



February 5, 2021

Aloha!

Aloha, Friend:

By any measure, January was a tumultuous month for our country and Hawai'i on so many fronts. As I continue to focus in Congress and back home on the crises we face, foremost COVID-19, it is even more critical that I continue to partner with you and our Neighborhood Boards on behalf of the people and communities we both represent.

My own obligations remain to contribute to sound national leadership including further federal emergency assistance, help our Hawai'i with the federal resources desperately needed here at home, and help you and yours with your own questions and needs. In this latest report to you, I highlight some of my efforts in all of these areas and ask for your guidance.

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
<https://case.house.gov/contact>

Delivering Federal Assistance to Hawai'i Through My Appropriations Committee

For the new 117th Congress (2021-2023), I will remain on the U.S. House appropriations Committee. I will also continue my service on the "Approps" Subcommittees on Military Construction and Veterans Affairs; Commerce, Justice and Science; and the Legislative Branch.

Approps plays a critical role for our country as we are responsible for directing some \$1.4 trillion in annual funding (in addition to our responsibility for COVID-19 emergency funding) across our federal government in all areas including agriculture, defense, veterans, energy, environment, justice, homeland security, labor, health and human services, education, transportation and housing. It is also critical for our Hawai'i especially considering our federal government's overall contribution to our economy and so many of our needs.

In addition to critical further federal emergency assistance for COVID-19, we are already at work on our legislative proposals to fund our federal government for Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 (October 1, 2021 – September 30, 2022). That process includes Members of the U.S. House submitting requests to Approps. As I prepare my own requests, I ask for your help and suggestions on priorities for funding areas of special interest to our Hawai'i. Because my own deadline for my submissions to Approps are coming up fast, I need to receive your suggestions by February 15, 2021. For more information and to submit a request, please visit my website at <https://case.house.gov/services/appropriations-requests.htm>.

Legislation

As we commence this two-year Congress, I am introducing and pursuing legislation on issues of special concern to our Hawai'i. Here are some of my bills so far:

Jones Act

I introduced three pieces of legislation to reform the century-old Merchant Marine Act of 1920 (commonly referred to as the "Jones Act"), which is widely credited with unnecessarily increasing our cost of living in Hawai'i. My bills are:

- the Noncontiguous Shipping Relief Act, which exempts all noncontiguous U.S. locations, including Hawai'i, from the Jones Act;
- the Noncontiguous Shipping Reasonable Rate Act, which benchmarks the definition of a "reasonable rate" which domestic shippers can charge as no more than ten percent above international shipping rates for comparable routes; and
- the Noncontiguous Shipping Competition Act, which cancels the Jones Act and opens up competition wherever monopolies or duopolies in noncontiguous Jones Act shipping develop.

My statement for the official Congressional Record on introductions is [here](#).

Safe and Quiet Skies Act

I re-introduced my Safe and Quiet Skies Act, which would impose strict safety and community disruption regulations on commercial air tour operations to include helicopters and small planes. My bill would address safety and national defense risks and community disruption, by prohibiting overflights of defense, park, cemetery and other sensitive installations and requiring minimum altitude and maximum noise limits on all flights. Additionally, it would allow states, localities and tribes to impose stricter regulations on tour flights in their jurisdictions, to include time, route and frequency, with required public engagement.

My statement for the official Congressional Record on introduction is [here](#). This is the same bill that most Oah'u Neighborhood Boards have already formally supported.

Hawai'i Invasive Species Protection Act

I also re-introduced my Hawai'i Invasive Species Protection Act, which would require the same preclearance inspection of baggage for invasive pests currently required when leaving Hawai'i to be required before entering the state (in other words, what is good for California should be good for Hawai'i). Since I introduced this bill in the last Congress, even more invasive pests and diseases have snuck into Hawai'i including coffee leaf rust, which is devastating our coffee industry. My bill would be a critical component in preventing these invasives that are threatening our unique national resources and local agricultural producers from coming to Hawai'i. My statement for the official Congressional Record on introduction is [here](#).

Protecting Local Authority and Neighborhoods (PLAN) Act

My bill, which I will soon re-introduce, targets illegal short-term vacation rentals by ending abusive litigation by internet-based short-term rental platforms attempting to strike down our carefully-crafted local regulations aimed at curbing this illegal activity and its widespread negative impacts

These impacts include the loss of affordable housing as residential units are converted to transient accommodations for tourists, and the failure of many unit owners and rental operators to comply with basic consumer safety, public accommodations, and tax requirements as must the legal lodging industry. This illegal hotel activity in otherwise residential neighborhoods also gives rise to serious community safety and disruption issues.

By far the main advertising for these rentals is off internet platforms like Airbnb and VRBO. These platforms have claimed that federal law prevents them from being sued for violating our local regulations if they allow illegal activity to be advertised. My PLAN Act would amend that law to make clear the statute does not shield them when they facilitate illegal rental bookings. Platforms would also be accountable if they fail to stop booking rentals after receiving notice from a private property owner that short-term rentals are prohibited at that location.

These are just some of the initiatives I am pursuing on Capitol Hill to address our national and local challenges. We also continue to assist thousands of my constituents with their own individual questions and needs on many types of issues like veterans benefits, Social Security and immigration. For more information on my activities and how we can help, please go to case.house.gov.

Please know that my D.C. and Honolulu staff and I remain fully committed to seeing our county, our Hawai'i and you and yours through this very difficult time for us all. As always, please contact me at ed.case@mail.house.gov with any questions and comments.

Best wishes and be well.

Mahalo nui loa, Ed Case

P.S. Please sign up for my regular e-newsletter [here](#).