A Family Focused ECONOMIC PLAN
MY PLEDGE TO RESTORE HAWAIʻI’S PROMISE

When a child is born in Hawaiʻi, our hope for them is pure. As she speaks her first words, we tell her that she can be whatever she wants to be. As he takes his first steps, we tell him that he can live a good, healthy life right here among family. This is Hawaiʻi’s promise.

But lately, this is sounding like an empty promise. When did we start telling our children that their dreams lie someplace else?

I’m running for Governor for one simple reason – to help our children and grandchildren be able to afford to live and thrive here.

Unfortunately, families and communities across Hawaiʻi continue to struggle. Some of our toughest challenges have been with us for way too long, such as the high cost of housing, low wages, and young people going to the mainland and not having opportunities to return home.

Women continue to be paid less than men and have also suffered disproportionately during the pandemic, with many mothers forced to leave or downsize their employment to care for their children. We all know that tourism remains the strength behind our state revenue base; however, our small businesses and families have been left behind.

As Governor, revitalizing and diversifying the economy will be my priority. It is time to shift from a tourism-focused economy to a family-focused economy. Tourism will always be critically important to our state economy; but our policies have to be focused more on how we become a state where children and future generations can stay and find opportunity here and not be forced to move because of our high costs and lack of opportunity.

My plan to rebuild Hawaiʻi’s economy will stimulate the development of affordable housing by working with the legislature to enact a State of Emergency in order to accelerate the kind of significant progress that we desperately need. My plan includes investing in renewable energy, making our state a global leader in combating the climate crisis, creating a healthcare hub of the Pacific and expanding broadband and internet access throughout our state.

A cornerstone of the Plan is my call to establish a Community Reinvestment Plan – one that requires businesses over a certain size to contribute a certain dollar amount to Hawaiʻi’s non profit organizations in order to support the community from which the businesses profit. This creates a sustainable community.

After 34-years, I left a business that I helped to start and grow to over one thousand employees in five locations – to run for Governor. I will use my business experience and entrepreneurial mindset to upgrade the way the government functions and to build a better economy for all.

I hope you get a sense of my values and ideas for how we can work together to solve these big problems through my Economic Plan – a Family Focused Plan – below. I have a track record and I have resolve.

If I receive the honor of being your next governor, we are going to look into the eyes of every child in Hawaiʻi and say they can live out their dreams here in our islands – that we will keep our promise, no matter what is put in our way. And this is my promise to you.

Mahalo,  

[Signature]
Affordable Housing: Rent-to-Own/Workforce/Rental Communities

For the past five years, we are one of the few states that has seen our population decrease. Most of those leaving are educated young people who ordinarily would form the middle class of our community. If the future of Hawaiʻi is leaving our State, what kind of future can we hope to have?

That is why affordable housing is so critical to my economic plan.

As Governor, I will work with the Legislature to declare a State of Emergency for an agreed upon timeline in order to fast track affordable housing. It will also enable people of all generations to have a home that they can rent and, if they choose, transition to home ownership. My Affordable Housing Plan consists of three parts, 1) Rent-to-Own, 2) Designated Workforce Housing and 3) Affordable Rental Communities. Read about it here.

Making Small Business a Priority

Across the state, businesses large and small continue to be impacted negatively and Hawaiʻi is one of only two states that has not enjoyed a job recovery rate to pre-pandemic levels. At the same time, Hawaiʻi’s shrinking workforce has created higher labor costs and a lower revenue base for employers.

I will create an Executive Office for Small Business - the first one in the history of our state. It will serve as a one-stop-shop to those seeking assistance on how to navigate the state government requirements of operating a business. The Executive Office for Small Business will also serve as a place to obtain information on how the state government can better support small business.

Across the country, states are experiencing “The Great Resignation” during which people chose not to return to their pre-pandemic jobs. The Executive Office for Small Business will...
Business will diversify our economy, and address The Great Resignation in Hawai’i by supporting those who wish to try something new in the operation of their own business. It’s a win-win.

Proposing a Suspension of 4.5% Tax for Families

As Governor, I will propose a one-year suspension of the 4.5% excise tax on food, medicine and diapers for families making under $100,000 a year. People are hurting, our communities are suffering, and it’s time to use the resources we receive from the federal government and rising Council of Revenue projections to put some money directly into the hands of those who need it most. Tax credits or exemptions for specific groups or businesses are enacted regularly by the state for enterprises such as film production, renewable energy projects, photovoltaic panels, coastal mitigation efforts. However, this would be the first-of-its-kind tax suspension to benefit the average consumer.

Helping the Homeless

As we work on keeping families together, we must also do more to help the homeless in Hawai’i. While there are organizations working to help the homeless in our communities, the State government’s efforts have not resulted in any noticeable improvement. In fact, the situation has become so unmanageable it is causing profound disruption in our streets, in our parks, and at health care centers. As the problems go unaddressed, tension and frustration in our community rise.

I propose to have a designated State Hospital where a dedicated continuum of care ranging from emergency services, primary care, psychological and social services can be administered to the needs of the homeless - many of whom have no means to pay health costs.

I also am proposing a bold plan to fast track affordable housing which I highlighted above.

Community Reinvestment

Sustainable communities are those that have mutually supportive relationships. Many local businesses are already supporting our community. This is why I will propose a “Community Reinvestment Fund” designating a percentage of sales generated in Hawai’i by all businesses grossing over a certain dollar amount, to be reinvested into the community. The reinvestment will be in the form of contributions made to the company’s choice of Hawai’i based nonprofit organizations and/or the public schools. This ensures that both business and community support each other to create a sustainable and thriving economy.

Investing in Healthcare

Addressing Hawai’i’s shortage of doctors—particularly on the neighbor islands—is critical to the health of our people and, in turn, critical to our economy. This pandemic has highlighted the importance of the healthcare profession in our island state and our place in the Pacific. We must ensure that we have the ability to serve the people of our entire state no matter the crisis. And, we need to expand healthcare resources to ensure that there is medical parity on the neighbor islands.
Hawai‘i could and should be the healthcare hub of the Pacific, which could be a major economic driver for Hawai‘i. With a world class healthcare system in our state, Hawai‘i’s residents and visitors alike will be the beneficiaries, in addition to the positive financial impact and diversification of our economy.

I will address the healthcare shortage on the neighbor islands by partnering with our hospitals to provide more residency opportunities. In working with the John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM), a state-of-the-art medical school with exceptional talent, I will propose ways the state can invest in health scholarships to ensure the return of doctors to rural communities. I will take action to work with the Legislature and healthcare partners to invest in the technology and talent needed to build Hawai‘i as the state that sets the bar in healthcare.

### Managing Climate Change/Renewable Energy

Climate change is an existential crisis for the planet - but particularly for Hawai‘i with its rising sea levels. Across the state we have seen the erosion of our beaches and hillsides, the rising of our sea-levels; increased fires and flooding, and bleaching coral.

Sadly, Hawai‘i does not rank in the top 20 states for renewable energy. We can, and must, do better. We must also take immediate action to shore up our infrastructure to lessen the impact on our island lifestyle from climate change. Additionally, we will set an example of how to be good stewards of our natural resources.

We need a new urgency to our efforts to develop renewable energy sources. Every state building should be meeting LEED standards. I will do what is necessary to move Hawai‘i forward in renewable power by spearheading projects in collaboration with our utility companies. I will also accelerate government study and planning for ways to deal with climate change.

### Caring for the Environment and Critical Infrastructure

The lack of proper maintenance of our watersheds and dams over the years, combined with invasive species in our forests, have caused damage to our watersheds and our indigenous plants and animals. Hawai‘i has 131 dams that pose a major threat to our environment and the life and property of our communities. These dams were built at a time when plantations ruled the islands and when the plantation era ended so did their proper management.

We must implement a system for the protection of our needs today and to avert expensive disasters in the future.

Many state positions with the Department of Land and Natural Resources have been vacant for years and, as a result, the management of our natural environment has suffered.

There is no reason why Hawai‘i cannot be the healthcare hub of the Pacific.
Prioritizing Native Hawaiian Issues

Many native Hawaiian beneficiaries have been waiting for decades on three wait lists managed by the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands: pastoral, agricultural and housing. By working with the Legislature to declare a State of Emergency, my administration will work to bring resolution to fulfill our commitment to native Hawaiians.

Whether the issue is about Hawaiian Home Lands or another issue pertaining to native Hawaiians, we need to collaborate and work together to ensure that the commitments made are honored and fulfilled.

As Governor, I will not make uneducated promises for political gain. I commit to listening to the community to restructure the system that has not been working. This is a priority.

Managing Tourism

We must always balance the needs of our residents and our natural environment, which make Hawaii a recognizable and world-class destination, and those of our top industry - Tourism. The Hawaii Tourism Authority Destination Management Plan is a roadmap as we move forward in managing tourism. I would also support a visitor user fee for the purpose of caring for our environment and natural resources.

Prioritizing Agriculture

I will work with our legislature and the Department of Agriculture to address the services that are needed today to help farmers and those in the agriculture industry succeed. With new technology in the farming industry, the State and the University of Hawai’i College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR) could work together to elevate the marketing and distribution for our farmers.

Improving Internet for All

For Hawaii to be competitive in education, healthcare, and in all sectors of society, we must have capable internet access across the state. As Governor, I will work with Broadband Hui and others in the private sector to make sure the government is expediting the process to address this critical need instead of being a barrier. Under my administration, we will expand the system and improve the infrastructure because internet equity is critical to moving our economy forward in all sectors of society.
Advancing Education

Education is the foundation on which our economic and social development is built. Improving education from preschool through post-secondary education is essential to making sure our children have the skills they need to succeed in the future, and so they can afford to live here and thrive here. As Governor, I will propose piloting preschools in certain areas of each island. I will also work with the private sector to partner with the State to offer pre-K campuses. I will work with our educational leaders to uplift our public school system as our students to prepare them for higher education and/or the workforce.

I will also help make the University of Hawai’i more of an economic driver in our economy. The Astronomy, Ocean Marine Science and Medical School are ranked highly internationally and UH brings in close to $500 million in grants and research funds each year. I will support the University as a center to spawn new businesses via research and innovation. Hawai’i should, at the same time, invest in expanding career and technical education so our children who decide to pursue careers that require training found outside of a four-year degree can access these educational opportunities right here at home. We fully support community colleges to help teach, train and develop a skilled workforce.