

24 Aug 2020

To: Hawaii Lodging and Tourism

From: Sam Kong

Candidate for House District 33 – Aiea

Re: Candidate Questionnaire

1) The future of tourism in Hawai'i

Yes, I support this policy. To add to that, would love to promote and implement Medical Tourism. Can't think of anywhere else better than here to be treated and recover from any illness.

2) Tourism Management

Yes, though not necessarily through added fees, but by added Features. Something like Destination Tourism, where one would come here to work on Agricultural projects, such as working in and on a Lo'i, planting and harvesting Taro. Or on Marine projects, such as cutting and re-planting Coral. Or even Hiking, where they not only Hike, but help with working on the Hiking Trails themselves. There is a strong sense, and great feelings of accomplishments which would genuinely tie a person to the Islands.

3) Funding for the Hawaii Tourism Authority

We need to actually change the percentages of the TAT revenue. If not that, then take the monies directly from the General Fund to support Tourism. (The remaining balance of the TAT goes to the General Fund anyway, so we will know how much of that we should be using.)

4) Homelessness Solutions

Sure, our '313 Tree' team on Homelessness (my office number is 313 at the Capitol) has identified through the VI-SPDAT system, who and how we could house and service (if needed), the homeless. There are many Faces to homelessness, by having this comprehensive plan, working with you, we could address certain components in order to focus on the harder and more severe individuals.

5) Sustainability in the Visitor Industry

This is a hard one. Not that we don't want to address this, but where our priorities lie with the state of our economy. Tax credits/incentives? Our first goal may be actually bring back tourism first, then when things stabilize, look to being 'green'.

6) Visitor Industry Health, Safety, and Security Standards

Yes!

7) Aloha Stadium Development

Yes!

8) COVID 19 Response

Yes, even with HIPAA regulations/restrictions, the need to inform the Public on treatments and contact tracing would go a long way in addressing the fears and confusion of our citizens. Not to mention the conflicting guidelines proposed by the different governing entities. We expressly told our leaders to get and stay on the same page.

9) If Elected

Priorities! Tourism needs to be supported for this is our State's #1 economic driver, period. We can look for other means, but the numbers don't lie, we need to prioritize what we do.

10) Fun Fact

Growing up with Bruddah Iz, Israel Kamakawiwo'ole, I look at life in Hawai'i through a true 'local boy' lens... boy was I 'Kolohe'...