

# Representative Andrew Takuya Garrett 2025 Spring Newsletter

Proudly serving District 22 (Mānoa/Tantalus/McCully-Mō'ili'ili)

Aloha e Friends and Neighbors!

As the 2025 legislative session progresses, my primary focus remains on my role as Chair of the House Higher Education Committee. We are working diligently to strengthen the University of Hawai'i system and ensure it remains a pillar of opportunity, innovation, and excellence for students, faculty, and the broader community. I'm proud to share that we've advanced several key bills aimed at expanding access to education, supporting research, and enhancing resources across all UH campuses.

However, budgetary uncertainty in Washington, D.C. is presenting an additional challenge this session. With the Trump administration initiating drastic cuts to federal funding (including laying off thousands of Hawai'i-based employees) we must be proactive in protecting our communities and ensuring that critical programs remain fully funded.

Inside this newsletter, you'll find updates on notable bills I introduced, along with the rationale behind them. I believe that transparency and community engagement are essential to effective policymaking, and I deeply appreciate the many constituents who have taken the time to share their thoughts and concerns. Your input is invaluable in shaping our work and ensuring that our policies reflect the needs and priorities of Hawai'i's people.

As we move forward, I encourage you to stay engaged, ask questions, and continue sharing your feedback. Your voice matters, and together, we can build a stronger future for Hawai'i. Mahalo for your support—I look forward to keeping you updated on our progress throughout the session!

With aloha and gratitude,



## Mānoa Neighborhood Board (NB) #7

First Wednesday of each month  
6:30pm; hybrid (in person & online)  
Noelani Elementary School  
[www8.honolulu.gov/nco/nb07/](http://www8.honolulu.gov/nco/nb07/)

## McCully-Mō'ili'ili NB #8

First Thursday of each month  
6:30pm; hybrid (in person & online)  
McCully District Park  
[www8.honolulu.gov/nco/nb08/](http://www8.honolulu.gov/nco/nb08/)

## Makiki-Tantalus NB #10

3rd Thursday of each month  
6pm; hybrid (in person & online)  
Makiki District Park  
[www8.honolulu.gov/nco/nb10/](http://www8.honolulu.gov/nco/nb10/)



*Rep. Garrett provides a legislative update to the McCully-Mō'ili'ili Neighborhood Board*



# House Bills still under consideration

Please visit [www.capitol.hawaii.gov](http://www.capitol.hawaii.gov) for the latest updates on these bills I introduced or co-sponsored. These bills were sent to the Senate and were still alive at the time this newsletter went to print.

## ***HB542: Relating to the Hawaii Promise Program***

**Description:** Expands the Hawaii promise program to provide scholarships for the unmet needs of qualified students at any four-year UH campus who meet criteria.

**Rationale:** Access to higher education is one of the most effective pathways to upward mobility, yet financial barriers continue to prevent many qualified students from pursuing a degree. All students deserve to have a fair shot at success.

## ***HB441: Relating to Cigarette Taxes***

**Description:** Increases the cigarette tax and directs funds to the Hawaii Cancer Research Special Fund.

**Rationale:** Higher cigarette taxes are proven to discourage smoking, and dedicating these funds to cancer research strengthens prevention, treatment, and support efforts. This measure, which will assist the UH Cancer Center, is a smart investment in public health and cancer prevention.

## ***HB756: Relating to Health***

**Description:** Prohibits the sale of flavored nicotine products and nicotine product flavor enhancers and the mislabeling of e-liquids as nicotine free

**Rationale:** Flavored products are designed to attract young users, leading to lifelong nicotine dependence. By enforcing stricter regulations and providing resources for enforcement, this measure helps curb deceptive marketing tactics and ensures stronger protections for Hawai'i's communities.

## ***HB701: Relating to Taxation***

**Description:** Establishes a Family Caregiver Tax Credit of \$5,000 for qualifying nonpaid family caregivers.

**Rationale:** Unpaid family caregivers in Hawai'i provide critical support, yet spend 26% of their own income on caregiving with little financial relief. A refundable tax credit would help ease their burden while reducing costs on formal long-term care.

## ***HB546: Relating to Artificial Intelligence***

**Description:** Establishes and appropriates funds to establish the Aloha Intelligence Institute within UH to develop and support artificial intelligence initiatives statewide.

**Rationale:** By investing in AI research and innovation, Hawai'i can drive technological advancements, create high-skilled jobs, and enhance local industries. Hawai'i can be a leader in ethical and culturally informed AI, ensuring that it aligns with the state's values and benefit its residents.

## ***HB698: Relating to Animal Cruelty***

**Description:** Amends the criminal penalties for various animal cruelty offenses by increasing the category of offense.

**Rationale:** Research shows that 70% of violent criminals started with animal abuse, and cases of animal cruelty in Hawai'i have increased significantly in recent years. By raising penalties for animal cruelty offenses, this bill ensures stronger deterrence, accountability, and protection for both animals and the community.

## ***HB544: Relating to Pet Insurance***

**Description:** Establishes a regulatory framework for pet insurance based on the NAIC Pet Insurance Model Act.

**Rationale:** This bill enhances consumer protection by establishing clear regulations for pet insurance, ensuring transparency, fairness, and accountability. It safeguards pet owners from misleading policies and unfair denials.

## ***HB969: Relating to Waste or Disposal Facilities***

**Description:** Prohibits the construction, modification, or expansion of any waste or disposal facility on land that is near or above a significant aquifer.

**Rationale:** Hawai'i's drinking water is our most precious natural resource, and the Red Hill fuel contamination crisis has highlighted the urgent need to protect our aquifers from potential threats, including landfills.



# Happenings in District 22



## House Higher Education Committee Holds Historic Hearing on UH-Mānoa Campus

The House Higher Education Committee held an official legislative hearing at Bachman Hall on the campus of UH Mānoa—bringing the democratic process directly to the university community. As the chairperson of the committee and proud UH Mānoa alumnus, it was great to be back on campus and to hear directly from students, faculty and administrators about issues that matter most to them.



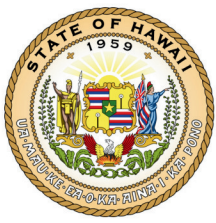
## MYBL is Ready to Play Ball!

I was honored to kick off the season with the amazing teams of the Manoa Youth Baseball League (MYBL) at their Opening Day Ceremony. Growing up, baseball was a huge part of my life, and I'm grateful to now pay it forward as an umpire by giving back to the game that taught me so much. Joining us at Mānoa Valley District Park were two of Mānoa's own legends of the sport: Coach Dunn Muramaru and Coach Pal Eldredge. Also in attendance were Mayor Rick Blangiardi, Councilmember Scott Nishimoto, and UH Baseball's own Coach Rich Hill. Wishing all the players a fantastic season ahead!



## DPP Approves Project at Former St. Francis Site

Avalon Development received conditional approval from the City and County of Honolulu's Department of Planning and Permitting (DPP) for its proposed housing development on the former St. Francis School site. Named "Aria Lane," the project will include up to 158 single- and multi-family homes. However, no affordable housing units will be offered within the subdivision. Instead, DPP has approved Avalon's plan to provide five such units off-site (location TBD). HB548, which I introduced to appropriate funds to UH to acquire this parcel, remains alive at the legislature.



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*Chair Garrett with Higher Education members after a historic hearing at UH-Mānoa*

# Representative Garrett in the Community



With UH students after hearing on campus



New field blessing at Les Murakami Stadium



Addressing MYBL players at Opening Day



Touring JABSOM with students and faculty



Umpiring a preseason UH Softball game



Speaking at a MADD rally at the Capitol