

Desktop Advocacy

Using the website, www.capitol.hawaii.gov you can participate in the legislative process from your desktop computer. The bill you are interested in can be monitored as it progresses through the legislative session from committee to committee, from the Legislature to the Governor and finally into law (if it gets that far). Follow the notes below in order to do your "desktop advocacy". To get started, go to the Capitol website, www.capitol.hawaii.gov

Finding Your Own Senator and Representative

On the home page, click on **Legislative Information**. Click on **Find Legislator** and enter the required information. Submit and you will identify your legislators, Representative and Senator. You are important to them because you can vote for them. They will listen to your story more closely than will other legislators.

Getting to Know Your Legislators

On the right side of the **Find Legislator** page you will see a menu. Click on **House**. You will see all the categories of information concerning Representatives. Click on **Members**. Since you know your Representatives name, you can click on it. You will see contact information, biographic information and the committee memberships of your Representative. If you click on **Senate**, you can get the same information on your Senator.

Committees

The work of the Legislature is done by Committees. Click on **Senate** on the menu. Then click on **Committees**. Here are listed all the Senate Committees with their responsibilities and their identifying acronyms (CPH, EDT, EDU, etc.). We deal mainly with HSP: Human Services, HTH: Health, EDU: Education, JDL: Judiciary, and WAM: Ways and Means. If the bill which interests you requires funding, it must pass through WAM.

On the House page you will find the same information on House Committees presented in a little different way. Each branch of the legislature likes to do its own thing. House bills requiring funding must pass through Finance Committee (FIN).

When you click on a Committee you will see the Chair, Vice Chair and committee members. The Chair and Vice Chair are important contacts to get your bill heard at a hearing. You may want to contact them directly to encourage them to hear your bill. By clicking on committee members, you can learn about them and gain contact information as you did with your own Representative and Senator.

Timetable

During the session, the Committees use the Hearing Process to review all bills for possible passage into law. Go to **Legislative Information** and click on **Timetable**. Here you will see the Timetable from the start of the Legislature in January to the adjournment in

May. Half way through the session, in early March, the House bills which have survived their hearings pass to Senate for further hearings by the Senate. Similarly, Senate bill survivors pass to the House.

As the bills progress they are amended so that in the end the Senate version may be dissimilar to the House version. In this case a conference is held. If the differences can be cleared, the bill passes to the full Legislature. If not, the bill is dead for this session.

Finding a Bill to Track

The Hawaii Chapter, AAP (HAAP) posts a listing of **Bills of Interest** for each session under **Legislative Issues**. Go to the HAAP website, www.hawaii.aap.org Click on **Legislative Issues** and then on **Bills Being Followed, Testimony and Reports, American Academy of Pediatrics, Hawaii Chapter**. Click on **Bills of Interest, 2008 Session**. In order to gain experience in tracking, you can select one of these bills which interests you. You will usually have a House bill number and a Senate bill number to use for tracking.

Hearings and Tracking

Now we come to the nitty-gritty of the whole process; identifying hearing dates for your bill and submitting testimony. When you know your hearing date you can submit your testimony for your bill by email. Your testimony will be included in that date's hearing of your bill.

Go to <http://www.capitol.hawaii.gov> Click on **Bill Status and Documents**. In the box labeled "2008 Regular Session Bill and Resolution Status, Text, and Committee Reports", you will see a space to enter your bill numbers. Enter both the House and, when available, the Senate numbers. For the purpose of this demonstration, we will use HB2022; Early Childhood; Vision and Hearing Testing. Click the boxes for "Testimony", "Show Text" and "Show Committee Reports" in addition to the Status box already clicked. Click **Go**. You will see Bill Status for the bill and, below that, Testimony, Committee Reports and Bill Text for HB2022.

Testimony gives the Individual testimonies submitted at the hearing and later. Committee reports give the conclusions of the committee following the hearing. The reports tell the Committee's evaluation of the bill, who submitted testimony in favor, who was opposed and who made comment without taking a position, as well as the voting record of committee members. Review the Committee Report for HB2022, Stand. Com. Rep. No. 91-08. You will see that the report also presents the amendment, HD1.

The bill text usually gives some background information as to why the measure is being proposed. This information is useful to you in preparing your testimony. The amendments are added as the hearings progress. Review the text of HB2022 HD1.

Click on **Bill Status** for HB2022. You will see information relating to the bill and then a record by dates of the progress of the bill through the session. The bill was introduced on 1/16/2008. It will be heard by HLT and FIN. On 1/18/2008 a hearing was scheduled for HLT on Wednesday, 1/23/2008. As you track the bill, you see the date when your bill will be heard, in this case, 1/23/2008. Usually you have two or three days before the hearing to get in your testimony.

Now you need to get the Hearing Notice to confirm that HB2022 is on the agenda and to get the information you need to email your testimony. Directions for submitting email (and other) testimony may be found at the bottom of the Hearing Notice. Go back to **Bill Status and Documents**. You will see a box labeled "2007 Interim / 2008 Regular Session Hearing Notices". When you are tracking your bill during the session, you can click on **Get current hearing notices**. Scroll down until you come to the date of your hearing (1/23/08) and then the hearing committee (HLT). Find **HB2022** and click on it. The agenda for the Hearing will appear with the position of your bill on the agenda, hopefully near the top.

Important Note: We may be doing this exercise in the summer or fall when the Legislature is not in session or, as in this case, during the session after the bill has been heard. The Hearing Notices from previous sessions and hearings are archived. We can still access the notice. Go to **Bill Status and Documents**. In the box labeled "2007 Interim / 2008 Regular Session Hearing Notices", click on **Browse the document directories**. Click on **Hearing Notices**. Scroll down to the HLT hearing on 1/23/08. Click and you will get the hearing agenda which has the information needed for your email testimony submission.

Here is the information to be obtained from the Hearing Notice for your email testimony:

E-mail address: Found at the bottom of the Hearing Notice.

Information to be placed in the Header of your testimony:

Organization/Person submitting testimony (*your name*):

Measure, House and/or Senate bill numbers:

Committee(s) the testimony is for, name of Chair and Vice-chair of Committee(s):

Day/Date of hearing:

Time of hearing:

Location (conference room number):

Number of Copies requested as indicated at the bottom of the hearing notice:

Your testimony follows below the Header.

Here is a Sample Testimony Submittal

Let's put it all together. Here is the content of an email in support of HB2022 which you would send in for the 1/23/08 Hearing.

To: HLTtestimony@capitol.hawaii.gov

Person submitting testimony: James E. Drorbaugh, MD, MPH, FAAP

Measure: HB2022; Relating to Children's Health

Committees: Committee on Health:

Chair: Rep. Josh Green, M.D.

Vice Chair: Rep. John Mizuno

Day/Date of hearing: Wednesday, January 23, 2008

Time of hearing: 8:00 A.M.

Location: Room 329

Number of Copies requested: 1

Testimony In Support of HB2022, Relating to Children's Health

HB2022 provides a means for childhood screening required for entry into school, from birth to eight years of age, and establishes the Early Childhood Screening Program Advisory Committee. The purpose of the bill is to ensure early diagnosis and treatment of children with special health care needs. Early diagnosis and treatment has been shown to prevent or alleviate the harm done to such children because of their special health care needs.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) policy statement on this issue entitled *Identifying Infants and Young Children With Developmental disorders in the Medical Home: An Algorithm for Developmental Surveillance and Screening* describes in detail how the medical home may identify children with special health care needs as a total effort of the office staff and in collaboration with public and private resources for evaluation and treatment. In addition, we are fortunate to have a system in place here in Hawaii which makes it possible to carry out such a program.

Supporting the need for HB2022 is the finding, as reported in the above policy statement, that "current detection rates of developmental disorders are lower than their actual prevalence". We need to do a better job at detection. We have the knowledge to do so. HB2022 would enable all children with special health care needs to receive early diagnosis and treatment.

When I was in practice I thought that my clinical judgement and close communication with parents would make it possible for me to identify all my patients with special health care needs. But I was wrong and times have changed. We need these new procedures to help all the children.

I strongly support passage of HB2022, Relating to Children's Health

Respectfully submitted,

James E. Drorbaugh, M.D.
Pediatrician (retired)

1-22-08

How Do You Put Together Your Testimony?

There is no required format for your testimony. You can say what ever is in your heart and mind in support of the bill, support with reservations or opposed to the bill. The testimony needs to be brief since legislators have little time to peruse lengthy documents. Breaking into short paragraphs is good practice.

Material from the bill's preamble may have bits of information you want to include in your testimony.

Reference to an AAP policy statement is also helpful as it provides an authority other than yourself. To find policy statements go to <http://www.aap.org> In the bar across the top of

the home page, click on **Advocacy**. Click on the box in the lower right labeled **AAP Policy**. (Note the other interesting sources of information on this page). Click on **AAP Policy Statements**. Now click on **Search**. Under "Title" write in "Developmental Screening". Click on **Search** again. You will see the article referred to in our testimony written above. You can read the article on line or down load for future reference. This is the procedure you can follow to find policy statements to back up your testimony.

The AAP has policy statements on just about everything under the sun. The statements are written by committees of experts from across the country. They are revised from time to time and are a good resource for "expert testimony".

There are many other data bases which contain information useful for testimony. A sample of these sources is posted on the HAAP website. Go to <http://www.hawaiiiaap.org> Click on **Legislative Issues**. Click on **Developing Position Papers, Writing and Submitting Testimony**. Click on **Useful Resources For Advocacy Information**. Here are listed some of the sites you can explore to get information for testimony.

By far the most useful information you can include in your testimony is examples relevant to the bill from your own clinical experience with patients. This is information which only you have and which the legislator will not get from any other source. He or she will get loads of statistics but few personal experiences from front line sources such as you.

Conclusion to These Notes

The above information should give you the skills and knowledge to enable you to participate in the Legislative Process. This is only the beginning. Learning comes from participation. What characteristics make for a well written bill? Who will this bill help? Who may it harm? Can you search the internet to find support for your position? What groups can you join in order to form a coalition in support of or in opposition to the bill? Can you identify those in opposition to the bill and initiate a dialogue with them? Can you identify a legislator with whom you can form a satisfying working relationship with mutual benefit to you both? Can you introduce a bill which will address an issue which concerns you?

For those who are interested, desktop advocacy can be an entry way for a long term and rewarding participation in the legislative process.