

The Maui News, Proposed bill eliminates open government (4.17.12)

Why is an issue of such monumental importance to all Hawaii citizens garnering zero attention? I'm referring to Senate Bill 2233, a.k.a the "Electronic Information Act."

Currently under state law, "whenever a government agency is required to give public notice, the notice shall be given in a daily or weekly publication of statewide circulation." A cup of coffee and your morning paper, and you can know everything that is going on in your community. SB2233 will change all of that with the two little words "electronically or." It also establishes a centralized state bureaucracy to, among other things, ensure notices and websites are accessible to the disabled, the elderly and others who require state assistance. It also mandates that the public library system provide ADA-compliant work stations and printers. And while the initial check for this massive new government boondoggle will come from the general fund, ultimately "the sum appropriated shall be expended from the Department of Education." Last I checked, the education system in Hawaii was broke. Now it has to pay for this too?

Every leader of every organization on Maui, every citizen - anyone who cares about open government - should be outraged by SB2233, and with anyone who has supported it. Where are all of our community leaders?

Kitesurfing is banned off Kanaha Beach. You didn't know? It was on a website. Park gates close at 7 p.m. You didn't know? The commercial development next door, you didn't know about that? They tweeted it, you know, electronically.

Jake Jacobus

Kihei