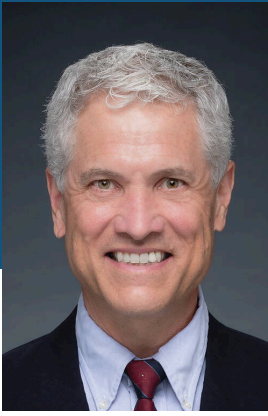


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FROM THE OFFICE OF YOUR STATE REPRESENTATIVE

MAY 2024

2024 LEGISLATIVE SESSION REPORT

STATE REPRESENTATIVE DAVID A. TARNAS



Aloha, I hope this newsletter finds you well. May 3rd, 2024 marked the last day of the 2024 legislative session. It has been a privilege to serve the communities of North & South Kohala every day of the 32nd legislature. We worked diligently on passing priority legislation to address many issues our community faces such as affordable housing, protecting Hawai'i's natural resources, reducing our cost of living, improving quality of life, and aiding in the recovery of Maui.

Please call or email me with any questions, concerns, or suggestions. Your voice matters, and I am committed to listening to you so I can best represent our district.

Mahalo,

David A. Tarnas
District 8 Representative

@reptarnas



2024 STATE LEGIS

MAJOR BILLS APPROVED BY THE LEGISLATURE

"Throughout the past four months, the House made significant progress in priority areas of affordable housing, cost of living, public safety, and wildfire prevention and recovery. We have passed quality legislation that delivers monumental tax relief to Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed (ALICE) families, who will experience firsthand one of the biggest tax cuts in the State's history."

Speaker Scott K. Saiki

Providing Tax Reform

- Increases the standard deduction amounts for each filing status for taxable years 2024, 2026, 2028, 2030, and 2031. **Amends the income tax brackets to widen the applicability of lower tax rates** to the taxable income for taxable years 2025, 2027, and 2029. **(HB2404)**
- Exempts from the **general excise tax for patients who receive Medicaid, Medicare, or TRICARE benefits** including health care goods and services provided by medical and dental practitioners. **(SB1035)**

Reducing Wildfire Risk

- Increases the maximum fine for violations** of the fire protection laws. **(HB1842)**
- Establishes the **Office of the State Fire Marshal**. **(SB2085)**
- Appropriates **\$23 million to Hawaii's Division of Forestry and Wildlife (DOFAW)** to hire staff, buy equipment, improve vegetation management efforts, and train DOFAW staff to fight wildland fires.
 - A **one-time \$1M infusion for the upgrade and replacement of out-of-date equipment** across the State, and another **\$1.5 million to hire 22 new staff positions**.
 - An additional **\$7.5 million appropriation** to fund wildfire



response, rehabilitation, leverage funds from the federal government, and wildfire fuel reduction contracts.

Strengthening Response to Disasters

- Allows pharmacists during an emergency to **refill prescriptions for persons impacted by the emergency** for up thirty-days if the practitioner cannot be contacted. **(HB1836)**
- Removes the ability of the governor or a mayor to **suspend electronic media transmission** in a state of emergency. **(HB522)**

JUDICIARY AND HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE REPORT

As Chair of the House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs (JHA), I led the Committee's efforts to review, amend, and approve legislation on a range of issues varying from criminal enforcement to transparency in the government processes. The following summarizes some highlights of the legislation passed by the JHA Committee.

Judiciary

- Appropriates funds for the **operating and capital improvement costs** of the Judiciary for each year of fiscal biennium 2023-2025 and establishes position ceilings. **(HB1911)**
- Requires the Judicial Council, to **conduct a comprehensive review of the Hawaii Penal Code and recommend proposed changes**. **(HB1953)**

Strengthening Ethics Laws

- Adjusts the **reporting period for gift disclosures to conform with the fiscal year** and provides for electronic filing of documents. Requires the Commission to post lobbyist statements on its website for at least six years. **(SB2217)**
- Increases the maximum administrative fine** allowed for violations of the state ethics code and lobbyists law. **(HB1881; Act 15)**
- Clarifies and updates the way the State Ethics Commission provides **advice and conducts investigations** pursuant to the state ethics code and lobbyists law. **(SB2216)**

Ensuring the Integrity of Elections

- Allows the Chief Election Officer to use **accurate copies of paper ballots**, rather than the originals, when conducting a precinct audit of an electronic voting system's tally. **(SB2333)**
- Prohibits reckless distribution or agreements with another person to distribute **materially deceptive media to impact elections** and **establishes criminal penalties and civil remedies**. **(SB2687)**
- Prohibits certain information included in **digital voter information guides** from being released to any requestor before the public release of the entire guide. **(HB1879; Act 14)**



JHA Chair Tarnas (right) and Vice Chair Takayama (left)

Hawaiian Affairs

- Extends the authorization of the **\$600M appropriation from last year to DHHL**, and deposits **\$124M to ACT 279 Special Fund for DHHL Homestead development**. **(SB3109)**
- Authorizes the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands to access public health records for purposes of **verifying eligibility for native Hawaiian beneficiary programs**. **(SB3123)**

Strengthening Sunshine Law

- Requires boards to schedule a meeting for deliberation and decision-making on a report at least six business days after the board meeting. **(HB1600; Act 13)**
- Requires public meeting notices to inform members of the public how to **provide remote oral testimony** in a manner that allows the testifier to be visible and recognizes a board's authority to **remove and block individuals who willfully disrupt or compromise** the conduct of meetings. **(HB1599; Act 12)**
- Requires board packets to be made **available for public inspection no later than two business days before a board meeting** and to be posted on the board's website. Allows **distribution of public testimony** and requires a notice to persons requesting notification of meetings to **include the documents from the board and distributed to board members** beforehand. **(HB1598; Act 11)**
- Clarifies that members of the public **may sue a board or alleged board after receiving an adverse Office of Information Practices decision**. **(HB1597)**



LATIVE REPORT

Increasing Affordable Housing for Local Families

- Appropriates **\$1 billion to aid recovery from Maui wildfires** including \$362M addressing costs related to food, housing and compensation and over \$447M for ongoing relief, recovery, management, and prevention.
- Clarifies the counties' authority to regulate the time, place, manner, and duration in which uses of land and structures may take place. Clarifies that uses that include the provision of **transient accommodations are not considered residential uses** and may be phased out or amortized by the counties. Expands the transient accommodations tax law to include shelters and vehicles with sleeping accommodations. **(SB2919)**
 - Allows **residential uses in areas zoned for commercial use** to be considered permitted. **(HB2090)**
 - Authorizes residentially zoned lots to construct **two accessory dwelling units**, subject to certain restrictions. **(SB3202)**



Controlling Invasive Species

- Mandates the Department of Agriculture (DOA) coordinate the state's efforts to **control and eradicate invasive pests**. Funds agricultural biosecurity programs and positions, and feral chicken control programs. **(HB2619)**

Expanding Mental Health Care and Human Services

- Establishes **licensure requirements** for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists and authorizes insurance reimbursements. **(HB1830)**
- Establishes a program to **expand existing services** for certain persons experiencing mental health disorders and co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders to appropriate health care systems and services. **(SB3139)**
- **Increases the monthly personal needs allowance from \$50 to \$75** for individuals living in adult residential care homes, developmental disabilities homes, community care foster family homes, adult foster homes, and other long-term care facilities. **(HB1974)**
- Allows the issuing of temporary **permits to out-of-state licensed nurses** who hold a multistate license issued by another state, territory, or country under certain circumstances. **(SB63)**
- Appropriates funds for the provision of **youth mental health and wellness services** to address the mental health and wellness needs of youth in the State. **(HB2042)**

Scan to access the full list of 2024 Legislation passed by the House and Senate, or visit <https://bit.ly/24LegislativeHighlights>



Safeguarding Public Servants and Community Safety

- Establishes a silver alert program to **help locate and safeguard missing kūpuna**. **(SB2305)**
- Establishes an **offense and process to control a dangerous dog; establishes designation, requirements for owners, and inspection of premises for dangerous dogs**. **(HB2058)**
- **Prohibits certain personal information from being publicly available on the Internet** upon request from certain public servants or their representative. **(HB1916)**

Supporting Law Enforcement

- Establishes as a goal of the State the **increased representation of female law enforcement officers** in the State by 2030. **(HB2231)**
- Requires the Director of Law Enforcement to **investigate alleged violations of the law** when directed by Governor or when deemed important to public interest. **(HB2458)**

Stopping Illegal Fireworks

- Authorizes police officers and county fire department officials to **inspect fireworks licensee premises for compliance**, with penalties for obstructing officers. Allows administrative inspections by law enforcement, mandates record-keeping by licensees, requires reporting of suspected theft or fraud licensees. Permits law enforcement and fire departments to **dispose of confiscated fireworks** and holds violators responsible for disposal costs. **(HB2193)**



Protecting Civil Rights

- Proposes an amendment to the Hawaii State Constitution to repeal the Legislature's authority to limit **marriage to opposite-sex couples**. **(HB2802)**

Expanding Clemency and Expungement

- Creates a **pilot project for people from Hawai'i Country who have an arrest record for possession of small amounts of cannabis**. It is the first state-initiated effort to remove the record from an individual who was found not guilty of the crime. **(HB1595)**
- Establishes the Clean Slate Expungement Task Force to develop a **state-initiated record clearing program**. **(SB2706)**
- **Expands expungement eligibility** to persons whose convictions for consuming a measurable amount of alcohol while **under the age of twenty-one or first-time property offenses** predate current expungement provisions. **(HB2513)**
- Mandates the Department of the Attorney General to create and oversee a **pilot project for expunging certain arrest records related to marijuana possession**, specifically for the offense of promoting a detrimental drug in the third degree. **(HB1595)**

"The House has made progress strengthening our ethics laws, ensuring the integrity of our elections, and making it easier for citizens to participate and track what our government is doing. This package of

legislation reaffirms our commitment to transparency, accountability, and improving public trust in government processes,"

JHA Chair, Rep. David Tarnas



Vice Chair Takayama (left) and Chair Tarnas (right) hearing testimony in JHA committee



Scan to access the full list of legislation passed by the JHA committee or visit <https://bit.ly/2024JHAhighlights>

FUNDING FOR OUR DISTRICT

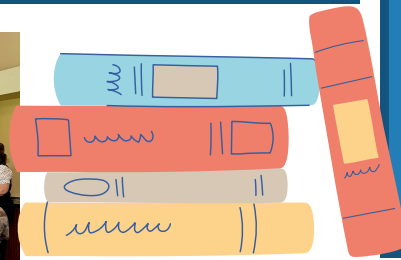
This 2024 legislative session approved Grants-in-Aid and Capitol Improvement Project (CIP) funding for numerous projects in North and South Kohala which will improve, enrich and safeguard the community. This year marked a successful return of State Grant-in-Aid and CIP funding.

2024 CAPITOL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

Kohala Hospital	Appropriation of \$2.6 million for the Kohala Hospital Administration Building and a \$500,000 appropriation for CT scan and expansion
New Waikoloa Public Library	An additional \$8 million , for a total of a two-year appropriation of \$21 million
Kawaihae Commercial Harbor	An additional \$15 million appropriation for the plans, land acquisition, design, and construction that will provide safer, more efficient use of existing and/or additional operational areas
Saddle Road Extension Project	\$3 million appropriation to complete the Final Environmental Impact Statement

2024 GRANTS-IN-AID FUNDS

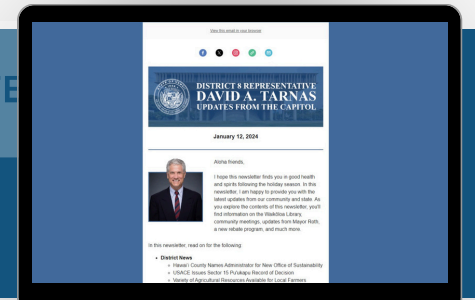
Hope Services Hawaii	\$100,000 for clearing and demolition, grading and excavation, and stormwater management for housing development
Hamakua Health Center	\$700,000 to meet the growing demand of patients by beginning infrastructure work of a new two-story 15,000 square foot facility in Kohala
Hawai'i Island Humane Society	\$100,000 to subsidize low-cost spay and neuter services
Japanese Cultural Center	\$160,000 for purchase of land for the development of a facility to perpetuate the legacy of Kona's Japanese roots and history
Five Mountains Hawaii	\$500,000 to expand services and capacity to meet the health needs of the community and North Hawai'i Island service area.
La'i'Ōpua 2020	\$100,000 to complete the workforce development center and open pavilion spaces to serve as a gathering space in Kona
Habitat for Humanity, Hawai'i Island	\$400,000 for affordable housing construction in Hawai'i County.
Big Island Substance Abuse Council	\$200,000 to provide substance abuse treatment service island-wide.
Hawai'i Keiki Museum	\$179,000 to expand STEM education for keiki



Pictured: Representative Tarnas and State Librarian Stacey Aldrich speak at the Waikoloa Library informational briefing

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UPDATE



Representative Tarnas with Lieutenant Governor Sylvia Luke and Majority Leader Nadine Nakamura at the last chamber session of the 32nd Legislative Session

A Judiciary bill signing with Representative Tarnas, Governor Green, Senator Rhoads, and Vice Chair Takayama



2024 Legislative JHA Staff: (left to right) Reis Nakamura, Kalei Han-Simms, Representative Tarnas, Jennifer Hee, Trinity Gilliam, and Sean Aronson

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