



In April, Rep. Kirstin Kahaloo hosted Kahakai Elementary School's Student Council and Aloha Ambassadors for a visit at the Hawai'i State Capitol. The students met with Rep. Kahaloo, Senator Dru Mamo Kanuha, and Lieutenant Governor Sylvia Luke. Hosting our community's future leaders is always a delight!

Success For Kona: The 2024 Legislative Session In Review

On May 3, the House of Representatives officially adjourned the 32nd Legislature of the State of Hawai'i. Lawmakers made significant progress in priority areas of affordable housing, cost of living, public safety, and wildfire prevention and recovery. They also delivered funding for key issues including affordable housing, homelessness, mental health needs in our community, and the shortage of healthcare workers across our state.

In addition, the House passed a series of good government bills relating to transparency in government boards, election procedures, and state employment, following last year's efforts to incorporate recommendations from Commission to Improve Standards of Conduct.

"Despite the challenges before us, the state's 2024-2025 budget reflects our values and our dedication to caring for our community and delivering the important government services our community needs," said Rep. Kirstin Kahaloo, who serves on the Finance Committee. She credited the hard work of the entire Hawai'i Island

delegation, including her counterpart Senator Dru Mamo Kanuha, with delivering **\$28.7 million to address key Kona priorities.**

Konawaena High School received funding for repairing the roof of the Ellison Onizuka Gymnasium. **Kona Community Hospital** received additional funding for their improvements – this year for the imaging suite. **Kealakekua Bay State Historical Park** received funding to plan, design, and construct improvements to advance the community-led master plan. And funding was secured for improvements to our transportation infrastructure at the **Ellison Onizuka Kona International Airport, Daniel K. Inouye Highway, and Highway 11 at the intersections with Nani Kailua Drive and Lako Street.**

Grants-in-Aid were also secured for the Hawai'i 'Ulu Co-op, the Japanese Cultural Center of Kona, Hawai'i Island Seed Bank, Hawai'i Island Humane Society, Lokahi Treatment Centers, and more.

Learn more about the policy achievements passed this session inside.

Policy To Support Local Families, Farmers, Entrepreneurs, and Our Environment

Bolstered by her service as Vice Chair of the Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems, and as a member of the Committees on Finance and Energy & Environmental Protection (chaired by fellow Kona Rep. Nicole Lowen), Rep. Kahaloa worked to pass many priority policies to support local families, protect our agricultural sector, boost our entrepreneurs, and strengthen Hawai'i.



Protecting Our Farmers, Protecting Consumers

After many years of work, the Legislature passed a bill to require at least **51% Kona coffee** in a blend in order to use the Kona name. Phasing in by 2027, the protection extends to other regional coffees in the state, offering clarity to consumers.

Rep. Kahaloa's bill to protect macadamia nut farmers also passed, requiring disclosure if a package contains macadamia nuts grown outside Hawai'i. Local farmers and large players in the industry have also committed to working together on expanding processing capacity on the island, a major constraint on increasing our macadamia nut output.

Delivering Tax Cuts For Working Families & All Taxpayers

With increasing pressure on every household, the Legislature passed the **biggest income tax cut in the State's history** – saving taxpayers in all tax brackets more than \$5 billion by 2030.

A single minimum wage earner will see savings of \$168 next year, and by 2030, will save \$1,706 a year on taxes.

A family of 4 making the median household income of \$88,000 a year will see a tax savings of \$348 next year, working up to savings of \$3,393 a year by 2030. **This working family will go from paying the second highest income taxes in the country to the fourth lowest.**



Expanding Access To Local Fruits & Vegetables For Families In Need

Rep. Kahaloa secured **\$1.5 million in the state budget for the Double Bux program**, which doubles the purchasing power of nutrition assistance recipients when buying local produce. With this annual funding, the program – which was born on Hawai'i Island – can draw \$9.6 million in matching federal funds to help even more local families support more local farmers.

Entrepreneurship & Innovation In Your Kitchen

Rep. Kahaloa worked closely Sen. Dru Mamo Kanuha and the Department of Health to expand the kinds of **homemade food products allowed to be sold** – a win for community-based economic development and entrepreneurs that maintains food safety protections for consumers. Some examples of products that can now be sold: chutney, salsa, sourkraut, barbecue sauces, relish, hot sauce, pickled mangoes, and kimchee.

Hawai'i was one of the few states that did not provide certain exemptions from health regulations for homemade food products. Supporting homemade food operations will foster economic growth, create local employment opportunities, and provide a lifeline for producers impacted by recent wildfires in Maui.

Public School Maintenance, Now Based In Our Community

In recognition of the many maintenance needs of our aging Kona schools, the Department of Accounting & General Services will establish and staff a West Hawai'i District Office for its school maintenance operations.

This will significantly improve response times compared to maintenance personnel responding from Hilo as they currently do, allowing crews more time to address the needs of our beloved community schools.



Securing Our Environment Against Invasive Species

In response to increased awareness and concern about the invasive species crisis in our state, the Legislature unanimously passed the largest package of biosecurity measures in the state's history.

Rep. Kahaloa's bill explicitly requires the Department of Agriculture to lead and coordinate the State's invasive pest control and biosecurity efforts, and to report progress in real time.

All told, the Legislature committed nearly \$20 million to the HDOA to assist in the administration and implementation of the biosecurity program, including new inspectors and support staff to improve our ability to catch invasive species as they enter Hawai'i.

This bill honors the work of the late State Representative Clift Tsuji of Hilo, who fought tirelessly for biosecurity during his tenure as the House Agriculture Committee Chair. It recommits Hawai'i to protecting its environment, food security, and way of life against invasive species like coconut rhinoceros beetles, coqui frogs, little fire ants, two-lined spittle bugs, rose-ringed parakeets, and other emerging threats.



Representative Kirstin Kahaloa
Hawai'i State Capitol, Room 314
415 S. Beretania St.
Honolulu, HI 96813

Sen. Lynn DeCoite (Maui-Moloka'i-Lāna'i), Rep. Kirstin Kahaloa, Sen. Dru Mamo Kanuha (Kona-Ka'ū-Volcano), Lt. Gov. Sylvia Luke, Sen. Tim Richards (North Kona-Kohala-Hāmākua-North Hilo)



On May 3, we closed a successful Legislative session – but the work doesn't stop when the gavel pounds. Following session, I was part of a delegation to the USDA Hawai'i Policy Summit in Washington D.C. to discuss how we can put more federal resources to work for our farmers, ranchers, and rural communities. It is an honor working with our Hawai'i Island delegation and the entire Legislature serving you!



Representative Kirstin Kahaloa

House District 6: Hōnaunau, Nāpo'opo'o, Captain Cook, Kealakekua, Keauhou, Hōlualoa, Kailua
call (808) 586-8530 | email repkahaloa@capitol.hawaii.gov | stop by **State Capitol Room 314**
visit capitol.hawaii.gov/house/kahaloa | follow [@repkahaloa](https://twitter.com/repkahaloa) on social media