

SENATOR STANLEY CHANG

East Honolulu Community Newsletter

March 2026



Legislative Update

2026 has been a productive legislative session so far! Most bills, generally, do not make it to the end, but several of my priority bills are still moving in the legislature. Here is an update on some of my housing and non-housing legislative priorities.

HOUSING PRIORITIES

1. **SB 2342** seeks to improve the Hawai'i Housing Finance and Development Corporation (HHFDC) Qualified Allocation Plan (QAP) by establishing a new working group. The bill passed the Senate Housing Committee and passed the Ways and Means Committee (WAM) on February 19, 2026.

The QAP is the official rubric that scores developers' applications for Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC). Developers use these tax credits to build affordable housing in Hawai'i. Currently, projects that receive lower scores are awarded over high scored applications. As a result, there is unaccountable discretion within HHFDC related to the awarding of projects. In addition, the current scoring process does not adequately prioritize projects that are permanently affordable, including State or county projects, or projects that will repay state loans as rapidly as possible.

2. **SB 2060** seeks to provide HHFDC with the financial flexibility to transfer funds from the Rental Housing Revolving Fund (RHRF) to the Mixed Income Subaccount. This bill passed the Senate Housing Committee and passed WAM on February 19, 2026.

The mixed subaccount is a new fast-revolving fund which was established in 2025 but without any funding. Currently, RHRF loans have 57 year terms and as low as 0.15% interest. The new subaccount would offer 3-5 year loans, enabling construction of ten projects for the price of one. This bill would allow HHFDC to

transfer much needed funding to the more efficient subaccount.

3. **SB 2192** would authorize a county to reduce the number of housing units that may be built within any geographical area of the county only if the county increases the number of housing units that may be built elsewhere in the county. The bill has passed both the Senate Housing and Energy and Intergovernmental Affairs Committees. The bill will now be heard in the Judiciary Committee.

NON-HOUSING PRIORITIES

1. **SB 2380** would establish a continuous legislative session. The bill has passed the Judiciary Committee and has now been referred to the WAM Committee.

Currently, the Legislature meets only four months every year. Four months is simply not enough time to consider the over 3000 bills introduced in the Legislature each year. Members of the Legislature also cannot introduce bills to address issues that arise after January. The process is ambiguous to both the public and even to Members of the Legislature. During my time in office, multiple conference periods have extended past their deadlines, leaving many bills to die in chaos, confusion, and with lack of transparency. A year-round, continuous legislative session would significantly improve the transparency, predictability, and effectiveness of the Hawai'i Legislature.

2. **SB 2199** would establish a state-owned sovereign wealth fund. The bill has been referred to the Economic Development and Tourism Committee, and WAM and the Judiciary Committees. A hearing has not been scheduled to hear the bill so it is likely to not move forward this year.

The purpose of SB 2199 is to invest a percentage of State funds and distribute earnings as cash dividends directly to qualifying residents each year, beginning in 2030. Other sovereign wealth funds

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HANDY CONTACTS

State Pothole Hotline
808-586-7852

City Pothole Hotline
808-768-7777

State Homelessness
gov.homelessness@hawaii.gov
808-586-0193

City Homelessness
complaints@honolulu.gov
808-768-4381

Abandoned Vehicles
808-733-2530

Building Permits
808-768-8000

Poison Control
800-222-1222

Trash Collection
808-768-3200

Street Light Repair
808-768-5300

Domestic Abuse Hotline
800-799-7233

Public Assistance
Information Line
855-643-1643

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in the US and in other countries use these funds in a variety of ways such as to provide direct cash payouts to all citizens, pay for higher education, or provide other public benefits that directly improve the quality of life.

3. **SB 2203** would establish the offense of use of a mask or facial covering by a law enforcement officer. This bill has passed the Senate and has now been referred to the House Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs Committee. This is one of the first bills of ours to cross over to the House.

Prohibiting the use of face masks except under certain situations, such as undercover missions, will improve public trust by drawing a sharp distinction between legitimate law enforcement and the perception of secret police tactics used by federal agents under the Trump administration.

To read about my other bills, please visit the [Hawai'i State Legislature](#).



Active Capital Improvement Projects in Senate District 9

The Hawai'i State Department of Education (HIDOE) has shared a status update on active Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) currently taking place in Senate District 9. These initiatives reflect HIDOE's ongoing work to improve school facilities, enhance safety and accessibility, modernize infrastructure, and support student learning environments.

The Department is also strengthening internal processes to streamline project reporting, improve community engagement, and provide timely updates on key milestones. Several schools in East Honolulu are currently benefiting from active projects.

Below is a list and brief description of each active CIP project:

- **Āina Haina Elementary School**
Replacements are being made to school windows and parking lot.
- **Haha'ione Elementary School**
Reroofing and Architectural Barrier Removal is ready for permitting, and the project is on the Department's Compliance Lump Sum backlog list, with construction funding anticipated in fiscal year 2027.
- **Hawai'i School for the Deaf and Blind**
Building D Dorm Renovation is under construction and

expected to be completed in Summer 2026.

Fire Alarm System Replacement is awaiting permit approvals prior to construction.

Pickleball/Basketball Court and Water Piping Replacement projects are currently in the design phase, with construction bids anticipated in early 2026.

- **Kaimukī Middle School**

Projects including STEM Lab Construction, Walkway Improvements, and Architectural Barrier Removal are in design, with construction bids anticipated in early to spring 2026.

Battery Energy Storage System construction began during Winter Break 2025.

Building A Reroofing is under construction and expected to be completed in Spring 2026.

- **Niu Valley Middle School**

Electrical Upgrades and Grease Interceptor Replacement remain on the Deferred Maintenance List, with execution anticipated in FY 2027, pending funding and prioritization.

- **Wai'ala'e Elementary PCS**

ADA Transition Improvements have been completed and the project is currently in the closeout process.

- **Waikīkī Elementary School**

G Building Ground Settlement Repairs are under permit review, with construction bidding anticipated in Spring 2026.

Looking ahead, while several projects are actively under construction, others remain in design or are awaiting funding through the State's broader school facilities prioritization process. Together, these efforts represent a significant investment in the long-term safety, accessibility, and functionality of public school campuses throughout Senate District 9.

For additional information or to discuss specific projects, inquiries may be directed to Audrey Hidano, Interim Assistant Superintendent of the Office of Facilities and Operations, at (808) 784-5000.



Image Credit: Hawai'i Department of Education

HAWAI'I TEXT-TO-911: A QUICK GUIDE

Did you know you can text 911 for emergencies? **Text-to-911** is an emergency service available statewide in Hawai'i that allows people to contact 911 by text message when they cannot safely make a voice call.

Calling 911 is still the fastest and most effective way to get help. Voice calls automatically share your quicker communication. Texting 911 should only be used when calling is not possible.

Use Text-to-911 if:

- It's unsafe to speak out loud
- You cannot speak or hear due to injury or a medical condition
- Voice service is unreliable, but texting works

How it works:

Send a text to 911 like a normal message. In your first text, include your exact location and the type of emergency (police, fire, or ambulance). Dispatchers usually do not receive your location automatically, so be specific.

Important limits:

- Text-only (no photos, videos, or emojis)
- Messages may be slower than calls
- You must have an active U.S. cell phone with a texting plan

You do not need a Hawai'i phone number—visitors can use the service while in the state. **Remember:** If you can safely call 911, always call. Text-to-911 is for situations when speaking isn't an option.

For frequently asked questions visit:

[Text-to-9-1-1-Brochure-911-Board.pdf](#).

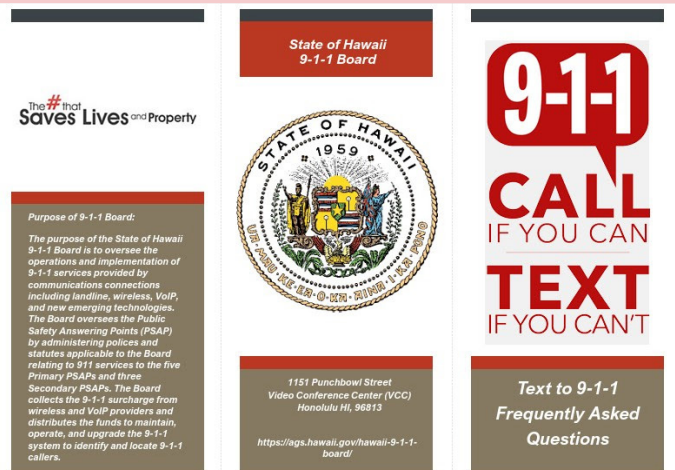


Image Credit: Department of Accounting and General Services

The Daniel K. Akaka State Veterans Home Provides Essential Services to Veterans

The Daniel K. Akaka State Veterans Home is proudly named in honor of the late U.S. Senator Daniel Kahikina Akaka, whose life exemplified service, leadership, and the spirit of Aloha. The Daniel K. Akaka State Veteran's Home is dedicated to providing a comfortable and supportive environment for residents.



Image Credit: Hawai'i Department of Education

Services include care plans, recreational activities, and access to medical assistance. They also offer various amenities such as communal dining, landscaped gardens, and wellness programs to enhance the quality of life for our veterans. Veteran well-being is their priority, and they strive to create a home-like atmosphere where they feel valued and respected with aloha. The organization is widely known as providing quality care for residents with Alzheimer's and dementia in addition to hospice care, long-term care, rehabilitation therapies, respite care, and 24-hour skilled nursing care. Located in Kapolei, the State Veterans Home is specifically designed for U.S. military veterans. Admission requires being a recognized veteran who was not dishonorably discharged, a Hawai'i resident, and in need of long-term care. While primarily for veterans, state veterans' homes sometimes accommodate spouses or Gold Star parents.

The late Senator Akaka was a prominent figure in Hawai'i. Born on September 11, 1924, Senator Akaka was raised in Pauoa Valley on the island of O'ahu. While attending Kamehameha School as a teenager, he witnessed the bombing of Pearl Harbor, an event that shaped a generation of Hawai'i residents. He later served his country during World War II with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Following his

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military service, Senator Akaka returned home to Hawai'i, where he earned degrees in education and devoted himself to teaching and public service. He went on to hold various positions within Hawai'i's education system and state government, building a career rooted in community service and leadership.

In 1976, Senator Akaka was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives, and in 1990, he was appointed to the United States Senate. He made history as the first Native Hawaiian and the only Chinese American to serve in the U.S. Senate. During his tenure, Senator Akaka became a strong advocate

for veterans' rights, championing the expansion of GI Bill benefits and seeking long-overdue recognition for Asian American and Pacific Islander veterans whose service had often been overlooked. Known for his humility, compassion, and unwavering commitment to the people of Hawai'i, Senator Akaka embodied the spirit of Aloha, working to improve lives and foster mutual respect across communities.

The Daniel K. Akaka State Veterans Home stands as a lasting tribute to his legacy, reflecting his lifelong dedication to honoring and supporting those who have served. For more information, visit dkasvh.org/daniel-k-akaka-legacy.

INAUGURAL CLIMATE REPORT CONFIRMS 2025 AS DRIEST, WARMEST ON RECORD IN HAWAII'

After eight years in development, researchers have released the first-ever Hawai'i Annual Climate Report. The report provides a comprehensive summary of rainfall, temperature, and drought conditions across the state over the past year. The report, produced by the Hawai'i Climate Data Portal (HCDP) in collaboration with the Hawai'i Mesonet, is designed to make climate data more accessible, understandable, and useful for communities statewide.

Written in plain language and supported by easy-to-interpret maps and figures, the report connects scientific climate data with the real-world conditions many Hawai'i residents experienced firsthand. It offers a statewide overview while also highlighting regional differences that are critical for planning, resource management, and decision-making.

A key goal of the Hawai'i Annual Climate Report is to highlight open-access datasets and tools that can support informed decision-making across sectors such as water resource management, agriculture, emergency preparedness, and land-use planning. By linking data with real-world applications, the report aims to strengthen climate awareness and resilience throughout Hawai'i.



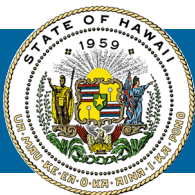
Image Credit: University of Hawai'i News

The report also introduces an upcoming initiative: a monthly climate summary, expected to launch later this spring. Information on how to sign up is included, offering residents, planners, and organizations a regular snapshot of evolving climate conditions.

Project leaders express gratitude to the many contributors who helped bring the report to fruition and encourage partners and community members to share it through relevant listservs and networks to ensure it reaches those who can benefit most.

The release of the inaugural Hawai'i Annual Climate Report marks a significant milestone in improving public access to climate information and strengthening Hawai'i's capacity to respond to changing climate conditions, now and into the future.

For more information visit: hawaii.edu/news/2026/02/04/hawaii-annual-climate-report-2025.



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