

2021 Legislative Priorities

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Basic Needs

Affordable Housing

Real Estate Investment Trust (REIT) Tax

Establish tax on real estate investment trusts (REITs). REITs are revenue-generating real estate holdings. If the real estate they own and operate were held by a regular business, they would be subject to taxation; all businesses should pay their fair share of taxes, including REITs. REITs are structured to advantage their investors; the overwhelming majority of REIT investors are not Hawai'i residents and therefore the tax advantages do not benefit locals.

A.L.O.H.A Homes

A.L.O.H.A. Homes, which stands for "affordable, locally owned homes for all," is a multifaceted policy proposal modeled after Singapore's public housing to stabilize its residents.

Stadium Housing Commitment

Commit 40 acres of state-owned land at Aloha Stadium for affordable housing. Hawai'i is already planning a major redevelopment of the site alongside renovations to the stadium itself. Housing was nominally included in those plans with zero commitment to the affordability thresholds and quantities that would put a dent in our state's need for affordable housing. The location is ideal for transit-oriented development (TOD), which will encourage and enable non-car-owning residents who will decrease roadway congestion and reduce our human impacts on the 'āina.

Minimum Wage

After 25 years of intense study, peer-reviewed research and multiple real-city and -state experiments, it's undeniable that strategic increases in the minimum wage aimed at shoring up the widening gap between income and cost of living are good for both the economy, and the workers that power it. Raising the minimum wage to a livable level—a Living Wage—would give Hawai'i's consumer economy a massive boost while giving Hawai'i's working families the financial opportunity to thrive here in our island home. This isn't about workers vs businesses. That's a false dichotomy. We need both businesses and workers to be able to thrive in order to end this recession quickly and get Hawai'i back on its feet.

Supportive Family Policies

Kupuna Care

Hawai'i made history as the first state to recognize and support family care providers for our kupuna. The program, which provides a working family caregivers with a subsidy of up to \$70 per day to be applied toward adult day services, will be more important than ever to get all of our workforce back and our economy stable. The program should be funded at the requested amount in the Governor's budget.

Child Care

The backbone of our economy is child care. Without it, our essential workforce could not have continued throughout the pandemic. Since the beginning of March, about a quarter of our providers have closed. Hawai'i was in a child care crisis before COVID-19 hit, and we cannot afford to lose any child care spaces. Child care deserves to be recognized and supported for the important role it plays. The state must continue to make investments in child care subsidies to ensure our workers and providers are able to sustain throughout these challenging times.

Paid Family Leave

Family leave insurance allows workers to take paid, job-protected leave for family emergencies, such as the birth or adoption of a baby, elder care, or to care for loved ones with a serious injury or illness. Although some workers might have access to paid leave through their workplaces, because coverage is a voluntary option for employers, it is usually offered as a perk for only the highest-paid workers, not those who truly need it the most. Now is the time to ensure no one is forced to choose between caring for an ill family member or making ends meet.

Public Health

Paid Sick Leave

All workers should be able to recover from illness or care for family member without risking their economic well-being. States where workers gained new access to guaranteed paid sick leave through the Families First Coronavirus Response Act saw a statistically significant 400 fewer confirmed COVID-19 cases per day. This translates to a 56 percent decrease in infections in these states. Workers without paid sick are 1.5 times more likely to go to work sick and less likely to see healthcare provider.

Equitable Recovery

Progressive Tax Revenue to Protect the State Budget

Before making budget cuts, the state should raise significant new revenue from those in our community who are fortunate enough to be able to afford it. Raising progressive revenues from profitable corporations and wealthy individuals can help our state avoid budget cuts, strengthen our recovery, and help reduce inequality.