



Senator Joy San Buenaventura

Senate District 2, Puna

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

  @sensasbuenaventura

March 2026 E-Newsletter

MARCH 2026 UPDATE FROM THE LEGISLATURE

Aloha:

Since my last update, the Hawaii State Legislature met the deadline to report bills to their final committee referrals. As you know, the condensed nature of the legislative calendar requires us to move quickly and prioritize the most important and most urgent legislation. As Chair of the Senate Committee on Health & Human Services, I have passed nearly 100 bills relating to subjects such as Child Welfare, Statewide Air Medical Services, Healthcare staffing, Drinking Water Infrastructure, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Domestic Abuse, Prescription Drug Coverage, Med Quest, Medical Cannabis, SNAP benefits, Kupuna Housing, and more. Due the broad range of bills that fall under the purview of Health and Human Services, my committee usually receives the largest number of referrals outside of the A-bracket committees (Ways & Means, Judiciary, and Commerce & Consumer Protection) and I will continue to work with my counterparts in the State House of Representatives as we head to the first crossover.

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 office: (808) 586-6890 or email j.honda@capitol.hawaii.gov

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joy San Buenaventura".

Joy San Buenaventura



SENATE DISTRICT 2 UPDATE: FUNDING AWARDED TO

VOLCANO ROAD

NORTHBOUND ACCELERATION LANE

\$290,000

THE OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR HAS AUTHORIZED **\$290,000** IN FUNDING TO FINANCE THE DESIGN FOR THE NORTHBOUND ACCELERATION LANE ON VOLCANO ROAD IN THE VICINITY OF MAMAKI STREET. THIS WILL HELP UPPER PUNA COMMUTERS INTO HILO USING STAINBACK.

THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO HELPED TO SUPPORT THIS EFFORT. PROJECTS SUCH AS THESE ARE CRITICAL COMPONENTS OF THE PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE AND CONTRIBUTE TO BUILDING A BETTER HOME FOR EVERYONE IN OUR PUNA COMMUNITY.

SENATOR JOY A. SAN BUENAVENTURA
SENATE DISTRICT 2





I was honored to have recently been given the "Legislator of the Year" award by the Hawaii Dental Association. As Chair of the Senate Committee on Health & Human Services, I understand the importance of dental health and the urgent need to ensure that low-income families with children have access to care. In 2022, I introduced legislation to reinstate adult dental benefits for Medicaid enrollees and due to the overwhelming support for my bill, the legislature actually ended up inserting funding for adult dental benefits into the budget.



Speaking with KHON2 News following the joint WAM/HHS Informational Briefing.



Receiving Aloha United Way 211 - 2025 Annual Report with President & CEO Michelle Bartell. 211 provides free, confidential access to health and human services information and referrals in every county statewide.



Receiving the State of Food Insecurity in Hawaii Report. The report was commissioned by the Hawaii Food Bank, The Food Basket (Hawaii Island's Food Bank), Maui Food Bank, and Hawaii Food Bank Kauai. Food insecurity is strongly associated with chronic health conditions including anxiety, depression and gastrointestinal issues. One of the bills I co-introduced and passed in committee this session is SB3245 - Relating to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). SB3245 requires the DHS to adjust the minimum certification periods for SNAP benefits households and participate in the Elderly Simplified Application Project. If signed into law, this measure would simplify SNAP enrollment and reduce administrative burdens to increase participation among eligible households. As Chair of the Committee on Health & Human Services, I remain committed to reducing barriers to public assistance programs and ensuring community food services remain available for those experiencing food insecurity.

I was honored to present a Senate Certificate recognizing Friends of the Library of Hawaii's Excellence in Service Awardee, Ambronette (Amber) Rivera. Amber is the Library Assistant III at the Mountain View Public & School Library. According to her peers, Amber greets everyone who enters the library, and knows most of the regulars by name. She assists when needed and goes the extra mile to help patrons, especially kupuna, with tech needs. When asked about what she enjoys most about her job, Amber shared that she loves meeting new people, building relationships with patrons, and making sure they have positive experiences at the library and that they leave happy. In addition to Amber, the Friends of the Library also honored Legislator of the Year, House Speaker Nadine Nakamura, Librarian of the Year, Matthew Brown (Library for the Blind & Print Disabled), Volunteers Brenda Lucas, Gail Satsuma, and Glenn Satsuma.



Thank you very much to the students and teachers of Keaau Middle School and Hilo High School for visiting my state capitol office. I appreciate being able to discuss the legislative process and I am especially grateful for the opportunity to learn more about your legislative priorities and what issues are important to you. Connecting students and their legislative representatives, provides an opportunity for lawmakers to better understand the needs of students and in turn, we have a better idea of how to approach policies that help support the future that they envision for themselves.



Discussing legislative priorities with AARP. On March 28, 2026 AARP will be giving a free family caregiver seminar at the Keaau Community Center.

Free Family Caregiver Seminar

March 28, 2026
Keaau Community Center - 16-186 Pili Mua Street, Keaau HI

Feature Speakers:

- Senator Joy San Buenaventura
- Representative Chris Todd
- Cheryl Dias, HIAC Caregiver Counselor; Positive Approach to Care Certified Independent Trainer
- Meredith Catalini, Hawaii Aging & Disability Resource Center, ADRC Service Manager
- Nic Los Banos, Alzheimer's Association, Hawaii County Program Manager



FREE FAMILY CAREGIVER SEMINAR

Caring for Kupuna? Get Prepared

Join us for a morning designed to help you confidently support an older loved one—whether you're caring now or planning ahead. Learn about healthy brain aging, local resources and steps to build a care team. Connect with others who understand the challenges of caregiving. Get a brief update on current policy issues that may impact caregivers and the kūpuna they support.

FEATURED SPEAKERS:

- Senator Joy San Buenaventura
- Representative Chris Todd
- Cheryl Dias, HIAC Caregiver Counselor; Postive Approach to Care® Certified Independent Trainer
- Meredith Catalini, Hawai'i Aging & Disability Resource Center, ADRC Service Manager
- Nic Los Banos, Alzheimer's Association, Hawaii County Program Manager

Saturday

March 28, 2026

9:30 AM to 11:30 AM

Kea`au Community Center
16-186 Pili Mua Stret
Kea`au, HI

**Pastries, fruit and coffee
provided.**

Pre-registration Required:



SCAN ME

<https://events.aarp.org/hicare3-28>

Or 1-877-926-8300

SENATE DISTRICT 2 UPDATE: FUNDING AWARDED TO

ORCHIDLAND NEIGHBORS, HAWAI'I

\$200,000

THE OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR HAS
AUTHORIZED RELEASE OF **\$200,000**
FOR ORCHIDLAND NEIGHBORS,
HAWAI'I.

FUNDING FOR THE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT
PROGRAM (CIP) GRANT-IN-AID (GIA)
PROJECT WILL BE USED FOR CONSTRUCTION
FOR A MULTI-PURPOSE COMPLEX IN
ORCHIDLAND ESTATES, KEAAU, HI.

SENATOR JOY A. SAN BUENAVENTURA
SENATE DISTRICT 2



DISTRICT 2 ACADEMIC RECOGNITION

Kurtistown resident Abby Jensen named to Clark University's Fall Dean's List

Abby G. Jensen, of Kurtistown, was named to first honors on the Clark University Dean's List. This selection marks outstanding academic achievement during the Fall 2025 semester. Students must have a GPA of 3.8 or above for first honors or a GPA between 3.50 and 3.79 for second honors.

Daphne Althea Igloria Makes Fall 2025 Dean's List at Adelphi University in New York

Daphne Althea Igloria has been named to Adelphi University's Fall 2025 Semester Dean's List. Igloria was among a select group of outstanding students recognized by Adelphi's deans of Arts and Sciences, Education and Health Science, Business, Nursing and Public Health, Social Work and Psychology for superior academic performance. The list comprises full-time students-registered for 12 or more credits-who have completed at least nine graded credits who achieved a GPA of 3.5 or above for the semester. This recognition becomes part of the student's academic record and is entered into the individual's transcript.

Crismel Juan named to MSOE Honors List for Fall Semester 2025

Crismel Juan, from Big Island, was named to the Milwaukee School of Engineering's Honors List for the 2025 Fall Semester. Juan is pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Nursing.

MSOE encourages excellence in academic achievement and, as a result, publishes the Dean's List and Honors List each fall and spring semester. Students taking undergraduate courses who have earned at least 12 credits in residence at MSOE, are in good academic standing, and have a cumulative GPA of 3.20 or higher are on the Dean's List. Students on that list who have maintained a 3.70 or higher receive "high honors." Students with a term GPA of 3.20 or higher, who are not on the Dean's List, are on the Honors List.



OHA Seeks Grant Evaluators for New Grant Programs

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs is seeking individuals interested in serving as grant applicant evaluators.

Capital Improvement Project (CIP)

For the design and construction of projects approved by the Hawai'i State Legislature designed to meet the needs of our Native Hawaiian community.

Mālama Honua Home Improvement/Renovation Program Grant for Nonprofits (Mālama Honua)

Evaluators will select a nonprofit organization to implement the grant program to target Native Hawaiian homeowners otherwise ineligible for traditional loans due to income or credit limitations who need critical health and safety repairs.

Apply to be a grant evaluator today!

oha.org/grants

JOIN THE FIGHT FOR HEALTH EQUITY:

Earn Your
Masters in
Public Health
from UH Mānoa.



APPLY NOW!



UNIVERSITY of HAWAII' at MĀNOA*

THOMPSON SCHOOL

SOCIAL WORK & PUBLIC HEALTH

SCAM ALERT: DMV PHISHING TEXTS

PUBLIC IS WARNED ABOUT SCAM TEXT MESSAGES FALSELY CLAIMING TO BE FROM THE HAWAII DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES

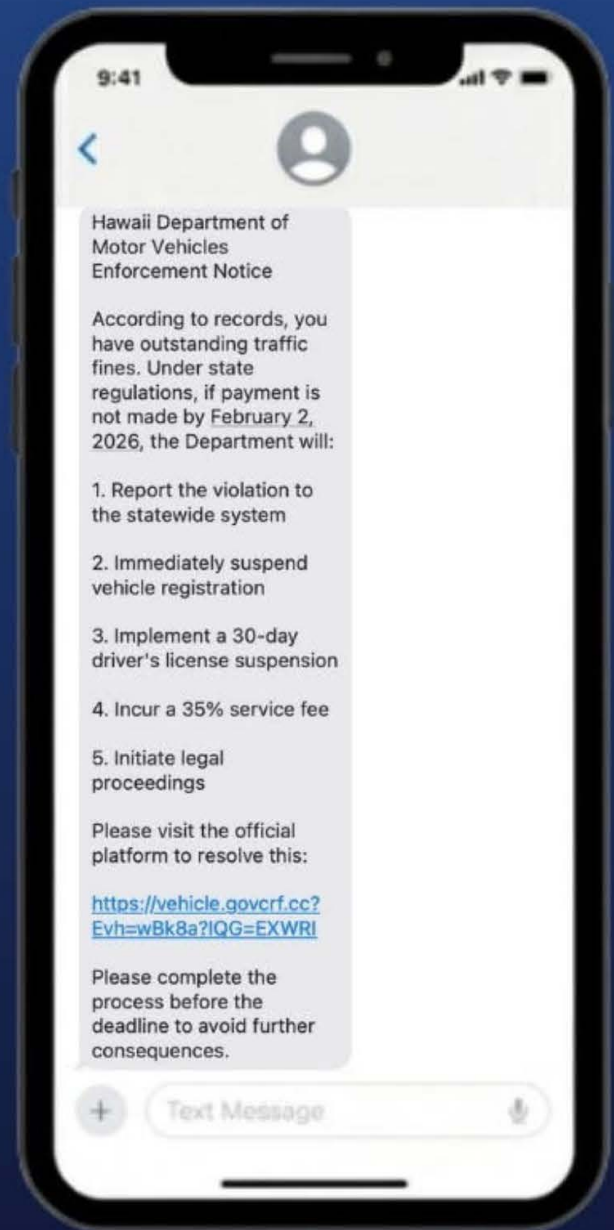
HOW THE SCAM WORKS

- Messages come from unknown numbers
- Often begin with “Important: Your Traffic Fine is Pending Payment”
- Threaten vehicle registration cancellation, license suspension, added fees, or legal action
- Include a link to a official looking fake payment page designed to steal personal and financial information

✗ These messages are **NOT** affiliated with the Hawai'i State Judiciary, State of Hawai'i offices, or County DMV offices.

IMPORTANT REMINDER

- Official communications **do not** request payment through unsolicited text messages, third-party websites, or unfamiliar web addresses.



DCCA
HAWAII



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.

AARP Foundation Tax-Aide

Hawai'i kupuna can get expert help filing their taxes at no cost this tax season through AARP Foundation Tax-Aide, the nation's largest free, volunteer-based tax assistance and preparation program, run by AARP Foundation, the charitable affiliate of AARP.

“During the 2025 tax season alone, AARP Foundation Tax-Aide volunteers completed 420,967 returns in Hawai'i with refunds of nearly \$5.3 million,” said AARP Hawai'i State Director Keali'i Lopez. “Tax-Aide helps older adults get the refunds and credits they've earned, free of charge and with no hidden fees. For many on fixed incomes, that refund can make a real difference in covering everyday essentials, like food, utilities and medicine.”

**For more information, please visit:
<https://taxaide.aarpfoundation.org/>**





2026 NEIGHBOR ISLANDS SITE LOCATIONS

All sites serving clients in-person; first-come/first-served walk-in basis, unless otherwise noted below.
Bring last year's 2024 returns with current Tax Year 2025 tax documents and voided check.

BIG ISLAND - KONA

Yano Hall (S122)

82-6156 Mamalahoa Hwy
Captain Cook, HI 96704

Open Wednesdays 2/4 - 4/8,
10 AM – 4 PM

APPT LINE: (808) 765-9141 (Call for
appt now thru 4/7, daily between
8:30AM – 7:30 PM)

Both walk-ins and appointments
accepted

Hale Halawai Community Ctr (S106)

75-5760 Ali'i Drive
Kailua-Kona, HI 96740

Open Thursdays 2/5 - 4/9,
8 AM – 12 noon

Walk-in; free parking on site

Waimea Community Ctr (S103)

65-1260 Kawaihae Rd
Kamuela, HI 96743

Open Fridays 2/6 - 4/10,
8:30 AM – 3:00 PM

**APPT LINES: (808) 388-6645 or
(808) 885-4722**

(Appointments accepted now to end of
tax season anytime)

Walk-ins welcome as time permits

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For more info, including latest updates, go to:

<https://hi1.taxaide.aarpfoundation.org>

BIG ISLAND - HILO

A & D Resource Center (S111)

1055 Kinoole Street
Hilo, HI 96720

Open Tuesdays 2/3 – 4/7, 8 AM – 4 PM
and Thursdays 2/5 – 4/9, 8 AM – 4 PM

APPT LINE: (808) 961-8777

By appointment only, call beginning
January 2, 8 AM – 3 PM

KAUAI

Hanapepe Library (S202)

4490 Kona Road
Hanapepe, HI 96716

Open Monday 2/23, 9 AM – 2 PM, and
Mondays 3/2 - 3/30, 9 AM – 11:30 AM

Koloa Neighborhood Ctr, 3461B Weliweli Rd

Open Wed 2/25 & 3/11, 9 AM – 11:30 AM

Kekaha Neighborhood Ctr, 8130 Elepaio Rd

Open Thurs 2/26 & 3/12, 9 AM – 2 PM

Kalaheo Neighborhood Ctr, 4480 Papalina Rd

Open Wed 3/4 & 3/18, 9 AM – 11:30 AM

Kaunakani Neighborhood Ctr, 2301 Kaunakani

Open Thurs 3/5, 9 AM – 11:30 AM

Lihu'e Neighborhood Ctr (S204)

3353 Eono Street
Lihu'e, HI 96766

Open Tuesdays 2/10 & 2/17, 9 AM – 2 PM
and Tuesdays 2/24 - 3/31 (closed 3/17),
9 AM – 11:30 AM

Kalukalu at 1624, 1624 Kuhio Hwy, Kapaa

Open Thurs 2/27, 9 AM – 11:30 AM

Kukui Grove Center, 3-2600 Kaunualii Hwy,

Lihu'e

Open Fri 2/20 & Sat 2/21, 9 AM – 11:30 AM

MAUI

**As of 12/31, dates/times are subject to
change.**

All Maui sites served by appointment only

APPT LINE: (808) 270-7308, ext 3

Call for appointments starting 1/15,

Mon-Fri except holidays, 8 AM – 4 PM

Kahului Jodo Mission (S301)

325 Laau Street (corner of Laau &
Molokai Hema Streets)

Kahului, HI 96732

Open Saturdays 2/7 – 4/11 (closed
2/14 & 2/21), 8:30 AM – 12:30 PM

Kenolio Recreational Complex (S309)

Kenolio Recreational Complex–Main Hall
131 South Kihei Road

Kihei, HI 96753

Open Mondays 2/2, 2/16, 3/2, 3/16, 3/30
& 4/6, 8:30 AM – 12:30 PM

Lahaina Civic Center (S303)

1840 Honoapiilani Highway

Lahaina, HI 96761

Open Mondays 2/9, 2/23, 3/9, 3/23 &
4/13, 8:30 AM – 12:30 PM

Kaunoa Senior Center (S304)

401 Alakapa Place

Paia, HI 96779

Open Wednesdays 2/4 – 4/15 (closed 3/18)
8:30 AM – 12:30 PM

Tax-Aide volunteers provide free tax preparation and filing services to those who qualify, with a focus on adults living with low to moderate income. Volunteers are trained and IRS-certified every year to ensure they understand the latest changes to the U.S. Tax Code.

<https://www.aarp.org/states/hawaii/>

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

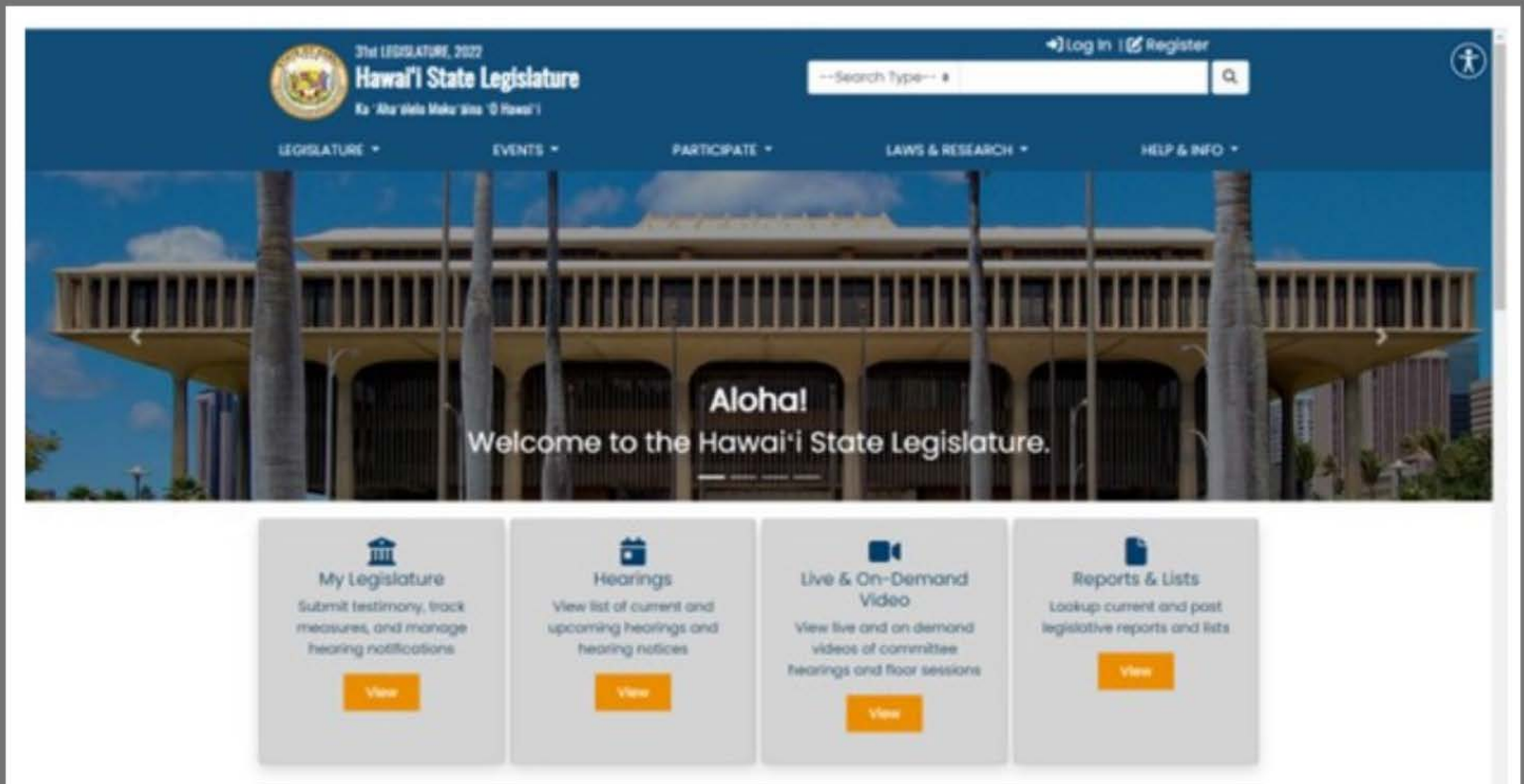
The Hawaii Child Wellness Incentive Pilot program (HCWIP) seeks to ensure the health of children in Hawaii, including early detection of potential illnesses. This program awards a \$50.00 incentive card to any parent who is a Medicaid/QUEST member for taking their child under the age of 18 to complete 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/>