FROM THE OFFICE OF

SENATOR STANLEY CHANG

East Honolulu Community Newsletter

August 2026

99-YEAR LEASEHOLD AND AUTOMATIC VOTER REGISTRATION BILLS SIGNED INTO LAW

The Thirty-Third Legislature adjourned in May, concluding two years of hearings, negotiations, and floor votes. Governor Josh Green recently signed two critical bills introduced by Senator Chang. SB2061 takes the 99 year leasehold condominium program one step closer to reality, expanding the buyer pool to include Hawai'i residents who will rent the condos to other Hawai'i residents. SB2239 grants automatic voter registration to all driver's license and state ID applicants on an opt-out, rather than opt-in basis, expanding the number of Hawai'i residents registered to vote.

SENATE BILL 2061 (ACT 121) RELATING TO HOUSING

On June 9, Governor Green signed into law Senate Bill 2061, now Act 121, which modifies the 99-year leasehold condominium program passed in 2023 by broadening the pool of potential buyers. The program focuses on building below-market condominium units for locals on state-and county-owned land in urban areas and selling the condos at cost, under a 99 year lease, exclusively to Hawai'i residents. The first development will take place at the corner of Kapi'olani Boulevard and Ward Avenue, where the Jack-in-the-Box and Galiher office building with the Obama mural are currently located. The project will include **370 units**. Of those units, **60% will be reserved for working families** earning up to 140% of the Area Median Income, and the rest offered at market rates.



Image Credit: Office of Senator Stanley Chang

Act 121 establishes a two-step process for selling the condos. During stage 1—the first **60 days**—all units will be exclusively offered to owner-occupants who must be Hawai'i residents. If buyers have ownership in other real property, they must dispose of it within **6 months**. If there are units unsold after 60 days, stage 2 takes effect. Up to **40% of the total units** may then be sold to non-occupant Hawai'i residents. These units must then be rented to other Hawai'i residents.

This program is the first state program to offer discounted housing for sale to all Hawai'i residents, regardless of income or ethnicity. The condos will be located in prime locations and offered at roughly 10–20% less than comparable privately developed condos. It seeks to offer a housing alternative to the middle class who cannot afford private housing but do not qualify for subsidized housing reserved for those with low income.

SENATE BILL 2239 (ACT 067) RELATING TO VOTER REGISTRATION

On May 29th, Governor Josh Green signed into law Senate Bill 2239, now Act 067. This law establishes Automatic Voter Registration (AVR) statewide beginning on **January 1, 2027**. This is a major step toward making voting simpler and more accessible in Hawai'i. Under this new law, eligible residents who apply for or renew their Hawai'i driver's license or state ID will be automatically registered to vote unless they

next page ↻



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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

continued from previous page

choose to opt out. Updates to addresses made through driver's license or state ID renewals will also automatically update voter registration records.

Automatic Voter Registration helps modernize our election system, reduces administrative costs, improves the accuracy of voter rolls, and makes it easier for residents to participate in the democratic process. When more people have access to voting, our democracy is stronger.

For more information about these bills and others, please visit the Hawai'i State Legislature website.

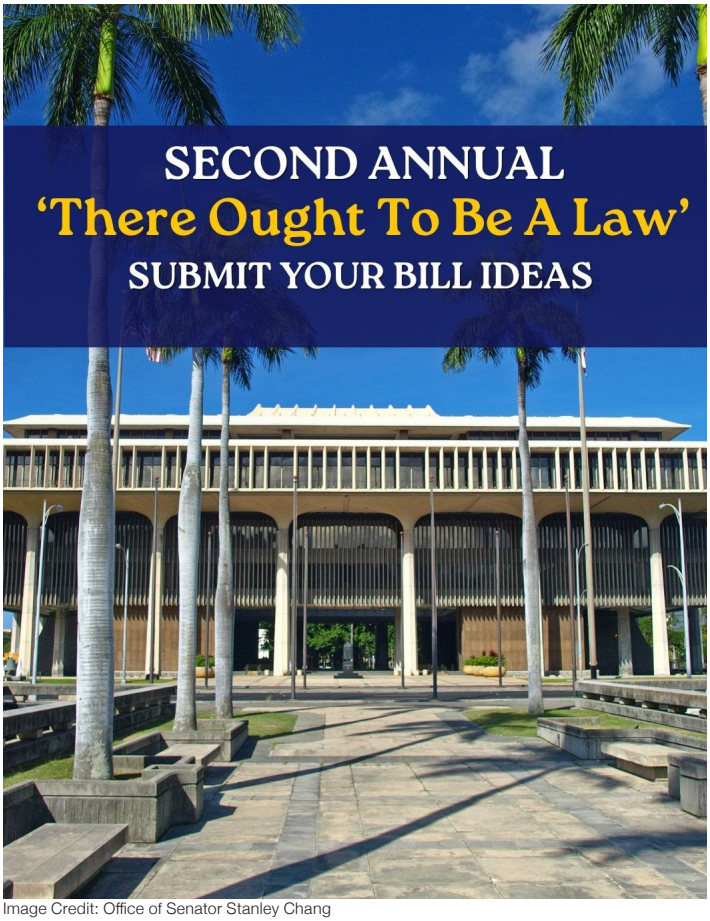


Image Credit: Office of Senator Stanley Chang

Senator Stanley Chang is inviting Hawai'i residents to help shape the future of state policy through his second annual "There Ought to be a Law" opportunity. Community members have the opportunity to propose an idea that Senator Chang will introduce during the 2027 Legislative Session.

"There Ought to be a Law" gives residents a chance to directly address issues facing our state. Senator Chang encourages residents of all backgrounds to submit their bill ideas—whether their proposal focuses on a local improvement project, statewide policy reform, or an update to existing law. Every submission will be reviewed!

Contestants who have their bill ideas selected will be invited to tour the State Capitol and may have the opportunity to testify at committee hearings, if the bills are heard. Submissions are due **Tuesday, September 1st, 2026**. Submit your bill ideas here. For more information, please contact the Office of Senator Stanley Chang at **(808) 586-8420**.

REQUEST A TREE BE PLANTED!

Do you know of the perfect location for a tree to be planted? To combat the summer heat, **Trees for Honolulu's Future** is launching an opportunity for community members to submit requests for trees to be planted at city-owned street right-of-ways throughout O'ahu!

Trees for Honolulu's Future is an organization that plants and cares for new trees while also protecting existing trees across O'ahu. They specialize in connecting communities with assistance and funding; educating the public and government officials on the benefit of trees; and advocating for policies, projects, and funding.



Image Credit: Office of Senator Stanley Chang

In the words of Sir David Attenborough, renowned British naturalist and broadcaster, "If the heat bothers you, plant a tree. If the water bothers you, plant a tree. If you like fruits, plant a tree. If you like birds, plant a tree. And if you like life, plant many trees."

To start the tree planting request process, call the **Department of Parks and Recreation**, **Horticulture Services Branch**, at **808-971-7151** or **complete this form**. The City will review the site and consider your request. If approved, they will plant the tree at your requested location.

For more information, please visit the **Trees for Honolulu's Future website** or email **info@treesforhonolulu.org**.



Image Credit: Office of Senator Stanley Chang

HAWAIʻI'S NEWEST LAW: CASH ROUNDING

On November 12, 2025, the United States' penny production finally ended after **232 years**. The retirement of the smallest monetary unit has led to confusion for several customers and businesses in Hawaiʻi. In response, Senate Bill 3255 was enacted into law and took effect on July 1, 2026 to provide clarity to businesses and consumers.

For cash transactions that end in 1, 2, 6 or 7 cents, the transaction will round down. The transaction rounds up if it ends in 3, 4, 8 or 9 cents. Here are some examples:

$10.01 or $10.02 → $10.00 (rounded down)

$10.06 or $10.07 → $10.05 (rounded down)

$10.03 or $10.04 → $10.05 (rounded up)

$10.08 or $10.09 → $10.10 (rounded up)

Overall, Senate Bill 3255 represents a critical step in making the transition to a post-penny economy. The standardized rounding framework establishes clear and balanced guidelines for cash transactions. For more information about this bill, please visit the Hawaiʻi State Legislature website.

SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (SBA) DISASTER RELIEF EXTENDS DEADLINE

Did your home or business suffer physical damage from the recent Kona Low storms?

The SBA has announced a 60-day grace period for disaster relief loans, extending the application deadline to August 13, 2026. Over $12.5 million has already been approved across Hawai‘i to help families and local businesses rebuild. Don't miss this extended window to get the funding you need.

Homeowners may be eligible for a disaster loan up to $500,000 for primary residence structural repairs or rebuilding. Businesses and nonprofit organizations may borrow up to $2 million to repair or replace damaged or destroyed real estate, machinery, equipment, inventory, and other business assets.

Other possible loans include:

- Personal Property: up to $100,000 (includes renters and vehicles)
- Business Loans: up to $2 million (includes nonprofits)

Overall, this critical extension provides a crucial lifeline for recovery. Take advantage of this 60-day grace period and submit your application before the **August 13, 2026 deadline**! For more information or to apply, please visit the **Small Business Administration website**.

SBA DISASTER RELIEF EXTENSION!

NEW DEADLINE: AUGUST 13, 2026

Home Repairs

$500,000

Personal Property

$100,000

Business Loans

$2 MILLION

Over $12.5M already approved across Hawai‘i



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