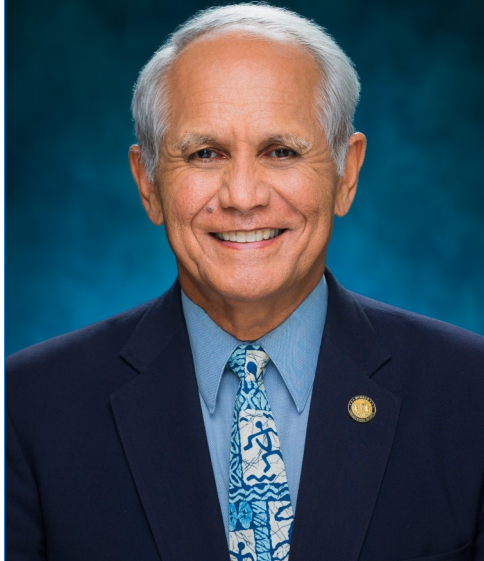




The Senate  
STATE CAPITOL  
HONOLULU, HAWAII

# Senator Mike Gabbard

November 2020 Vol. 14 Issue 11



## *Aloha e Friends,*

I hope you and your 'ohana are safe and well. First, mahalo to all who voted for me to continue serving as your senator at the State Capitol. I'll try my best to help you in any way I can. For those of you who didn't vote for me, or didn't vote at all, I'll be your voice in the State Senate for the next two years, so don't hesitate to contact me for any reason. (Note: Normally, state senators have 4-year terms, but because of reapportionment, all 25 senators will be up for re-election in 2022.)

I wanted to send out a big congrats to Principal Keith Hayashi and the [Waipahu High School](#) 'ohana for their [five career academies](#) receiving national certification from the [National Career Academy Coalition](#). The honored academies are the

Academy of Arts & Communication, the Academy of Professional & Public Services, the Academy of Industrial & Engineering Technology, the Academy of Health & Sciences, and the Academy of Natural Resources.

Best wishes to you and your 'ohana for an awesomely aloha-filled Happy Thanksgiving! As always, please contact me at (808) 586-6830 or [sengabbard@capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:sengabbard@capitol.hawaii.gov) if I can help you or your family in any way. You can also follow me on [Twitter](#) @senmikegabbard, [YouTube](#), or Facebook at [facebook.com/senmikegabbard](https://facebook.com/senmikegabbard).

## COMMITTEE CHAIR

### AGRICULTURE & ENVIRONMENT

#### MEMBER

- ◆ Judiciary
- ◆ Labor, Culture & the Arts

#### DISTRICT 20

- ◆ Kapolei, Makakilo and portions of Ewa, Kalaeloa and Waipahu

## Tier 2: What does it mean for O'ahu?

It was great news having O'ahu move to [Tier 2](#) in the City's 4 Tier Reopening Strategy on October 22. This means our daily COVID-19 cases were under 100 with a positive test rate below 5% for a four week period. Here are the changes Tier 2 implemented:

- ⇒ Restaurants: groups of 5 allowed regardless of household/living unit
- ⇒ Personal Care Services allowed
- ⇒ Legal Short Term Rentals allowed
- ⇒ Gyms and Fitness Facilities allowed to operate indoors at 25% capacity
- ⇒ Indoor group physical activity classes allowed with no more than 5 people
- ⇒ Outdoor group physical activity classes allowed with no more than 10 people
- ⇒ Hawai'i Golf Phase 2.5
- ⇒ Other commercial attractions, groups of 5 allowed indoors at 50% capacity
- ⇒ Helicopter tours at 50% capacity allowed



## Second Special Session

The State Senate will hold our second Special Session to consider the confirmation of two judges from November 18 – 19. The two appointees are Circuit Court [Judge Todd Eddins](#) as a Supreme Court Associate Justice and public defender [Stephanie R.S. Char](#) as a District Family Court Judge for the Fifth Circuit (Kaua'i). I'll participate in hearings as a member of the Judiciary Committee on November 16 at 1pm and decision making will be on November 18 at 10:30 am.

## Testimony on Bill 59 (Community Recreational Garden Program)

I submitted testimony to the City Council's Parks, Community Services and Intergovernmental Affairs Committee on October 20 in support of Bill 59. This bill, which passed the Committee and will now go for Second Reading, calls for the expansion of the City's Community Recreational Gardens Program. As Chair of the Agriculture and Environment Committee, I want to see more opportunities for people to grow their own food. There are currently only 10 community garden sites on Oahu and none on the westside. Given the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, many people have been faced with unemployment and economic hardships that have resulted in thousands of O'ahu residents being more food insecure. I'm sure you've seen the long lines at food giveaways and also more demand for donations from the Food-bank. Community gardens are a great way to offer local residents an opportunity to grow their own food and help our island become more self-sufficient. During both World Wars of the 20th century, because of drastic food shortages, our nation launched the [Victory Gardens](#) program which was very successful in helping us get through those difficult times. We should do the same now! Our state has a renowned agricultural tradition, but today we are importing 85% to 90% of our food. By expanding the [Community Recreational Gardening Program](#), we can grow more of our food here locally and also encourage people to consider agriculture as a profession.

## Kapolei Parkway Affordable Rental Housing Development

I wrote a letter on October 9 to the Hawai'i Housing Financing and Development Corporation in support of a consolidated financing application being submitted by Kapolei Parkway Partners, LLLP for the development of an approximately 400-unit affordable rental housing project. The Kapolei Parkway affordable rental housing development will benefit the community by providing more affordable housing. The project uses vacant City land, near the existing Mehana residential community on Kapolei Parkway.

## Hawai'i Farmers Union United Convention

The [10TH Annual Hawai'i Farmers Union United \(HFUU\) "Virtual" Convention](#) will take place between November 12 – 15. The theme of this year's Convention is "Celebrating Local Agriculture" and will focus on regenerative agricultural interactive presentations on the "Hawai'i Theatre Livestream Platform" with keynotes, panels, breakouts, farm tours, and chef demos. There will be a FARM AID Style Hawai'i farmer and musical benefit concert curated by Micah Nelson, the son of Willie Nelson. Members of HFUU can register for \$65 and non-members will pay \$125, which includes a membership for one year in HFUU. To register and for more information, visit [hfuuhi.org](https://hfuuhi.org)



## Transitional Housing in Kalaeloa

I wrote a letter to the City's Office of the Division of Purchasing on October 21 in support of the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands' (DHHL) application for Federal HOME Investment Partnerships program funding. These funds could be used to assist beneficiaries of the [Hawaiian Homes Commission Act](#) by providing transitional housing in Kalaeloa. DHHL and Partners in Care – Oahu Continuum of Care have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to improve services to the homeless population, specifically focusing on native Hawaiians on O`ahu. This request for funding would build upon this MOU aimed at providing transitional housing for beneficiaries in Kalaeloa. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development study titled "[Housing Needs of Native Hawaiians: A Report From the Assessment of American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian Housing Needs](#)" noted the following: "Homelessness among Native Hawaiians" is prevalent. The funding to support transitional housing for beneficiaries in Kalaeloa would provide a mechanism to assist a segment of the native Hawaiian community that might not otherwise be served.

## \$500 Hawai'i Restaurant Card Program

You might have heard that the Governor recently announced a new Hawai'i Restaurant Card Program. The program provides a \$500 prepaid debit card to aid unemployment insurance recipients with supplemental funds they can use at island restaurants statewide. Qualified recipients should be automatically receiving this benefit as of October 15, 2020 and the funds must be spent by December 15, 2020. No application is necessary. This program is being funded by \$75 million of the Coronavirus Relief Fund. The program will help thousands

of unemployed residents and also stimulate the local economy by driving business to dine-in and take-out restaurants and fast-food establishments. Here are some key points related to the program:

- ⇒ To learn more about using the card, visit [HawaiiRestaurantCard.com](http://HawaiiRestaurantCard.com)
- ⇒ Questions about the Hawaii Restaurant Card Program: [HRC@cochawaii.org](mailto:HRC@cochawaii.org) or 825-4904
- ⇒ Eligibility: [myrestaurantcard.hawaii.gov](http://myrestaurantcard.hawaii.gov)

## Business Pivot Grant Program

On October 20, the State and the Chamber of Commerce Hawai'i announced the launch of the [Business Pivot Grant Program](#). This program will provide Hawai'i small businesses \$25 million in grants to help them adjust to COVID-19-related impacts. The program will provide approximately 2,500 small businesses with reimbursement grants to cover expenses up to \$10,000 that they incurred implementing changes to their operations, products, and services. Funded by federal CARES Act appropriations, the program provides qualifying businesses reimbursement for eligible expenses incurred since March 20, including investing in e-commerce, reconfiguring workspaces, adding safety equipment and implementing new business processes. The grant application period started on October 22 and will remain open until November 23, 2020, as funds are available. The Chamber of Commerce Hawai'i will administer the program.

*(Continued p. 4)*

STATE OF HAWAII:  
**HAWAII RESTAURANT CARD PROGRAM**

\$75 million of the Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) will be used to support unemployed residents while stimulating the local economy by driving business to dine-in and take-out restaurants and fast food establishments.  
↳ [www.dbedt.hawaii.gov/hawaii-restaurant-card/](http://www.dbedt.hawaii.gov/hawaii-restaurant-card/)

**WHAT TO EXPECT:**

- » \$500 pre-loaded card to spend at local restaurants.
- » Automatically mailed to unemployed individuals in mid-October.
- » No application necessary.
- » Must be spent by Dec. 15.

Hawai'i Restaurant Card  
debit  
5301 3312 3456 7891  
VALID 12/20  
VALUED CARDHOLDER  
LIMITED ACCESS CARD



### **(Business Pivot Grant Program, Continued from p. 3)**

To qualify for the grant, businesses and non-profits must meet the following criteria:

- ◇ Be registered in the State of Hawai'i and have fewer than 100 employees;
- ◇ Operate in a physical commercial space in Hawai'i; home-based businesses are not eligible;
- ◇ Have suffered economic injury due to the COVID-19 pandemic;
- ◇ Been in business prior to March 20, 2020.

To apply and find out more information, go to

[HawaiiBizPivot.org](http://HawaiiBizPivot.org).

## **Climate Change Commission Meeting**

On October 28, I participated as a member of the State Climate Commission in a virtual meeting. As the Agriculture and Environment Committee Chair, I'm suggesting the Climate Commission focus on two key areas. The first is encouraging Hawai'i residents to adopt a plant-based, climate friendly diet based on the consumption of local produce. The second is recommending our farmers switch to regenerative agricultural techniques that improve soil health. Check out the documentaries, [Kiss the Gound](#) and [Cowspiracy](#), as good overviews of these important topics.

*"I encourage Hawai'i residents to adopt a plant-based, climate friendly diet based on the consumption of local produce."*

Connected to this on October 22, I was interviewed by a group of UH Manoa students about climate change for their Natural Resources and Environmental Management class on the Paris Agreement and climate change. Here's a rundown of some of the points I made to the students.

- It was very disappointing that in June 2017 President Trump announced that the U.S. would cease participation in the Paris Agreement. This agreement was signed in 2016 by 196 countries as a commitment to keep the increase in global average temperature to well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.
- In anticipation of this possible announcement from Trump during the 2017 session, we at the Legislature, passed SB 559 which became Act 32 that committed Hawai'i to stay the course on the Paris Agreement, regardless of what the federal government does.
- The bill created the [Hawai'i Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission](#) under the state Department of Land and Natural Resources to work on the

greenhouse reduction and sea level rise issues. We were the first state in the nation to enact legislation that implements the [Paris Agreement](#).

- There's now a coalition of 25 Governors who have signed on, including Governor Ige, to abide by the Paris Agreement. First and foremost, this sent a signal to Washington D.C. and President Trump that our state is vulnerable to climate change impacts and we are taking this seriously with or without the support of our federal government.
- We are of course very vulnerable to negative impacts from sea level rise and environmental impacts associated with climate change. This action is consistent with Hawai'i's leadership in the 2015 passage of our 100% renewable energy mandate by 2045 (HB 623, Act 97). I helped lead this effort with Rep. Chris Lee. This was also a first-in-the-nation law that shows our commitment to addressing climate change.
- In 2019, New Mexico, Nevada, Washington, Maine, New York, Washington D.C., and Puerto Rico joined Hawai'i and California in enacting 100% clean energy legislation. Together these states represent 16% of the nation's electricity load. Additionally, we have the mandate of support from our local residents. Take for instance a November 2019 poll by ALG Research of O'ahu voters. The survey of 503 likely voters found 50% think climate change is a "very serious" problem and another 32% consider it "somewhat serious." Of those surveyed, 78% said they would be likely to change their habits, such as driving less or installing solar. So local residents are expecting action! The City and other counties have been doing their part. Just this month, Maui County became the latest local government to go to court seeking compensation and other damages from the oil industry for climate change-related problems caused by the burning of fossil fuels. Maui joined Honolulu, who did the same in March 2020.
- At least 21 states, counties and local governments have filed lawsuits against fossil fuel companies for rising costs and impacts related to deleterious greenhouse gases. The complaint claims 20 oil companies — among them Chevron, BP, Shell and Exxon Mobil — knew the harm they were causing for decades but essentially covered it up. The suit, which also names Aloha Petroleum and BHP Hawaii Inc., seeks compensatory and punitive damages.