



REPRESENTATIVE RICHARD ONISHI

2021 Mid-Session Newsletter

March 2021

Session Update

I want to thank you again for the privilege and the opportunity to serve you in the Legislature as we continue to battle the Covid-19 pandemic in our communities. Session is very different this year, with strict Covid-19 protocols, daily temperature checks, security clearance, sanitizing stations and the State Capitol building being closed to the public. With only legislators and staff allowed in the building, all hearings and meetings are coordinated online through Zoom. I was fortunate to bring back my outstanding support staff, two who are born and raised in Hilo but currently living in Honolulu, Tracy Weidie – Office Manager and Isaac Goya – Legislative Aide, as well as Tim Coughlin who has served as Committee Clerk for the past few years.

This year I have taken on a new role as Chair of the House Labor and Tourism committee. I am honored to be given this immense opportunity. As Chair of the this committee, we will be focused on helping our Hawaii businesses get back on their feet while trying to help our unemployed residents receive their proper benefits and get them back in the workforce. We will also be focused on restoring Tourism in a safe but timely fashion so that we are able to rebuild our economy with its number one driving industry.



Ka’u Coffee Distribution



Big Island Legislators



Session Staff Isaac and Tim



Rep. on the State Capitol floor. Plexiglass has been set up for safety and Covid-19 protocols.

HB 1278 HD1

(see back for more info)

Rep. Richard Onishi

State Capitol, Room 438

415 S. Beretania Street

Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Phone: (808) 586-6120

EMAIL: reponishi@capitol.hawaii.gov



Representative Richard Onishi
415 S. Beretania St., Rm. 438
Honolulu, HI 96813

ACT 1 (HB1278 HD1) - Relating To Employment

Working with the administration of the Department of Labor, I introduced HB 1278 to provide unemployment tax relief to our Hawaii Businesses and non-profit organizations.

HB1278 HD1 quickly made its way through the Hawai'i State House of Representatives and State Senate and was recently signed into law as Act 1 by Governor David Ige on March 2, 2021. This bill will bring much needed unemployment insurance relief to employers, small businesses and non-profit organizations across the state. Act 1 will mitigate the economic fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic by reducing employer contribution rates. Without these protections, struggling businesses would face the highest rate, Schedule H, at a time when they can least afford it. By lowering this to Schedule D, the Legislature's goal is to help our local economy stay afloat without the need for layoffs or other cost-cutting measures that would affect workers. Hawai'i faces a long path to economic recovery, and I am confident that Act 1 is a critical part of that process.

