

Hawaii State Visit

CSG West staff conducted its annual state visit to Hawaii March 21-23, just over the halfway point of the legislative session. During this time lawmakers were advancing their proposals through the various policy committees. The week before staff arrived the House had passed over 130 bills to the Senate for consideration, and the Senate had passed over 400 bills to the House. Many issues being tackled in other Western legislatures were also being debated in Hawaii, including homelessness, affordable housing, virtual currency, recycling, eliminating tobacco on college campuses, and medical aid-in-dying.

The Hawaii Senate Majority includes all 25 Senators as of January 1, 2017. The Senate's Legislative Program, consigned at the beginning of the 2018 legislative session, provides a framework to enact the [17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#) into state policy. The goal of this effort is to significantly improve the quality of life for future generations. These goals are: No Poverty; Zero Hunger; Good Health and Well-Being; Quality Education; Gender Equality; Clean Water and Sanitation; Affordable and Clean Energy; Decent Work and Economic Growth; Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure; Reduced Inequalities; Sustainable Cities and Communities; Responsible Consumption and Production; Climate Action; Life Below Water; Life on Land; Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions; and Partnerships for the Goals.

CSG West staff met with legislative leadership, including Senate President Ronald D. Kouchi, Senate Majority Leader J. Kalani English and House Speaker Scott Saiki. Both Senate President Kouchi and Senate Majority Leader English are alumni of the Western Legislative Academy (WLA). The leaders were generous in the time they afforded staff to hear about the work of CSG West policy committees, annual meeting planning and additional programs to be held throughout the year.

A WLA alumni breakfast was convened on March 22, which many members still serving attended. The breakfast provided CSG West staff an opportunity to connect with members, hear about the issues being considered during the session, and receive recommendations for the 2018 WLA.

The Hawaii Legislature will Sine Die on May 3rd. Some significant measures approved in the session and that are headed to Governor Ige's desk include:

- \$570M to build 25,000 affordable rental housing units
- \$34.7M for "Ohana Zones" which will include medical and other wraparound (social) services (in Hawaiian, Ohana means family but refers to a wider scope that includes relatives and neighbors)
- \$125M in emergency funding for areas affected by the flooding in certain parts of the state
- A ban on firearms modified with bump stocks
- A ban on sunscreens containing oxybenzone and octinoxate beginning in 2021 to protect corals, essential to the oceans and Hawaii's ecosystem
- A pilot program to test all-mail elections
- A working group to study Paid Family Leave and its implementation
- "Our Care, Our Choice Act", known as compassionate care in other states with similar legislation, establishes a regulated process for adult residents of Hawaii to obtain a prescription with which to end their life if they have a confirmed diagnosis of a terminal disease and have less than six months to live.

As in previous years, a special thanks to 2003 CSG West Chair, Senator Brian Taniguchi, and his staff, but especially Poni, for being instrumental in outreach and coordination of our visit.

For more information about the Hawaii legislative session, please visit:

<https://www.hawaiisenatemajority.com/single-post/2018/05/01/SENATE-MOVES-ON-LANDMARK-MEASURES>

<http://hawaiihouseblog.blogspot.com/>