



**Representative
Lauren
Matsumoto**
Serving You in District 45

Aloha friends and neighbors!

I want to extend a sincere mahalo for responding to my 2020 Issues Survey. Responses from engaged community members like you helped inform and shape this year's bill package. You identified some of our community's biggest issues, including the high cost of living, education and early learning, and improving environmental stewardship. While I wasn't able to fit every priority into this year's bill package, I'm confident that the following legislation will help improve our lives and make Hawaii's people and natural environment happier and healthier.

First and foremost, survey responses were overwhelmingly concerned about tackling our cost of living. Here are the four bills I'll be introducing to tackle the high cost of living in Hawaii:

Income Tax Reduction: Eliminates the income tax for those earning at or below the minimum wage and reduces rates for everyone else.

Child Tax Credit: Creates a tax credit for each taxpayer's dependent children, starting at \$500 per child for those earning at or below minimum wage.

Dependent Care Flexible Spending Accounts: Allows taxpayers to spend pre-tax dollars (reducing total taxable income) on dependent care expenses, including daycare, after school programs, and in-home care.

Exempt Food, Medical Services & Products, and Feminine Hygiene Products from the General Excise Tax: Makes food, medical services, and feminine hygiene products tax-free.

Earned Income Tax Credit: Makes the state earned income tax credit refundable and permanent.

Expand Refundable Food/Excise Tax Credit: Increases the allowable tax credit for food/GET expenses to \$330 for minimum wage earners and expands it for everyone else.

Another major area of concern for survey respondents was the lack of affordable access to childcare, education, and early learning. Options are often too expensive, too far away, or simply not available.

Tax Credit for On-Site Childcare Facilities: Creates a tax credit for businesses with on-site childcare facilities.

Early Childhood Education Scholarships: Creates a scholarship program for University of Hawaii early childhood education students who commit to teach at least three years in a public prekindergarten classroom.

School Repair Subaccounts: Allocates dedicated funds each year to school principals for repair and maintenance projects minor enough to not need a

permit or environmental impact statement.

Finally, many surveys prioritized environmental stewardship and government transparency. The unprecedented number of visitors coupled with numerous building projects around our islands are affecting our treasured natural resources.

Airplane Pamphlet: Requires airlines to distribute, alongside the agricultural declaration form, a pamphlet to visitors with information about protected species, hiking & ocean safety, emergency contacts, and more. The pamphlet will be developed by the Department of Business, Economics and Tourism in partnership with the Department of Land and Natural Resources.

Environmental Impact Statement Website: Creates a central, user-friendly website for state and county environmental impact statement hearings, notices, and reports so community members will be informed via email when meetings will be held.

Making any of these ideas a reality will take your help! Submit testimony and engage in the legislative process. And if you have any suggestions, please feel free to share them with me so that we can work together for the long-term health and vitality of our community.

And as always, please don't hesitate to contact my office if you have any questions or concerns about happenings in our community. You can reach me at (808) 586-9490 or at repmatsumoto@capitol.hawaii.gov.