

TWENTY-SECOND DAY

Wednesday, February 25, 2026

The Senate of the Thirty-Third Legislature of the State of Hawai'i, Regular Session of 2026, convened at 11:39 a.m. with the President in the Chair.

The Roll was called showing all Senators present, with the exception of Senator Kidani who was excused.

The Chair announced that he had read and approved the Journal of the Twenty-First Day.

Senator Gabbard introduction

Senator Ihara introduction

Senator Lamosao introduction

Senator Elefante introduction

Senator Dela Cruz introduction

Senator Keohokalole introduction

Senator Moriwaki introduction

Senator Elefante introduction

Senator DeCoite introduction

HOUSE COMMUNICATION

The following communication from the House (Hse. Com. No. 4) was read by the Clerk and was disposed of as follows:

Hse. Com. No. 4, transmitting H.B. No. 9, H.D. 1, which passed Third Reading in the House of Representatives on February 24, 2026, was placed on file.

On motion by Senator Wakai, seconded by Senator DeCorte and carried, H.B. No. 9, H.D. 1, entitled: "A BILL FOR AN ACT DESIGNATING HAWAII AS A PURPLE HEART STATE," passed First Reading by title and was deferred.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

Senator Dela Cruz, for the Committee on Ways and Means, presented a report (Stand. Com. Rep. No. 2715) recommending that S.B. No. 2069, S.D. 1, as amended in S.D. 2, pass Third Reading.

By unanimous consent, action on Stand. Com. Rep. No. 2715 and S.B. No. 2069, S.D. 2, entitled: "A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO THE DWELLING UNIT REVOLVING FUND," was deferred until Thursday, March 5, 2026.

Senator Dela Cruz, for the Committee on Ways and Means, presented a report (Stand. Com. Rep. No. 2716) recommending that S.B. No. 2342, S.D. 1, as amended in S.D. 2, pass Third Reading.

By unanimous consent, action on Stand. Com. Rep. No. 2716 and S.B. No. 2342, S.D. 2, entitled: "A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO HOUSING," was deferred until Thursday, March 5, 2026.

Senator Dela Cruz, for the Committee on Ways and Means, presented a report (Stand. Com. Rep. No. 2717) recommending that S.B. No. 2861, S.D. 1, as amended in S.D. 2, pass Third Reading.

By unanimous consent, action on Stand. Com. Rep. No. 2717 and S.B. No. 2861, S.D. 2, entitled: "A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO THE OFFICE OF WELLNESS AND RESILIENCE," was deferred until Thursday, March 5, 2026.

Senators Rhoads and Kim, for the Committee on Judiciary and the Committee on Education, presented a joint report (Stand. Com. Rep. No. 2718) recommending that S.B. No. 3123, as amended in S.D. 1, pass Second Reading and be placed on the calendar for Third Reading.

On motion by Senator Wakai, seconded by Senator DeCorte and carried, the joint report of the Committees was adopted and S.B. No. 3123, S.D. 1, entitled: "A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO PRIVATE SUPPORT OF EDUCATION," passed Second Reading and was placed on the calendar for Third Reading on Thursday, March 5, 2026.

Senator Keohokalole, for the Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection, presented a report (Stand. Com. Rep. No. 2719) recommending that S.B. No. 2623, as amended in S.D. 1, be recommitted to the Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection.

On motion by Senator Wakai, seconded by Senator DeCorte and carried, the report of the Committee was adopted and S.B. No. 2623, S.D. 1, entitled: "A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO LICENSING," was recommitted to the Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection.

ORDER OF THE DAY

ADVISE AND CONSENT

Stand. Com. Rep. No. 2708 (Gov. Msg. No. 684):

Senator Rhoads moved that Stand. Com. Rep. No. 2708 be received and placed on file, seconded by Senator Gabbard and carried.

Senator Rhoads then moved that the Senate advise and consent to the appointment of STEPHANIE R.S. CHAR as Circuit Court Judge of the Circuit Court of the Fifth Circuit (Island of Kaua'i), for a term of 10 years, seconded by Senator Gabbard.

Senator Rhoads rose to speak in support of the appointee as follows:

REMARKS

The motion was put by the Chair and carried on the following showing of Ayes and Noes:

Ayes, 24. Noes, none. Excused, 1 (Kidani).

At this time, Senator Rhoads introduced Judge Stephanie R.S. Char, who was seated in the gallery with her mom, Jean Sato; her husband, Noa Char; their children Naia and Sullivan Char; and supporters, including Hawai'i Supreme Court Acting Chief Justice Sabrina S. McKenna.

The Chair announced that Judge Char would be greeted on the Senate floor immediately following adjournment.

The Chair then recognized retired Hawai'i Supreme Court associate justice Simeon Acoba, who was present in the gallery. The Chair noted that Justice Acoba was visiting from Kaua'i and was also a member of the Judicial Selection Commission.

THIRD READING

Stand. Com. Rep. No. 2701 (S.B. No. 585, S.D. 2):

On motion by Senator Dela Cruz, seconded by Senator Moriwaki and carried, Stand. Com. Rep. No. 2701 was adopted and S.B. No. 585, S.D. 2, entitled: "A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO THE ISSUANCE OF SPECIAL PURPOSE REVENUE BONDS TO ASSIST BANA PACIFIC INC.,"

having been read throughout, passed Third Reading on the following showing of Ayes and Noes:

Ayes, 24; Ayes with Reservations (Elefante, Hashimoto, Rhoads, San Buenaventura). Noes, none. Excused, 1 (Kidani).

Stand. Com. Rep. No. 2702 (S.B. No. 2211, S.D. 2):

On motion by Senator Dela Cruz, seconded by Senator Moriwaki and carried, Stand. Com. Rep. No. 2702 was adopted and S.B. No. 2211, S.D. 2, entitled: "A BILL FOR AN ACT MAKING AN EMERGENCY APPROPRIATION TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES," having been read throughout, passed Third Reading on the following showing of Ayes and Noes:

Ayes, 24. Noes, none. Excused, 1 (Kidani).

Stand. Com. Rep. No. 2703 (S.B. No. 2446, S.D. 2):

On motion by Senator Dela Cruz, seconded by Senator Moriwaki and carried, Stand. Com. Rep. No. 2703 was adopted and S.B. No. 2446, S.D. 2, entitled: "A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO THE JUDICIARY," having been read throughout, passed Third Reading on the following showing of Ayes and Noes:

Ayes, 24. Noes, none. Excused, 1 (Kidani).

Stand. Com. Rep. No. 2704 (S.B. No. 2919, S.D. 1):

On motion by Senator Dela Cruz, seconded by Senator Moriwaki and carried, Stand. Com. Rep. No. 2704 was adopted and S.B. No. 2919, S.D. 1, entitled: "A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO THE OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER," having been read throughout, passed Third Reading on the following showing of Ayes and Noes:

Ayes, 24. Noes, none. Excused, 1 (Kidani).

S.B. No. 2125, S.D. 1:

On motion by Senator Kim, seconded by Senator Fukunaga and carried, S.B. No. 2125, S.D. 1, entitled: "A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO TEACHER LICENSING," having been read throughout, passed Third Reading on the following showing of Ayes and Noes:

Ayes, 24. Noes, none. Excused, 1 (Kidani).

RE-REFERRAL OF SENATE BILLS

The Chair re-referred the following Senate bills that were introduced:

S.B. No.:	Re-referred to:
S.B. No. 2001	Jointly to the Committee on Water, Land, Culture and the Arts and the Committee on Ways and Means
S.B. No. 2116, S.D. 1	Committee on Labor and Technology, then jointly to the Committee on Judiciary and the Committee on Ways and Means
S.B. No. 2656, S.D. 1	Jointly to the Committee on Economic Development and Tourism and the Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection and the Committee on Ways and Means
S.B. No. 2999	Committee on Ways and Means
S.B. No. 3169	Jointly to the Committee on Economic Development and Tourism and the Committee on Ways and Means

At this time, the Clerk stated:

"Mr. President, we have a Supplemental Order of the Day."

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORT

Senator Dela Cruz, for the Committee on Ways and Means, presented a report (Stand. Com. Rep. No. 2720) recommending that S.B. No. 2656, as amended in S.D. 1, be recommitted to the Committee on Ways and Means.

On motion by Senator Wakai, seconded by Senator DeCorte and carried, the report of the Committee was adopted and S.B. No. 2656, S.D. 1, entitled: "A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO TAXATION," was recommitted to the Committee on Ways and Means.

At this time, Senator Gabbard announced that Ag Day at the Capitol would be taking place the following day on the fourth floor from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., hosted by the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment and House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems and organized by the Hawai'i Farm Bureau. Senator Gabbard observed that 60 vendors representing farmers, ranchers, and agriculture advocates as well as organizations and entities that constitute the state's diverse agriculture sector would be participating. Senator Gabbard then urged the members to go to the event and buy local.

Senator Kim rose to speak on a point of personal privilege as follows:

REMARKS

The Chair requested that members of the Majority report to the Majority Caucus Room immediately following adjournment and the greeting of the newly confirmed judge.

ADJOURNMENT

At 11:57 a.m., on motion by Senator Wakai, seconded by Senator DeCorte and carried, the Senate adjourned until 11:30 a.m., Thursday, March 5, 2026.