



Representative **Andrew Takuya Garrett** *2025 Summer Newsletter*

Proudly serving District 22 (Mānoa/Tantalus/McCully-Mō'ili'ili)

Aloha e Friends and Neighbors!

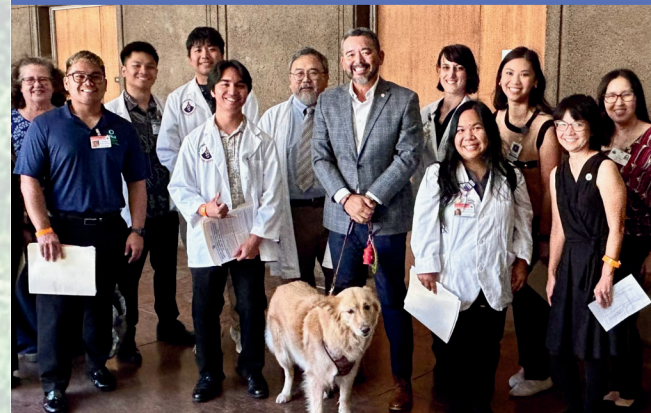
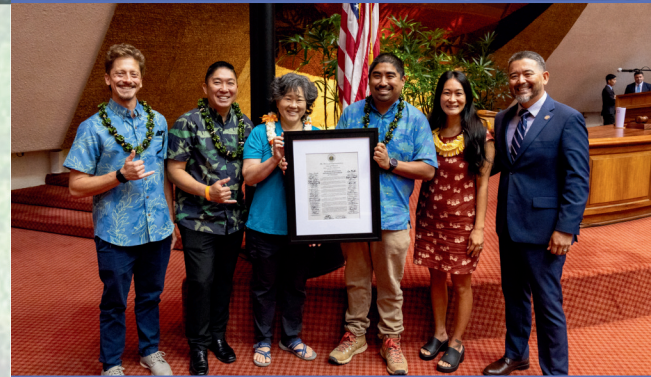
With the 2025 Legislative Session behind us, I've taken time to reflect on the challenges we faced and the progress we made together. It was a year of growth—personally and politically—as we worked to pass meaningful legislation and invest in the future of our state.

From infrastructure upgrades to cost-of-living relief and environmental protections, this session produced real results for our communities. As Chair of the House Higher Education Committee, I also had the privilege of advancing key bills to strengthen the University of Hawai'i system—supporting students, research, and accountability across our campuses.

Inside this newsletter, you'll find highlights of major bills that passed and a breakdown of key district projects we secured funding for in the biennium budget. We are likely to be called into special session later this year to respond to looming federal budget cuts, and I remain committed to protecting essential services.

As we prepare for the 2026 session, I welcome your ideas and feedback. Please scan the QR code on the back to complete the survey—your voice plays a vital role in shaping the work we do.

Mahalo for your continued support and engagement!



Top: Recognizing Ko'olau Mountains Watershed Partnership on its 25th anniversary;

Middle: Meeting UH Hilo pharmacy students;

Bottom: Hosting members of University Laboratory School's Student Council



Highlights of Major Bills/Resolutions

Please visit www.capitol.hawaii.gov for the latest updates on bills and resolutions that were passed by the 2025 legislature. The governor has until June 24th to release his “intent to veto” list. The veto deadline is July 9th.

HB441: Relating to Cigarette Taxes

Description: Increases the cigarette tax from 16 cents to 18 cents per cigarette and directs funds to the Hawaii Cancer Research Special Fund.

My position: **SUPPORT**

Rationale: Higher cigarette taxes are proven to discourage smoking, and dedicating these funds to cancer research strengthens prevention, treatment, and support efforts. This measure will raise tens of millions of additional funds toward debt service for the UH Cancer Center, one of only 72 NCI-designated facilities in the US and the only one in the Pacific.

SB897: Relating to Energy

Description: Allows HECO to recover wildfire-related costs, authorizes liability caps with the Governor’s approval, permits securitization of expenses, and directs the Public Utilities Commission to study impacts on victims and utilities.

My position: **OPPOSE**

Rationale: While I support the intent of the bill to reduce wildfire risk and ensure financial viability of electric utilities, I voted against this bill because decisions of this magnitude—such as capping utility liability for wildfires and allowing automatic rate increases—should be made by the Legislature, not by unelected regulators behind closed doors. We must be mindful of protecting Hawai’i ratepayers who already pay the highest electricity rates in the nation.

HB806: Relating to Fireworks

Description: Provides funding for sting operations and the establishment of an explosives and firearms lab, equipping law enforcement with the tools necessary to crack down on illegal fireworks.

My position: **SUPPORT**

Rationale: The tragic explosion in Aliamanu on New Year’s Day, which claimed multiple lives and injured many others, underscored the urgent need for stronger enforcement. The bombs and illegal aerials shaking our neighborhoods are not cultural—they’re criminal. It’s time we draw a clear line to protect our families, pets, and communities.

SCR121: Requesting DBEDT to convene a Tourism & Gaming Working Group

Description: Establishes a working group housed within the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism to explore legalized gambling in Hawai’i.

My position: **OPPOSE**

Rationale: This resolution represents a clear move towards the legalization of gambling in Hawai’i. This isn’t merely about exploring the issue; it’s about pre-determined outcomes. The involvement of gaming corporations and the New Aloha Stadium developer indicates that the real end game is to make the stadium financially viable with a casino. I am a firm NO when it comes to legalized gambling in Hawai’i.

HB969: Relating to Waste or Disposal Facilities

Description: Prohibits the construction of a landfill on land that is near or above a significant aquifer.

My position: **SUPPORT**

Rationale: Hawai’i’s drinking water is our most precious natural resource, and the Red Hill fuel contamination crisis has highlighted the urgent need to protect our aquifers from potential threats, including landfills. However, the City and County must keep their promise to close the landfill in Leeward Oahu and pick a site that doesn’t threaten our water supply.

HB958: Relating to Transportation

Description: Creates a safety framework for electric bicycles by prohibiting those under 15 from operating Class 3 e-bikes, requires helmets for riders under 18, bans high-powered e-bikes from public roads and restricts dangerous behaviors like wheelies.

My position: **SUPPORT**

Rationale: E-bikes have become increasingly popular, but their unregulated use has led to a surge in accidents and injuries, particularly among young riders. By implementing age restrictions, helmet requirements, and operational guidelines, this will make our roads safer for everyone and protect the lives of riders.

Delivering For District 22!

FY '26-'27 Budget Highlights

Grant-in-Aid Funding

Mānoa Japanese Language School

- **\$130,000** to replace aging bathrooms

Mō'ili'ili Community Center

- **\$350,000** for operational costs to continue to provide various classes for kūpuna

Japanese Cultural Center of Hawai'i

- **\$300,000** for construction of permanent exhibit on Japanese-American experience

Capital Improvement Projects

University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

- **\$119 million** for renovations to student housing facilities
- **\$50 million** for repair and maintenance of various campus facilities
- **\$10 million** for UH athletics, including upgrades to Stan Sheriff Center and future home of Track & Field and Wahine Soccer
- **\$9 million** for Holmes Hall (home of College of Engineering) for upgrades to laboratories
- **\$6 million** for Magoon Research Institute for Controlled Environment Agriculture project

Roosevelt High School

- **\$3.3 million** for athletics upgrades, including new girls locker room for Title IX compliance



SB1300: Relating to School Meals

Description: Expands access to free school meals in Hawai'i public schools. Starting in the upcoming school year, students who qualify for reduced-price lunch will receive meals at no cost, then the year after, the program extends to students with family income up to 300% of the federal poverty level.

My position: **SUPPORT**

Rationale: This legislation is a significant step toward ensuring that more of our keiki have consistent access to nutritious meals, which is essential for their academic success and overall well-being. By expanding free meal coverage, we support working families who are struggling with the high cost of living in Hawai'i.

SB1396: Relating to Economic Development

Description: Increases Hawai'i's Transient Accommodations Tax (TAT) by 0.75% while extending the TAT to cruise ship fares based on time spent in Hawai'i ports.

My position: **SUPPORT**

Rationale: By allocating revenue from a modest increase in visitor taxes, we can utilize this "green fee" (which is expected to raise up to \$100 million per year) to invest in protecting our natural resources, enhancing disaster preparedness, and ensuring the long-term sustainability of our communities. This proactive approach not only safeguards Hawaii's unique ecosystems but also preserves the quality of life for residents and the experience for future visitors.

SB1044: Relating to Stabilization of Property Insurance

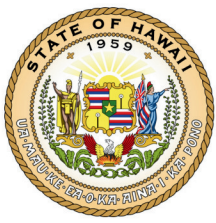
Description: Aims to stabilize Hawai'i's property insurance market by expanding the powers of the Hawai'i Property Insurance Association and reactivating the Hawai'i Hurricane Relief Fund. Establishes programs to provide financing for repairs and deferred maintenance to condo associations and incentivizes lenders to offer competitive loans.

My position: **SUPPORT**

Rationale: Many condominiums in our district are facing skyrocketing insurance costs due to global events and aging infrastructure. This legislation provides a framework to offer relief by expanding access to more affordable insurance options and financing for necessary repairs.



Current Construction at UH Lower Campus



Rep. Andrew Takuya Garrett
Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street #323
Honolulu, HI 96813
(808) 586-8475



*Rep. Garrett with House colleagues on
Adjournment Sine Die*

Your feedback guides our work!



Your voice matters—and I'd love to hear it. This brief community survey (available via the QR code below) will help guide my position on several controversial bills likely to return in the 2026 legislative session. As your Representative, I rely on your input to shape the decisions I make at the Capitol.

If you'd prefer to discuss the questions directly, give our office a call—we're happy to set up a time to chat. Prefer a paper copy? Just let us know, and we'll mail one to you. No need to use the QR code. Mahalo!

**SCAN
HERE!**

