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Please see news release below regarding the Hawaii House and Senate Minority's launch of the Hawaii Open Budget Initiative website.

Caption: Hawaii lawmakers to make state budget figures interactive and available online.

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Wednesday 3/4/2015

Hawaii Open Budget Initiative: A bold step towards fiscal transparency

HONOLULU— Today, Senator Sam Slom and Representative Gene Ward held a joint press conference to launch the Hawaii Open Budget Initiative, a nonpartisan effort to make the state budgeting process accessible to the public by putting state budget facts and figures online, in real time, on the Hawaii Open Budget Initiative website: <http://hawaiiopenbudget.com>.

Senator Sam Slom says, *"State departments and agencies are required to disclose information, but they usually publish information in static format, like in a PDF. With the Hawaii Open Budget site, people will for the first time be able to work with the numbers to create their own version of the budget and envision their ideal state economy."*

Representative Gene Ward says, *"Hawaii's government holds its budget like a poker player holds his cards.....close to his chest and turns a card over only when he has to. With this budget website, all bets are off the table and the people of Hawaii win."*

Hawaii lawmakers are taking this step toward fiscal transparency just in time for Sunshine Week,¹ which is "an annual celebration of access to public information" slated for March 15-21, 2015.

Among the Hawaii Open Budget's main objectives is to educate the public about the state budget process by making the information readily available in a dynamic format and encouraging interaction with the numbers. Lawmakers are confident the site will allow people to gain insight into the decisions they have to make, and see the consequences behind decisions to increase taxes, cut spending, propose a tax credit or grant a tax exemption. There is even a "Balance the Budget" interactive tool where people can choose which proposed laws they want to enact to balance the state budget.

To learn more, visit the Hawaii Open Budget Initiative website or connect through Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn by searching for Hawaii Open Budget Initiative or using the links provided on the webpage at <http://hawaiiopenbudget.com>. There is also a demonstration video on how to navigate the site and use the various tools, which can be accessed at <http://hawaiiopenbudget.com>.

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FOR MEDIA ONLY: For digital images, or an interview with Senator Sam Slom, please contact Senator Sam Slom direct at (808) 349-5438 or Herb Laybon at (808) 586-6780 / h.laybon@capitol.hawaii.gov. For an interview with Representative Gene Ward, please phone (808) 586-6420 or email repward@capitol.hawaii.gov.

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¹ <http://www.sunshineweek.org>