



## Hawai‘i responds to COVID-19, prepares for census

While Washington, D.C. still deals with political acrimony and gridlock, the nation’s governors are finding ways to work together — led, in part, by Governor Ige and Governor Asa Hutchinson of Arkansas. Read about how the states are carving their own path to bi-partisanship, Hawai‘i’s monitoring of the coronavirus (COVID-19), support for the Joint Legislative Package to help working families, and plans for the New Aloha Stadium Entertainment District.

**Q. What’s the latest on the state’s response to the coronavirus?**

**A. Everyone should know we’re ready and prepared to deal with the situation.** We’re in constant contact with our federal, county and local healthcare partners to protect our residents and visitors. Everyone needs to stay informed and take preventive measures to keep our community safe. When I was in Washington, D.C., the governors were briefed by the **Centers for Disease Control**. I made sure the CDC understood that because of Hawai‘i’s isolation, it’s important that we can test for COVID-19 ourselves to quickly identify the virus and take action to isolate anyone who could be infected. (See story on Page 3)



Gov. Ige with state Department of Health director Bruce Anderson and epidemiologist Sarah Park at a recent news conference on COVID-19.

**Q. What was covered in your meetings in Washington, D.C. and Japan?**



**A.** There was clear consensus among both Democrats and Republicans that the **National Governors Association (NGA)** shouldn’t get mired in the confrontations that have dominated D.C. **As the co-chair of the Council of Governors**, I pushed to create bi-partisan teams of governors to work on priority issues. We’re concerned that National Guard funding not be diverted to build a border wall between Mexico and the U.S. I also met with several cabinet members to make sure Hawai‘i is well-positioned to take advantage of federal funding and other opportunities. In Japan, we met to make progress on visitor pre-clearance. I also reinforced our commitment to ensuring safe access to the Thirty Meter Telescope site and that we’re working on broader issues of reconciliation with the Hawaiian people.

**Q. The Joint Legislative Package is making its way through the session. Why are these bills such a priority?**

**A.** We wanted to make **significant progress in reducing the cost of living** and realized it would take addressing several areas to make a difference. The bills provide for two of the biggest expenses in a family’s budget — the cost of housing and childcare — while raising the minimum wage and providing targeted tax relief. (See story on Page 2)

**Q. The 2020 Census gets under way in March. Why is a complete count for the state so important?**

**A. An accurate count really does mean more resources for our state.** In the past, we’ve lost millions of federal dollars because Hawai‘i has been undercounted. People shouldn’t be concerned that the information will be used to negatively impact anyone. It can help us receive our fair share of funding and guide future planning.



**Q. What makes the plans for the new Aloha Stadium Entertainment District especially promising?**

**A.** There are a lot of opportunities for sports and entertainment activities, housing development, hotels, and retail businesses. The parcel is right on the rail line, virtually in the middle of the island. The real key will be how we can structure the public-private partnership to help pay for the stadium construction and maintenance. (See story on Page 3)

# Public support urged for Joint Legislative Package

In a historic show of unity, the Hawai'i State Legislature, Governor Ige, and local business and community leaders are working together on a comprehensive set of bills to reduce the cost of living and create a Hawai'i where everyone has the ability to thrive. **Forty-eight percent of our households in Hawai'i are "ALICE"** (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed), **struggling to make ends meet**. They have no safety net for emergencies, their income falls short of basic necessities, and they are working but can't afford the cost of living.

The bills moving through this legislative session address the top three cost drivers workers and families are facing: wages and tax burdens, affordable housing, and access to affordable early childcare and learning opportunities. **The public is urged to stay informed and support these measures:**



**HB2541:** Relating to Helping Working Families will provide up to **\$70 million in annual tax relief** by making the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) refundable and permanent and increasing the food/excise credit by 36 percent to \$150.

**SB3104:** Relating to Land Development addresses our need for 50,000 housing units by 2050. This measure creates an efficient path to get people into these homes now through the authorization of **\$275 million in GO Bonds** for infrastructure and the development of affordable housing.

**HB2543:** Relating to Access to Learning sets forth the ambitious, yet necessary, goal of providing **all 3- and 4-year-olds access to early childcare and learning** opportunities by 2030.

**SB3103:** Relating to a School Construction Authority expedites **building and designing 21<sup>st</sup> century schools** for our keiki and community by leveraging underutilized school lands.

## 2020 Census: A complete count matters for Hawai'i



It takes only a few minutes, but every completed 2020 census form means more federal dollars for Hawai'i to fund schools, roads, Medicare and Medicaid, and a long list of other programs for local communities. That's why it's so important that every Hawai'i resident fills out the 2020 Census questionnaire. **Starting March 12**, look for an invitation in the mail to fill out the census questionnaire online or by phone. The form will be translated into multiple languages, and phone assistance will be available. There is no citizenship question, and answers are kept confidential. If you haven't responded online or by phone within a couple of weeks, you will be mailed a paper questionnaire. If you haven't responded by the end of April, census takers will follow up in person **from May through July 2020** to make sure you're counted.

"It's all of our responsibility to ensure that we reach into every community in Hawai'i," emphasized Governor Ige at a State Capitol rally, joined by a host of state and community partners. "The census numbers drive the resources we receive for the next decade. We have to make sure we receive the resources we deserve." In the past, the state has had lower census participation rates than the rest of the country. In 2010, the national average response rate was 74 percent, but our state's rate was just 68 percent and neighbor island self-response was even lower at 54 percent. **That means almost a third of Hawai'i's households received a knock at their doors from census workers in 2010.**

The census data is also used to forecast population and economic growth, estimate housing needs, and determine where new schools, roads, health care complexes and other facilities will be needed. "We use census data for many of our studies, such as the number of people working at minimum wage and the self-sufficiency income needed for the state's families," said Dr. Eugene Tian, state economist and chair of the Hawai'i Government Complete Count Committee.

**To avoid census scams**, know that the Census Bureau will never ask you for your social security number, donations, anything on behalf of a political party or your banking and credit card information. If you suspect fraud, call the Census Bureau at (808) 650-6611 to speak to a local Census Bureau representative. For details, go to [census.hawaii.gov](https://census.hawaii.gov). If you want to apply to be a census worker, go to <https://2020census.gov/en/jobs.html>.



"This is Me 2020" census video  
The powerful video urges full participation.



# State on high alert to protect against COVID-19

**W**ash your hands. Stay home if you're sick. Get your information from reliable sources, such as the state Department of Health (DOH) and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). All that sounds pretty basic, but in the case of the **novel coronavirus (COVID-19)**, Hawai'i health officials say it's the best advice to reduce fear and prevent the spread of illness. They also recommend getting the seasonal flu shot to avoid confusion with the coronavirus, which has similar symptoms of fever, cough and shortness of breath.



State officials and community partners join Gov. Ige at a news conference to provide coronavirus updates.

**COVID-19 has sickened thousands of people in China**, with more cases being identified in the United States and other parts of the world. At press time, state officials were tracking the movements of one couple from Japan who had traveled to Maui and O'ahu and tested positive for COVID-19 when they returned home. Governor Ige and health officials have stressed that while the risk to the state remains low, they continue to be on high alert. "We're being proactive because we want to stay ahead of this," the governor said. "We're working very closely with the CDC and will keep everyone updated."

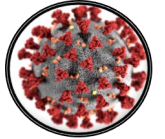


Following DOH advice, Gov. Ige gets his seasonal flu shot from epidemiologist Sarah Park.

**The Daniel K. Inouye International Airport in Honolulu** is one of 11 airports in the nation where select passengers traveling to the U.S. from China will be funneled, though direct flights from China to Hawai'i have been suspended. These airports will only accept passengers from China who are U.S. citizens, legal permanent residents and their immediate family members. "We're fortunate to have one of the CDC quarantine stations here in Hawai'i to help us," said state DOH director Bruce Anderson. "We're recommending that people not travel to China at this time. This is a fast-moving issue, but it hasn't stopped us from doing what we can."

State epidemiologist Sarah Park has worked with the CDC before on global health emergencies and has twice received commendations as part of the CDC's international team. Park supervises a staff of 75 investigators and epidemiologists whose job it is to keep the community safe. **"The bottom line is we're alert, aware and making sure we protect Hawai'i,"** she said.

**So are these coronaviruses becoming more common?** "It's more a question of whether there are more 'zoonotic' infections — those coming over from the animal world to the human world," said Park. "We have overpopulation, instantaneous travel from underdeveloped to developed countries. There's more opportunity for these crossover events. We just have to be prepared. It's a team effort." To stay informed, go to the state Department of Health website at <https://health.hawaii.gov/> or the CDC website at [www.cdc.gov/nCoV](http://www.cdc.gov/nCoV). The public can also call 211 to ask questions.



## Field of dreams: Concepts unveiled for new stadium district

**W**hen it's completed, the **New Aloha Stadium Entertainment District (NASED)** is envisioned as a vibrant mix of housing, restaurants, retail stores, hotels, recreation sites, cultural amenities, green space and, of course, a new stadium to replace the current aging facility. The state has allocated \$350 million for the project and seeks to attract developers through a P-3 public-private partnership.



The public is invited to provide feedback on the new stadium designs.

**The public is invited to provide feedback on three possible options** in the 98-acre footprint. The full build-out will be accomplished in several phases over the course of 10 to 15 years after the new Aloha Stadium opens, with a projected goal of being ready for the 2023 football season. Option A is adjacent to the present stadium, while Options B and C position the new stadium elsewhere on the site. In all cases, stadium activities, such as the swap meet and football games, will continue while construction is underway.

The NASED team has been meeting regularly with O'ahu Neighborhood Boards and community groups to seek input and keep them informed on the master planning process. Comments and suggestions can be made by going to [nased.hawaii.gov](http://nased.hawaii.gov). For videos that show aerial views of the three conceptual designs, go to <http://nased.hawaii.gov/about/>.

# Hawai'i launches 'School Breakfast Month' for March

Whether it's a "Grab and Go" kalo bowl or other 'ono items, the state's keiki are eating healthier school breakfasts, thanks to an initiative launched by **First Lady Dawn Amano-Ige, the Hawai'i Department of Education (HIDOE), the No Kid Hungry foundation and other community partners.** "Since the governor is proclaiming **March 'School Breakfast Month,'** we wanted to highlight our **'Jump Start Breakfast'** project to encourage more students and families to participate," said Mrs. Ige.



HIDOE is testing new breakfast options to help students jumpstart their day as well as incorporating more local products through its **'Aina Pono Farm to School program.** Legislators got to taste kalo bowls delivered by Kaimuki High. Other events include a March 2 governor's proclamation at Pālolo Elementary and a March 4 Jump Start Breakfast Celebration at Honowai Elementary. Honowai is piloting a "breakfast in the classroom" approach while several Leeward schools are offering the "Grab and Go" option.



"Our students need to have a positive start to their day for good health and academic success," said Mrs. Ige, who is vice chair of the National Governors' Spouses Leadership Committee. She shared the project's success as part of a discussion during NGA meetings in Washington, D.C. For project details, go to <https://ainapono.org/jumpstart/>.

## Students learn how to mobilize for real-world issues



Abinosa, Lopez and Espino at the Capitol.

"Be a voice, not an echo." Those words sum up the annual **Secondary Student Conference (SSC),** where student leaders from the state's public high schools learn about the legislative process. The goal? To show young people how to make their voices heard on issues they care about.

"This conference shows we can have a big impact because we can push real legislative bills that are important to us," said **Daniela Lopez, a Campbell High senior** who is also the student representative to the **state Board of Education.** "We teach delegates how to do research and testify at hearings." **Alexandra Abinosa, a Farrington High senior and this year's SSC chair,** added, "As future leaders, it's important we learn how to make changes for the better."

**Governor and Mrs. Ige** talked with the students about Time magazine's 2019 Person of the Year, Swedish teenager Greta Thunberg, who has galvanized people about the threat of climate change. "This is really about your future," said the governor. "In today's global society, a single person can make a difference." Mrs. Ige reminded the students that she and the governor are both proud public school graduates — she from Campbell High and he from Pearl City High. "We believe in the work you're doing through this program," she said. "Leadership is about service and empowering others." **Zach Espino** learned that lesson as a 2014 SSC delegate who now works in the governor's office. "Students should know the Legislature is open to them to get involved," he said.

## New school immunizations

Beginning in the 2020-2021 school year, additional immunizations will be required for students entering preschool, kindergarten through grade 12 and colleges in Hawai'i.

Seventh grade students must provide documentation for Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis), HPV (human papillomavirus vaccine) and MCV (meningococcal conjugate vaccine). Parents should note that the HPV vaccination requires two doses given six months apart so they will need to show that they have a doctor's appointment to complete the immunization requirements.

The State of Hawai'i continues to recognize exemptions to the immunization requirements for medical and religious reasons. For a list of school health requirements effective July 1, 2020, go to:

[www.vaxtoschoolhawaii.com/](http://www.vaxtoschoolhawaii.com/)

## DHHL to provide affordable rentals



Kamehameha Schools CEO Jack Wong and DHHL Director William Aila, Jr.

Native Hawaiians on a wait list for homesteads will soon have a **first-ever option to rent affordable apartments** from the state Department of Hawaiian Home Lands. DHHL signed an agreement to buy two vacant apartment buildings in Mō'ili'ili from Kamehameha Schools for \$7.8 million. The agency plans to renovate the buildings for occupancy by the end of the year.

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