



Senator Joy San Buenaventura

Senate District 2, Puna

Chair, Senate Committee on Health & Human Services • Vice Chair, Committee on Hawaiian Affairs
• Committee on Government Affairs • Committee on the Judiciary

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April 2025 E-Newsletter

2025 LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Aloha:

In the first week of March, the legislature held its final third reading of Senate bills before the March 7th "First Crossover" deadline. All House bills that have passed third reading in their originating chambers had since been transmitted to the Senate (and vice-versa). From the start of the session, I have been working very hard to pass as many bills through the Senate Health & Human Services Committee while also serving my duties as a member of the Senate committees on Government Operations, Judiciary, and Vice Chair of Hawaiian Affairs. After the First Crossover, we have been working at an even faster pace to bring as many House bills for a vote in my committee. The deadlines after the crossover become even shorter and the importance of prioritizing bills that have survived the deadlines to this point, are crucial to ensuring that the most important and impactful bills make it to the upcoming 'Second Crossover' Deadline.

As many of you know, we anticipate that there will be some changes with regard to the federal agencies that fund or partially fund local programs. With that in mind, I have been taking a very careful approach to ensure that we are funding the most critical programs and leaving nothing on the table when it comes to programs that are especially critical to struggling families and Kupuna on set incomes.

Joy San Buenaventura



Education Week at the Capitol

Education Week at the Legislature is a weeklong celebration featuring events such as a student showcase, career pathway expo, leadership presentation, and recognition of outstanding achievements. On day 4 of Education Week at the Capitol, I had the honor of introducing District Complex Teacher of the Year winners, Leah Gouker and Jonathan Peralta (both from Puna). A big Mahalo to all of the students and staff who traveled all the way to Honolulu to participate in this year's festivities.



DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES ADVOCACY DAY AT THE CAPITOL

At the 25th Annual Hawaii State Council on Developmental Disabilities Day at the Capitol. This year's theme "Respect Yourself and All People with Disabilities." It was an honor to provide the opening remarks at this year's event and pay a special visit to our delegation from Hawaii Island, who traveled all the way to Honolulu to participate. A big mahalo to everyone who took part in this years event. I am very grateful for your advocacy and as Chair of Health & Human Services, I will continue to ensure that your voices are heard.



We want to hear from you!



What are your health needs and challenges?

What are the health needs and challenges of your family?

The Hawai'i Department of Health, Family Health Services Division receives federal and state dollars to support maternal, child and family health programs statewide. We are conducting a needs assessment to better understand your needs and the needs of communities in Hawai'i.

Can you please help us by completing a brief survey?
The survey is completely anonymous.



How to take the survey:

Visit health.hawaii.gov/mchsurvey
English - Ilocano - Tagalog - 繁體中文



The DOH needs your help to better understand the challenges you and your loved ones face accessing care that make it harder for **women, pregnant persons, families, children, teens, and children and youth with special needs** to get what they need to be healthy.

If you care about the health and well-being of you and your family, please complete this brief survey. You can help shape maternal, child and family health programs in Hawai'i!



EARLY EDUCATION AND CHILDCARE

Today I had the pleasure of welcoming young advocates from Seagulls Schools. Seagull School is a community-centered, early education and childcare provider. As Chair of the Senate Committee on Health & Human Services, I recently held a hearing for HB692. HB692 expands the Preschool Open Doors Program's eligibility. Expanding eligibility for the Preschool Open Doors Program would help make early education opportunities more accessible for Hawaii's working families. By lowering the cost of community based programs, we optimize the development of our keiki, while also lowering the financial burden for families and allowing parents to remain in the workforce. Amongst the many supporters of HB692 are Lt. Governor Sylvia Luke, who, came before my committee to support the Preschool Open Doors Program. Upon my recommendation, the Senate Committee on Health & Human Services committee passed HB692 unanimously.



PRESCHOOL OPEN DOORS

Online application is available at: <https://childcaresubsidyapplication.dhs.hawaii.gov/>
Or, download an application at patchhawaii.org or call PATCH at (808) 791-2130 or 1-800-746-5620 to request an application. **The deadline to apply is April 30th, 2025**

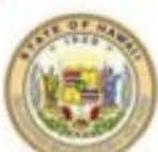
PRE SCHOOL OPEN DOORS

APPLICATION PERIOD IS OPEN! APPLY NOW!

Apply online:

<https://childcaresubsidyapplication.dhs.hawaii.gov/>

Application deadline is April 30, 2025 at 4:30 p.m.



CONTACT US FOR MORE INFO:

808-791-2130

Toll Free: 1-800-746-5620

Email: PODAdmin@Patch-HI.org

Visit us online at www.patchhawaii.org





With the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network.



With the Hawaii Island YMCA team. The YMCA offers programs and services that support people of all ages, backgrounds, and walks of life. I'm so grateful for all that they do for our community.



Looking at one of the many displays at this year's "Ag Day at the Capitol." Agriculture has been vital to Puna's economy and culture.



Discussing legislative priorities with the Department of Hawaiian Homeland Director Dr. Kali Watson,



Welcoming UH pharmacy students to the capitol. The event, which included health screenings was organized by the Hawaii Pharmacists Association. Today I had my blood glucose checked by Daniel Yee of the Daniel K. Inouye College of Pharmacy. It was especially great to see that programs such as the DKI College of Pharmacy are creating opportunities for local students to pursue careers in careers in pharmaceutical science without having to relocate to mainland colleges where they may not qualify for in-state tuition.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

The Senate Committee on Hawaiian Affairs recently voted to recommend that the Senate 'Advise and Consent' to the nominations of Archie Kalepa and Lawrence Lasua for the Hawaiian Homes Commission. We also voted to advise and consent to the nominations of Kekamamakoakailihou Caceres, Julian Ako, and Charish Miller for the Island Burial Council (Oahu). Their nominations will now be brought to the Senate floor for a full vote. As Vice Chair of the Senate Committee on Hawaiian Affairs, I am very grateful for the opportunity to learn about the nominees and their commitment to serving in their respective roles. I am very grateful for their willingness to take on the added responsibilities and for their devotion to our community.



SENATE COMMITTEE ON HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

SB781 OLELO HAWAII INITIATIVES

APPROPRIATES FUNDS TO SUPPORT THE OLELO HAWAII INITIATIVES.

SB606 DEPARTMENT OF HAWAIIAN HOMELANDS

DEPOSITS FUNDS INTO AND APPROPRIATES FUNDS OUT OF THE ACT 279 SPECIAL FUND TO ELIMINATE ITS WAITLIST.. REQUIRES DHHL TO SUBMIT A STRATEGIC PLAN.

SB109 RELATING TO THE HAWAIIAN LANGUAGE.

REQUIRES THAT THE HAWAIIAN VERSION OF A LAW BE HELD BINDING IF THE LAW IN QUESTION WAS ORIGINALLY DRAFTED IN HAWAIIAN.

SB1051 RELATING TO HAWAIIAN HISTORY MONTH

DESIGNATES SEPTEMBER AS HAWAIIAN HISTORY MONTH.

HB576 RELATING TO HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEWS

EXEMPTS TRANSFERS OF HAWAIIAN HOME LANDS FROM TRANSFER RESTRICTIONS FOR REAL PROPERTY UNDER HOUSING DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS OF THE HAWAII HOUSING FINANCE AND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION.

SECOND LATERAL DEADLINE: JOINT COMMITTEE REFERRALS

Prior to the March 21st “Second Lateral” deadline, the standing committees must navigate the tight logistical restraints and public notice requirements to ensure that bills with ‘Joint Referrals’ are passed out of committee in time to meet the deadline. This requires a lot of close coordination with my fellow committee chairs and inevitably results in residing over multiple joint hearings in a single day. Amongst some of the jointly referred bills that we passed to meet the Second Lateral deadline include measures relating to the State Rental Supplement Program for vulnerable Kupuna, Ohana Zones & supportive housing, prescription drug cost controls, emission standards, health care workforce development programs, cesspool conversion grants, telecommunications access, manufactured hemp products, and medical cannabis patient access.



KALAUPAPA SETTLEMENT

At a special joint hearing with the Senate Committee on Energy and Intergovernmental Affairs on Senate Bill (SB) 1432. SB1432 establishes the Kalaupapa State Historical Area and authorizes the Department of Health to continue providing services statewide to Hansen's disease patients living in the community. As Chair of the Committee on Health & Human Services, I inserted language that requires the Department of Health to include Ka Ohana O Kalaupapa and a topside community organization from Molokai in the transition planning team.



HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES: RESOLUTIONS AND NOMINATIONS

Monday's Health & Human Services hearing. On the agenda was a mix of Senate Resolutions and confirmation hearings for the Governor's Nominations. Amongst others, the Committee on Health & Human Services voted to 'Advise & Consent' to the nomination of Mr. Raymond Mamea for the State Council on Developmental Disabilities. Mr. Mamea's nomination will now go before the full Senate for a vote with the committee's recommendation to confirm. The committee is so very grateful to all of the nominees for volunteering their time and expertise to serve on our state's various boards.



SENATOR IN THE NEWS



Update: Senate bill advances to increase air medical services

<https://mauinow.com/2025/02/03/senate-bill-set-for-hearing-monday-on-increasing-air-medical-services/>



Hawai'i lawmakers still considering year-round legislative session

<https://www.hawaiipublicradio.org/local-news/2025-02-04/hawaii-lawmakers-consider-year-round-legislative-session>



Public Discourse Was Flowing On The Pot Bill. Then The House Snuffed It

<https://www.hawaiipublicradio.org/local-news/2025-02-04/hawaii-lawmakers-consider-year-round-legislative-session>



Senate panel passes bill to fund illegal fireworks task force

<https://mauinow.com/2025/02/06/senate-panel-passes-bill-to-fund-illegal-fireworks-task-force/>



Hawaii bill would subsidize fencing to control ungulates

<https://www.staradvertiser.com/2025/02/18/hawaii-news/hawaii-bill-would-subsidize-fencing-to-control-ungulates/>



Keiki Caucus presents 2025 bill package, priorities to state legislators

<https://bigislandnow.com/2025/01/29/state-legislature-hear-proposed-bills-advocating-for-hawai%CA%BBis-keiki/>

2025 CONCURRENT RESOLUTIONS

IN ADDITION TO BILLS, I HAVE ALSO INTRODUCED A PACKAGE OF RESOLUTIONS FOR THE 2025 LEGISLATIVE SESSION. BELOW ARE SOME OF THE CONCURRENT RESOLUTIONS THAT I HAVE PUT UP FOR FIRST READING. IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN ANY OF THESE MEASURES AND WOULD LIKE HELP USING THE TRACKING FEATURE ON THE HAWAII LEGISLATURE'S WEBSITE (WWW.CAPITOL.HAWAII.GOV), PLEASE DO NOT HESITATE TO CONTACT MY OFFICE AT (808) 586-6890.



SCR68 - RELATING TO ROADWAY MAINTENANCE

REQUESTING THE COUNTIES TO AUTHORIZE A PERCENTAGE OF TAXES GENERATED BY THE GENERAL EXCISE AND FUEL TAXES COLLECTED BY THE COUNTIES TO BE USED FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF PRIVATELY-OWNED ROADWAYS THAT ARE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC.



SCR13 - RELATING TO COMMUNITY CARE FOSTER FAMILY HOMES

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES AND DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO ESTABLISH A PROGRAM TO INCENTIVIZE COMMUNITY CARE FOSTER FAMILY HOMES IN THE STATE TO ACCEPT INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE ELIGIBLE FOR ASSISTANCE PURSUANT TO THE STATE'S MEDICAID I/DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES WAIVER PROGRAM.



SCR15 - PROTECTING STUDENTS FROM HARMFUL AND INNAPPROPRIATE MATERIAL

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO AMEND ITS TECHNOLOGY MONITORING POLICIES AND GUIDELINES TO INCLUDE MONITORING THAT BLOCKS STUDENTS FROM RECEIVING INAPPROPRIATE MESSAGES AND ACCESSING HARMFUL MATERIAL.



SCR69 - RELATING TO DRUG COSTS

REQUESTING THE DIRECTOR OF HEALTH TO CONVENE A PHARMACY BENEFIT MANAGER WORKING GROUP TO DETERMINE THE BEST POLICIES TO REFORM PHARMACY BENEFIT MANAGER PRACTICES IN THE STATE TO ENSURE TRANSPARENCY AND FAIRNESS FOR CONSUMERS AND IN THE PHARMACEUTICAL SECTOR, LOWER DRUG COSTS TO PATIENT CONSUMERS, AND INCREASE ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE.



SCR86 - RELATING TO AIR AMBULANCE SERVICES

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO CONVENE AN AEROMEDICAL SERVICES WORKING GROUP TO DEVELOP PLANS, PROCEDURES, PROTOCOLS, AND FUNDING TO INCREASE THE STABILITY OF AIR AMBULANCE SERVICES.

SCR10 - RELATING TO HEALTH INSURANCE REFORM

URGING THE DIRECTOR OF HEALTH TO ESTABLISH A WORKING GROUP ON HEALTH INSURANCE REFORM TO PROVIDE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REDUCING THE IMPACT OF PRIOR AUTHORIZATION REQUIREMENTS ON THE TIMELY DELIVERY OF HEALTHCARE IN THE STATE.



SCR73 - RELATING TO TRAUMA INFORMED CARE

REQUESTING THE OFFICE OF WELLNESS AND RESILIENCE TO DEVELOP A REPORT TO ADDRESS THE DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS OF CHILDREN BORN DURING THE CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 PANDEMIC.

The Official Arts and Crafts Fair of the Merrie Monarch Festival



Merrie Monarch

HAWAIIAN ARTS & CRAFTS FAIR

April 23 to 26, 2025

Wednesday - Friday: 9am to 5pm

Saturday: 9am to 4pm

**Afook Chinen Civic Auditorium & Butler Buildings
Hilo, Hawai‘i**

Manuahi • Free Admission

*Supporting Hawai‘i Artisans and Creators and Showcasing the
Official 2025 Merrie Monarch Apparel, Posters & Programs*

merriemonarch.com | [@merriemonarchcraftfair](https://www.instagram.com/merriemonarchcraftfair)





NATIVE HAWAIIAN PLANT FESTIVAL

Giveaways • Educational booths • Hands-on activities



APRIL 12TH
Saturday, 9am-3pm

18-1325 Old Volcano Rd.
Mountain View, HI

FAFSA HAWAII HOTLINE

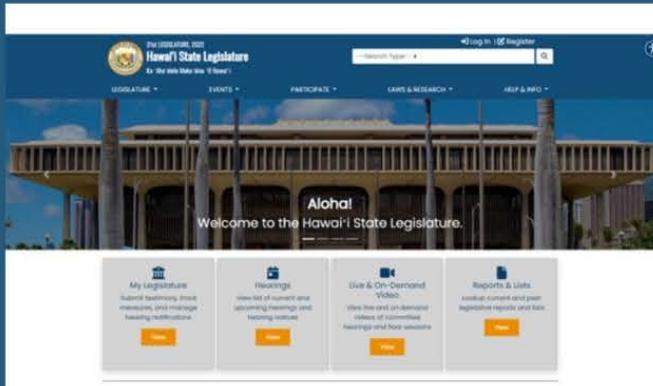
***FAFSA is now available for the
2025-2026 award year!***

**FAFSA QUESTIONS?
CALL (808) 842-2540**

Legislative Reference Bureau: Public Access Room

The Public Access Room (PAR) provides the public with information, facilities, and services to assist them as they engage and participate in the State legislative process. PAR's website includes guides on how to track measures, submit testimony, and subscribe to hearing notices.

To learn more, please visit:
<https://lrb.hawaii.gov/par/>



Legislature's Website

The Legislature site provides quick and easy access to the information you need in order to participate in the lawmaking process.

[Visit the Legislature site](#)