

## THE LEGISLATIVE TIMETABLES AND THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

This overview of the legislative timetables and legislative process is meant to give you a general idea of the Legislature's work schedule throughout the legislative session.

The **legislative timetable** sets forth, among other things, the milestones and filing and voting deadlines that different types of legislative measures must meet to progress successfully through the legislative process. It is customarily a two-page document with information presented in calendar form on the first page and in a more detailed list form on the second page.

Measures can die if they fail to meet the milestones and deadlines established by the legislative timetable, so familiarity with the timetable is of critical importance. Keep in mind that deadlines set by the timetable represent the *last day* upon which an action must occur; accordingly, a measure can proceed through the legislative process at a much quicker pace ahead of these milestones and deadlines.

In addition to the legislative timetable, each house has an **internal legislative timetable** that sets forth additional requirements established by each house, such as limits on the number of bills that may be introduced and the triple referral filing deadline which applies to bills that are referred to three or more successive committees.

A new legislative timetable is established for each annual regular session by agreement between the Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate. A new internal legislative timetable is adopted by each house for each annual regular session. Make sure the timetables you rely on are current.

The current legislative timetable may be accessed on the Hawaii State Legislature's website by following the ["Calendar"](#) link on the home page and clicking on the button marked "Printable PDF version" at the top of the page.

Following are brief descriptions of some of the major events, milestones, and deadlines that will occur in the legislative process for the annual regular legislative session.

### Opening Day

Opening Day marks the official commencement of the annual legislative session, i.e., the regular session. Pursuant to Article III, section 10, of the Hawaii State Constitution, the legislature convenes annually in regular session at 10:00 a.m. on the third Wednesday in January.

## **Bill Introduction; Bill Introduction Cutoff Deadline**

The lawmaking process commences with the introduction of a bill. All bills must be introduced before the applicable bill introduction cutoff deadline on the legislative timetable in order to progress through the legislative process.

Note, however, that any bill pending at the adjournment of a regular session in an odd-numbered year, i.e., the first year of a legislative biennium, will automatically carry over to the regular session of the next even-numbered year, i.e., the second year of the legislative biennium, with the same bill number and bill status; therefore, for these **carry-over** or **carried-over bills**, reintroduction in the second year of the legislative biennium may not be necessary.

Be aware that each house may set additional internal deadlines relating to bill introduction. A house may set forth deadlines after which only a limited number of bills may be introduced by each legislator. Each house may also require that bills be filed by a certain time on a deadline day. It may be helpful to check the Hawaii State Legislature's website for updated information.

### **First Lateral Deadline: Last Day to Move Bills to a Final Committee in the Originating House**

Many bills are referred to more than one committee. The first committee to which a bill is referred is called the **lead committee**. If a bill has a joint committee referral, then the first committee in the joint committee designation is the lead committee. As an example, an "HUS/HLT, FIN" referral means that the Human Services and Health committees will convene as joint committees with the Human Services Committee being the lead committee. The Finance Committee in this committee referral is the final committee and this bill would be subject to the double referral filing deadline.

Certain committees traditionally serve as final committees. For example, in the House, the committees on Finance, Judiciary, and Consumer Protection and Commerce traditionally serve as final committees.

In the house in which they were introduced, i.e., the originating house, all bills with multiple referrals must move to the final committee to which they are referred on or before the **first lateral deadline** to remain alive for consideration by that committee. This ensures that the final committee will have enough time to consider the bill.

Bills with triple referrals must meet an additional deadline prior to the first lateral deadline. These bills must, among other things, be reported out of the first committee or joint committees to which they are referred on or before the **triple referral filing deadline**.

Note that there are two lateral deadlines in each legislative session. The **first lateral deadline** applies to bills with multiple committee referrals when proceeding through their originating house. For bills that have passed in their originating house and have consequently crossed over to the non-originating house, the **second lateral**

**deadline** will apply as those bills proceed through the non-originating house if those bills are given a multiple committee referral in the non-originating house. These bills must move to the final committee to which they are referred on or before the **second lateral deadline** to remain alive for consideration by that committee. A **triple referral filing deadline** may also apply if the bill is given a triple committee referral in the non-originating house.

### **Mandatory Five-Day Recess**

The mandatory recess runs for five consecutive days and is intended to encourage the public to review the bills moving through the Legislature. It also provides legislators an opportunity to schedule public meetings in their districts to brief their constituents on the major issues before the Legislature. No formal floor action takes place during this recess, but committees may still meet and conduct business, including public hearings.

In addition to the mandatory recess, the Legislature may schedule additional recess days anywhere in the legislative timetable.

### **First Decking Deadline: Last Day to Deck Bills for Third Reading in the Originating House**

The Hawaii State Constitution provides that "[n]o bill shall pass third or final reading in either house unless printed copies of the bill in the form to be passed shall have been made available to the members of that house for at least forty-eight hours." The **first decking deadline** is the deadline by which a bill must be submitted, i.e., "decked," in its final form to be considered for passage on third reading by its originating house. As a general rule, any bill not submitted in its final form by a decking deadline can no longer be considered for passage during that session. The purpose of the decking deadlines is to give legislators sufficient time to read and understand bills they are considering for passage on third or final reading.

### **First Crossover Deadline: Last Day for Third Reading of Bills in the Originating House**

**First crossover** is the deadline by which a final vote must be taken in the bill's originating house to pass the bill on third reading, thus enabling it to cross over to the non-originating house for consideration.

### **Second Lateral Deadline: Last Day to Move Bills to a Final Committee in the Non-Originating House**

The **second lateral deadline** applies to bills that have crossed over from their originating house to the non-originating house, where they have been given a multiple committee referral. House bills with multiple committee referrals in the Senate must move

to the final Senate committee to which they are referred on or before the second lateral deadline to remain alive for consideration by that committee. Likewise, Senate bills with multiple committee referrals in the House must move to the final House committee to which they are referred on or before the second lateral deadline to remain alive. **A triple referral deadline** may also be applicable to bills with triple referrals in the non-originating house.

**Second Decking Deadline:  
Last Day to Deck Bills Amended by the Non-Originating House**

The Hawaii State Constitution provides that "[n]o bill shall pass third or final reading in either house unless printed copies of the bill in the form to be passed shall have been made available to the members of that house for at least forty-eight hours." The **second decking deadline** is the deadline by which a bill that is amended by the non-originating house must be submitted, i.e., "decked," in its final form to be considered for passage on third reading by the non-originating house. The purpose of the decking deadlines is to give legislators sufficient time to read and understand a bill they are considering for passage on third or final reading. In addition, the second decking deadline also serves to give a bill's originating house notice of any amendments made by the non-originating house and time to consider whether to agree to the amendments or to refer the bill to a conference committee to resolve areas of disagreement.

**Second Crossover Deadline:  
Last Day for Third Reading of Bills Amended by the Non-Originating House**

Second crossover is the deadline by which all bills amended by the non-originating house must be returned to the originating house. Bills that have not been amended by the non-originating house are not subject to this deadline because they are not required to be returned to the originating house.

**Disagree:  
Last Day to Disagree with the Non-Originating House's Amendments**

Either house can agree or disagree to the amendments made to its bill by the non-originating house. If either house chooses to disagree, it must do so by the last-day-to-disagree deadline. Such bills may be referred to a conference committee for further consideration of areas of disagreement. If the originating house agrees to the amendments made to its bill by the non-originating house, that bill is considered to be passed by the Legislature, and is sent to the Governor.

**First Crossover for Concurrent Resolutions:  
Last Day to Pass Concurrent Resolutions to the Non-Originating Body**

Concurrent resolutions must be adopted in their originating houses on or before the first crossover deadline to remain alive. Upon adoption, these concurrent resolutions will cross over to the non-originating house for consideration.

**Final Decking Deadline:  
Last Day to Deck Bills for Final Reading**

The final decking deadline applies to bills amended by the non-originating house and whose differences have been resolved either by a conference committee or reconsideration by the originating body. All such bills must be submitted or decked on or before this deadline to be considered for passage on final reading.

**Adjournment Sine Die**

This is the last day for votes to be taken on bills up for Final Reading and on resolutions up for adoption. It is the last day of the regular legislative session.