



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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HOUSE REPUBLICANS' STANCE UPON CROSSOVER

GOP members place 224 bills on consent calendar, 149 on ordinary calendar

HONOLULU – Today, House Republicans placed 224 out of 373 bills on the consent calendar for third reading. The remaining 149 were put on the ordinary calendar, meaning that at least one member of the caucus raises an issue or was in strong support of the measure. Raising concern or expressing strong support for a bill can be done in a variety of methods, ranging from voting no or with reservations, to making a speech on the House floor, to submitting written comments for the journal. On Thursday, all bills passing third reading crossover to the Senate and visa versa.

Quotes from Minority Leader Lynn Finnegan at the crossover junction:

On Governor Lingle's Innovation and Tax Packages:

"We are very pleased that the Governor's innovation measures and tax relief measures are moving forward. Some of them are inserted in Democrat bills and that is fine by us, our main concern was that they crossed over. I am disappointed that the scholarship for Hawaii's students pursuing careers in the STEM areas was cut from the package."

On Ethics Reform

"We are very pleased that the subject of ethics has been placed on the table and that reform is being taken seriously. There are some things that are still lacking, such as the issue of fundraising during the Legislative session and being allowed to accept certain gifts. However, I am glad that it is being actively discussed and we will take a little now towards reform, with hopes to further down the road to improve later on through other measures."

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Medical Malpractice Reform

"We are very saddened that medical tort reform was killed. It's an extremely emotional and sad issue when we look at some very unfortunate situations. However, the bigger picture needs to be kept in mind and the bottom line is that our citizens have real problems when there is limited access to health care. Capping the non-economic damages, or in other words, pain and suffering, in medical malpractice suits would keep more doctors in Hawaii. There is really no way to put a dollar amount on pain and suffering."

Electorate Process

"There are bills pertaining to the way Hawaii State Elections are conducted (HB1133, HB848, HB764) that we have concerns with. Our reservations on these measures have to do with preserving the accuracy and transparency of the democratic process. The intention to increase voter turnout is a good one but there may be unintended consequences that we need to be aware of. Making something easier does not necessarily make it better."

A SELECTION OF THE BILLS

IN SUPPORT of certain bills:

HB1268 - RELATING TO INNOVATION IN EDUCATION

It is imperative that teachers have adequate knowledge of STEM disciplines to provide students with the tools they need to function in a global society where STEM skills are becoming a must in the workplace. The measure in this bill provides a flexible program for all middle and high school teachers to obtain training at the UH through the College of Education. (Rep. Lynn Finnegan)

HB564 – DEBIT CARDS

This is an important measure that will give teachers the resources and flexibility to give our children the best education possible. Our teachers are committed to educating their students, but they are frustrated. They find themselves limited by the resources they are given or find themselves waiting for long time periods for supplies they need to educate their students. Often times, they resort to spending their own money to get supplies that they feel are essential for students' learning. This was demonstrated in HSTA's testimony on this bill when they said that input from their teachers suggest that they are spending about \$800 each for supplying their classroom. These dedicated teachers need help. (Rep. Corinne Ching)

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HB506 – RELATING TO ETHANOL

Ethanol is a much-talked about alternative fuel; the problem is how much it costs to produce; this bill will allow companies to take a tax credit for facilities, thus lowering their costs. (Rep. Kymberly Pine)

HB1786 - MAKING AN APPROPRIATION TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

The Bridge to Hope Program specifically addresses the needs of low-income re-entry students and has grown from a pilot project into a nationally recognized program that provides access to college for single parents. While the program continues to target low-income adults, it also offers support services for all re-entry students at all the University of Hawaii System campuses. (Rep. Karen Awana)

HB1830 - RELATING TO CHILD PROTECTION

The intent of this bill is to ensure the safety of infants who are unwanted and whose natural parents are unready or unwilling to care for them. Provision of a safe haven will enhance the infant's chances for survival and for safe adoption. The best interest of the child should have high priority over possible prosecution of a parent who is unable to care for the infant. (Rep. Karen Awana)

HB330 - RELATING TO PROSTITUTION

This is a serious problem, which greatly affects my constituents and the neighboring districts. At night, a lot of my constituents are afraid to venture out because of this problem. The once safe streets, which has many wonderful sights and historical value, is now marred with prostitutes that hassle them and expose their children to a world in which we try to shield them from. (Rep. Corinne Ching)

HB1848 - RELATING TO AQUATIC RESOURCES

I have a great deal of local fishermen in my district and many of them are concerned about the vast power of DLNR and the department's ability to close off traditional fishing areas. (Rep. Karen Awana)

HB1792 - RELATING TO DRUG ABUSE

I'm not saying that PROMETA will be the "super concoction" to end the meth crisis in Hawaii, but our communities are seeing the devastation that meth brings, especially our children. This bill

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will review at least three pilot studies, and will offer some insight into PROMETA and what it can do to help are current crisis. (Rep. Karen Awana)

HB 1660 - AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF REVENUE BONDS FOR THE PURCHASE OF LAND TO DEVELOP KALAELOA COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT

Authorizing the issuance of revenue bonds will allow the state to make the necessary infrastructure improvements that are so critical to implementing the Kalaeloa Master Plan. This investment in Kalaeloa will benefit the entire Ewa Plain by fostering job creation, and pump nearly \$7 billion into the state's economy via construction payments alone, in addition to the estimated \$5.7 billion in post-construction economic benefits. (Rep. Kymberly Pine)

OPPOSED to certain bills:

HB764 – RELATING TO VOTING

This bill does not address when people are in another state and request permanent absentee voter status. It also does not provide the necessary precautions to protect the State from voter fraud and other types of election mischief related to permanent absentee voter status. This could lead to a lot of litigation and post race contesting. (Rep. Lynn Finnegan)

HB1133 - RELATING TO ELECTION DAY REGISTRATION

This places a new and difficult burden of responsibility on poll workers. This bill offers no protection against last minute fraudulent registration or voters in the name of people who had died or moved. The current system to register voters is neither onerous nor unreasonable. A person wishing to register to vote has up to 700 of 730 days to register to vote during the election cycle. (Rep. Lynn Finnegan)

HB252 - RELATING TO CONVEYANCE TAXES FOR SPECULATIVE SALES

This bill purports to stop, or slow down, the practice of speculative real estate sales by increasing the tax on conveying the property. Essentially, this is under the guise of soaking those rich people who don't live here and grab their money and run. However, what we really have here is another way to gouge the hardworking local taxpayers of Hawaii. Anytime you add another tax burden on property, you drive up the price of the rental housing market. (Rep. Gene Ward)

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HB750 - RELATING TO THE OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN

Hawaii is a state that prides itself on privacy, so much that the right to privacy was included in the bill of rights of the State Constitution Article I Section 6. This bill tramples on this privacy by exposing our private tax records to others in the public by the Ombudsman, who is "allowed" to disclose this information in the performance of their duties, under this bill. They should never be allowed to publish information from a person's tax return to the public. (Rep. Lynn Finnegan)

HB758 - RELATING TO EMPLOYEES

This bill requires employers with 50 or more employees to allow rest or meal periods for employees who work more than five consecutive hours. This bill is unnecessary as many employers already provide meal breaks or other break periods for their employees and the bill does not consider that some employees may want the option of working through breaks or meals. (Rep. Gene Ward)

HB31 - RELATING TO PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

Currently, when a proposed trade agreement is being negotiated, the United States Trade Representative seeks input from the States, to ascertain the potential impacts of the agreement. The State Administration in turn seeks to input from the agencies that are affected, and these agencies in turn seek input from stakeholders, both in the private and public sectors. Most often the USTR requires a response in one to two weeks. Due to the relatively quick turnaround, it is not always feasible to seek a broader assessment of the impacts of international trade agreements through public hearings and such, or locally mandated procurement, labor, taxation, and other laws and policies. (Rep. Gene Ward)

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