



In April, Kahakai Elementary School's Student Government visited the Capitol, hosted by the West Hawai'i delegation including Kahakai parent Rep. Kirstin Kahaloa and Kahakai alumnus Sen. Dru Mamo Kanuha.

## 2026 Legislative Session Another Good One For Kona

The 2026 legislative session concluded on May 8, and while the Legislature faced difficult decisions **balancing the state budget amidst federal funding cuts while preserving lower taxes for working families**, the focus remained on strengthening local families.

In her new leadership roles as House Majority Caucus Leader and Chair of the Native Hawaiian Caucus, Rep. Kahaloa remains committed to ensuring Kona's voice is heard at the Capitol. "This year was one of long days and difficult conversations," Rep. Kirstin Kahaloa shared. "Together, we worked to move forward legislation that protects Hawai'i's future and builds a more resilient state."

### Strengthening Healthcare In Kona

Access to healthcare continues to be one of the top priorities for our community, and a strong, coordinated Hawai'i Island legislative delegation delivered resources this session.

Along with Sen. Dru Mamo Kanuha and the rest of the delegation, Rep. Kahaloa secured **\$50 million toward the future North Kona medical**

**center campus**, a partnership between the state hospital system and The Queen's Medical Center to modernize Kona's facilities and bring care closer to the population center.

The delegation also secured nearly **\$10 million for improvements to our public hospitals** islandwide including Kona Community Hospital, **\$500,000 for a new pharmacy in Kealahou** in partnership with Hawai'i Island Community Health Center, and **\$200,000 for modern diagnostic equipment** at Ali'i Health Center – all in all, **over \$60 million to improve healthcare for our community**.

"For rural communities like ours, access to healthcare is not optional – it is essential," said Rep. Kahaloa.

### Stewarding The Public Land Trust & Delivering For Native Hawaiians

One of the most significant measures passed this session was SB903, spearheaded in the House by Rep. Kahaloa, which continues the State's efforts toward **reconciliation of revenues from the Public Land Trust** – Hawaiian kingdom land



A key to West Hawaii's success at the Capitol is close collaboration across the aisle, and between both chambers of Hawaii's bicameral legislature. At a recent Civil Beat Café discussion hosted by Chad Blair and Kevin Dayton (on the left), Rep. Kahaloa shared updates from the House Majority alongside Rep. Diamond Garcia (R - 'Ewa, Kapolei) and Sen. Angus McKelvey (D - West Maui, Mā'alaea, Waikapū, South Maui).

that came into State stewardship following the illegal overthrow of the kingdom in 1893.

“Nearly seven decades after statehood, we still lack a complete and credible inventory of trust lands and agreement on how to calculate the share of revenues constitutionally mandated to uplift Native Hawaiians,” said Rep. Kahaloa.

The bill also immediately appropriates **\$55 million in Public Land Trust revenues for Native Hawaiian programs and services** addressing critical needs in education, health, economic development, and community initiatives where the federal government has made cuts.

“Where the federal government is stepping back from its responsibility to our community, we will stand in that gap to support our people, protect these programs, and ensure our keiki and kūpuna are not left behind,” Rep. Kahaloa said.

## Advancing Government Integrity, Ethics and Accountability

The House Majority concluded the session by passing a suite of good government measures aimed at strengthening ethics, transparency, and reforming campaign finance laws.

The Legislature took a strong stand against the influence of corporate money in politics by passing SB2471, **a rebuke to the U.S. Supreme Court's *Citizens United* decision** that opened the floodgates to dark money in elections. Governor Josh Green signed the bill on May 14, making Hawai'i **the first state in the nation to explicitly restrict political spending by corporations** and other artificial entities.

Also passed this session: a measure to strengthen Hawai'i's public financing for elections, a prohibition on political fundraising by certain political appointees, and extending the statute of limitations for bribery offenses, providing prosecutors with the necessary time to pursue complex corruption cases.

## Supporting Agriculture, Food Security & Local Manufacturing

Agriculture remains one of the most important pillars of Hawai'i's future, and this session Rep. Kahaloa continued working to strengthen local food systems, support farmers, and grow local manufacturing opportunities.

The Hawai'i Farm to Families Program will expand thanks to a measure introduced by



To protect 'ōkolehao as a unique product, as she did with Kona coffee, māmaki tea, and Hawai'i-grown macadamia nuts. Rep. Kahaloa worked with local entrepreneurs like Nā'ehalani Breeland of Ola Brew on legislation.

Rep. Kahaloa, with **\$1.4 million to improve food access while supporting local agriculture.** The State will partner with Hawai'i Island's Food Basket and food banks across the islands to purchase fresh produce from farmers for hungry families on the islands they serve.

A measure introduced and championed by Rep. Kahaloa establishes crucial **labeling requirements for 'ōkolehao**, a traditional Hawaiian distilled spirit, to safeguard its cultural integrity and economic potential. Traditionally made from fermented kī (ti) root, the name has been misused over the years due to a lack of clear standards, which has diluted its authenticity and consumer confidence.

By setting standards, the measure aims to support the development of a locally-rooted 'ōkolehao industry that benefits Hawai'i farmers and manufacturers, using models established by successful, regionally distinctive beverages like Kentucky bourbon or Napa Valley wine.

### Improving Traffic & Making Roads Safer

Many District 6 residents pass through the intersections of Highway 11 with Nani Kailua and Lako Street every day. An appropriation of **\$1.9**



A March storm caused significant damage to Konawaena High and Middle Schools, and Ke Kula 'o 'Ehunuikaimalino. Repairs continue, and Rep. Kahaloa is in close contact with the Dept. of Education tracking progress.

**million for intersection widening, sidewalk, crosswalk, and bike lane improvements** will make those intersections safer for drivers, pedestrians, and bikers alike.

### Investing In Our Community Schools

A torrential March storm caused significant damage to Konawaena High and Middle Schools and Ke Kula 'o 'Ehunuikaimalino. Konawaena High's 850 students transitioned to distance learning for the remainder of the school year while major structural repairs and cleanup occurs.

Rep. Kahaloa and Rep. Jeanné Kapela visited the schools shortly after the storm, and the damage was heartbreaking. The West Hawai'i delegation is closely tracking the recovery efforts with the Dept. of Education, Dept. of Accounting & General Services, and Gov. Josh Green's team.

In addition to post-storm recovery work, Rep. Kahaloa secured \$323,000 for **air conditioning system replacement and building reroofing at Konawaena Elementary School**, \$165,000 for **evacuation pathway work and cafeteria ceiling fan replacement at Kahakai Elementary School**, and \$100,000 for **facility improvements at Innovations Public Charter School.**



Representative Kirstin Kahaloa  
Hawai'i State Capitol, Room 438  
415 S. Beretania St.  
Honolulu, HI 96813



## Representative Kirstin Kahaloa

*House District 6: Hōnaunau,  
Nāpo'opo'o, Captain Cook,  
Kealakekua, Keauhou, Hōlualoa, Kailua*

call **(808) 586-8530**  
email [repkahaloa@capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:repkahaloa@capitol.hawaii.gov)  
stop by **State Capitol Room 438**  
visit [capitol.hawaii.gov/house/kahaloa](http://capitol.hawaii.gov/house/kahaloa)  
follow **@repkahaloa** on social

**Public service is always a collective effort, and none of this work happens alone.** Mahalo to our District 6 community, advocates, kūpuna, students, educators, healthcare workers, farmers, small businesses, nonprofit organizations, and everyone who took the time to testify, meet with us, share concerns, and stay engaged throughout the 2026 legislative session.

Mahalo as well to my incredible session staff – Cassie, Nanea, Kyung, Luke – and my office manager Clare for their hard work, dedication, and commitment to serving our community every day.

While session has officially adjourned, the work continues. I remain deeply committed to advocating for Kona and Hawai'i Island and building a future where local families can continue to live, work, and thrive here at home!