2026 Legislative Session Start Newsletter

OFFICE OF REP. SUE L. KEOHOKAPU-LEE LOY
House District 2 - Hilo

Aloha Family, Friends, and Neighbors!

In 2026, we welcome the Year of the Fire Horse, where the 'Horse' represents energy and a vibrant spirit, while the 'Fire' element infuses the year with passion and intensity. This newsletter highlights the robust funding obtained for our community during the 2025 legislative session and outlines new opportunities and strategic investments for the 2026 session, benefiting everyone who calls Hawai'i Island home.

My inaugural year in the Legislature mirrored the Year of the Horse, characterized by energy, action-oriented funding, and sound policy initiatives aimed at positively impacting our community. During the 2025 legislative session, serving as a member of the Committee on Finance, we successfully secured over $32M in capital improvement and program funding for all of Hawai'i Island, including $15M specifically designated for repair and maintenance at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo.

Starting this year, the State has been allocated $188 million annually for the next five years, specifically targeting the transformation of rural health care. As your Vice Chair for the Committee on Health, my focus will be dedicated to steering nearly $1 billion in funding into our communities, empowering local hospitals, clinics, and health care workers to take charge of their locally-driven healthcare initiatives.

Stay tuned! I recently engaged in discussions with the Airport Division of the Department of Transportation about the development of a hotel at or near Hilo International Airport. The concept has garnered positive feedback and complements Southwest Airlines' new direct flights between Hilo and Las Vegas. I am confident that establishing a hotel in Hilo will generate substantial economic opportunities for the community.

Aloha Piha and Cheers,

Office Staff Introductions

Jayne Nantkes - Committee Clerk
Jayne comes with an established background of working with former Rep./Sen. Aquino for the past 7 years. Her extensive record will greatly support Rep. Keohokapu-Lee Loy's work.

Soana Tupua-Fanoga - Office Manager
Soana provides a wealth of experience from working with several other House representatives, and continues to be Rep's right-hand woman.

Jace Kawano - Legislative Aide
Jace enters the legislature as a recent UHM graduate in Political Science. She will utilize her academic experience to support our office.

Kevin Chong - Assistant Committee Clerk
Kevin continues his journey working for the legislature and attending UHM. He aims to contribute towards meaningful work that supports Hawai'i.

2025 Interim Highlights

Lawmakers Listen 2025

Lawmakers Listen Town Hall for House Districts 1 and 2, led by Reps. Keohokapu-Lee Loy and Kusch

Hawai'i on the Hill 2025

Rep. attending the 9th annual Hawai'i on the Hill, set at our nation's Capitol Hill

SB933 Bill Signing

Relating to the State Budget

Pictured (left to right): Rep. Todd, Rep. Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Gov. Josh Green, M.D., Sen. Hashimoto, Rep. Holt

SPEED Task Force

Rep. serving as the Building Permit Permitted Interaction Group Co-Chair for the SPEED Task Force

HLT Site Visit

House Committee on Health visited Queen's Medical Center - Manamana and their new Emergency Department

FIN Site Visit

House Committee on Finance visited Hawaiʻi Island to see several projects and programs supported by the Legislature

District Funding Recap

Capital Improvement Project Funding

- **$1M** - Hilo Intermediate School Gymnasium
- **$2.5M** - Waiākea Intermediate School
- **$2.5M** - Hilo High School
- **$1M** - James "Jimmy" Correa Ballfield
- **$1.2M** - 121 Banyan Drive
- **$15M** - University of Hawai'i at Hilo
- **$300K** - The Island of Hawai'i YMCA

Grant-in-Aid Awards

- **$40K** - Friends of Children's Justice Center of East HI
- **$75K** - Hospice of Hilo
- **$120K** - Hilo Bayfront Trails
- **$150K** - Pacific Tsunami Museum
- **$300K** - The Arc of Hilo
- **$300K** - The Island of Hawai'i YMCA
- **$600K** - Boys and Girls Club of Hawai'i

ACT 310 Nonprofit Grants

In November 2025, the Hawai'i State Legislature announced funding decisions for Act 310 Nonprofit Grants Program to support nonprofits impacted by recent federal funding delays and reductions.

Over **$8.5M** has been awarded to 18 different nonprofits that help our communities in the Hilo District and Hawai'i Island.

2026 Legislative Session Goals

Policy Proposals and Bills Introduced:

- HB# Relating to Housing - Expedited Construction Permits for Individuals with Special Needs
- HB# Relating to Land Use - Rodeos and ancillary uses in Agricultural areas
- HB# Relating to the Psychology Inter-jurisdictional Compact
- HB# Relating to Child Custody - Licensed Mental Health Evaluators
- HB# Relating to Mental Health - Medicaid Reimbursement
- HB# Relating to Insurance - Cognitive Assessments
- 2026 CIP Relating to Health Learning Labs
    - Requesting appropriation of $5,725,000 for a health learning lab at Waiākea High School

... and many more!

Rest in Aloha, Fire Chief Kazuo Ku'ika'aleoPelepohākalani Todd

Fire Chief Kazuo Todd, you inspired us to present our best selves. With profound sadness, Hilo bid farewell to a son, brother, husband, father, uncle, friend, and leader. Chief Todd exemplified daily what it means to embody love for the community, servant leadership, and aloha in action. These qualities have been intricately woven into the fabric of our community, and we are all better for having known you.

Representative Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee Loy
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Website

SCAN HERE

Instagram

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REPKEOHOKAPULEELOY

Hawai'i State Representative

SUE L. KEOHOKAPU-LEE LOY

House District 2 - Hilo

Have a question? Contact my office:

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Rep. Keohokapu-Lee Loy's 2026 Committee Assignments

Committee on Health - Vice Chair
Committee on Finance
Committee on Human Services & Homelessness