

---

---

# 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) The legislature finds that a more continuous  
6 legislative framework would facilitate improved planning,  
7 analysis, and coordination across the legislative process, and  
8 therefore, a year-round legislature is the most suitable  
9 approach to ensure more thorough deliberation, transparency, and  
10 responsiveness. The legislature further finds that the  
11 development of a year-round legislative framework requires  
12 formalized planning, sustained engagement, and the preparation  
13 of a comprehensive plan to be considered and adopted by both  
14 houses of the Legislature, thereby necessitating a working group  
15 composed of members of the legislative branch to ensure  
16 accountability and alignment with legislative priorities. The  
17 legislature also finds it essential that the working group  
18 receive input from legislative staff, legislative service  
19 agencies, the executive branch, and the public to adequately  
20 consider the impacts of a year-round legislature across  
21 government and the public.



1 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to:

2 (1) Establish a regular session review working group to  
3 develop a comprehensive plan and make recommendations  
4 to the legislature on the adoption of an effective  
5 year-round legislative session calendar; and

6 (2) Establish a technical advisory committee composed of  
7 legislative staff and members from legislative service  
8 agencies, other branches of government, and the  
9 public, that is exempt from part I of chapter 92,  
10 Hawaii Revised Statute, to advise the regular session  
11 working group on issues relating to the adoption and  
12 operation of a year-round legislative session  
13 calendar, including but not limited to campaign  
14 activities, elections, ethics, costs, staffing, and  
15 security considerations.

16 SECTION 2. (a) There is established a regular session  
17 review working group to develop a comprehensive plan and make  
18 recommendations to the legislature on the adoption of an  
19 effective year-round legislative session calendar.

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

21 (1) The senate president, or their designee;



1 (2) The speaker of the house of representatives, or their  
2 designee;

3 (3) Two members of the senate, to be appointed by the  
4 senate president;

5 (4) Two members of the house of representatives, to be  
6 appointed by the speaker of the house of  
7 representatives;

8 (5) The majority leaders of both houses of the  
9 legislature, or their designees; and

10 (6) The minority leaders of both houses of the  
11 legislature, or their designees.

12 (c) There is established a technical advisory committee  
13 that shall operate solely in an advisory capacity to the regular  
14 session review working group on issues relating to the adoption  
15 and operation of a year-round legislative session calendar,  
16 including but not limited to campaign activities, elections,  
17 ethics, costs, staffing, and security considerations. Member of  
18 the technical advisory committee shall include:

19 (1) The attorney general, or the attorney general's  
20 designee;

21 (2) The comptroller, or the comptroller's designee;



1 (3) The chief clerks of both houses of the legislature, or  
2 the chief clerks' designees;

3 (4) The director of the legislative reference bureau, or  
4 the director's designee;

5 (5) The chief election officer, or the chief election  
6 officer's designee; and

7 (6) The chair of the state ethics commission, or the  
8 chair's designee.

9 The members of the technical advisory committee may invite  
10 other persons to serve as committee members whose technical  
11 expertise may assist in advising the working group in fulfilling  
12 its duties pursuant to subsections (a) and (e).

13 (d) The technical advisory committee shall be exempt from  
14 part I of chapter 92.

15 (e) In fulfilling its duties as set forth in subsection  
16 (a), the working group shall:

17 (1) Study the feasibility of transitioning the  
18 legislature's regular session from one that meets from  
19 mid-January to early May to one that meets year-round;

20 (2) Analyze the financial impacts and necessary costs to  
21 operate year-round regular sessions, including



- 1 staffing requirements, changes to legislative  
2 services, operational costs, office space needs, and  
3 impacts on legislation;
- 4 (3) Analyze and recommend any constitutional, statutory,  
5 and legislative rule changes necessary to implement  
6 year-round regular sessions;
- 7 (4) Examine other states that have year-round legislative  
8 calendars or legislative calendars that are  
9 lengthened, which for the purposes of this Act means  
10 any regular session that is of significantly longer  
11 duration than the State's typical January-to-May  
12 regular session, as deemed appropriate by the working  
13 group; and
- 14 (5) Consider the findings and suggestions made by the  
15 legislative reference bureau in its report submitted  
16 pursuant to House Concurrent Resolution No. 138,  
17 H.D. 1, S.D.1 (2024).
- 18 (f) The regular session review working group may contract  
19 the services of a qualified facilitator to facilitate its  
20 meetings if the members deem it appropriate. Any contract



1 subject to this subsection shall be exempt from chapter 103D,  
2 Hawaii Revised Statutes.

3 (g) The regular session review working group shall submit  
4 an interim report of its findings and recommendations, including  
5 any proposed legislation, to the legislature for public comment  
6 and feedback no later than twenty days prior to the convening of  
7 the regular session of 2027. The regular session review working  
8 group shall submit a final report of its findings and  
9 recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the  
10 legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of  
11 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 and technical  
18 advisory committee shall be dissolved on June 30, 2028.

19 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general  
20 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$                    or so  
21 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2026-2027 to



1 contract for the services of a facilitator for meetings of the  
2 regular session review working group established pursuant to  
3 section 2 of this Act; provided that the contracting of services  
4 using funds appropriated under this section shall be exempt from  
5 chapter 103D, Hawaii Revised Statutes.

6 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the senate for  
7 the purposes of this Act.

8 SECTION 4. There is appropriated out of the general  
9 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so  
10 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2026-2027 to  
11 contract for the services of a facilitator for meetings of the  
12 technical advisory committee established pursuant to section 2  
13 of this Act; provided that the contracting of services using  
14 funds appropriated under this section shall be exempt from  
15 chapter 103D, Hawaii Revised Statutes.

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

18 SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect on October 18, 3000;  
19 provided that sections 3 and 4 of this Act shall take effect on  
20 July 1, 2026.



**Report Title:**

Legislature; LRB; Regular Session Review Working Group; Regular Sessions; Length; Year-Round; Technical Advisory Committee; Reports; Appropriations

**Description:**

Establishes a Regular Session Review Working Group to develop a comprehensive plan and make recommendations to the Legislature on the adoption of an effective year-round legislative session calendar. Establishes a Technical Advisory Committee to advise the Regular Session Review Working Group. Requires reports to the Legislature. Requires report finalization and drafting assistance from the Legislative Reference Bureau. Dissolves the Working Group and Advisory Committee on 6/30/2028. Appropriates funds. Effective 10/18/3000. (SD1)

*The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.*

