



Senator Joy San Buenaventura

Senate District 2, Puna

- Chair, Senate Committee on Health & Human Services
- Senate Committee on the Judiciary

@sensenbuenaventura

February 2026 E-Newsletter

FEBRUARY 2026 LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

Aloha:

On January 21st, we opened the 2026 legislative session and I am now finalizing my bill package for the 2026 legislative session. As your Senate representative, I am very proud of the many legislative successes that you have helped me push through during previous sessions. This year, I will continue to prioritize infrastructure improvements in our district, while also protecting the social safety nets that support many working class families throughout our state. Thanks to community advocates along with support from public and private sources, we are making much needed investments in our island's healthcare infrastructure and homeless support programs. As Chair of the Senate Committee of Health & Human Services, I am committed to expanding access to healthcare in our district and I will continue to use my position to ensure that the needs of Puna remain a priority.

Throughout the session, I will continue to provide legislative updates and alerts on any bills that specifically affect our district. If you have any questions about the legislative process, have any comments on a specific bill, and/or would like help navigating the Hawaii State Legislature website, please do not hesitate to contact my legislative aide: j.honda@capitol.hawaii.gov

Joy San Buenaventura



32nd Annual Hawaii Children and Youth Summit at the state capitol.



Inaugural Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Awareness rally.

INFORMATIONAL BRIEFING: 2026 BUDGET

As the Senate Committee Chair on Health & Human Services, my responsibilities include collaborating with the appropriations committees to examine the budgets of the Department of Human Services and the Department of Health. Prior to the start of the session, the Senate Committees on Ways & Means and Health & Human Services held joint public informational briefings to review the executive budget proposals. These briefings give the legislature the opportunity to further ensure that our resources are being used for the benefit of the public and that we are prioritizing our state's most urgent needs.



DISTRICT2 ACADEMIC RECOGNITION

Elijah Dinkel earns President's List honors at Utah Tech University

Students at Utah Tech University in the fall 2025 semester demonstrated remarkable academic talent, with 951 students earning President's List honors.

Elijah Dinkel was among 951 Utah Tech University President's List honorees for the fall 2025 semester. To qualify, students had to attain a semester GPA of 3.9 or higher and complete at least 15 credits.

Emma Lindsey receives Dean's List honors for fall 2025 semester

Students at Utah Tech University showcased exceptional academic performance during the fall 2025 semester, with 1,071 students earning Dean's List honors.

Emma Lindsey attained a 3.5 to 3.89 GPA and completed at least 15 credits

SNHU Announces Kayla Jones, Roger Dickey, and Leilani Stone earn Fall 2025 President's List honors

It is with great pleasure that Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU) congratulates **Kayla Jones, Roger Dickey, and Leilani Stone** on being named to the Fall 2025 President's List.

Full-time undergraduate students who have earned a minimum grade-point average of 3.700 and above for the reporting term are named to the President's List.

SENATE DISTRICT 2 UPDATE: FUNDING AWARDED TO

HAWAII ISLAND COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER

\$400,000

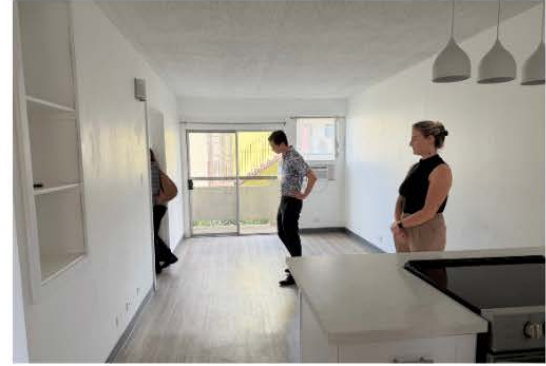
THE OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR HAS
AUTHORIZED RELEASE OF FUNDS FOR
HAWAII ISLAND COMMUNITY HEALTH
CENTER.

\$400,000 FOR DESIGN TO TRANSFORM
EXISTING KEAAU MEDICAL, DENTAL,
AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CENTER
INTO A FULLY DEDICATED DENTAL
CLINIC.

SENATOR JOY A. SAN BUENAVENTURA
SENATE DISTRICT 2



I did a site visit of Family Promise of Hawaii's most recent affordable housing project. The site, which provides housing for 20 low income families, was acquired almost entirely with Federal Grant monies. The rent covers the site's operating costs allowing them to continue to provide housing and support services (case management, financial education, workforce development, tenancy training, and other wrap around services) at no cost to the legislature. I am very grateful for the work being done by our local non-profits and as Chair of the Senate Committee on Health & Human Services, I will continue to support similar affordable housing projects on Hawaii Island and critical housing services that provide comprehensive, innovative, and compassionate approaches to helping Hawaii families secure stable housing.



This morning the community came together to honor the lives of Alex Pretti and Renee Good. Recent videos of Alex Pretti's death have reignited concerns over the well-being of our community and we encourage the federal government to address the public's concerns about accountability, public safety, and our collective civil rights.



I was honored to take part in a joint House and Senate meet-and-greet to welcome a Prefectural Delegation Assembly from Fukuoka, Japan. In 1881, King Kalākaua's visit to Japan led to the first wave of Japanese contract laborers arriving in Hawaii, many of whom were from Fukuoka Prefecture. In 1981, Hawaii and Fukuoka established the first Japan-U.S. sister-state relationship. Today, our bond continues to foster cultural and educational exchanges.





On the 2nd day of the legislative session, we hosted Razan, a 15-year old exchange student from Lebanon. Razan interned with me for the day as she wants to be in the health profession, a surgeon, when she grows up.



Discussing legislative priorities with The Hawaii Academy of Family Physicians (HAFP): Dr. Rob Carlisle, Dr. Kehau Wong (Big Island), and Dr. Marti Taba. I am grateful for the HAFP's focus on serving rural/underserved districts and supporting residency programs.



Pre-session meeting with Justice Sabrina S. McKenna, the first Richardson Law graduate to serve on the Hawai'i Supreme Court as its Acting Chief Justice. I am honored to have served in both the House and Senate Judiciary Committees and I look forward to continuing to serve on the Senate Judiciary Committee next year.



With Hawaii Island Realtor discussing legislative initiatives, responsibly increasing our state housing supply, and expanding housing opportunities for local families, which ultimately make it easier for Hawaii residents to stay in Hawaii.



With the Hawaii Island Fentanyl Task Force. Great meeting with them and supporting their fight against opioid addiction. Wally Lau, Representative Jeanne Kapela, Dr. Hannah Preston-Pita, and Kapono Kekela.



With American Medical Response (AMR) Regional Director of Hawaii Operations, Speedy Bailey and Regional Director, Tiffany Allen, discussing legislative priorities and improving the continuum of care throughout Hawaii.

Hawaii Women's Legislative Caucus

2026 Bill Package

SB2841 / HB1960 HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Requires the Department of the Attorney General to develop a Human Trafficking Awareness Training Program to educate and train workers in the transient accommodations sector. Requires transient accommodations employers to periodically provide the human trafficking awareness training to certain employees and contract workers; keep records of the training; post signage; and develop and implement a human trafficking prevention policy that includes procedures for the reporting of suspected human trafficking. Establishes penalties. Requires the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to adopt rules.

SB2842 / HB1962 RELATING TO FAMILY

Establishes an exemption from mediation in parentage proceedings where there are allegations of domestic abuse. Clarifies the exemption from mediation in divorce proceedings as it relates to domestic abuse.

SB2843 / HB1959 DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Extends for five years certain provisions from Act 19, SLH 2020, and Act 238, SLH 2021, relating to abuse of family or household members, including establishing a petty misdemeanor offense of abuse of family or household members, clarifying penalties for violations, and allowing a deferred acceptance of guilty plea for misdemeanor and petty misdemeanor abuse of family or household members offenses. Effective 6/29/2026.

SB2844 / HB1963 IMAGE-BASED SEXUAL ABUSE

Establishes the nonconsensual disclosure of intimate or private images as a criminal offense. Amends the criteria for an extended term of imprisonment to include an offender whose act of attempting to commit or committing the nonconsensual disclosure of intimate or private images against a minor or vulnerable adult resulted in the victim's death.

SB2845 / HB1961 HEALTH CARE

Prohibits persons from interfering with another person's access to or from a health care facility or disrupting the normal functioning of a health care facility. Makes violations a petty misdemeanor. Establishes a private right of action for individuals and health care facilities harmed as a result of interference with a health care facility. Authorizes the Attorney General to bring an action for injunctive or other equitable relief.

► **Fall application deadline March 1, 2026**

Shape the future of Public Health by earning your Master's Degree in Health Policy and Management.

► **Informational webinar,
February 10, 2026, 12 p.m. HST**

What You will learn in this webinar:

Program highlights: Discover how this online Master's program equips you with the skills to develop and implement policies that make a difference in communities locally and globally.

Career Opportunities: Learn about diverse health policy and management roles, from nonprofit leadership to governmental advisory positions.

Flexible Learning: See how our fully online structure empowers you to advance your career without putting your life on hold.

Q&A Session: Get answers from a faculty and program advisor about admissions, curriculum, and financial aid options.

Reserve your spot today!



► **A degree for you**

21 months

No GRE required

Online Courses

Affordable



UNIVERSITY of HAWAII at MĀNOA

THOMPSON SCHOOL

SOCIAL WORK & PUBLIC HEALTH

► **outreach.hawaii.edu/publichealth**

I OLA: OHA'S EMERGENCY RELIEF FUNDS SNAP ASSISTANCE

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs and Hawaiian Council are happy to extend a helping hand to those affected by the federal shutdown.



We invite **eligible Native Hawaiian residents currently receiving SNAP benefits** to join us in-person for assistance.

Up to \$350 in grocery gift cards per person will be available on a first-come, first-served basis.

JOIN US IN PERSON

KTA Waimea - Thursday February 5th, 3pm-6pm

KTA Puainako - Friday, February 6th, 11am-3pm

SNAP ASSISTANCE (UP TO \$350 PER PERSON)

To qualify, applicants must:

1. Be Native Hawaiian
2. Live in Hawai'i
3. Be a current SNAP recipient
4. Have no minor dependents

Eligibility Requirements:

- Government-issued photo ID
- Proof of Hawai'i residency
- Proof of Native Hawaiian ancestry:
 - Preferred: OHA Hawaiian Registry ID or OHA HRP-approval email
 - If not registered:
 - Birth certificate **and**
 - Recent photo of self
- Proof of current SNAP benefits

APPLICATIONS ACCEPTED:



Online:

www.hawaiiancouncil.org/oha-relief/



By Phone:

(808)596-8155
Mon-Fri: 9:00am-7:00pm



In Person:

91-1270 Kinoiki St., Kapolei 96707
Mon-Fri: 9:00am-5:30pm
After hours by appointment only



AUTO INSURANCE CHANGES

As of January 1, 2026, Hawai'i law increased the minimum liability insurance coverage limits that all drivers and motor vehicle owners must carry.

The new minimum liability limits required are:

- \$40,000 Bodily Injury Liability per person
- \$80,000 Bodily Injury Liability per accident
- \$20,000 Property Damage Liability per accident

These limits are commonly shown as 40/80/20.





Free Seminar: Stop Fraud Before It Starts

Practical Steps to Outsmart Scammers in the Age of AI and Crypto

Fraudsters are evolving fast. They use convincing AI voices, deepfakes, and cryptocurrency to hide their tracks. In this energizing free seminar, fraud expert Doug Shadel shares what decades of research and real scams reveal about how cons work, why smart people get hooked, and how to shut them down. You'll see AI-driven fraud in action, learn what crypto is and why criminals love it, and leave with red-flag checklists and simple refusal scripts you can use today.

Free breakfast provided.

Featured Speaker:

Doug Shadel, Managing Director of Fraud Prevention Strategies, LLC is a former fraud investigator and special assistant attorney general with the Washington State Attorney General's office. He has collaborated on numerous academic studies and co-authored several books about fraud.

February 26, 2026

9:30 a.m. to 11:30

Hilo Hawaiian Hotel
71 Banyan Dr,
Hilo, HI 96720

Registration Required:

Call toll free
1-877-926-8300

Online:

events.aarp.org/fraud2-26





For life-threatening emergencies, call 911.

For non-life-threatening emergencies, call (808) 935-3311.

For the Fire Department, call (808) 961-8336.



PROPER 911 USE

Learn when and how to use 911 for emergencies to ensure a quick and effective response.



POLICE DIRECTORY

Access contact information for HPD departments, stations, and specialized units.



CRIME STOPPERS

Submit anonymous tips about crimes or suspicious activity to help keep our community safe.



ANIMAL CONTROL

Report stray or dangerous animals, access lost-and-found services, or learn about licensing and care.



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Find support, counseling, and emergency resources for victims of domestic violence.



KULEANA HOTLINE

Share non-emergency community concerns confidentially to improve neighborhood safety.



REPORT AN UNSAFE DRIVER

Notify authorities about reckless, impaired, or dangerous driving behavior.



GET A COPY OF A POLICE REPORT

Request copies of police reports for legal, personal, or insurance purposes.



SUBMIT A TIP ABOUT AN UNSOLVED CASE

Provide confidential information to assist investigations.

CHILD WELLNESS INCENTIVE PROGRAM

Earn \$50 per child per year for taking your child to a well-child examination visit.

The Hawaii Child Wellness Incentive Pilot Program (HCWIP) seeks to ensure the health of children in Hawaii, including early detection of potential illnesses. This program awards a \$50.00 incentive card to any parent who is a Medicaid/QUEST member for taking their child under the age of 18 to complete a well-child examination once per year. The child does not need to be a Medicaid/QUEST member.



Contact Us :

Phone: 833-909-3631

Email: HCWIP@dhs.hawaii.gov

Fax: 808-900-7978

Mail: DHS/MQD ATTN:HCWIP

PO Box 700190

Kapolei, HI 96707



“Keeping Our Growing Keiki Healthy”

Hawaii Child Wellness Incentive Program (HCWIP)

Earn \$50 per child per year for taking your child to a well-child examination visit!

Easy as 1-2-3!



See a doctor Submit Application Get card by mail

- 1) Take your child for a well-child examination
- 2) Submit completed DHS 1193 application form
[DHS 1193 Form and Instructions \(Rev. 05.2024\).pdf](#)
- 3) Receive a \$50 incentive card by mail

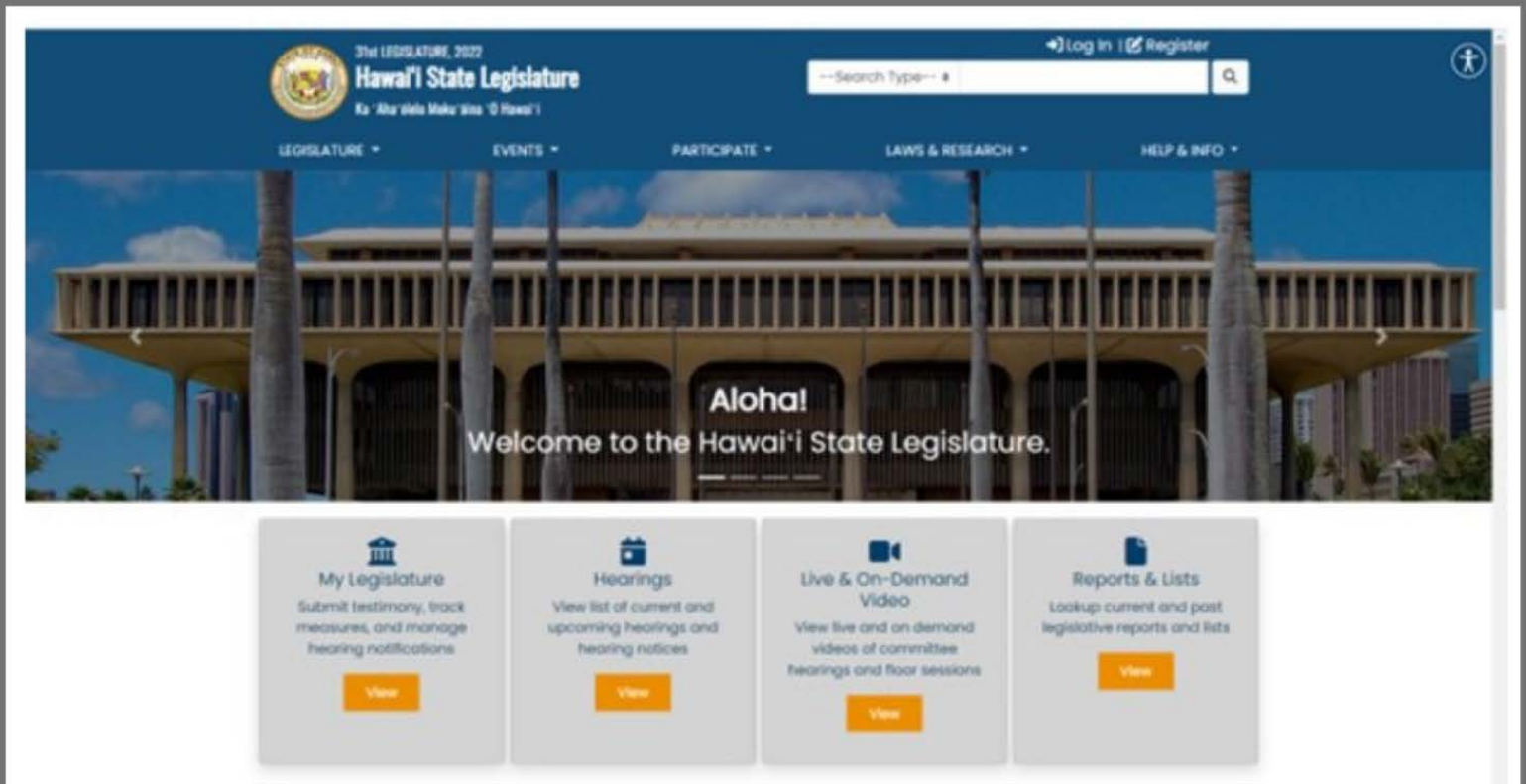
The Hawaii Child Wellness Incentive Pilot program (HCWIP) seeks to ensure the health of children in Hawaii, including early detection of potential illnesses. This program awards a \$50.00 incentive card to any parent who is a Medicaid/QUEST member for taking their child under the age of 18 to complete a well-child examination once per year. The child does not need to be a Medicaid/QUEST member.

**For Customer Service Call:
833-909-3631**



“Keeping Our Growing Keiki Healthy”

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/>