

ACT 53

S.B. NO. 869

A Bill for an Act Relating to Community Outreach Boards.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Hawaii:

SECTION 1. The legislature finds that county neighborhood and advisory boards provide local communities with opportunities to participate in government. Likewise, boards created for the purpose of community outreach, such as the Hawaii county community development plan action committees, serve as an intermediary between residents and government leaders to understand local concerns, gather and disseminate information, and create solutions in a collaborative environment. However, because such boards are not specific to one neighborhood, it is not clear that they are “neighborhood boards” and thus entitled to use the special provisions set out for neighborhood boards in part VII of chapter 92, Hawaii Revised Statutes. As community outreach boards serve as a grassroots tool, ensuring open access to board activities is essential to thriving communities statewide.

Therefore, the purpose of this Act is to:

- (1) Define “community outreach board”;
- (2) Include community outreach boards in existing provisions of the sunshine law that relate to neighborhood boards; and
- (3) Authorize neighborhood board and community outreach board members to attend meetings or presentations related to official board business statewide.

SECTION 2. Chapter 92, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended by adding a new section to part VII to be appropriately designated and to read as follows:

“§92- **Definition.** As used in this part, “community outreach board” means a board established to serve in a community advisory capacity under a county commission or a county department.”

SECTION 3. Chapter 92, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended by amending the title of part VII to read as follows:

**“~~[[[PART VII.]]] NEIGHBORHOOD BOARD;~~
COMMUNITY OUTREACH BOARD”**

SECTION 4. Section 92-81, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended as follows:

1. By amending its title and subsections (a) and (b) to read:

“~~[[[§92-81]]] Neighborhood board; community outreach board; notice and agenda; public input; quorum.~~ (a) ~~[Any contrary provision in this chapter notwithstanding,]~~ Notwithstanding any provision in this chapter to the contrary, the provisions of this part shall apply to neighborhood boards and community outreach boards overseen by a neighborhood commission of the city and county of Honolulu, and ~~[such]~~ other neighborhood boards and community outreach boards as may be created in other counties and overseen by a county-based commission~~[-]~~ or county-based department.

(b) The agenda required to be included in written public notice of a ~~[neighborhood]~~ board meeting may include an opportunity for the board to receive public input on issues not specifically noticed for consideration at the forthcoming meeting.”

2. By amending subsection (d) to read:

“(d) A quorum for a meeting of a neighborhood board or community outreach board shall be required for:

- (1) Conducting official board business;
- (2) Discussions ~~[prior to]~~ before and related to voting; and
- (3) Voting required to validate an act of the board as part of official board business.

A neighborhood board or community outreach board may receive information or testimony on a matter of official board business without a quorum; provided that the board shall not make a decision on the issue. The board members, at the next meeting of the ~~[neighborhood]~~ board, shall report the matters presented as information or testimony.”

SECTION 5. Section 92-82, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended to read as follows:

“§92-82 Permitted interactions of neighborhood board and community outreach board members. (a) Neighborhood board and community outreach board members may attend meetings or presentations ~~[located on Oahu]~~ on matters relating to official board business; provided that the meeting or presentation is open to the public, does not charge a fee or require registration, and is not specifically and exclusively organized for or directed toward members of the board; ~~[and]~~ provided further that no member ~~[makes]~~ shall make a commitment to vote on any of the issues discussed.

(b) Neighborhood board and community outreach board members who attend meetings or presentations allowed by subsection (a) may ask questions relating to official board business of persons other than fellow board members.”

SECTION 6. Section 92-83, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended to read as follows:

“[§92-83] Neighborhood board meeting; community outreach board meeting; unanticipated events; public interest. An unanticipated event that occurs after public notice of a neighborhood board or community outreach board meeting has been issued, but before the scheduled meeting, may be the subject of discussion at the scheduled meeting if timely action on the matter is necessary for public health, welfare, and safety. At a duly noticed meeting, a board may take action on an unanticipated event in the public interest that is not on the agenda in the same manner as if the board had held an emergency meeting to take action on the issue, pursuant to section 92-8.”

SECTION 7. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.¹

SECTION 8. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

(Approved May 15, 2025.)

Note

1. Edited pursuant to HRS §23G-16.5.