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Policy Advisory Board for Elder Affairs (PABEA)
Legislative Committee Meeting
EOA Large Conference Room (250 S. Hotel St., Suite 406)
And via Zoom

MEETING MINUTES
Friday, September 4, 2026

PABEA Board Members in Attendance: Pokiʻi Balaz (arrived at 9:38am) Roy Katsuda, Stephen Lung (arrived 9:45am), Marilyn Seely, Barbara Service, Gary Simon (Chair), Rick Tabor (Vice-Chair), and Kathy Wyatt

AAA/Community Members/EOA Staff Attendance: Rowena Dagdag-Andaya (MCOA) (arrived at 9:37am), Caroline Cadirao (EOA), Charlene Iboshi (arrived at 9:41am), Joanne Kealoha, and Jason Wong (EOA)

Board Members Absent: Suzie Schulberg

I. Public Access Room Training: "Using the Interim," presented by Andy Langhurst, Public Access Room Coordinator, and Keanu Young, Public Access Room Assistant.
The presenters explained how to make effective use of the interim period before the legislative session begins. Topics covered included:
- How You Can Use the Interim and
- Working with Legislators During the Interim

II. Call to Order
Chair Gary Simon called the meeting to order at 10:06am A.M.

III. Roll Call
Jason Wong took roll call across board and community members and agency representatives. With 8 board members present at roll call quorum was established.

IV. Review and Approval of Minutes
The draft minutes for the August 7, 2026 meeting were distributed via email. Rick motioned to approve and Roy seconded the motion. There were no objections or discussion on the minutes. The August 7, 2026 meeting minutes were unanimously approved as is.

V. Old Business
A. Criteria for Announcements
The committee reviewed what should count as "Announcements." Chair Gary noted

that at the last meeting the criteria were left vague. He asked members to consider what kinds of announcements would support their work with the Legislative Committee and on aging-related issues.
He recommended focusing on announcements about aging-related events and activities, as well as key legislative dates (such as the start and end of session and crossover). He said the criteria can be updated later but should stay centered on an "aging lens" and how the information benefits PABEA Legislative Committee members.

Comments:

- Rick asked whether comments or suggestions about the criteria need to be listed on the agenda before they can be discussed. Chair Gary said members should contact him directly if they have comments or suggestions to add to a future agenda.

VI. New Business

A. Criteria for PABEA Support for Legislation (e.g. align with goals and strategies of the State Plan on Aging)
Chair Gary explained that the Legislative Committee typically reviews ideas for legislative advocacy before sending them to the full PABEA board for approval. He noted that the committee has been focusing too narrowly on specific bills (for example, hearing-aid bills), which causes delays and makes it harder for members to engage in the legislative process. Often, a bill is identified in February, but by then it may already be dead or moving through the process too quickly for members to provide input.

He suggested broadening the committee's legislative criteria, so it does not need separate approval for each specific bill. Instead, the committee could support legislation that aligns with topic areas in the State Plan on Aging. If there is any uncertainty, Chair Gary said he would check with Caroline (EOA Director) to confirm whether a bill aligns with the State Plan.

Comments:

- Kathy said she plans to introduce a bill related to the Department of Planning and Permitting and asked whether it could be considered by the committee. Chair Gary said any item listed on the agenda can be discussed. He added that the bill might align with the committee's scope if it relates to expanding adult daycare services. Kathy clarified that her bill is about home-modification permits and delays in the permitting process, not adult daycare.

- Chair Gary emphasized that he is not excluding narrow bills, but reviewing every small topic makes the committee less effective. He said Kathy can still bring the bill to the committee but noted that if the issue falls under county authority, the state legislature may have limited influence. He suggested bringing such issues to the county councils.

- Charlene asked whether Kathy could bring proposed legislation or resolutions to the committee. Chair Gary said she can speak with him about adding items to the agenda.

- Rick asked when members should contact him to add agenda items. Chair Gary said members should reach out at least two weeks before the next meeting.

- Roy asked whether resolutions are useful. Gary said PABEA has supported "empowering legislation," and when a bill is likely to fail, it may be converted into a resolution to keep progress moving. He clarified that bills are still the primary tool for legislative action. Rick added that PABEA successfully supported several aging-related bills last year that became law and described how PABEA monitors and supports bills during the session. Roy concluded that if PABEA has been effective in supporting legislation, the committee should continue those efforts, but if not, it may not be worthwhile.

B. Sunshine Law Amendment for Advisory Board Meetings
Marilyn clarified the concern she raised at the last meeting. She explained that the Attorney General (AG) will be key to addressing it. She noted that some groups, subject to Sunshine Law, should have different lower-level reporting requirements and procedures than bodies that create policy, and those policies become law at the organizational or state level. She emphasized that PABEA does not make policy; it advises the EOA Director, and the Director sets policy. Advising and policymaking are two distinct roles.

Marilyn suggested that the committee look at models and approaches used in other states to give PABEA more flexibility and avoid concerns about violating the Sunshine Law. She explained that the Sunshine Law mainly applies to decision-making bodies, and PABEA is not authorized to make policy decisions.

Comments:

- Gary asked whether Marilyn knew of similar boards in other states that might also benefit from more flexibility. Marilyn said she did not know of any and recommended researching it. Gary asked if she would be willing to take the lead on looking into the issue further. Marilyn said she would do as much as she could with her limited time. Gary suggested reaching out to other legislative members for help, and Marilyn added that attorneys will also be important in addressing the issue.

- Marilyn restated that PABEA was included under the Sunshine Law by default, but the law is really intended for policy-making bodies to ensure transparency. She reminded the group that PABEA does not make policy decisions.

- Gary said he will keep this item on future agendas.

C. Letter in Support of Social Security
Chair Gary noted that a previous meeting included discussion about possibly recommending that PABEA send a letter to Hawai'i's Congressional delegation asking them to protect Social Security benefits. He referred to Stephen, who first raised the issue.

Stephen agreed that the committee should act. He said there is uncertainty about the long-term solvency of Social Security trust funds and that more public pressure is needed to push Congress toward a solution. Although the exact solution is unknown, he said that because PABEA has a responsibility to support the welfare of older adults in Hawai'i, it makes sense for PABEA to publicly urge the Congressional delegation to act. Several members, including Marilyn and Rick, supported Stephen's comments.

Gary asked for a motion to recommend that PABEA send a letter to the state's Congressional delegation supporting the protection of Social Security. Roy made the motion, and Rick and Marilyn seconded it. There was no further discussion or opposition. Members voted unanimously in favor. Gary will draft the letter, with Stephen assisting.

Comments:

- Caroline asked what year the Social Security trust funds would become insolvent. Stephen answered 2032.

- Charlene shared that she recently attended a Social Security presentation. The speaker, who works for Social Security, reassured the audience that similar funding issues have happened before and that solutions, although sometimes patchwork, have always been found.

- Marilyn said she agrees with Stephen and is worried about Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid. She encouraged PABEA to voice its concerns, so the public becomes more aware and motivated to act.

- Rick mentioned a Morning Edition article reporting that Social Security could face an automatic benefit reduction of 22%–24% by 2032, which would amount to about $500 less per month for beneficiaries. He said this issue has been known for a long time and emphasized that changes must be made to ensure Social Security continues for the people who rely on it. He mentioned reasons why Social Security is in jeopardy. Gary added that PABEA's letter will focus on urging Congress to protect Social Security benefits, rather than the details of the issue.

VII. Public Testimony on Agenda Items – no public testimony available

VIII. Announcements

1. PABEA meeting scheduled for Friday, September 4, 2026 at 12 p.m. In person and remote meeting via Zoom.
2. Kupuna Caucus meeting scheduled for Friday, September 4, 2026 at 2 p.m. via Zoom. There will be a presentation on Case Management.

The next PABEA Legislative Committee meeting is scheduled for **Friday, October 2, 2026 from 9:30-11am.** Meetings are held in person in the EOA Large Conference (250 S. Hotel St., Room 406) and remotely via Zoom.

Meeting adjourned at 10:35 A.M.

Respectfully submitted by Cristina Valenzuela