

At the time of writing this article, Hawaii's legislative session will be approximately a month away from wrapping up. This session has been characterized by drama of every kind. Residents and businesses got a front row seat to see how our legislature operates. News articles have called out bullying tactics by certain legislators and how their theatrics have gotten in the way of sound policymaking. The aloha spirit has become elusive in the State Capitol building.

Even Governor Josh Green, who once served in the legislature as a senator has not escaped the wrath of certain legislators. So far two of his Cabinet nominees have been declined and there are still more that will have to undergo the arduous process of being confirmed by the Senate. The nominees for the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism, who oversees the State Energy Office, Hawaii Tourism Authority, and Aloha Stadium; and Department of Hawaiian Home Lands, which has \$600 million to spend on housing for Native Hawaiians, were not confirmed, leaving their departments without current leadership. We continue to keep a close eye on who will be our new Cabinet members, as our HEMA members are impacted by these decisions.

There are numerous bills on a broad range of issues that we have been monitoring or actively engaged in voicing our concerns:

Relating to Consumer Protection: HEMA raised concerns that these bills, which require service stations to affix, bear or attach an environmental warning label at each dispensing gas pump subject to Public Utilities Commission approval, are unnecessary because there are already adequate labels at dispensing gas pumps.

Relating to Fair Scheduling: HEMA opposed this bill because it requires employers to provide written notice of the employee's shift schedule ten days in advance before the scheduled work and compensate employees twice their regular pay for time worked when shift scheduled was not provided in a timely manner. This measure would limit businesses from having the flexibility to create schedules that meet their needs.

Relating to Mooring Lines: Many businesses, including Par Hawaii, IES, and Aloha Petroleum, opposed these bills that require commodities and manifested cargo requiring tug assistance to be manned

by an existing, operational stevedoring company that is operating within the state, because they increase costs that ultimately will be borne by consumers and create energy supply disruptions.

Relating to Family Leave:

HEMA opposed a bill that requires the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish and administer a family leave insurance program. Provides that businesses employing one or more employees who meet the hourly qualifications would be required to provide family leave insurance benefits, and extends the period of family leave to 16 weeks, eliminating the previous threshold of 100 employees for employers. This measure would add more costs to employers and small businesses that would prolong economic recovery, and the costs would likely be passed on to customers.

Relating to Health: Some HEMA members opposed this measure that prohibits the sale of flavored tobacco products and the mislabeling of e-liquids as nicotine free and authorizes the Department of Health to appoint, commission, or contract for services of inspectors, because there is already enforcement by stores on controlling underage smoking.

Relating to Consumer Protection: HEMA opposed this bill that requires self-service stations to put labels on gas dispensing equipment that advise consumers on the effects of fossil fuel consumption to human health and the environment because there are already adequate warning labels at dispensing gas pumps.

Relating to Paid Sick Leave: HEMA opposed this bill that requires employers to provide a minimum amount of paid sick leave to employees to be used to care for themselves or a family member who is ill or needs medical care, and supplemental paid sick leave to employees under certain public health emergency conditions. Many businesses already offer paid leave programs as a means to retaining their workforce; and the mandate would add another burden to the extremely high cost of running a business in Hawaii.



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