



# Representative Bertrand Kobayashi Community Update

DIAMOND HEAD, KAHALA,  
KAIMUKI, KAPAHULU



APRIL 2023

## HOUSE AMENDS, APPROVES 213 SENATE BILLS BEFORE SECOND CROSSOVER DEADLINE

The House passed an additional 213 Senate Bills before the second crossover deadline on April 13th. These bills now head back to the Senate for their consideration. If the Senate disagrees to amendments made by the House, the bills will be negotiated in conference committees.

Key measures passed by the House include bills relating to electronic smoking devices, child welfare services, a state telework pilot monitoring system, firearms, and destination management in Hawaii.

Here are some highlights from April 11th :

### Electronic Smoking Devices

[SB975 SD2 HD3](#) establishes the offense of unlawful shipment of tobacco products. Include electronic smoking devices and e-liquids under the definition of "tobacco products" for purposes of the cigarette tax and tobacco tax law. Imposes an excise tax on e-cigs by a wholesaler or dealer. This measure would subject e-cigarettes to the current regulations that apply to cigarettes and other tobacco products.

### Child Welfare Services

[SB295 SD2 HD2](#) establishes within the Office of Wellness and Resilience, the Mālama 'Ohana Working Group to provide improvements to the State's existing child welfare system. This would be a working group with various stakeholders that play one part or another in serving this community and interacting as part of the community; whether they be resource caregivers, birth families, or nonprofits.

### Telework Pilot Study

[SB725 SD2 HD2](#) appropriates funds for the Department of Human Resources Development to submit an annual report to the Legislature on the telework policies of the executive branch, and establishes requirements for a pilot telework monitoring system. Telework can be a powerful recruitment tool for filling vacancies in State government, especially for the younger generations.

### Firearms

[SB1230 SD2 HD1](#) establishes sensitive places for firearms and prohibitions on the carrying of firearms in certain circumstances. This measure was carefully crafted to make sure that we do comply with the U.S. Supreme Court decision, the Bruen Case, where we are allowed to set up a reasonable system of regulation for concealed carry weapons.

### Office of Destination Management

[SB1522 SD2 HD2](#) aims to repeal the Hawai'i Tourism Authority and establish an Office of Destination Management within the Department of Business, Economic Development, and tourism. It establishes and appropriates funds for a tourism liaison officer within the Office of the Governor.

The House will recess until the Second Crossover deadline on Thursday, April 13, 2023 at noon. To date, [213 Senate measures](#) have been amended and passed third reading in the House. An additional [13 Senate measures](#) have passed third reading in the House unamended.



## HAWAII COVID-19 HOSPITALIZATIONS ON THE RISE-90% INCREASE

The Hawaii Department of Health (DOH) reports a rise in the rate of COVID-19 hospitalizations. The number of total positive COVID-19 hospitalizations has increased over the past week (3/26 – 4/4) from 39 to 74 patients, which is an 90% increase.

State Epidemiologist Dr. Sarah Kemble says that Hawaii hospitals still have capacity, but she is reminding everyone of the ongoing circulation of COVID-19 in our community. She still recommends that everyone stay up to date on COVID-19 vaccines, including boosters, as the best defense against becoming seriously ill.

Those experiencing COVID-19 symptoms are advised to get tested immediately and if positive, to consult with their health care provider regarding treatment. This is especially important for individuals who are over the age of 50 and have an underlying medical condition.

To find COVID-19 testing and vaccination sites in your area, please visit: <https://hawaiiicovid19.com/vaccine/>

For more information about COVID-19 please visit: <https://hawaiiicovid19.com>



## ROCKY THE MONK SEAL RETURNS TO KAIMANA BEACH



Rocky the monk seal returned to Kaimana Beach since April 3, 2023 and has been active along the shoreline. The Department of Land and Natural Resources is monitoring Rocky with volunteers from Hawaii Marine Animal Response.

The public is reminded to keep a distance from endangered monk seals resting on the beach and to be aware of informational signs set up around them. You can help seals and their pups by:

- \* Giving them space. Keep a respectful distance of at least 150 feet
- \* Swim at a different location. Monk seals have bitten people in the past
- \* Keep your dogs leashed. Pets can transmit diseases to wild animals.
- \* Report sightings. If you spot a seal call the statewide NOAA Marine Hotline: (888) 256-9840