



Hawai'i Children's Policy Agenda

2021 Wrap-Up

Convened by



Hawai'i
Children's
Action
Network
Speaks!

Overview



The state budget is much more than numbers and line items — it is a reflection of Hawai‘i’s priorities and values.

This year, the Legislature had the opportunity to ask profitable corporations and wealthy individuals, who benefit from our state investments, to pay their fair share in taxes. This would have helped prevent budget cuts to programs and services that serve the families and workers in our state—the folks that make our economy. The legislature did adopt some tax fairness options but left most on the table. Along with hundreds of millions of dollars in federal aid, they were able to save some of our programs, but not all.

We appreciate that funding for domestic violence programs, housing programs, teachers in our public schools, and early intervention services were not cut. These programs help families stay safe and provide children a strong start in life. Investments in these programs help our communities thrive.

Unfortunately, we may see fewer children attending early learning classes because of cuts to the Preschool Open Doors program and charter school early learning programs. Cuts in this area are particularly painful, because just last year, the Legislature committed to expanding access to early learning programs for 3- and 4- year olds.

Families struggled to make ends meet before the pandemic and many have been languishing for over a year. We needed a people-centered budget this year, a budget that represents the needs of everyone—no exceptions. What we got fell short of that vision.

About the Hawai‘i Children’s Policy Agenda

This sixth annual Hawai‘i Children’s Policy Agenda, published by Hawai‘i Children’s Action Network Speaks!, reflects the input of 44 Community Champion members. These organizations, coalitions, and individuals are committed to improving the lives of our keiki by promoting public policy changes that benefit children’s health, safety, education, and economic security.

The Agenda contained 12 priorities for the 2021 Hawai‘i State Legislative Session. These were the top priority issues of our Community Champion members. Ultimately, six bills reflecting those priorities were passed.

HCAN Speaks! respects the diversity, expertise, perspectives, and priorities within this community of advocates and is honored to advance the work of our peers in children’s advocacy. HCAN Speaks! supports all of the items in the Agenda. Each initiative is led by an organization that serves as the primary point of contact for advocacy.

Big wins for keiki

These six bills reflect priorities from the 2021 Hawai'i Children's Policy Agenda.



✔ Take concrete steps toward our new state goal of ensuring all 3- and 4-year-olds have access to preschool by 2032.

HB 1362 | A 2020 law, Act 46, sets a new state goal of dramatically expanding preschool access. HB 1362 will start to implement Act 46 by establishing a stipend program for early childhood educators to address the current workforce shortage. It will also create an Act 46 Coordinator to assist in the law's implementation.

➔ Lead: Hawai'i Early Childhood Advocacy Alliance

✔ Urge the Board of Education and Department of Education to support and implement the “community schools” strategy.

HR 10 | Under this strategy, each school becomes the hub of its community and coordinates relationships and resources through the school to accelerate equitable outcomes in health, education, and employment.

➔ Lead: Hawai'i Afterschool Alliance

✔ Raise revenue for critical public programs through tax fairness.

HB 58 | This bill increases taxes on sales of properties worth at least \$4 million and suspends some exemptions to the General Excise Tax.

HB 286 | Real estate investment trusts (REITs) are exempt from corporate income taxes on much of their income. Although this bill doesn't impose new taxes, it does require REITs to start reporting their assets and revenues annually.

➔ Lead: Hawai'i Tax Fairness Coalition

✔ Keep up the momentum toward a statewide paid family leave program.

HR 86 | This resolution requests that the director of the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations convene a task force to study, design, and develop a paid family leave program.

➔ Lead: Hawai'i Working Families Coalition

✔ Fund the Family Planning Program.

HB 200 | This ensures all people in Hawai'i have access to basic, preventive health care and education regardless of where they live, how much money they make, their background, or whether they have health insurance.

➔ Lead: Planned Parenthood Votes Northwest and Hawai'i

Community spotlight

These bills were not part of the Hawai'i Children's Policy Agenda but represent additional wins for our keiki and families.

✔ Expand access to locally-grown fruits, vegetables, and proteins for SNAP recipients.

SB 512 | The "DA BUX Double Up Food Bucks" program provides a dollar-for-dollar match to SNAP (previously known as food stamps) beneficiaries who purchase locally grown fruits and vegetables. This bill removes the previous \$10/day cap on this incentive program and specifies that healthy proteins are also eligible purchases.

➔ Lead: Hawai'i Public Health Institute

✔ Create a trauma-informed task force.

HB 1322 | This bill creates a new trauma-informed care task force within the Department of Health to make recommendations about trauma-informed care in the State.

➔ Lead: Danny Goya

✔ Modernize Hawai'i's voter registration system.

SB 159 | This bill makes opting in for voter registration part of all state ID and driver's license applications, and automatically transfers registration information to the county clerks, unless a voter declines.

➔ Lead: Common Cause Hawai'i

✔ Study missing and murdered Native Hawaiian women and girls.

HCR 11 | This requests the Hawai'i State Commission on the Status of Women to convene a task force to study missing and murdered Native Hawaiian women and girls.

➔ Lead: Hawai'i State Commission on the Status of Women

Missed opportunities

Despite community support, many priorities ultimately did not pass. We look forward to continuing our efforts to pass these bills next year.

✘ Funding was cut for early learning subsidies and programs.

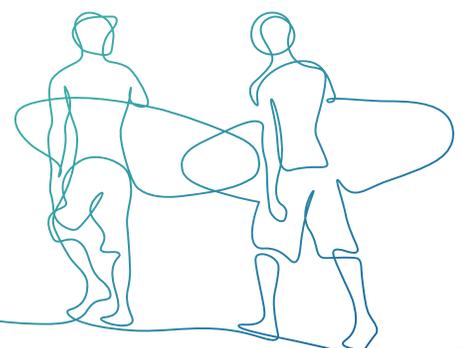
HB 200 | The Preschool Open Doors subsidy was cut by \$7 million, along with a loss of \$30,000 for early learning programs at public charter schools.

✘ Other tax fairness bills were not passed.

The Children's Policy Agenda proposed numerous bills that would have raised 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 would help our state avoid budget cuts, strengthen our recovery, and reduce inequality. This included raising taxes on personal income from those at the top, corporate profits, investments, and other "capital gains"; closing a tax loophole for REITs, making global corporations pay taxes in Hawai'i; increasing taxes on large inheritances; and establishing a fee on sugar-sweetened beverages.

✘ Other bills in the Children's Policy Agenda were not passed.

These community-driven priorities included: universal paid sick days, a statewide paid family leave program, credentialing of school psychologists, ensuring equal access to the full range of reproductive health care, e-cigarette regulation, increased funding for summer learning programs, and support for afterschool programs.



Community Champion members

Organizations

ALICE Policy Hui
AlohaCare
American Academy of Pediatrics, Hawai'i Chapter
Blueprint for Change
Breastfeeding Hawai'i
Early Childhood Action Strategy
Epic 'Ohana, Inc.
Family Programs Hawai'i
Family Support Hawaii
Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) Action Group
Hawai'i Women in Filmmaking
Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action
Hawai'i Afterschool Alliance
Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law & Economic Justice
Hawai'i Association of School Psychologists
Hawai'i Diaper Bank
Hawai'i Pacific Health
Hawai'i Public Charter Schools Network
Hawai'i Public Health Institute
Hawai'i State PTSA
Hawai'i State Teacher's Association
Hawai'i Youth Services Network
Imua Family Services
Maui Family Support Services, Inc.
Midwives Alliance of Hawai'i
Parents and Children Together
Parents for Public Schools Hawai'i
People Attentive to Children (PATCH)
PHOCUSED
Planned Parenthood Votes Northwest and Hawai'i
Raise Up Hawai'i
The Learning Coalition/HE'E Coalition
UHM/Bridge to Hope
Wai'anae Coast Early Childhood Services

Individuals

Annie Au Hoon
Chris Jackson
Jackie Jackson
Erin O'Donnell
Quin Ogawa
Robert Peters
Susan Rocco
Sheri Schmidt
Dana Senaha
Jeannine Souki
Karen Worthington

Member list as of May 25, 2021.

Take action today!

Become a Community Champion member

You'll get exclusive advocacy tools, including custom action alerts, bill tracking, briefings on legislative hearings, sample testimony, media assistance, policy research, breaking news concerning children's issues, explanations of legislative/regulatory activity, and more.

➔ www.hawaii-can.org/communitychampions

Sign up for free action alerts

Join us as we begin strategizing for the 2022 legislative session. Anyone interested in children's issues at the Legislature can sign up for our email updates. Your voice is needed — and we make it easy to get involved with our simple advocacy tools.

➔ speaks.hawaii-can.org/updates

Donate to this grassroots movement

The fight for Hawai'i's keiki continues, and we need your support to advance these important initiatives. Your gift today will help to address the root causes of poverty and inequity and develop these crucial public policies for our keiki.

➔ speaks.hawaii-can.org/donate



Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks! is a nonpartisan 501(c)4 nonprofit working to ensure all keiki are healthy, safe, and ready to learn. We give Hawai'i residents the tools they need to change systems and policies, hold leaders accountable, and make informed voting decisions. We are honored to be the convener and coordinator of the pro-child organizations, coalitions, and individuals who participated in this Agenda.

Get in touch

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