

Hawai'i State Capitol, Room 332 | Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813
 Phone: (808) 586-9444 | Fax: (808) 586-9499
 Email: rephashimoto@capitol.hawaii.gov

Proudly serving District 8 - Kahakuloa, Waihe'e, Waiehu,
 Puuohala, Wailuku, Waikapu, parts of Kahului

NEWS AND UPDATES FROM Representative Troy N. Hashimoto

February 2020

Aloha!

The 2020 Legislative Session officially began on Jan. 15 and I, along with my colleagues have been working over the past few weeks to hear many bills that impact our communities throughout the State. I was the primary introducer of 15 bills, and co-sponsored and co-introduced over 100 others that tackle issues ranging from our teacher shortage, abandoned vehicles, assisting the blind and visually impaired, better regulating short-term rentals, addressing affordable housing, and advocating for important capital improvement projects for our district.

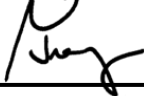


Maui delegation members on the House floor on opening day: with Rep. McKelvey, Rep. DeCoite, and Rep. Woodson.

Overall, approximately 455 new House bills and 1,080 Senate bills have been introduced to be considered this session. Although many ideas have merit, in the end, only around 300 become law. In addition, Hawai'i has a two-year legislative session that always begins in odd-numbered years. Since this is an even-numbered year, any bills pending from last year carry over to this year. Those bills will start off in the same place as they left off last year.

My committee assignments have not changed, and I continue to serve as the vice chair of the Transportation committee and a member of the Finance and Housing committees. The majority of my time will focus on addressing bills with those subject matters, including the State Budget.

There is a lot of work before us, and I will strive to continually keep you updated on notable bills that will impact our community. If you have questions or concerns, please contact my office by calling (808) 586-9444 or by emailing me at RepHashimoto@capitol.hawaii.gov.

Mahalo, 

Wailuku Heights park closed for construction

The County of Maui Department of Parks and Recreation has closed the Wailuku Heights Park **from January 27, 2020 through May 14, 2020**. The closure is due to the construction of the Wailuku Heights Park Playground project.

The project will include the installation of new playground and exercise equipment as well as an ADA accessible pathway connecting the two areas. The Department asks the public to please remain outside of construction area barriers for safety precautions.

Any questions or concerns, can be directed to Cheryl Akiona, Parks CIP Coordinator at cheryl.akiona@co.maui.hi.us or (808) 270-7388.

War Memorial complex parking lot closed for repair

The parking lot at the War Memorial Complex will be closed **from March 2, 2020 through Aug. 31, 2020** for repair. The County of Maui project will include the removal and replacement of the existing asphalt parking lot, drainage improvements, additional sidewalks and raised medians, and landscaping improvements.

The public is asked to please remain outside the construction area for safety precautions. The newly repaired parking lot will have a total of 807 parking stalls, including 12 accessible stalls and 11 van accessible stalls.

Any questions or concerns can be directed to Samuel Marvel, Parks Civil Engineer, at samual.marvel@co.maui.hi.us or (808) 270-6173.

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT



(Left) Congratulations to **Hawaiian Paddle Sports** on celebrating their 10th Anniversary on Jan. 15. Wailuku resident, owner and founder, **Timothy Lara** is presented with a certificate from the House.



(Right) The Japanese Cultural Society of Maui awarded their prestigious Nihon Bunka Award to individuals who perpetuate the Japanese culture at their event on Jan. 25. Certificates of congratulations were presented (L-R) to **local artist Kirk Kurokawa** (nominated by Stephanie Ohigashi), **former State Senator Joe Tanaka** (represented by granddaughter Jolee Correa and nominated by Rep. Hashimoto), and **Wailuku Hongwanji Reverend Shinkai Murakami** (nominated by Mike Munekiyo).

Investing in Hawai‘i’s Future...



No doubt, every year it gets harder and harder to live in Hawai‘i. The Aloha United Way recently reaffirmed this notion in their latest report called, “Alice: A Study of Financial Hardship in Hawai‘i.” The report highlighted the economic hardships facing working families and pointed out that a family of four needs about \$77,000 a year to cover typical expenses.



In recognition of this reality, the House, Senate, and Governor collaborated and released four legislative proposals that are aimed at supporting and empowering Hawai‘i’s working class families. Members of the Maui delegation were co-introducers of each of the bills and will be working to ensure its passage.

1 Lowering the cost of living

Hawai‘i’s high cost of living is the single biggest obstacle to local families who want to build their lives and careers here. In reducing our shared tax burden and making Hawai‘i more affordable, **H.B. 2541** was introduced, which makes the State Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) refundable, and increases the food excise tax credit by 35 percent. *This proposal will save the average working class family of four approximately \$500 per year in state taxes.*

2 Raising stagnant wages

The second component of **H.B. 2541** provides for an increase in the State minimum wage to \$13 per hour by 2024. The current \$10.10 minimum wage went into effect at the beginning of 2018, meaning that it has not risen in the past two years to meet the increasing demands on the cost of living. This legislation will call for an increase to \$11 in 2021, \$12 in 2022, \$12.50 in 2023, and finally \$13 in 2024. *One full-time job in Hawai‘i should be enough to make ends meet in our State.*

3 Addressing the Housing Shortage

The housing shortage in our State has been growing for decades with no end in sight. **H.B. 2542** is a bold proposal calling for the construction of affordable housing across the islands. In an effort to meet housing needs, the State has identified a number of parcels it owns on all islands and will invest primarily in infrastructure. The State will then partner with the private sector to offer leasehold housing units to qualified buyers. *The bill has an initial appropriation of \$275 million to begin the construction process and has the potential to create thousands of affordable housing units statewide.*

4 Transforming our schools

Many schools in our State have fallen into disrepair and are woefully inadequate to provide a safe and stimulating learning environment for our keiki. **H.B. 2544** proposes the creation of a new agency exclusively focused on the development, planning, and construction of all public-school facility projects. *The new “School Facilities Agency” will also engage with the public to give students and their families an opportunity to share their concerns and priorities.* The goal is for this agency is to move faster and be more responsive to the needs of the community.

5 Providing access to early learning

The lack of access and affordability of pre-school in our State is a critical contributor to the cycle of poverty and achievement gap. **H.B. 2543** will establish a new “Learning to Grow Agency” with the sole responsibility of ensuring access to early learning opportunities for unserved preschool-age children, especially those from low-income households. *This initiative will help local families who currently struggle to find quality and affordable early education for their children.*



With Zahra Bhattacharya, Olivia Dubach, Fernanda Maldonado who are student delegates of the Secondary Student Conference from H.P. Baldwin High School and their Student Activities Coordinator, Donna Vierra. The conference aims to teach secondary students of the legislative process and to debate ongoing issues.

Funds for Waihe‘e Elementary

Governor David Ige announced on Feb. 4, 2020 the **release of \$12,336,000** in capital improvement funds for Waihe‘e Elementary School. The funding will be used for the design and construction of a brand new administration building or an expansion of the already existing building. The legislature secured funding in the FY 2018 Budget.



Bill Highlights

Below are a few notable bills of interest that Rep. Hashimoto introduced, co-introduced or co-sponsored this session:

- ⇒ **H.B. 1874-RELATING TO CRIMINAL OFFENSES AGAINST SENIORS.** Increases penalties for violent and financial crimes against the elderly and standardizes the definition of elderly as age 60.
Our kupuna are a major target of violent and financial crimes such as robberies and scams. This bill, initiated by the Maui County Prosecutors Office will help to deter crime by increasing penalties for those seeking to attack or exploit our kupuna.
- ⇒ **H.B. 1867-RELATING TO THE KUPUNA CAREGIVERS PROGRAM.** Requests \$2 million to continue implementation of the Kupuna Caregivers program to assist working family caregivers.
This bill is required to maintain funding for the program and lowers the amount of hours a caregiver must work to qualify.
- ⇒ **H.B. 2554-RELATING TO TEACHER EDUCATION.** Appropriates funds to establish a task force to develop a K-12 STEM education degree coordinated through the University of Hawai'i Maui College.
This bill serves as a critical step towards establishing teaching degree programs on Maui in order to combat Hawai'i's statewide teacher shortage. The main objective of the task force is to develop a degree program that will create a diverse group of K-12 STEM teachers with the skills necessary to instruct students in high-need areas.
- ⇒ **H.B. 2457-RELATING TO THE YOUTH VAPING EPIDEMIC.** Prohibits the sale or distribution of all flavored tobacco products beginning on January 1, 2021.
This bill will help to curb the youth vaping epidemic that is a significant threat to public health. Just last year the State Department of Health issued a health advisory urging individuals to stop vaping. In Maui County alone, it has been reported that 32 percent of high schoolers and 18 percent for middle schoolers use electronic smoking devices. The national average is 12 percent for high schoolers and 3 percent for middle schoolers. If this bill passes, Hawai'i will be among twenty-six other local jurisdictions in four states: California, Colorado, Massachusetts, and Minnesota, that have enacted legislation to prohibit the sale of flavored tobacco products.
- ⇒ **H.B. 2553-RELATING TO CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE EIGHTH REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT.**
This is known as a "wish list" for Capital Improvement Projects in our district. Unfortunately, not all items will be funded, but this bill allows the projects to be highlighted as a need for our schools.
 - **H.P. Baldwin High School:** \$2 million for campus wide air conditioning including electrical system upgrades; \$200,000 for gymnasium fans; \$4.5 million for installation of new track and field, repair to practice field; \$7 million for locker room, weight room, & dance facility.
 - **Iao Intermediate School:** \$15 million for renovations to Building A to create more classroom space; \$75,000 for due diligence for land acquisition.
 - **Waihe'e Elementary School:** \$1.5 million for campus wide air conditioning.
 - **Wailuku Elementary School:** \$450,000 for parking lot expansion.
 - **Pu'u Kukui Elementary School:** \$75,000 for due diligence for land acquisition.

Let YOUR Voice be Heard!

Engaging in the legislative process is critical to a vibrant democracy! Providing your input on bills moving through the legislative process through **public testimony** is a critical part of the legislature's decision making process.

All of the resources that you need is located at the capitol website located at:

capitol.hawaii.gov

If you have any issues or may not have access to the internet, do not worry, simply reach out to my office and we are available to help you!

(808) 586-9444

rephashimoto@capitol.hawaii.gov



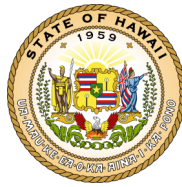
- The home page serves as a "dashboard," allowing you to access just about anything you will need.
- As you navigate the site, you can return to the home page at any time by clicking anywhere on the website's headline (blue area, pictured above) or the "Home" icon in the upper right-hand corner.
- Keep an eye out for announcements and timely information that will be posted in the shaded "Recent Updates" box.
- There are [9 Handy Icons](#) that appear in the center of the home page.

Submit Testimony, Hearing Notification, and Measure Tracking. This top row of buttons is for features you can access once you've signed into the website. They can help by ensuring you don't miss anything, as well as by saving you time.

Legislators, Committees, Reports and Lists. On the second row, clicking on the first two buttons presents lists of legislators and committees. The third button, "Reports and Lists," brings you to a wealth of information – lists of all bills introduced, bill packages, and numerous specialized search functions. You'll want to be sure to take a moment and explore this key portal to the website.



Hearings, Order of the Day, Broadcasts/Video. Find hearing notices and the agendas for House and Senate floor sessions (Orders of the Day). Find what has been scheduled for broadcast, as well as videos of archived hearings and floor sessions.



Representative
Troy N. Hashimoto
 Hawai'i State Capitol
 415 South Beretania Street, Room 332
 Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

(808) 586-9444
RepHashimoto@capitol.hawaii.gov
*If you would like to be added to our email list,
 Please email us, and we will gladly add you.*

The more you know: NOVEL CORONAVIRUS

The Coronavirus is a type of virus that causes diseases of varying severities, ranging from the common cold to the more serious respiratory disease. A novel (new) coronavirus is a new strain of coronavirus that has not been identified before in humans.

There are no specific antiviral treatments and no vaccine to protect against this virus. People who are infected should receive supportive care to help relieve symptoms. The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed. The State of Hawai'i is currently working with healthcare facilities to ensure hospitals and healthcare providers are up to date on infection control recommendations in the event they encounter a person potentially infected.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Customs and Border Protection at Daniel K. Inouye International Airport are monitoring for travelers who exhibit symptoms and have a travel connection with China.

At the time of publication, there are no cases in Hawai'i. However, stay alert, be informed, and practice good hygiene.

How is it spread?



Through coughing and sneezing.



People who have traveled to or from China, could have been exposed to the virus. Seek medical care if you traveled to China and develop a fever and cough or respiratory **symptoms within 14 days of your return.**



Close personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands.



Touching an object or surface with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose or eyes before washing your hands.



Because coronavirus is new, we are learning more each day about the transmission patterns and incubation periods.

If you think may have been infected, call the Department of Health reporting line at **(808) 586-4586.**

What are the symptoms?



Fever



Cough



Difficulty Breathing



Severe Illness

For more information:

Visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website at www.cdc.gov/ncov or the Department of Health website at health.hawaii.gov/docd/advisories/novel-coronavirus-2019. You can also call 211 for information and referral services.



Information provided by the State Department of Health

