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“O lou Tofi, o lou Faasinomaga, o lou Faavae.”

“The government belongs to the people, therefore representation from different aspects of the community is vital to this committee. Allowing them the opportunity to sit at the table, ensures all voices are heard, and that we are all in consensus in reviewing our Constitution.”

On Tuesday, February 8th, an official opening ceremony of the “O lou Tofi, o lou Faasinomaga, o lou Faavae, ‘ American Samoa 2022 Constitutional Review Committee was held at the Governor H. Rex Lee Auditorium, in support of Governor Lemanu’s Executive Order 001-2022 dated and released on February 4, 2022.

The committee is made up of five members of the Governor’s staff, five members of Senate, five members of Representatives, thirteen members of the Cabinet, seven members of Clergy, three members from the public, two members of the Bar, two members from the Private Sector, four Youth representatives, five Women representatives, and our Federal representative from the Department of Interior Office of Insular Affairs. Members of the Constitutional Review Committee are tasked with the following duties, responsibilities, and powers as stated in the Executive Order:

- a. The Committee shall review the entire Constitution and consider all proposals for revision as submitted through designated meetings, gatherings, and discussions, as held by and through the Political Status, Constitutional Review and Federal Relations Office and the Office of the Governor, as well as reports and requests as submitted by lawfully appointed bodies including but not limited to the Fono, the Judiciary, the political status study committees, local government, and the public.
- b. The Committee shall keep a journal and records of all public proceedings according to date and subject.
- c. The Committee is authorized to adopt bylaws which do not conflict with this order or any applicable laws of American Samoa, to govern its own affairs, and to aid in executing the tasks which the Committee may undertake in effectuating this Order.

“We are now at the commencement of the Plan to Review our Constitution.” Governor Lemanu advised the Committee to share, collaborate, and effectively discuss the particular amendments before them, to keep the people of American Samoa in mind during their Review, and to work

diligently and honorably.

Governor Lemanu highlighted that the government does not belong to the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, or members of the Fono. He stated, “The government belongs to the people, therefore representation from different aspects of the community is vital to this committee. Allowing them the opportunity to sit at the table, ensures all voices are heard, and that we are all in consensus in reviewing our Constitution.”

During the opening ceremony, the Lt. Governor, Honorable Talauega E. V. Ale was appointed as Chair of the Constitutional Review Committee, and Assistant Secretary of Samoan Affairs, Tauese Sunia as Vice-Chair.

Tapaa Dr. Dan Aga, emphasized the importance of understanding the difference between a Constitutional Convention and a Political Status Convention. The Constitutional Convention’s aim is to revise or amend the American Samoa Constitution that involves the Local Government, Territorial Government, and Civil Government. The Political Status Convention’s aim is to change our status from Territory to Independence or Statehood.

After a short recess, Chair Committee Lt. Governor Talauega in the orientation briefed the committee on this week’s schedule. Every day will begin at 9:00 am with a presentation on the particular amendment before it is open for discussion.





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