



**HAWAII COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**

547 Queen Street, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813  
Telephone: (808) 594-0300 Fax: (808) 587-0299  
Web site: <http://dbedt.hawaii.gov/hcda/>

DAVID Y. IGE  
GOVERNOR

SUSAN TODANI  
CHAIRPERSON

CRAIG NAKAMOTO  
INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Statement of  
**CRAIG NAKAMOTO**  
Interim Executive Director  
Hawaii Community Development Authority  
before the

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY,  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND TOURISM**

Friday, April 8, 2022  
3:00 P.M.

State Capitol Conference Room 224 & Videoconference

In consideration of

**GM 828 - Submitting for consideration and confirmation  
to the Hawaii Community Development Authority, Gubernatorial Nominee,  
STERLING HIGA, for a term to expire 06-30-2026.**

Chair Wakai, Vice Chair Misalucha and members of the Committee. The Hawaii Community Development Authority (HCDA) **supports GM 828**, that confirms Sterling Higa as a member of the HCDA board.

Mr. Higa is an experienced educator and communications professional who currently serves as Executive Director of Housing Hawaii's Future, a nonprofit whose mission is to address the shortage of workforce housing in Hawaii.

Mr. Higa's participation on the HCDA board will add a millennial perspective, as Hawaii's Housing Future also aims to engage more of Hawaii's young professionals in policy discussions about workforce and affordable housing initiatives throughout the islands.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support.



## HAWAII LABORERS-EMPLOYERS COOPERATION AND EDUCATION TRUST

650 Iwilei Road, Suite 285 · Honolulu, HI 96817 · Phone: 808-845-3238 · Fax: 808-845-8300

April 5, 2022

To: **Senate Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism (EET)**

Re: **Testimony on GM828, Confirmation of Sterling Higa to the Hawai'i Community Development Authority (HCDA) for a term to expire June 30, 2026**

For EET Hearing on Friday, April 8, 2022 at 3:00 pm in Conference Room 224

Aloha Honorable **Chair Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair Bennette Misalucha**, and Senate Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism Committee Members,

The **Hawai'i Laborers & Employers Cooperation and Education Trust Fund** (Hawai'i LECET) is a labor and management partnership established in 1992 between the 5,000 statewide members of the Hawai'i Laborers Union and over 250 construction contractors from the *General Contractors Association* and the *Building Industry Association*. The Laborers International is the largest construction union in the country, and Hawai'i LECET is part of a network of 38 labor + management LECET Funds in North America.

**We offer our strong support for GM828.** Mr. Sterling Higa is uniquely qualified to serve as a member of the **Hawai'i Community Development Authority** (HCDA). Mr. Higa is the Executive Director of **Housing Hawai'i's Future**, a non-profit movement led by young locals to create opportunities for Hawai'i's Gen Z and Millennials, by working to end the workforce housing shortage. As evidenced by his stellar resume, Mr. Higa's accomplishments align with many of the qualifications highly desired of an HCDA member. Mr. Higa wasn't born with a silver spoon in his mouth, which helps him understand the regular every day struggles and concerns of local residents. Mr. Higa represents the best of Hawai'i's future, and has a personal stake in making sure development is done right for future generations.

Mahalo for offering us this opportunity to testify in strong support of Mr. Higa's nomination to the Hawai'i Community Development Authority.

Mahalo,

**Brian Lee**, Director

**Hawai'i Laborers & Employers**

**Cooperation and Education Trust Fund**



# HAWAI‘I BUDGET & POLICY CENTER

Better information. Better policy. Better Hawai‘i.

**LATE**

**SUPPORT** – **GM828** Confirmation of **STERLING HIGA** for the  
Hawaii Community Development Authority  
Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism  
Friday, April 8th, 2022, 3:30PM

Aloha Chair Wakai and Vicechair MIsalucha,

I strongly recommend Sterling Higa for the Hawaii Community Development Authority.

Sterling is an excellent listener and communicator with a strong interest in understanding housing development and how housing policy can create more affordable homes for Hawaii residents. As the Director of Housing Policy for the Hawaii Budget and Policy Center, I know how important these skills are for advancing effective policy solutions.

I have witnessed Sterling’s commitment to learn from a variety of perspectives through his involvement in the Hawaii Housing Affordability Coalition where he was an active member of the “Housing Policy Subcommittee”. On this committee Sterling learned about various policy approaches to achieve affordable housing, listened to the experiences of members who have been involved in local housing policy for decades, asked important questions and ultimately helped the committee come to agreement about policy priorities. His enthusiasm for learning and for engaging in constructive dialogue with others was very apparent. Housing policy can be complicated with many technical terms, so Sterling’s persistence and patience with acquiring new knowledge will serve him well as he assists the Hawaii Community Development Authority in making important decisions for the future of Hawaii.

In short, Sterling Higa will be a tremendous asset to the Hawaii Community Development Authority, and I encourage this committee to confirm his nomination.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Kenna Stormogipson  
Director of Housing Policy  
Hawai‘i Budget and Policy Center



Senator Glenn Wakai, Chair  
Senator Bennette E. Misalucha, Vice Chair  
Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism

Wednesday, April 6, 2022

Jeffrey Laupola

**SUPPORT FOR STERLING HIGA ON THE BOARD OF HAWAII COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (HCDA)**

I am submitting testimony in **SUPPORT** of Sterling Higa to serve on the Board of the Hawaii Community Development Authority.

I have worked with Sterling Higa since 2019 in which we were co-authors of a report, *Troubled Waters: Charting a New Fiscal Course for Hawaii*. Furthermore, I currently serve as a director on the board of *Housing Hawaii's Future*, the non-profit organization in which Sterling serves as the Executive Director. I can unequivocally state that Sterling is an outstanding choice for public service on the board of the Hawaii Community Development Authority (HCDA).

Sterling loves Hawaii. He is a product of the best of Hawaii and like the leaders on this committee, knows he has a responsibility to serve Hawaii. Sterling will bring a world-class scholar skill set acquired from his studies at Harvard University and the University of Hawaii to HCDA. In addition, he'll bring his compassion of a college professor at the Hawaii Pacific University with the local expertise of a resident born and raised in urban Honolulu. Sterling has the capacity, capability, competence, and character to serve with distinction on the board of HCDA.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony and **MAHALO** to all members of the committee for your service to the people of Hawaii as our elected leaders.

**GM-828**

Submitted on: 4/5/2022 12:50:00 PM

Testimony for EET on 4/8/2022 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Sterling Higa	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Thank you for your consideration of my nomination. I am happy to answer any questions you have during the hearing.

**GM-828**

Submitted on: 4/5/2022 9:38:56 PM

Testimony for EET on 4/8/2022 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Reyn Kaupiko	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Selecton Committee,

It is with great pleasure I am writing this statement of recommendation on behalf of the nomination for Mr. Sterling Higa to the Hawaii Community Development Authority.

Mr. Higa is an ideal candidate for this position. His roots run deep within the Honolulu area, he has witnessed first hand Kaakako transform from industrial into the rich cultural area it is today. Professionally he is working to address the issue of Housing within the State. He has spent the last several years dissecting the issues of the State regarding housing and housing opportunities.

It is without a doubt Mr. Higa will tremendously enrich the ideas and logic for this Authority to continue its important work for the island and the state.

**GM-828**

Submitted on: 4/5/2022 10:21:52 PM

Testimony for EET on 4/8/2022 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kevin Pakamiaiaea Davis	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**I support Sterling Higa as a stellar candidate for the Hawai'i Community Development Authority for a term to expire 6/30/2026. Sterling Higa is an exemplary young leader with a passion for ensuring the future wellbeing of his community. Sterling's multi-layered background shows his firm connection to urban Honolulu, which is undoubtedly a community he is proud to hail from and hungry to serve. Sterling's ability to hold multiple perspectives in balance has been refined through his various professional roles, and is more valuable now than ever! Sterling's world-class communication skills will enable him to effectively represent the views and perspectives of Hawai'i's people in order to assist in achieving our needs and aspirations. I am struck by Sterling's ability to strive for excellence, while remaining rooted and connected to others. Sterling is a true leader for our local communities to look to and celebrate.**



Friday, April 8, 2022 at 3:00 PM  
Conference Room 224 & Via Videoconference

**Senate Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism**

To: Senator Glenn Wakai, Chair  
Senator Bennette E. Misalucha, Vice Chair

From: Janice Hata

Re: **GM 828 – Testimony In Support  
Gubernatorial Nominee STERLING HIGA**

---

My name is Janice Hata, and I am a Community Impact Planner Fellow at the Hawai'i County Planning Department. I am writing in strong support of GM 828 which submits Gubernatorial Nominee, Sterling Higa, for consideration and confirmation to the Hawai'i Community Development Authority (HCDA), for a term to expire June 30, 2026.

As an accomplished educator and writer, Sterling demonstrates exceptional critical thinking and communication skills in his pursuit to build relationships and advocate for public interests, such as affordable housing, across the State of Hawai'i. I have had the great pleasure of working with Sterling during his recent venture in launching Housing Hawai'i's Future, a nonprofit focused on addressing the workforce housing shortage in Hawai'i. Sterling embodies a deep commitment to Hawai'i and the unique ability to elevate community voices and strategically align values with actionable solutions. Through his diverse educational and professional experiences, Sterling offers a balanced perspective that is indispensable to decision-making and effective planning.

Sterling continues to actively engage in our community and lean into complex challenges. He thrives in a role with purpose and accountability which is why he will be successful in this position.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify **in support of Sterling Higa**.

Sincerely,



Janice Hata

Senator Glenn Wakai, Chair  
Senator Bennette E. Misalucha, Vice Chair  
Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism

Wednesday, April 6, 2022

Evan Kamakana Gates

**SUPPORT FOR STERLING HIGA ON THE BOARD OF HAWAII COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
AUTHORITY (HCDA)**

I am submitting testimony in **SUPPORT** of Sterling Higa to serve on the Board of the Hawaii  
Community Development Authority.

A true public servant knows what is right, knows how much of that good is attainable, and knows the means to attain that good. From my experience in working with Sterling for the past two years, I have gained full confidence that Sterling meets all three of these criteria. In the height of fears surrounding the pandemic, Sterling voluntarily and generously assisted me with research on economic diversification in Hawai'i in the summer of 2020. Since then, I have worked with Sterling as a Director on the Board of Housing Hawai'i's Future.

In this time, I have come to know Sterling as a young man dedicated to his community, his work, and ultimately Hawai'i. Hawai'i is not just the birthplace of Sterling; it is his home, and he is determined to fight for it. Sterling believes that Hawai'i is defined by its people, and I am confident that he will represent all the peoples of Hawai'i if confirmed to the Hawai'i Community Development Authority Board. Sterling is known by all who meet him as an intelligent, gifted young man. He has studied Hawai'i's beautiful history but also its issues, and he is determined to be a part of resolving them. Sterling believes in the local dream of raising a family in Hawai'i, and he will ensure that that view is always represented. I **recommend his confirmation** with full confidence and free from any reservations.

Mahalo nui for this chance to testify and for your service.

**GM-828**

Submitted on: 4/6/2022 12:56:01 PM

Testimony for EET on 4/8/2022 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Talitha Liu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I have the pleasure of working with Sterling Higa for the non-profit organization Housing Hawai‘is Future, which seeks to activate and educate Millennial and GenZ about affordable housing issues. Together we’ve spoken to more than 200 stakeholders and constituents in the world of housing.

Sterling is an information sponge. In the past 8 months of working together he’s gained remarkable depth and breadth of knowledge into the design, economics, and policy of urban development. As part of HHF, Sterling has made it a personal goal to visit every neighborhood board on the island of Oahu. He also is a member of several affordable housing policy standing committees and coalitions (including and not limited to the HI Housing Affordability Coalition and Vibrant Hawai‘i). This in combination with his passion for community, evidenced by his years of experience as a teacher and journalist, gives him fresh insight into the state of planning and governance in Hawai‘i.

In addition, Sterling is passionate about people. In interviews and conversations, Sterling quickly forges strong connections and keeps the discussion going beyond the world of Zoom. He has widened the HHF network, in turn widening the network for young people who want to create change. He has a resource for every question and need - whether it’s a connection to a local creative or connecting a young leader to a mentor or planning tool.

Sterling approaches his work with equal parts pragmatism and passion, which will serve him well as a collaborative, committed, and forward-thinking member of the HCDA.

**GM-828**

Submitted on: 4/6/2022 5:28:18 PM

Testimony for EET on 4/8/2022 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Keoni M. Williams	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Wakai, Vice Chair Misalucha, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing in support of Mr. Sterling Higa's confirmation to the Hawaii Community Development Authority. I write in three capacities. First, I write as a former classmate of Mr. Higa at Roosevelt High School. Second, as the former director of the Pacific Forum Young Leaders Program. And lastly, I write as a member of the next generation of Hawaii.

Importantly, Mr. Higa is a public school graduate and a proud product of Royal Elementary, Kawanakoa Middle, and Roosevelt High School. When I first interacted with Mr. Higa in high school, I observed that he was a thoughtful and talented student. He manifest his skills through writing and poetry, among other pursuits. Mr. Higa worked hard at the things he was passionate about and was liked by his peers.

As a young professional, Mr. Higa became involved with the Young Leaders Program at Pacific Forum, a Honolulu-based foreign policy think tank focused on the Asia-Pacific region. Mr. Higa successfully applied to the Hawaii Asia-Pacific Affairs Leadership Program, a Hawaii-focused initiative geared toward equipping the next generation of leaders in business and civil society to understand Hawaii's role in the Asia-Pacific region. Mr. Higa made important contributions to the program and honed his policymaking skills through a self-directed research project.

Mr. Higa brings an important perspective to the table not just because of his skills, but his age as well. He is a member of the next generation of Hawaii. Like so many Hawaii residents our age, Mr. Higa understands that the challenges of our era will be ours to tackle — not a can to kick down the road. He understands that our future is at stake and his perspective will add value to important discussions.

Again, I write in support of Mr. Sterling Higa's confirmation to the Hawaii Community Development Authority. Thank you for your consideration.

Mahalo,  
Keoni M. Williams

Manoa, Hawaii

**GM-828**

Submitted on: 4/7/2022 5:00:07 AM

Testimony for EET on 4/8/2022 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Zachary Yamada	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear members of the Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism. My name is Zachary Yamada, I live in Honolulu and I am locally raised, recent college graduate. I **support** the nomination of Sterling Higa to the board of the HCDA. I have had the opportunity to get to know and work closely with Sterling over the last eight months in the development of Housing Hawaii Future. In these eight months, I have seen Sterling's passion and commitment to help solve the housing crisis grow as his knowledge has. He has been acquire and analyze so much information because of his mindset of constant learning through reading and conversation, an attitude and mindset he will bring with him to this position. He is a skilled thinker and strong communicator whose age and background will represent the intergenerational consensus required to build a brighter future. Hopefully, this nomination will be the first of many where Hawaii's future begins to take an active role in the decisions that will shape not only the generations of today, but also those of tomorrow.

**GM-828**

Submitted on: 4/7/2022 2:33:52 PM

Testimony for EET on 4/8/2022 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Steven Petranik	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Sterling Higa is an excellent choice to serve on the Hawaii Community Development Authority. His commitment to Hawai'i and its people is both generous and passionate.

I have known Sterling well for four years and he is smart, empathetic, disciplined and open-minded – far beyond what might expect from someone of his age. He listens well and acts only after careful consideration of the many facets involved in any decision.

He is also articulate – both in writing and speaking – and takes care to understand and explain the nuances of complicated issues.

I am confident that he will serve Hawai'i well as a member of HCDA.

Thank you.

Steven Petranik