H.C.R.
3 No. 138) requested the legislative reference bureau (bureau) to
4 conduct a study of "a continuous legislature, extending the
5 regular session, and adding additional recess days" to the
6 regular session. In addition, H.C.R. No. 138 requested that the
7 bureau:
- 8 (1) Discuss the pros and cons of a continuous legislative
9 session, extending the legislative session, and adding
10 additional recess days;
- 11 (2) Focus on what a continuous legislative calendar,
12 extended legislative calendar, and a legislative
13 calendar day [sic] with additional recess days for the
14 State may look like, including bill and budget
15 deadlines; and
- 16 (3) Examine salary needs for full-time legislators and
17 staff.



1 (b) The legislature recognizes that the bureau has
2 conducted and completed the requested study and submitted its
3 report, "Sine Die Another Day: Should Hawaii's Legislative
4 Sessions Be Longer?", to the legislature. In conducting the
5 study, the bureau:

- 6 (1) Reviewed applicable state constitutional and statutory
7 provisions and legislative rules impacting legislative
8 sessions and the State's typical regular session
9 calendar to establish a contextual basis for
10 requirements and limitations that have shaped the
11 current regular session framework and duration;
- 12 (2) Solicited information regarding ways in which a
13 lengthened or continuous regular session could affect
14 costs and operations of those entities most likely to
15 be directly affected by a longer regular session;
- 16 (3) Examined the relevant legal provisions and legislative
17 calendars of California, Massachusetts, Michigan,
18 Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin, which have significantly
19 longer regular sessions than Hawaii, and of the
20 councils of Hawaii's four counties, which meet
21 year-round;



- 1 (4) Explored certain legal and practical limitations to
2 consider when contemplating a lengthened or continuous
3 regular session;
- 4 (5) Provided mock-up legislative calendars illustrating
5 hypothetical longer regular sessions that utilize
6 additional recess days for 2026, an election year, and
7 2027, a non-election year; and
- 8 (6) Discussed other potential impacts and factors to
9 consider with respect to a lengthened or continuous
10 regular session, including a review of legislator and
11 staff compensation.
- 12 (c) The legislature makes the following observations based
13 on the bureau's report:
- 14 (1) The duration of Hawaii's annual regular session
15 appears to generally fall within the same timeframe as
16 regular sessions in a majority of other states. Also,
17 some states that may technically have longer
18 legislative sessions do not necessarily meet and
19 conduct formal business throughout these entire
20 periods;



- 1 (2) There does not seem to be a "one-size-fits-all"
2 legislative session model that the Hawaii state
3 legislature could easily adopt to lengthen its regular
4 session, without making significant modifications and
5 without necessitating significant statutory and
6 constitutional amendments;
- 7 (3) The state constitution requires regular sessions to
8 commence annually at 10:00 a.m. on the third Wednesday
9 in January and to run for no more than sixty session
10 days, and requires that each chamber provide, by rule,
11 a bill introduction deadline;
- 12 (4) However, the legislature appears to otherwise have
13 broad discretion to determine its regular session
14 calendar. Regular sessions may be lengthened by
15 adding recess days pursuant to an agreement between
16 the house of representatives and senate, which would
17 not require constitutional or statutory amendments;
- 18 (5) Fiscal bills, which generally comprise a supermajority
19 of all bills introduced each year, usually have an
20 effective date of July 1, the beginning of the fiscal
21 year, to ensure timely passage and avoid creating



- 1 economic uncertainty and disruption of public
2 services;
- 3 (6) The legislative process should continue to prioritize
4 enactment of fiscal bills well before July 1,
5 regardless of how long a regular session lasts; and
- 6 (7) A specific schedule for a "longer" session is needed
7 to determine operating expenses and staffing needs.
- 8 (d) The legislature further recognizes that the bureau's
9 report suggested that:
- 10 (1) The legislature first determine the essential timing
11 and framework for a desirable lengthened legislative
12 calendar for election and non-election years;
- 13 (2) Establishing specific and concrete proposals regarding
14 the duration of a lengthened regular session calendar
15 would allow parties having direct in-depth knowledge
16 regarding potential fiscal, operational,
17 administrative, legal, and labor impacts within the
18 legislative environment to more accurately frame
19 staffing and budgetary needs and other operational
20 issues; and



1 (3) This approach would facilitate the preparation of a
2 more complete and reliable assessment of the
3 feasibility and cost of establishing a lengthened or
4 continuous regular session.

5 (e) Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to establish a
6 regular session review working group to consider the suggestions
7 proposed by the bureau's report.

8 SECTION 2. (a) There is established a regular session
9 review working group to determine the essential timing and
10 effective framework for a lengthened legislative session
11 calendar for election and non-election years.

12 (b) The members of the working group shall include:

13 (1) One member of the senate, to be selected by the
14 president of the senate, who shall serve as co-chair
15 of the working group;

16 (2) One member of the house of representatives, to be
17 selected by the speaker of the house of
18 representatives, who shall serve as co-chair of the
19 working group;

20 (3) The chair of the senate standing committee on ways and
21 means, or the chair's designee;



- 1 (4) The chair of the house standing committee on finance,
2 or the chair's designee;
- 3 (5) The attorney general, or the attorney general's
4 designee;
- 5 (6) The comptroller, or the comptroller's designee;
- 6 (7) The chief election officer, or the chief election
7 officer's designee;
- 8 (8) The chief clerk of the senate, or the chief clerk's
9 designee; and
- 10 (9) The chief clerk of the house of representatives, or
11 the chief clerk's designee.
- 12 (c) The co-chairs of the working group shall invite:
- 13 (1) The Hawaii State Association of Counties to designate
14 one representative to serve as a member of the working
15 group; and
- 16 (2) A community member to serve as a member of the working
17 group.
- 18 (d) The co-chairs of the working group may invite other
19 persons to serve as working group members who the co-chairs
20 believe will effectively assist in fulfilling the working
21 group's duties pursuant to subsections (a) and (e).



- 1 (e) In making the determinations required by subsection
2 (a), the working group shall:
- 3 (1) Study the feasibility of transitioning the Hawaii
4 state legislature's regular session from one that
5 meets from mid-January to early May to one that is
6 lengthened, which for the purposes of this Act means
7 any regular session that is of significantly longer
8 duration than Hawaii's typical January-to-May regular
9 session;
- 10 (2) Analyze the financial impacts and necessary costs to
11 operate lengthened regular sessions, including
12 staffing requirements, changes to legislative
13 services, operational costs, office space needs, and
14 impacts on legislation;
- 15 (3) Analyze and recommend any constitutional, statutory,
16 and legislative rule changes necessary to implement
17 lengthened regular sessions;
- 18 (4) Examine other states that have lengthened sessions, as
19 deemed appropriate by the working group; and
- 20 (5) Consider the findings and suggestions made by the
21 legislative reference bureau in its report submitted



1 pursuant to House Concurrent Resolution No. 138,
2 H.D. 1, S.D.1 (2024).

3 (f) The co-chairs of the regular session review working
4 group may contract the services of a qualified facilitator to
5 facilitate its meetings if the co-chairs deem it appropriate.
6 Any contract subject to this subsection shall be exempt from
7 chapter 103D, Hawaii Revised Statutes.

8 (g) The regular session review working group shall submit
9 a report of its findings and recommendations, including any
10 proposed legislation, to the legislature no later than twenty
11 days prior to the convening of the regular session of 2028.

12 (h) The legislative reference bureau shall provide
13 assistance to the working group in finalizing the working
14 group's report and drafting any proposed legislation; provided
15 that the working group shall submit a draft report to the bureau
16 no later than October 31, 2027.

17 (i) The regular session review working group shall be
18 exempt from part I of chapter 92, Hawaii Revised Statutes.

19 (j) The regular session review working group shall be
20 dissolved on June 30, 2028.



1 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general
2 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
3 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2026-2027 to
4 contract for the services of a facilitator for meetings of the
5 regular session review working group; provided that the
6 contracting of services using funds appropriated under this
7 section shall be exempt from chapter 103D, Hawaii Revised
8 Statutes.

9 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the senate for
10 the purposes of this Act.

11 SECTION 4. There is appropriated out of the general
12 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
13 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2026-2027 to
14 contract for the services of a facilitator for meetings of the
15 regular session review working group; provided that the
16 contracting of services using funds appropriated under this
17 section shall be exempt from chapter 103D, Hawaii Revised
18 Statutes.

19 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the house of
20 representatives for the purposes of this Act.



1 SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect on October 18, 3000.



Report Title:

LRB; Legislature; Regular Sessions; Length; Working Group;
Appropriation

Description:

Establishes a Regular Session Review Working Group to determine the essential timing and effective framework for a lengthened legislative calendar for election and non-election years. Requires a report to the Legislature. Requires report finalization and drafting assistance from the Legislative Reference Bureau. Appropriates funds. Effective 10/18/3000.
(HD1)

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