



Quarter 2, 2021

Aloha!

Aloha Friend:

I would first like to express my sincere gratitude to all of our O'ahu Neighborhood Boards for finding the best ways to continue discharging your responsibilities throughout these difficult times.

It has been just over one year since the first COVID-19 case was confirmed in Hawai'i. Since then, life in our islands has changed in ways that none of us could have ever before imagined. As I write you, our state has seen nearly 30,000 coronavirus infections and tragically lost more than 450 of our 'ohana. However, with the federal government's approval of now three safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines and with vaccination availability expanding rapidly, there is light at the end of the tunnel and glimmers of a new normal ahead of us.

As your U.S. Representative for the First Congressional District, I will continue to listen to and learn from you, and ensure that our Hawai'i receives its fair share of federal assistance throughout these trying times. Our neighborhoods are the backbone of our great state, as such I recently voted in favor of the American Rescue Plan through which I was able to secure funds specifically to benefit our communities during this time of continued difficulty and uncertainty.

I truly look forward to continuing to work together to ensure that our community's voices are heard and concerns are met by our federal government wherever and however possible. Here's a quick update on some of those areas.

COVID-19 Vaccine Progress

The Hawai'i Department of Health, in partnership with local, state and federal agencies as well as health care systems and providers, has been responsible for coordinating the state's COVID-19 vaccine efforts. Vaccine distribution and administration is set up to ensure that vaccines are quickly made available to those at highest risk for acquiring or falling seriously ill to this disease.

Currently, Hawai'i is moving into Phase 1c of its vaccination plan, making vaccines available to adults 60 and older, frontline essential workers and individuals with high-risk medical conditions. To learn more about whether you're eligible for the vaccine and how you can schedule an appointment, you can visit: hawaiicovid19.com/vaccine. Kūpuna living on O'ahu can also call 211 to set up a time to get vaccinated.

While the current vaccination plan for Hawai'i is determined and managed at the state level, I am working with our federal partners to ensure vaccines are safe, effective, widely available and equitably distributed. For example, earlier this year, I joined several of my House and Senate colleagues in a letter requesting that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Department of Health and Human Services increase funding for small states like Hawai'i, which had been receiving comparatively less federal dollars for COVID-19 vaccinations. These funds are critical to delivering vaccines and other related resources to the people of Hawai'i, especially those living in rural and medically underserved areas.

Last week, I was fortunate to have the opportunity to visit Queen's Medical Center-West O'ahu for the opening of its new mass vaccination clinic. Queen's West has been an essential partner in providing critical primary and specialty health services to hundreds of thousands living in West and Central O'ahu. During my visit, I discussed at length with hospital staff how we can continue working to combat vaccine hesitancy particularly among our Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities, and what additional federal resources are needed to break down barriers to care in the islands. With the expansion of the vaccination clinic at Queen's West and other efforts in the coming weeks, we can ensure Hawai'i residents have access to COVID-19 vaccines no matter where they live.

Newly Approved COVID-19 Relief

On March 10, 2021, I joined a majority of my colleagues in voting for final passage of the American Rescue Plan, a \$1.9 trillion measure to deliver emergency assistance to families, communities and businesses across the country and throughout Hawai'i that continue to suffer from the health, economic and social impacts of COVID-19.

The American Rescue Plan embraces our duty to act by allocating federal resources to boost production and distribution of vaccines, help our keiki and their teachers safely return to the classroom, assist our small businesses and devastated industries like tourism, extend unemployment benefits and provide stimulus checks to those in dire need. This measure as

passed by Congress also provides additional direct funding to our state and local governments whose budgets have taken a severe hit from the loss of revenue due to the economic shutdowns caused by this pandemic.

Since the initial COVID-19 outbreak, I have worked with my colleagues to pass several emergency assistance packages including the \$2.2 trillion CARES Act last March, the \$900 billion COVID-19 relief bill in December and now the latest \$1.9 trillion relief package. I have also worked to assure that a fair share of this emergency assistance is actually received and applied to so many critical needs back home. So far Hawai'i is closing in on some \$15 billion from these and other federal COVID relief efforts.

In the American Rescue Plan, in addition to billions of additional federal assistance for specific needs throughout Hawai'i, more than \$2.2 billion will go to Hawai'i state and county government for needs to be determined largely by our state and counties. Our state and county governments are now determining where these critical additional resources should be directed, and the input of our Neighborhood Boards would be especially valuable. The projected breakdown is:

- Total State and Local Government in Hawai'i: \$2.3 billion
- State of Hawai'i: \$1.6 billion
- Counties / Local Government in Hawai'i: \$524 million
- Hawai'i Coronavirus Capital Projects Fund: \$115 million

To view a full summary of the American Rescue Plan and how it will support individuals and families across Hawai'i, please visit my website online here (<https://case.house.gov/news/>). As we continue to work through this crisis together, please visit my COVID-19 website at <https://case.house.gov/coronavirus> for the latest updates of my efforts to help our state, communities and neighborhoods.

Legislation

We are now well into the thick of the 117th Congress (2021-2023), and I am working hard with my colleagues in Congress to promote legislation that addresses many of our unique challenges in Hawai'i. In addition to my other work especially on the U.S. House Committee on Appropriations, here are just a few of the legislative areas I am focusing on:

The Ka'ena Point National Heritage Area Act. This Congress, I have been joined by my new colleague, Representative Kai Kahele, to pursue the creation of the first National Heritage Areas (NHA) in the State of Hawai'i. NHAs are designated by Congress to encourage the preservation of places with unique national significant qualities and resources. NHA designations offer federal assistance to support joint efforts to protect and appropriately utilize the area without circumventing local interests and needs. Since the designation of the nation's first NHA in 1984, there are now 55 located in states across the country but none in Hawai'i.

Our bill, the Ka'ena Point National Heritage Area Act, would authorize a feasibility study to determine whether Ka'ena Point should be designated as an NHA. The measure focuses on the undeveloped area of Ka'ena Point on the west end of O'ahu from Mākua to Waialua. As you know, this site is the last intact sand dune ecosystem in Hawai'i and has a deep cultural,

historic and environmental significance to many in the Native Hawaiian community. It is also largely state-owned. The State of Hawaii's Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) has already created a management plan to protect and preserve the Ka'ena Point Stewardship Area, making it the perfect candidate for a National Heritage Area in Hawai'i. My bill would not change the ownership of any of this land but it can help DLNR achieve the vision for this area it developed with our community.

Representative Kahele also introduced a similar measure on which I joined him to study the suitability of designating the South Kona coastline on the Island of Hawai'i as an NHA. These designations for South Kona and Ka'ena Point would ensure the full involvement of all engaged communities in charting the plan for protection and use of these unique places, which are part of the rich heritage of our country.

Ensuring the Inclusion of Native Hawaiians in Effort to Combat Violence Against Women.
The U.S. House recently passed H.R. 1620, the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act (VAWA) with my support. For nearly three decades, VAWA has been a transformative force for the safety and security of American women. Millions of women have gained access to protections from violence and abuse, and millions of survivors gained access to essential services and justice. Since its passage, domestic violence rates have declined by nearly two thirds in America.

The reauthorization bill that passed the House will make new investments to improve services for victims of domestic violence, combat intimate partner homicides and expand protections for victims and survivors. During the House's consideration of VAWA, my colleagues accepted my amendment mandating a review of Native Hawaiian women's interactions with the criminal justice system and related crime prevention programs. This will make sure more of our unique issues in Hawai'i are properly considered as we work to protect more women from violence. You can read my complete explanation of the amendment at <https://case.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=456>.

As always, I welcome your questions, comments, guidance and partnership as we all get through this difficult time for our Hawai'i and country. Best wishes and be well.

*Mahalo nui loa,
Ed Case*

P.S. Please sign up for my regular e-newsletter here: <https://case.house.gov/news/email/>.

Contact Me

IN WASHINGTON, DC
2210 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515
Ph. (202) 225-2726

IN HONOLULU
1003 Bishop Street
Suite 1110
Honolulu, HI 96813
Ph. (808) 650-6688

Email: ed.case@mail.house.gov
Web: <https://case.house.gov/contact>

Social Media

