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# Hawai'i's Legislative Process

Presented to the UH Student Caucus  
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- Senate

  - 25 Members (23 Democrats – 2 Republicans)

    - Big Island (3 members)

    - Kaua'i, Ni'i'hau (1 members)

    - Maui, Moloka'i, Lāna'i (3 members)

    - O'ahu (18 members)

- House of Representatives

  - 51 Members (45 Democrats – 6 Republicans)

    - Big Island (7 members)

    - Kaua'i, Ni'i'hau (3 members)

    - Maui, Moloka'i, Lāna'i (6 members)

    - O'ahu (35 members)



# *Legislative Sessions*

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- Meets in Regular Session every year
- Convenes on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday in January
- 60 Session Days (Not including Saturdays, Sundays, Holidays, and Recess Days)
- Usually ends late April or early May
- Special Sessions can be called by Governor or Legislature (2/3 Vote)



# *Bills*

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- Approximately 3,000 bills introduced each session
- Used to enact law
- Must pass 3 readings in each Chamber (House/Senate) on separate days
- Must be approved (or at least not vetoed) by Governor to become law



# *Bills (continued)*

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- Limited to a single subject contained within its title
- Title cannot be amended
- Must be introduced by a legislator (i.e. Governor's Package)



- Legislative Deadlines
  - Cutoff
  - Lateral
  - Deck
  - Crossover
  - Sine Die (Adjournment)



# *Committees*

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- Standing Committees
- Bills are referred to committees for public hearing and possible amendment(s)
- Chamber Sessions



# *Committee Referrals*

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- HED, FIN (1<sup>st</sup> to Higher Education, then to Finance)
- HLT/HED, FIN (1<sup>st</sup> to ***Joint*** hearing between Health and Higher Education, then Finance).  
All bills having money implications must go to money committee.
- HLT, HED, FIN (triple referral)





# *Committee Actions*

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- Hold public hearings and take testimony.
- Usually, 48-hours notice required for hearing.
- After hearing, committee can pass bill as is, “hold” it, or amend it.
- Committee report



# *Crossover*

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- Bills passed by the House go over to the Senate
- Bills passed by the Senate go over to the House



# *Crossover (cont'd)*

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- Bills in the Second Chamber - Do It All Over Again
  - Introduction and Passage on 1st Reading
  - Referral to Committee(s)
  - Move to Last Committee by Second Lateral
  - Amended Bills Have to be Filed by Second Deck



- Bill passed 3 readings in Second Chamber, now can it go to the Governor?
  - Only if the Second Chamber made no amendments
- What Happens if the Second Chamber Made Changes?
  - If the First Chamber AGREES - Go To Governor
  - If the First Chamber DISAGREES-Go To CONFERENCE



Both Chambers must agree on what the Legislature sends to the Governor

- CONFERENCE is the process by which differences are hammered out
- Each Chamber appoints a team of Conferees (Negotiators)



# *Conference (cont'd)*

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- Meetings of Conferees are open to the public, but no testimony is taken
- If a compromised amendment is reached during conference, bill is sent to both Chambers for Final vote for enrollment to Governor



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# *Enrolled to Governor*

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Once a bill is passed by the Legislature and enrolled to the Governor for approval, there are constitutional deadlines the Governor has to take action.



## *Enrolled to Governor (cont'd)*

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- If bill enrolled to the Governor 10 or more days prior to Sine Die, the Governor has 10 days to pass, veto or allow bill to become law without signature.
- If bill enrolled less than 10 days prior to Sine Die, the Governor has 45 days after Sine Die to pass, veto or allow bill to become law without signature.
- If the Governor intends to veto a bill, the Governor must notify the Legislature by the 35<sup>th</sup> day the intent to veto.





## *Enrolled to Governor (cont'd)*

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- Any bill enrolled to the Governor that is neither signed into law, vetoed by the Governor, or overridden in Special Session by the Legislature, will automatically become law.



- Total number of bills (House and Senate):
  - Introduced: 2,748
  - Tracked by UH-Government Relations: 432
  - Testimony submitted: 125
  - Passed the Legislature: 49
  - Enacted: 34
  - Vetoed: 9
  - Overridden: 6