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Legislature rules for public notice already getting sidestepped

February 3rd, 2013 · [6 Comments](#) · [Legislature](#), [Politics](#)

The legislative session isn't three weeks old yet and already it looks like rules are starting to be bent to meet internal deadlines.

Email alerts from the legislative information system at 6:42 p.m. and 6:47 p.m. Friday alerted the public of bills added to the agendas for Monday morning hearings before the House Agriculture and Housing committees.

The housing committee added HB1117 to its 8:45 a.m. agenda, while the agriculture committee added two bills and deleted two other bills from its 11:30 a.m. agenda.

The problem is that House rules seem to require public notice of Monday or Tuesday agendas before 4:30 p.m. “on the last work day” of the prior week.

Here’s Rule 11.5(1) of the [House Rules](#):

Meetings, including decision-making sessions, of standing committees shall be public. Notice shall be publicly posted or announced on the House floor at least forty-eight hours prior to the meeting. Except for notices posted by the Committee on Finance, notice shall be posted before 4:30 p.m. on the last day of the work week for a hearing to be held on the following Monday or Tuesday. Notice of meetings may be shortened at the discretion of the Speaker upon request on the House floor by a chair or vice-chair and upon good cause shown.

It’s possible, I suppose, that the respective chairs could request a retroactive waivers from the 4:30 p.m. notice requirement during the floor session on Monday, but such after-the-fact remedies wouldn’t seem very fair to the public.

It’s still early in the session, so there will be lots of chances for those who are specifically concerned about these measures to catch up. But it’s still not a good to see the rules being sidestepped so early.

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- 
Hugh Clark // [Feb 3, 2013 at 7:15 pm](#)

That’s the luxury of being a legislator. You make your own rules and break them – at whim!

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- 
Natalie // [Feb 3, 2013 at 10:34 pm](#)

Looking back at the notices I received Friday, 11 of them that are for Monday or Tuesday hearings were time stamped after 4:30 p.m. They have to be watched like hawks.

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- 
palolololo // [Feb 4, 2013 at 11:01 am](#)

Same old wine in a brand new bottle

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- 
ohiaforest3400 // [Feb 4, 2013 at 2:18 pm](#)

As to the two committees referenced, it may “just” be a case of inexperience, on the one hand, and incompetence, on the other, not any conspiracy to screw the public.

Imagine the frustration of being a staffer in a legislative agency when the committee chair asks for help preparing for a hearing but doesn’t actually make the request until after the notice is posted, wasting hours or days of prep time that could have been filled during regular work hours, instead dropping off the hearing notice on the way home Friday afternoon so that the agency has to unnecessarily use overtime to do the work. Imagine the frustration of working for administrators of such an agency who do nothing to train legislators and their staff in how to avoid these problems and say nothing when they do it, enabling their inefficient fumbling. How depressing must it be to work for someone who, when the agency is treated thusly by legislators and their staff, asks only meekly “You want me to jump? How high?” or “You want me to bend over? How far?”

If the public only knew that the problems in the legislature are less outright dishonesty than inconsiderate, clueless idiocy.

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◦ **Former legislative staff** // [Feb 6, 2013 at 2:20 am](#)

“Imagine the frustration of working for administrators of such an agency who do nothing to train legislators and their staff in how to avoid these problems and say nothing when they do it, enabling their inefficient fumbling.”

Imagine what years of hiring as a kickback for holding signs does towards quality of staff. Imagine what happens when these brain trusts who have absolutely no real life skills are asked to do something that requires an ounce of critical thinking. Imagine the ego involved with the staffer who plans to use their job as a stepping stone to run for office and combine that with their boss’ ego and tell me what happens when you let them know that they did something incorrectly or just need to do something in general.

Part of it is the nature of the gig. Session hires consist of a huge portion of the staff that do the majority of the grunt work that you describe. It’s very hard to hit the ground running in such a chaotic environment. However, when legislators’ permanent staff refuse to learn how to do their jobs and actually restrict their staff from going to training, what do you think is going to happen? There’s a huge attitude of “who are you to tell me what to do?” involved with a lot of this and when the people you complain about are given no real authority in fixing these problems, they’re really only treated as glorified garbage men.

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• **REPEAL PLDC!** // [Feb 4, 2013 at 7:10 pm](#)

This is circulating around:

<https://www.facebook.com/events/447707171965988/>

ACTION ALERT!!! TODAY!!! EMAIL: sens@capitol.hawaii.gov, reps@capitol.hawaii.gov to hear Senate Bill 1 – to repeal PLDC.

Malama Solomon promised to hear the Repeal PLDC bill and turn around to delete it. Malama Solomon and Neil Abercrombie dancing to the developers’ music. HELL NO!!!

http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=2ntspNKzhyY#! Abercrombie wants to give public lands & million\$ in developments to his 1% ohana.

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