

EIGHTH DAY

Tuesday, February 2, 2021

The House of Representatives of the Thirty-First Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2021, convened at 12:01 p.m., with Speaker Saiki presiding.

The invocation was delivered by Representative Sonny Ganaden, after which the Roll was called showing all members present, with Representatives Har, LoPresti, and Matsumoto participating remotely via videoconference, and with the exception of Representatives Perruso and Tokioka, who were excused.

By unanimous consent, reading and approval of the Journal of the House of Representatives of the Seventh Day was deferred.

ORDER OF THE DAY

ANNOUNCEMENTS

At this time, the Speaker delivered his address, stating:

"The Chair has some brief remarks. So, as you know, our Opening Day speeches were deferred because of the potential security threat, so these are my remarks that I would have presented on Opening Day.

"I just wanted to start off by saying that I know that many of you, like me, have mixed feelings about this legislative session. And this is a reflection of what the public is feeling and asking. When will this end? What will happen to us? Where is Hawaii headed? With these thoughts in mind, I actually have a title for my remarks this year. One State. One State.

"To survive the pandemic, we must be one state. This is not a time to pit one against another. The state versus the counties, county versus county, Democrats versus Republicans, liberals versus conservatives, progressives versus moderates, business versus workers. This is a time when everyone, everyone, must pull together and work together to achieve the common purpose of saving Hawaii.

"This can be done even if there are different ideas on how to get there. If President Obama was here today, he would remind us that most issues are not black and white. That most issues are gray, and that we should fight for our principles but be prepared to compromise if we want to achieve anything long-lasting.

"I would like to think that this is what the public expects of us. The public wants us to rise above conflicts and just get things done. This requires us to demonstrate three traits: leadership, trustworthiness, and decisiveness.

"During the past year, I would say that this is exactly what the House has demonstrated. When there has been inaction in other parts of government, the House has taken action. The House has been upfront with the public and taken hard positions even when some may disagree. It was only eight months ago when Representatives Nakamura, Cullen, and Luke allocated and implemented CARES funds for a restaurant card, rental assistance, and early childhood grants.

"Since last March, Representatives Belatti, McDermott, Onishi, and Yamashita worked with the House COVID-19 Committee to develop real public-private partnerships to fight major pandemic issues. Two days before New Year's Day, Representatives Ichiyama and Johanson helped build mass public vaccination centers at Pier 2 and the Blaisdell Concert Hall, which have the potential to collectively vaccinate up to 8,000 people per day.

"Representative Kitagawa took the lead to create a farm-to-car food distribution program in her community. Representative Eli has personally served and distributed over 10,000 meals in her community. In fact, all of our House members took a leading role to organize programs to help their communities and our state since the pandemic began.

"But this was only the start. During this session, the House will take leadership in three other areas. The first is to stabilize our government and state finances. This requires us to critique revenue streams and expenditures. We need to restructure government and consolidate overlapping functions.

We need to take a hard look at programs that are not functional, such as the ADC, the Agribusiness Development Corporation.

"Representative Quinlan has been working to clean up our existing government infrastructure so that government can actually facilitate economic growth. In this pandemic, if we cannot reform government to make it more effective, then we never will.

"Second, we need to build a reliable state public health infrastructure. This includes screening, testing, contact tracing, quarantine, and vaccinations. Even with vaccinations, we need a statewide mask mandate.

"In addition to the pandemic, Hawaii continues to struggle with particularly difficult health problems. Representative Yamane has been working to comprehensively reduce underage vaping through tax parity and better enforcement.

"We know that the pandemic has hit women and immigrants the hardest in terms of jobs, child care, and domestic violence. This is why we will find funds to save programs like the Sex Abuse Treatment Center, language access, and HIV services – critical programs that potentially face budget cuts. I would say to those who seek tax breaks or creating new programs, please keep in mind that such policies, at this time, come at the expense of life saving programs like these. Individuals without voices need to be protected, and the House will protect them.

"Third, we need to reopen the Hawaii economy incrementally and safely. We need to acknowledge that our economy differs from those in other states. Hawaii's economy is service-oriented and primarily consists of small businesses and restaurants.

"We need to incrementally and safely reopen travel. Even if that means using a statewide travel policy that is predictable and functional. Tourism must be better managed, and Representative Lowen is working to have visitors pay their fair share since they also use our natural and environmental resources. And non-residents who reside in Hawaii should also contribute their fair share.

"Representatives Hashem and Perruso have been applying lessons learned from the pandemic into local food resiliency and a Farm to School program. Representative Hashimoto has diligently worked to create a program to help prevent renters from being evicted. Representative Woodson understands that transforming our economy requires our public education system to be competitive on an international level. Vice Speaker Mizuno, Majority Floor Leader Morikawa, and the rest of the House leadership team stands ready to work with House members to achieve these goals.

"So, members, you know that reopening our economy will not be easy. As Representatives Tarnas, Nakashima, and Holt understand, it will require us to resolve conflicts between economic growth, culture, and the environment.

"There is a long-standing issue that we must address. Mauna Kea. As you know, the University of Hawaii has held the master lease to manage the Mauna Kea Astronomy Precinct and the Natural and Cultural Preservation Area since 1968. The master lease is set to expire in 2033, and the University is currently working to extend it. The University has tried to manage Mauna Kea, but for too long the University's work has been shrouded by its inability to appropriately manage cultural practices, resources, and education.

"This is why the University of Hawaii must no longer manage Mauna Kea, and it should cease its work to extend the master lease. The House will introduce a resolution to begin the process of reassessing a new governance structure for Mauna Kea. And we will invite Ku Kia'i Mauna Kea to have a seat at the table and be a part of the discussion. Mauna Kea is a manifestation of what happens when we draw lines, work in silos, and disregard different views.

"So, members, in conclusion, please remember just three things. Number one, avoid drawing lines. Number two, work through the gray. Number three, work with those you disagree with in good faith. If we do this, we will build Hawaii into one state. So, thank you very much and have a productive session."

The Chair then recognized Representative Belatti, the Majority Leader, to deliver remarks on behalf of the Majority Caucus:

"Mr. Speaker, if I may provide my opening remarks. Thank you, Mr. Speaker and colleagues. Brazilian novelist Paulo Coelho reminds us, 'when we least expect it, life sets us a challenge to test our courage and willingness to change; at such a moment, there is no point in pretending that nothing has happened or in saying that we are not ready. The challenge will not wait. Life does not look back.'

"None of us would have believed at the beginning of 2020 that we would be living through a global pandemic, the likes of which we have never seen for 100 years, and that this novel coronavirus would threaten the health of people around the world. Hawaii tragically has lost more than 410 of our own neighbors and friends to COVID.

"None of us could have ever imagined in March of 2020 that this pandemic would eviscerate our economy, cause our state tax revenues to plummet, and leave us with a \$1.4 billion budget shortfall that local economists are predicting will take years to recover from. But there is no time to look back.

"This dire situation is forcing us to question every expenditure, scrub through every special fund, examine and reexamine every tax credit, consider programmatic cuts that impact real services and real people, and look at targeted taxes. But our House is not inclined to simply increase taxes without considering the wider impact and consequences of those taxes.

"It is not simply enough for us to take cookie cutter solutions from the continental United States that often get pitched as progressive versus centrist, Democrat versus Republican. Frankly, those are just labels, and we need to move beyond labels, beyond slogans, and develop solutions that work in Hawaii, that recognize our strengths, our unique history, and yes, our unique state-county relationship, where the state bares the large burden of so many statewide services that are typically funded and implemented by counties in other states.

"There are no easy choices this session, and we will only be faced with harder choices in the year ahead if we do not do our due diligence now. Every expenditure, every tax credit, and every tax relief measure we authorize will come at the price of another program, another staff position, or furlough days.

"In line with this hard position and this strategy, the House is already leading by example. We have implemented cuts and reduced our fiscal year 2021 expenditures by \$1.4 million. We did this largely by doing more with less. We have a much skinnier leadership team and structure that will continue to rely on our system of committees, chairs, and vice chairs to do the important work of the House.

"We have reduced our invaluable House staff offices, our front-line workers. Where we have previously hired nine session staff for the Sergeant-at-Arms, we have only hired one additional session staff member. In the Clerk's Office, we've gone from eight session staff to four. In the Printshop, we have gone from fifteen to ten. Our representative offices have reduced their number of session staff down to one person, and colleagues are relying on volunteer interns who work remotely and continue to do the community work in our districts.

"We have eliminated copier contracts, postal budgets, travel budgets, and deferred some tech purchases, even when we have had to spend in order to purchase precious Zoom licenses and ensure that we have enough connectivity to conduct our virtual hearings efficiently and effectively.

"We are asking executive agencies to find smart, creative, innovative ways to consolidate, streamline, and restructure. And we are, the House that is, again, leading by example, and have asked our legislatively attached agencies to do the same.

"Mr. Speaker, I want to pause here and really emphasize this point, because there are largely uniformed accusations about the House and the members here not being supporters of accountability and transparency. Your House is looking at ways to restructure our legislatively attached agencies to reduce overhead and duplication and increase accountability by consolidating multiple agencies into an Office of Public Accountability. These agencies include, yes, the Office of the Auditor, the Office of the

Ombudsman, the Office of Information Practices, the Hawaii State Ethics Commission, and the Campaign Spending Commission.

"As you mentioned, Mr. Speaker, we will need to take all of these hard decisions, and we will need to decide how to restore funding for serious and critical programs like the Sex Abuse Treatment Center and legal services for immigrants and low-income workers and families. We need to prioritize what is truly important, step forward to protect the vulnerable, and do the right thing for our Hawaii.

"Yes, Mr. Speaker, these are unprecedented times indeed, but as elected officials, it is our duty to be held to a higher standard and be the reasoned voice for our constituents.

"Mr. Speaker, now is the time to work collaboratively to find solutions in providing hard-working families with the support they most definitely deserve. Your House stands ready to do this work, Mr. Speaker. Thank you."

COMMITTEE REASSIGNMENTS

The following measures were re-referred to committee by the Speaker:

<u>H.B.</u> <u>Nos.</u>	<u>Re-referred to:</u>
3	Committee on Economic Development, then to the Committee on Housing, then to the Committee on Finance
7	Committee on Health, Human Services, & Homelessness, then jointly to the Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs and the Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce, then to the Committee on Finance
75	Committee on Economic Development, then to the Committee on Finance
133	Committee on Economic Development, then to the Committee on Finance
158	Committee on Transportation, then to the Committee on Finance
194	Committee on Transportation, then to the Committee on Finance
196	Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs, then to the Committee on Finance
205	Committee on Legislative Management, then to the Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs, then to the Committee on Finance
238	Committee on Health, Human Services, & Homelessness, then jointly to the Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs and the Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce, then to the Committee on Finance
363	Committee on Economic Development, then jointly to the Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs and the Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce, then to the Committee on Finance
364	Committee on Labor & Tourism, then to the Committee on Finance
383	Committee on Economic Development, then jointly to the Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce and the Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs, then to the Committee on Finance
421	Committee on Health, Human Services, & Homelessness, then jointly to the Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs and the Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce, then to the Committee on Finance
422	Committee on Health, Human Services, & Homelessness, then jointly to the Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs and the Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce, then to the Committee on Finance
445	Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce, then to the Committee on Finance

- 457 Committee on Economic Development, then jointly to the Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce and the Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs, then to the Committee on Finance
- 510 Committee on Transportation, then to the Committee on Finance
- 514 Committee on Education, then to the Committee on Finance
- 533 Committee on Education, then to the Committee on Finance
- 542 Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs, then to the Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce
- 550 Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection, then to the Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce, then to the Committee on Finance
- 682 Committee on Economic Development, then to the Committee on Finance
- 736 Committee on Economic Development, then jointly to the Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce and the Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs, then to the Committee on Finance
- 772 Committee on Economic Development, then jointly to the Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce and the Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs, then to the Committee on Finance
- 850 Committee on Economic Development, then jointly to the Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce and the Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs, then to the Committee on Finance
- 1022 Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection, then to the Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs
- 1032 Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs, then to the Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce

ADJOURNMENT

At 12:24 p.m., on motion by Representative Belatti, seconded by Representative Morikawa and carried, the House of Representatives adjourned until noon tomorrow, Wednesday, February 3, 2021. (Representative Tokioka was excused.)