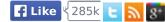
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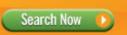


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Redistricting panel's rules inhibit public's participation,



groups say

By Gary T. Kubota

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Apr 29, 2011





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Three public advocacy groups have asked the state Reapportionment Commission to rescind its decision to require only three days' public notice for its meetings.

The League of Women Voters of Hawaii, Common Cause Hawaii and Americans for Democratic Action asked the commission for six days' notice as required by the state Sunshine Law.

The commission is redrawing election district boundaries to reflect population changes in Hawaii. In a letter Tuesday, the groups also asked the commission to remove a new rule requiring members of the public to make a request to testify 48 hours before a meeting.

"We believe this is extremely discouraging for public participation," the groups said in the joint letter.

"Many citizens may simply show up at a meeting and want to testify — as they are accustomed to doing at most other public meetings."

The groups said combining the three days' notice for meetings with the 48-hour rule for testimony gives a 24-hour window for someone to review the agenda and make their request to testify.

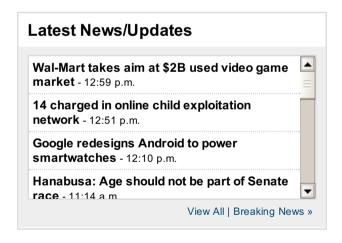
"This is prohibitive for most people," the groups' letter said.

<t-5>Acting commission Chairman Dylan Nonaka said he has been advised by the state attorney general's office that the commission is not subject to the Sunshine Law requirement of six days' notice. He said the commission had about 100 days to get its work done and wanted the flexibility.

"We're going to try and do our best to adhere to the spirit of the law, but we didn't want to limit ourselves ... because it could limit the amount of meetings we could have," he said.









The state Supreme Court is expected to announce selection of a commission chairman today, after commissioners, apparently split along party lines, were unable to pick one.

The next commission meeting is scheduled for 3 p.m. Wednesday at Room 204 in the State Office Tower at 235 S. Beretania St.

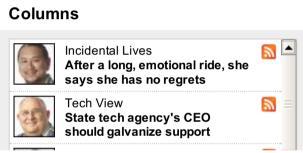
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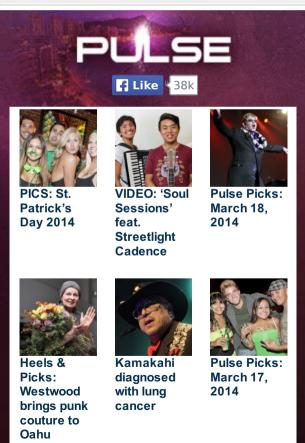
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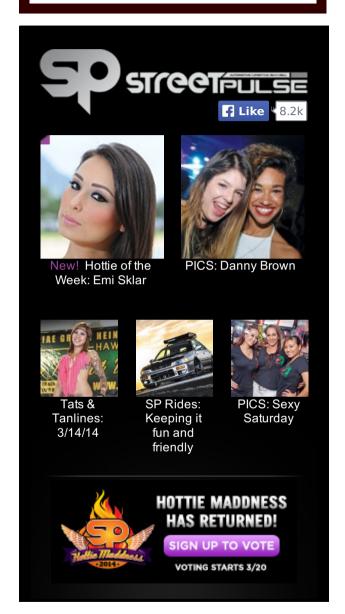


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