

September 29, 2009

Aloha Charter Commission,

Standing Committees do the bulk of the work in that they provide the greatest investigation and scrutiny of matters to be placed before the council. Every council member represents their district and each district may have a different perspective on a particular matter. To disallow a district's elected representative to be part of a standing committee, to refuse input from a council member providing the perspective of that district, and prohibit that council member's vote on a matter in committee is to disenfranchise the entire district. Each matter leaves the committee and goes to the council with a positive or negative recommendation. The outcome of a positive or negative recommendation may be drastically altered when fewer than the nine council members are on a committee.

To achieve the most efficient handling of council business, all council members should be included in standing committee meetings. Hearing and discussing matters in committee reduces the amount of time it would take to review the entire matter again in council and provides the necessary information for council members to do independent investigation of any matter between the committee and council meeting.

Equally important is that every matter whether a resolution, bill, ordinance, presentation, or discussion needs to be agendized in the respective committee as soon as possible. No matter brought forward from any council member or the public in the case of an initiative should be "buried" in a committee and prevented from having a public review and allow public input. The county government is the government closest and most accessible to the people.

Open and transparent government includes the "right to know" what is on an agenda in a timely manner for the public and for council members; therefore, I submit this amendment to Article III, Legislative Branch, County Council.



Brenda Ford
Council Member

**AMENDMENT TO THE HAWAI'I COUNTY CHARTER
ADDING STANDING COMMITTEES**

Section 3- . Standing Committees.

(a) The county council shall establish standing committees with a chairperson and vice chairperson of each standing committee in order to expedite the business of the council. The council shall have the right to determine how many standing committees it needs, and

the subject matter that each committee shall control.

(b) It shall be the duty of the standing committees to investigate, consider, and make recommendations to the council on matters referred to the respective committees.

(c) The council chairperson and all members of the council shall be members of each standing committee with voting privileges.

(d) The respective chairperson of each standing committee shall agendaize every resolution, bill, ordinance, presentation, or subject for discussion appropriate to that committee at the first committee meeting on which the matter can be legally agendaized; an exception may be made by the respective committee chairperson to withhold the initial placement of a resolution, ordinance, bill, presentation, or subject for discussion on an agenda for one no more than one committee session. After that, the matter shall be placed on the next standing committee agenda.

(e) All referrals forwarded to the standing committees shall be placed on the committee agenda with a minimum of six calendar days notice to the public.

(f) Filing and posting of public notice of the standing committees agendas for public access shall be prior to 4:30 p.m. on the sixth calendar day prior to the committee meeting and shall be accomplished by physically posting the agenda outside of the building that houses the office of the county clerk to allow public access and posting the agenda on the county website under the county council section prior to the 4:30 p.m. deadline.