



Caring for each other

COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER • SEPTEMBER 2020

SENATOR SHARON MORIWAKI

DISTRICT 12 - ALA MOANA, KAKAAKO, MCCULLY, MOILIILI, SHERIDAN, WAIKIKI



Aloha! Life changed on February 28 when COVID-19 arrived here. We had to deal with the cruise ship carrying infected passengers and 30,000 daily passengers flying into our airports. When our first COVID case grew to six on March 4, Governor Ige proclaimed a state of emergency; his stay-at-home order and 14-day quarantine shuttering our state began tanking our economy.

Small businesses closed and our unemployment rate went from the lowest in the country to the second highest--with over 200,000 claimants seeking help.

The Senate President appointed a COVID-19 Special Committee to assess government's response. The six-member committee included me so work in our office switched to almost full-time focus on responding to pressing questions on health care, keeping condo residents safe, explaining the emergency orders, and helping with unemployment insurance claims. Needless to say, the bills we hoped to pass at the year's beginning must await the

2021 session. We switched from monthly chats to the almost daily email messages related to the pandemic. I've appreciated your comments and your ideas. We are fearful, frustrated, and angry, but we do have community. I look forward to coming out of this crisis a better, stronger community-- and continuing to learn and grow.

In the meantime, keep in touch. Please fill out our survey; your responses help us serve you better. And if you haven't yet, sign up for updates at senatormoriwaki.com/contact to keep in touch. Together, we will care for each other and our community!

Sign up for email message updates at
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Senate COVID-19 Committee Highlights

Since March, the Senate COVID Committee has been hard at work, holding the Ige administration accountable while strengthening Hawaii's public health infrastructure. Unfortunately, a study led by former CDC Director Tom Frieden revealed that Hawaii was releasing *only 13%* of the information that experts believe the public needed. Our hearings and a visit to the Health Department's Disease Outbreak Control Division helped gain answers from tight-lipped officials. That visit on August 7th found investigators and contact tracers overloaded and understaffed, with some investigators individually tracking 100+ COVID cases.

The committee briefings since March have helped move the administration to close our borders to cruise ships, to require a 14-day quarantine for incoming passengers at our airports, to use federal CARES funding to equip the airports with thermal scanners, testing facilities and needed staff, to close travel quarantine violation loopholes, to upgrade the legacy computer system and increase the Unemployment Insurance (UI) staff to meet the unprecedented increase in claimants, to urge daily administration updates on the severity of the pandemic, to map the location of ballot drop-boxes for voter use, to provide rules for safe restaurant opening, and to increase the Health Department's disease investigation/contact tracing staffing, space, and partnerships with community networks. Much work still remains to obtain and share with the community more data on virus spread, to ramp up the testing and contact tracing, and to sufficiently equip our health care facilities and workers as well as schools, elderly and child care facilities, businesses and the community to prevent, contain and control the virus. Our committee will continue to meet during the interim.



Senate COVID Committee Members (L to R): Chair Donovan Delacruz, Sharon Moriwaki, Jarrett Keohokalole, Michelle Kidani, Kurt Fevella, Donna Mercado Kim

LEGISLATION THAT AFFECTS OUR COMMUNITY



The Women's Legislative Caucus worked on bills to address sexual harassment in the workplace (HB2054), domestic violence (HB2060, HB2425) and abuse of family household members (SB2638)



The Kupuna Caucus introduced several measures that help seniors and their caregivers, address dementia, and strengthen laws to protect kupuna.

KEEP CONNECTED WITH US

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COVID-19 CARES ACT FEDERAL RELIEF (ACT 9) \$635 MILLION TO HELP OUR RESIDENTS WITH



Rental Housing and Mortgage Assistance



Food Assistance



PPE in Small Businesses & Non-profits



Childcare Assistance



PPE for Schools



PPE for Child and Senior Care Facilities



Unemployment Insurance (UI)*



Airport Temperature Screening



Supply Chain Development for PPE & Cleaning



Workforce Development

*The Legislature allocated \$230 million for UI supplemental \$100/week "plus up" assistance to start when the federal "plus up" benefit lapsed; but Governor Ige vetoed that portion of the Act. The Senate COVID Committee requested Governor reconsider this line-item veto.

MEASURES AFFECTING US SENT TO THE GOVERNOR

SB75 (Act 8) **appropriates CARES Act funds to each county:** Honolulu - \$387 million, Hawaii County - \$80 million, Maui - \$66 million, Kauai - \$28 million. Other funding includes \$40 million for **emergency management response activities**, \$36 million for **thermal screening at airports** statewide, \$1.3 million for **Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA)**, \$8.1 million for **unemployment insurance** information technology, systems and staffing, \$2 million for **EBT (food stamps) and SNAP** technology services, \$14 million for the Department of Health for **outbreak and control, contact tracing, and PPE**.

HB117 (Act 2) **defers further implementation of salary increases** for the executive, legislative, and judicial branches.

HB2183 **increases the Hula Mae Multifamily Revenue Bond** authorization ceiling amount to continue financing affordable rental housing statewide.

HB1676 establishes the **Photo Red Light Imaging Detector Systems Program** as a two-year pilot program in Honolulu County. Proceeds of the fines will remain in the county where collected to operate the program.

SB2893 amends the definition of "chronically homeless individual" to **clarify and expand services to the homeless**.

SB2060 amends coastal zone management laws to protect state beaches and **protect against impacts of sea level rise and coastal erosion**.

SB2421 clarifies and makes permanent the **priority of payments in condominium foreclosure**.

SB2425 makes permanent the rules for alternative dispute resolution, expands the **condo education trust fund** to cover voluntary binding arbitration, and establishes conditions for mandatory **mediation to address condo disputes**.

SR174 requests the Governor to establish stay-at-home orders, including civil and criminal penalties for violators, to ensure **rapid response to any COVID resurgence**.

SR78 requests the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism to work with the Legislature to **create 100,000 permanent jobs by 2022**.

SR84 convenes a restaurant reopening task force to assist in **safe reopening of restaurants** statewide.



INCLUSIVE PLAYGROUND PLANNED

The inclusive playground that Paani Kakoo (PK), a non-profit group, planned to build in Ala Moana Regional Park was met with park user objections. PK, park users, city and state agencies worked together and agreed to move the playground to Kakaako Waterfront Park near the Children's Discovery Center.



PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE FOR ALA MOANA BLVD

\$20 million in federal funding and partnership between the state department of transportation and Howard Hughes Corp will make crossing Ala Moana Blvd safer for pedestrians. The bridge will connect Victoria Ward Park and Kewalo Basin Harbor.



HEALTHY TREES ON ALA MOANA BLVD.

The City completed permanent work in July to fix the sprinkler system to water the trees and foliage on the median.



ALA WAI PROMENADE

City funding of \$100,000 will go way beyond the planned tree-lighting demonstration set for 2021. Thanks to the City Council and the Department of Parks & Recreation and the many committee partners spearheaded by the Waikiki and Ala Moana/Kakaako Neighborhood Boards, you can look forward to an enjoyable experience along the Ala Wai Canal in the future.



ALA WAI SMALL BOAT HARBOR SAFETY

At Senator Moriwiki's request, the Division of Conservation and Resource Enforcement (DOCARE) conducted a saturation sweep and found 550 violations over 3 weekends, which led to her request for funding to continue small harbor enforcement and exploration of mobile law enforcement office on site to make the harbors safe for users.



LAUULA ST/RITZ CARLTON PARK AND PARKING FOR THE PUBLIC

In response to residents' calls to open the "secret park" off Kuhio Avenue adjacent to the Ritz Carlton, Senator Moriwiki worked with Ritz Carlton, the City Department of Transportation Services and Waikiki Improvement Association to open the park (during daylight hours) and parking lot now open for public use.



MCKINLEY HIGH SCHOOL

- \$4,730,000 released to design McKinley High School's Athletic Complex that includes locker/shower rooms, stadium lighting and bleachers, and other improvements
- \$2.35 million released to finance design and construction for improvements to comply with current ADA standards



WASHINGTON MIDDLE SCHOOL

\$250,000 for a modern, coordinated performing arts academy to be integrated with world-class recording studio.



LUNALILO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

\$277,000 renovation of B Building 1st floor restrooms



HOUSING THE HOMELESS: KEAUHOU SHELTER

Supporting Waikiki Health Center's newly-opened emergency shelter on Isenberg Street housed 40 unsheltered on the street; serving 75 residents, giving them shelter and assisting in housing placement, job training, medical care.



ALA WAI CANAL IMPROVEMENTS & DREDGING

October 2019, construction began to repair and stabilize Ala Wai Canal walls and dredging to remove accumulated silt and sediments and enhanced plans for netting floating debris. Additional \$4 million appropriated in 2020 for wall stabilization. Project expected to be completed late 2020 or early 2021.



KAIMUKI HIGH SCHOOL

\$400,000 for planning and design of student center and cafeteria



ALA WAI ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

- \$1 million for covered playcourt (phase 2)
- \$1.5 million for school-wide electrical and service equipment upgrades



WAIKIKI AQUARIUM

\$600,000 for plans, designs, construction, and equipment for various repairs and improvements to the Waikiki Aquarium



ROYAL HAWAIIAN GROIN REPLACEMENT

Construction commenced in May to replace the groin by the Royal Hawaiian Hotel to preserve the sandy shoreline east of the groin with funding from the State and the Waikiki Beach Special Improvement District. The project was completed in July.



SAND REPLENISHMENT

\$2 million for placement of approximately 15,000 cubic yards of sand and related work.



SENATE DISTRICT 12 WE'RE WORKING FOR YOU

2020 SURVEY RESULTS - MAHALO FOR YOUR INPUT!



Since taking office, Senator Moriwiki invited the sharing of concerns in community surveys to better understand what is important to our district. This year we sought your comments both before and after COVID hit Hawaii. When asked what was the #1 problem, most said homeless, crime, affordable housing and poor infrastructure. When asked what government could do to better respond to the COVID crisis, responses emphasized strictly enforcing quarantine, keeping visitors out and handling unemployment claims more efficiently. You can see the survey results at senatormoriwaki.com. Below are some of the responses and what we're doing to address the issues.

SUBJECT RESULT

GREATEST PERSONAL IMPACT OF COVID

SEPARATED FROM FAMILY AND FRIENDS

UNEMPLOYED/FURLOUGHED/LAID-OFF

BASIC NEEDS UNMET

NO SCHOOL/CHILD CARE

3%

WHAT WE'RE DOING

The Senate COVID Committee urged the administration to develop a COVID response plan and communicate better to the public. Our office assisted almost 200 unemployed with their UI claims and we continue to work with those with pending claims. We allocated CARES Act money to meet basic needs, including school/child care (see page 2)

"AFFORDABLE" ONE-BEDROOM MONTHLY RENT

LESS THAN \$1,800

\$1800

\$2,300

\$2,700

\$3,200

0%

The Senate appropriated \$100 million in CARES Act money for rental and mortgage assistance to benefit 34,000+ households and provided \$750,000 for rent supplement to avoid evictions. It increased to \$3 million the rental housing & dwelling unit revolving fund to build more affordable rentals.

MAKING NEIGHBORHOODS SAFE FOR WALKING*

ADD MORE POLICE IN NEIGHBORHOODS WITH HIGH CRIME.

INCREASE PENALTIES FOR UNSAFE DRIVING

REPAIR DAMAGED SIDEWALKS AND CROSSWALKS.

NOTHING IS NEEDED. URBAN HONOLULU IS ALREADY SAFE FOR WALKING.

2.17%

We worked with the community to repair hazardous sidewalks and crosswalks, supported a photo red light pilot program to deter speeding motorists, and introduced legislation to geographically ban persons convicted of three misdemeanors in Waikiki, any business district, or resort zoned area.

MOST EFFECTIVE WAY TO END HOMELESSNESS

MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT FOR THE HOMELESS.

HOUSING SHELTERS WHERE HOMELESS ARE CONNECTED TO NEEDED SERVICES.

INSTITUTIONALIZE TO HELP CRIMINAL AND MENTALLY ILL HOMELESS.

INCREASE OUTREACH CASE WORKERS WORKING WITH UNSHELTERED HOMELESS.

HOUSE QUALIFYING FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN FIRST.

FUND SCHOOL STAFF TO WORK WITH HOMELESS STUDENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES.

NOTHING.

5%

We support the Waikiki Health Center's serving communities from McCully to Kakaako to provide emergency housing by moving homeless into housing with job training, medical care, and other services. We work with the city and state homeless coordinators, the Department of Health and others who provide the district with support for the homeless. We supported bills to expand the definition of "homeless" to enable help for more homeless; and to establish a long-term rental assistance pilot for elderly or those on the verge of becoming homeless.

We helped with unemployment insurance woes

In April, more than 37% of Hawaii's work-force filed unemployment insurance (UI) claims, overwhelming the department of labor and creating huge backlogs. In response to many calls for help among frustrated and angry residents, the Senate COVID-19 Committee met with UI administrators to discuss ways to expedite the process such as deploying 500 staff from other departments, augmenting the call centers, moving the operation to the larger convention center, and upgrading its

computer system.

Although most claims have since been resolved, still ten thousand of the initial 250,000 jobless remain trapped in unemployment purgatory. Since the onset of the pandemic, our office has helped about 200 unemployed to address their pending claims. As the department ramps up operations in hiring additional staff and stabilizing its operations, we hope to see more claims resolved. We will continue to assist as needed during this challenging time.



Please take our new survey at senatormoriwaki.com



Put this QR code in your phone camera to go directly





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INSIDE:

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Keeping Waikiki Community Center keiki and preschool teachers safe - Senator donating "PPE STARTER KIT"- face shields, gloves, hand sanitizer, and kids size masks - to safely open on the first day of school



Listening to community concerns - Joining fellow district lawmakers in February at Washington Middle to hear community concerns and ideas.



Infrastructure improvements - The groin by Royal Hawaiian Hotel was rehabilitated with matching funds appropriated by the legislature. Above is the blessing of the project in July (see page 4 for completed groin)

Around the community with Sharon Moriwaki



Fighting crime - Working with Councilmember Tommy Waters in hosting a Waikiki Crime and Safety Townhall in February to hear community concerns and discuss solutions.



Caring for businesses - Speaker Scott Saiki and Senator Moriwaki toured the Hilton Hawaiian Village to view the standards and careful steps taken to reopen safely.



Caring for the community - Chatting with Clarence, a chronically homeless individual, about his experience at one of the shelters and his interest in finding housing at a community facility.



Caring for our keiki - Senator Moriwaki invited McKinley High School students to the Senate Chamber and had a lively discussion on legislative matters.