



Courtesy Tyler Kruse

From the governor: Challenges, progress, the year ahead

Until you assume the office, no one can really know what it means to be Hawai'i's governor: the daily decisions that affect thousands of people, the responsibility to help chart the state's future, and the flood of community invitations that come your way. This issue of Capitol Connection provides a snapshot of some of the past month's events as the governor reflects on challenges, progress and the year to come.

Q. In this, your third year as governor, what do you want people to know about the challenges we're facing and what your administration is doing about them?

A. The evidence is telling us **we've made progress** in many of the areas people care about. Our **housing production** is up, and we're looking for ways to reduce the barriers to increase the pace. About 5,300 units have been produced since we took office – 40 percent of them affordable – and more are in the pipeline. **Homelessness** is down by 9 percent statewide, and we're taking new steps to maintain access to and safety in our public spaces. We kept our promise on **cooling more than 1,000 classrooms in our schools statewide**. Hawai'i also has become a recognized leader in **sustainability and clean energy**. Finally, the state is in **solid financial shape**, and the U.S. Department of Labor just reported we have **the lowest unemployment rate in the nation** for the first time in nearly 11 years. We've made good progress and we want to maintain the momentum.



Gov. Ige and Blanche Pope Elementary students helping in the Washington Place garden.

Q. What are some of your highest priorities for the coming year?

A. I want to keep investing in our people and our community while being smart about managing taxpayer dollars. Moody's Analytics reported that Hawai'i is one of only 16 states with enough cash reserves to weather the "stress test" of another recession. It's that kind of planning that allows us to be in better financial shape than when we took office. We went through the budget for the coming year, and there isn't going to be a whole lot of additional money. So it's about understanding the systems we have in place, then figuring out better ways to get the results we want — whether it's education, housing, homelessness or the economy.

Q. What do you say to some people who ask if "progress" is always tied to more tourism?

A. The short answer is no. "Progress" isn't limited to more visitor arrivals, although tourism has always been a big part of our economy for the jobs and tax revenue it generates. But moving forward, it's also about building a smart **"innovation economy"** and creating higher-paying jobs. We're seeing how technology is transforming our lives and the impact it has on every industry – from banking to agriculture. We want our children to be prepared to fill these jobs. The state is already working with businesses to help upgrade people's skills for this new kind of workforce. By investing in our local talent, we can create opportunities for the future.

Q. What are you looking forward to with the Washington Place restoration and the holidays?

A. It will be exciting to reopen this landmark to the public. The Washington Place restoration gives us the chance to learn more about Queen Lili'uokalani, the Dominis family and the governors who lived in this historic home. As for our family, now that Amy, Lauren and Matthew are out of college and working, the holidays are the time we can count on for all of us to be together. We're wishing everyone a wonderful holiday season as we look forward to 2018.

Governor orders full investigation into patient escape

An immediate investigation into the escape of Hawai'i State Hospital patient Randall Saito, 59, is underway, as ordered by Governor Ige. So far, seven hospital employees have been suspended without pay for 30 days as the Department of Health (DOH) sets out to uncover how the killer was able to leave the grounds after 38 years in confinement. Saito was captured after chartering a plane to Maui, then boarding a commercial flight to California.

"This escape should never have happened," said the governor. "I stand with the public in being deeply concerned that this dangerous person was able to leave our hospital undetected for hours. Law enforcement and the public should have been notified sooner."



BETTER SECURITY: Gov. Ige and DOH director Ginny Pressler outline plans. Courtesy KITV

DOH director Dr. Ginny Pressler acknowledged "a major breakdown in hospital procedures, protocols and guidelines. In the meantime, all unescorted on- and off-campus privileges have been stopped, all levels of patient privilege and visitation policies are being reviewed, and additional security fencing is being expedited. A new high-security state hospital facility has been funded by the Legislature and is targeted for completion around December 2020.

Kaka'ako, Nimitz enforcement to keep state lands safe

Gov. David Ige has pledged more enforcement efforts to keep public areas such as the Kaka'ako Makai parks and Nimitz Viaduct pedestrian areas open to the public. The governor said teams are working compassionately and in accordance with applicable laws to maintain state lands and to allow unimpeded public access.

The Kaka'ako parks have suffered extensive damage to plumbing, power poles and landscaping. In October, enforcement action resulted in the movement of about 180 people from the Kaka'ako parks and surrounding areas. "The situation that led to the park closures is unacceptable," the governor said. "We will continue to make changes as necessary to maintain access to and safety in our public spaces."

The Hawai'i Community Development Authority is procuring private security, which will work with law enforcement after the park is reopened. Further, the recently cleared area along the Nimitz corridor has been secured and turned over to HART and the county for maintenance and enforcement.

Public can comment on OCCC site

The public has until Jan. 8, 2018 to comment on the preferred site of a new Oahu Community Correctional Center (OCCC) at the state's Animal Quarantine Station area in Halawa Valley. The governor said the new facility would relieve long-standing overcrowding and would be more secure and efficient. The draft Environmental Impact Statement is available for comment at health.hawaii.gov/oeqc/ (scroll to "Online Library of EISs").

Housing update: Koa Ridge, Kahauiki Village make progress

Governor Ige joined Castle & Cooke executives and community leaders last month to break ground for **Koa Ridge**, a new master planned community in central O'ahu. "We thank you for your perseverance," said the governor, noting that his son was in pre-school when Koa Ridge planning started some 20 years ago.



Castle & Cooke breaks ground for more housing at Koa Ridge.



Gov. Ige checks progress at Kahauiki Village with Mel Kaneshige and Maj.Gen. Joe Logan.

The project will provide 3,500 new homes — a third of which will be designated as affordable under City and County of Honolulu guidelines. The first 170 homes are expected to be finished in mid-2019.

At a recent Building Industry Association summit, the state reported it is still on track to build **10,000 housing units by 2020**. "About 5,300 units have been produced since the governor first took office. Forty percent of those are affordable. Another 1,400 units are under construction, and another 4,500 units are in some stage of planning," said the governor's senior special assistant Denise Iseri-Matsubara.

On the other side of the island, members of the **Hawai'i National Guard** are pitching in to help prepare **Kahauiki Village** near Nimitz Highway for the first group of homeless families to move in by mid-January. The plantation-style village was launched by **Duane Kurisu and his aio Foundation** to provide affordable rental units for families who are employed but in transitional housing.

Kurusu credits the governor's emergency homeless proclamation and transfer of the 11.5 acres of state land for moving the project forward, plus help from other state departments and many community supporters.

Historic Washington Place to reopen with new exhibits

There's something about **Washington Place** that stirs some of our deepest emotions. Maybe it's the memories of Queen Lili'uokalani and the life she lived there. Or the milestones the historic home has seen. Or the stories from past territorial and state governors who have shaped Hawai'i.

That's why **First Lady Dawn Amano-Ige and the Washington Place staff** have been working with the **Washington Place Foundation** on a \$1.5 million restoration project to transform the entire second floor of the historic mansion into a public exhibit area as a legacy for future generations. Until 2002 when a new residence was built, Washington Place was the official home of 12 Hawai'i governors. However, for the past few years second floor access has been limited due to needed repairs.

"To open up the second floor to the community, we had to address many health and safety issues such as structural reinforcement, wiring and new LED lights for energy efficiency," explained the first lady. Now, the public will be able to see several refurbished rooms, with photos, memorabilia and artifacts from the queen, the Dominis family and photos from former governors.

The public will be able to view the new exhibits on Friday, Dec. 15 from 5 to 8 p.m. at the **Washington Place Foundation Annual Christmas Open House**. A second free public event will be the **'Aha Mele** on Dec. 16 from 2 to 6 p.m.

As host and hostess of Washington Place, Governor Ige and the first lady have held many events at the historic home. The landmark has grown into a place for the community to gather for tours, musical events and to learn about our state's history. "We created the organic garden with the help of students to reflect the governor's initiative on sustainability. We also want to bring more children here to appreciate what the home means to the people of Hawai'i," Amano-Ige said.

"The new exhibits include personal items from Lili'uokalani before she became queen; artifacts from the Dominis collection; photos from past governors of their families and dignitaries; and a history of the building's changes through the years," said Cynthia Engle, curator of Washington Place. Musicians also will be able to use the *He Ku'ono Mele* composition room (music niche) to honor the queen's vision of preserving Hawaiian language and music.

Cameron Heen, director of Washington Place, added, "We wanted to share the queen's love of Hawaiian music and pay tribute to her accomplishments. The queen composed more than 165 songs and chants, including the famous *'Aloha Oe.*' We hope this project gives people a window into the queen's life, a sense of the families who lived here, and what Washington Place meant to them."

'Year of Remembrance' for the Queen

To honor Hawai'i's last monarch, Governor Ige proclaimed the year 2018 as the **"Year of Remembrance of Queen Lili'uokalani"** during a moving ceremony Nov. 11 at the State Capitol. The event marked the 100th anniversary of the queen's death and paid tribute to her legacy.

"Queen Lili'uokalani was a strong and wise leader who had courage, conviction and compassion," said the governor. "She gave a lifetime of service to the people of Hawai'i and put her people first, before money or power."

Senators Brickwood Galuteria and Kai Kahele, co-organizers of the event, said there was an overwhelming response to the idea of honoring the last sovereign of Hawai'i. "She was an extraordinary queen who demonstrated the best in all of us," Galuteria said.



(top) A framed photo of Queen Lili'uokalani. First Lady Dawn Amano-Ige with Washington Place curator Cynthia Engle and director Cameron Heen, who are working on the 2nd floor restoration.

Holiday events set

Gov. David Ige and First Lady Dawn Amano-Ige, together with the Washington Place Foundation, will host a **Christmas Open House** at the historic home **Friday, Dec. 15** from 5 to 8 p.m.

The event includes tours of the newly restored second floor and Christmas and Hawaiian music. Reservations are required and can be made at washingtonplacefoundation.org/contact or by calling 586-0248 by Friday, Dec. 8.

Tickets for the **Saturday, Dec. 16 'Aha Mele** from 2 to 6 p.m. at Washington Place are available at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/htas-aha-mele-hawaiian-music-series-at-washington-place-tickets-40269542285>. The free event is sponsored by the Hawaii Tourism Authority.



ALOHA, LILI'U: Hula halau pay tribute to the queen at the State Capitol.

Hawai'i's top teachers honored for their dedication

Leading by example — that's one of the reasons **Vanessa Ching**, the student activities coordinator at Ewa Makai Middle School, was named the state's **2018 Teacher of the Year** at a Washington Place ceremony Oct. 27. Whether it's a "green" service project or an anti-bullying campaign, Ching's work as the student activities coordinator at Ewa Makai Middle School is creating good citizens and future leaders for the community.

"What I remind my students is that whatever you do," she said, "you do it with passion, with your heart." Because of her students' advocacy for a plastic-free Hawai'i, Ewa Makai is the state's only school to have won the National Green Ribbon School certification.



HONORING THE BEST: Vanessa Ching (center) from the DOE's Leeward District was named the state's 2018 Teacher of the Year. Congratulating her and the other top teachers were the Iges, DOE Superintendent Dr. Christina Kishimoto and Board of Education chair Lance Mizumoto (right).

Governor Ige recognized the outstanding teachers representing districts statewide and thanked them for choosing "one of the most important and noblest professions in state government." Other finalists for the statewide honor were Amanda Fretto, Kaua'i District; Francine Hughes, Maui District; Gregg Iha, Central District; Erika Kaneo, Hawai'i Island District; Del Onaga, Windward District; Cristin Priolo, Charter Schools; and Naomi Salaveria, Honolulu District.

2017 Legacy Award winners

Governor Ige and four other outstanding individuals were honored by the **Hawai'i United Okinawa Association (HUOA)** Nov. 12 for their contributions to the community. Besides the governor, the Legacy Award recipients were Jake Shimabukuro, 'ukulele virtuoso; Shinye Gima, military intelligence service (MIS) veteran and educator; Hidehito Uki, CEO of Sun Noodle Hawai'i; Herbert Yamamoto, 442nd Regimental Combat Team and MIS veteran.



The program highlighted the governor as the first in the nation of Okinawan descent but also described his reputation as someone of humility and integrity with "vision, heart and a servant-leader mindset." A high point of the evening was an 'ukulele duet by Jake Shimabukuro and the governor of "Somewhere Over the Rainbow." Before their performance, the governor joked with the crowd, "I want you to know that when Jake and I practiced, we played flawlessly. But you guys are making me nervous."



(top) The 2017 HUOA Legacy Award honorees Jake Shimabukuro and Governor Ige perform.

Aloha spirit Lāna'i style



On Lāna'i, the governor got a workout at the 24th Annual Turkey and Rice Giveaway last month, which provided food for every family on the island. Organizers Jim and Randy Coon of Trilogy Charter Boat Co. joined with Maui Hotel & Lodging, Young Brothers and Bank of Hawaii, along with other community organizations, to distribute more than 1,000 turkeys and bags of rice for Thanksgiving.

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Citizens provide a voice on boards

They come from all walks of life, serve as volunteers and advise on decisions vital to the future of the state. Those are the governor's appointees to more than 170 boards and commissions, officially sworn in during recent ceremonies.



Land Use Commission member Gary Okuda with his family and the governor and first lady.

"Their service is a way for Hawai'i citizens to have an active voice in government and make our community a better place," said Sharon Ibarra, director of Boards and Commissions. "Serving on a board requires a strong commitment. Everyone has something to offer." For an online application, go to boards.hawaii.gov. For questions, contact Ibarra at boards.commissions@hawaii.gov.

Capitol Connection with Gov. David Ige is a regular e-newsletter that provides updates from the State Capitol. As we work to become paperless, the newsletter is available online and via subscription. Check out the governor's website at governor.hawaii.gov to subscribe. Also, follow the governor on Twitter and Instagram @govhawaii and check [facebook.com/GovernorDavidIge](https://www.facebook.com/GovernorDavidIge).
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