



HAWAI'I LODGING & TOURISM  
ASSOCIATION

## HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY ANNOUNCES ENDORSEMENTS

### FOR PRIMARY ELECTION - SUPPORT GOVERNOR IGE FOR RE-ELECTION

The Hawai'i Lodging & Tourism Association—the state's largest private sector tourism organization with 700 members representing more than 50,000 hotel rooms and nearly 40,000 lodging workers—today announced its endorsements of state and county candidates running in the Primary Election on August 11.

The selections were made after what HLTA President & CEO Mufi Hannemann described as an “exhaustive and comprehensive” month long endorsement process. It involved invited candidates completing a tourism-centric questionnaire soliciting their views on issues of importance to the hospitality industry; scrutiny of those responses by the association's state endorsement committee; similar review meetings by the HLTA's county chapters on O'ahu, Hawai'i Island, Maui, and Kaua'i; and final approval of the slate by the HLTA's statewide board of directors. Hannemann said the “endorsement decisions were based largely on island-by-island grassroots input and feedback from those most familiar with the candidates and their records.”

#### **Governor**

In the Democratic race for the state's chief executive, the HLTA endorsed incumbent **Governor David Y. Ige**, spurred by a unanimous vote from all four HLTA county chapters and the statewide endorsement committee.

HLTA chief Hannemann said, “Governor Ige and his administration have been very supportive of the hospitality industry, and always accessible to our members. His leadership on tourism was reflected on how he heard our views on a potentially harmful resort fee bill and subsequently vetoed it. His administration's stand on the as-yet-unresolved transient vacation rentals issue, which is a top priority for HLTA, closely mirrors ours. Moving forward, we anticipate collaborating more with the governor on ways in which we can continue to provide jobs for the 200,000-plus people who are dependent on tourism for their livelihoods and healthy quality of life.”

“While we are endorsing the governor, Congresswoman Colleen Hanabusa is certainly a worthy candidate. Her work as a senator, for example, in making the Ko Olina resort development a reality added a welcome new dimension for the visitor industry which continues to expand and flourish today.”

## **Lieutenant Governor**

The HLTA recommended support for **Kaua‘i Mayor Bernard Carvalho, Jr.**, also in the Democratic primary.

Hannemann said, “In a crowded lieutenant governor’s field, we believe the people of Hawai‘i would be well-served by Mayor Bernard Carvalho. The mayor has been a staunch supporter and ally of the visitor industry during his 10 years in office. He has been there for us through thick and thin, an important quality given the challenges Garden Island tourism has experienced over that time. His passion and support for tourism was also very much welcome and appreciated throughout the state, as he was an active participant in our HLTA events and activities.

“Hawai‘i Island Senator Josh Green also received acknowledgement and support because he was a vocal opponent of raising the transient accommodations tax to pay for Honolulu’s rail project and was helpful in supporting the homeless repatriation program and backing the appropriation of matching state funds to address homelessness in tourism-impacted areas.”

## **Mayor, County of Kaua‘i**

**Derek Kawakami** won the endorsement of the HLTA in the race for mayor of the Garden Island.

Denise Wardlow, chair of HLTA’s Kaua‘i Chapter endorsement committee and general manager of The Westin Princeville Ocean Resort Villas, said, “We faced a difficult choice in this race but ultimately decided that Derek Kawakami would be the best candidate for mayor. One of the candidates, Council Chairman Mel Rapozo, has been a strong advocate for tourism and led the charge in fighting the Legislature’s attempt to raid the TAT. But we felt that Derek Kawakami, with his experience on the County Council and House of Representatives, will provide the best meld of government and industry perspectives and priorities. He has shown that he is a collaborative leader who will have the unique ability to bring elected officials together from the state and counties to work in the best interests of the Garden Island.”

## **Mayor, County of Maui**

The HLTA endorsed **Mike Victorino** in the mayor’s race.

Gregg Nelson, HLTA chairman of the board and general manager of the Napili Kai Beach Resort, said, “Tourism has experienced unprecedented growth in the county. We want to sustain the hospitality industry but recognize the need to balance industry needs with the preservation of our natural resources, demands on our infrastructure, and other concerns. Former Councilmember Mike Victorino will bring steady, experienced leadership to the helm of county government. The industry knows we can count on Mike to guide Maui, Moloka‘i, and Lana‘i in the right direction.”

Endorsements for other races are listed below.

Hannemann noted, “A few of the candidates we’ve endorsed will stand for election in the General Election. However, we wanted to endorse them now as an expression of our appreciation for their outstanding contributions to the hospitality industry and tourism.”

**Governor**

David Y. Ige

**Lieutenant Governor**

Bernard Carvalho, Jr.

**Senate**

Kaiali‘i Kahele	District 01
Lorraine Rodero Inouye	District 04
J. Kalani English	District 07
Brickwood Galuteria	District 12
Ken Ito	District 24

**House of Representatives**

Christopher L.T. Todd	District 02
Richard H.K. Onishi	District 03
Cindy Evans	District 07
Troy Hashimoto	District 08
Justin Woodson	District 09
Don Couch	District 11
Kyle Yamashita	District 12
Lynn DeCoite	District 13
James Kunane Tokioka	District 15
Stephanie N. Iona	District 16
Gene Ward	District 17
Calvin K.Y. Say	District 20
Tom Brower	District 22
Daniel Holt	District 29
Romy M. Cachola	District 30

Sam Satoru Kong	District 33
Bob McDermott	District 40
Sharon Har	District 42
Lei Uemura Learmont	District 46
Kika G. Bukoski	District 48
Scot Matayoshi	District 49

### **County of Hawai'i**

Valerie T. Poindexter	Council District 01
Ashley Kierkiewicz	Council District 04
Matt Kanealii-Kleinfelder	Council District 05
Maile David	Council District 06
Herbert "Tim" Richards III	Council District 09

### **City and County of Honolulu**

Robert "Bobby" Bunda	Council District 02
Trevor Ozawa	Council District 04
Carol Fukunaga	Council District 06

### **County of Kaua'i**

Derek Kawakami	Mayor
Arthur Brun	Kaua'i County Council
Mason K. Chock	Kaua'i County Council
Ross Kagawa	Kaua'i County Council
Arryl Kaneshiro	Kaua'i County Council

### **County of Maui**

Mike Victorino	Mayor
Kanamu Balinbin	West Maui

Alice Lee	Wailuku-Waihee-Waikapu
Alan M. Arakawa	Kahului
Kelly Takaya King	South Maui
Mike Molina	Makawao-Haiku-Paia
Yuki Lei Kashiwa Sugimura	Upcountry
Riki Hokama	Lanai
Stacy Helm Crivello	Molokai

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### **About the HLTA**

The Hawai'i Lodging & Tourism Association is a non-profit, statewide trade organization of lodging properties, lodging owners and management companies, suppliers, and related firms and individuals. It was founded in 1947 and is now the state's largest private sector tourism organization. Today, HLTA consists of 700 members representing more than 50,000 hotel rooms and nearly 40,000 lodging workers.

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