



# THE HAWAI`I STATE YOUTH COMMISSION

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**The Hawai`i State Youth Commission (HiYC)** was established to, “Advise the governor and legislature on the effects of legislative policies, needs, assessments, priorities, programs, and budgets concerning the youth of the State.”

-HiYC Purpose Statement



*“The Hawai`i State Youth Commission is a constellation of youth, connected to our past and mindful of our future, who engage in public-policy advocacy through a commitment to inclusivity, opportunity, and progress in Hawai`i.”*

-HiYC Mission Statement

## HiYC 2020-2021 Term

The **15 Youth Commission members** (ages 14 – 24) are appointed by the Governor, the Senate President, and the Speaker of the House and current membership includes representation from Kaua`i, O`ahu, Lāna`i, Moloka`i, Maui, and the Island of Hawai`i.

**Big Island** Shwe Win

Taylor Quanan

**Kauai** Kallen Wachi

**Oahu** Karen Abe -- Communications Director

Pono Gay-Madina

Kate Helbush

Regilong Hetiback

Kawika Pegram -- Legislative Co-Lead

Kaneala Peters-Clark -- Legislative Co-Lead

Kierra Thompson -- Vice Chair

Lauren Yamaguchi -- Chair

Logan Yogi -- Treasurer

**Lanai** Kainalu Morimoto

**Maui** Maile Crowe

**Molokai** Mallory Go -- Secretary

## Diverse Experiences

As the inaugural cohort of Hawai`i State Youth Commissioners, we are humbled by the kuleana—the responsibility and the privilege—of our positions. We consist of members who...

- Attend online classes with unreliable internet service

- Advocate for the houseless, for environmental protection, and for youth resources
- Have parents who have recently lost their jobs due to COVID-19
- Simultaneously juggle two jobs, school, and volunteering
- Honorably pledge to join the armed forces
- Will move from Hawai`i due to a lack of educational and economic opportunity
- Will become doctors, educators, case workers, managers, filmmakers, and lawyers
- Care for sick family members and take guardianship for their siblings
- Have the privilege of attending college
- Have gone straight into the workforce
- Are Kānaka Maoli, immigrants, and descendants of immigrants
- Come from Kaua`i, O`ahu, Lāna`i, Moloka`i, Maui, and the Island of Hawai`i

Together, the Hawai`i State Youth Commissioners represent resilience and redemption in the policy making process. Often encumbered with the very difficulties we were designated to address, the members of the HiYC offer valuable insight to the future of Hawai`i.

## **Legislative Projects**

Lead by: Kaneala Peters-Clark & Kawika Ke Koa Pegram

HiYC's top 3 legislative priorities for 2021 session:

- Environmental Protection

Lead by: Shwe Win

The Hawai`i State Youth Commission understands that the environment is the most pressing issue of our generation. Environmental changes disproportionately affect minority and low income communities. As commissioners from majority-minority communities, it is imperative to ensure an equitable, sustainable future for us all.

- COVID-19 Economic Recovery and Small Business Support

Lead by: Kainalu Morimoto

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused massive turmoil to our local economy. Hawai`i tied third with New York for having the highest unemployment rate in the United States. This truth exposed an economy disproportionately dependent on tourism and construction. The current economy is failing to meet the needs of our communities. A diverse economy is needed to redistribute the wealth, to heal our communities, and to create a prosperous future. The Commission supports small businesses to create more opportunity for the youth of today and tomorrow. It is paramount that we advocate for solutions to this devastating impact on our safety, security, and wellbeing.

- Health Care

Lead by: Mallory Go

The world is burning, and our actions today determine our capability to rise from the ashes. The ability of young people to navigate school and work in a safe and healthy manner has been drastically affected by the climate crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic. The Youth of Hawai'i need additional access to therapy to combat heightened depression and anxiety along with healthier coping skills to quit vaping and drugs. Health Care is an opportunity to set the precedent in preserving the sanity of our Youth.

## Communications and Media

Communications Director: Karen Abe

Get Connected with Us!

Instagram: @HawaiiStateYC (<https://www.instagram.com/hawaiistateyc/>)

Facebook: Hawai'i State Youth Commission (<https://www.facebook.com/HawaiiStateYC>)

## HiYC Beginnings

Signed into law on July 5, 2018, the creation of the Hawai'i State Youth Commission signals an official recognition of the unique obstacles the youth of Hawai'i face and the great burden future generations will inherit. Since “[m]any of the most persistent issues facing the State, such as affordable housing, jobs, and education, primarily affect youth,” the Hawai'i State Legislature concludes, “the legislature and governor would benefit from additional formal input from youth on the effect of legislation on young people in the State.”<sup>1</sup>

As such, the Hawai'i State Youth Commission was formed to “advise the governor and legislature on the effects of legislative policies, needs, assessments, priorities, programs, and budgets concerning the youth.”<sup>2</sup> The 15 Youth Commission members (ages 14 – 24) are appointed by the Governor, the Senate President, and the Speaker of the House.

While the need for the HiYC is urgent for our generation, the story of the commission comes with failed attempts in its inception. The first version of the HiYC was introduced as “Youth Advisory Board” by Honolulu Charter Commission Member Nathan Okubo in 2016 which failed to pass after a 5-4 vote. The next versions of the HiYC were introduced as companion House<sup>3</sup> and Senate Bills<sup>4</sup> in 2017. Both versions of the bill failed to get a hearing from the Senate Ways and Means Committee. The last version of the HiYC<sup>5</sup> passed in 2018. The first cohort of Hawai'i State Youth Commissioners was chosen in June 2020.

*HiYC's current work including public postings will be uploaded on this webpage soon. Stay Tuned!*

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<sup>1</sup> HB 1716 HD1 SD1 CD1, 2018 Reg. Sess. (Hawai'i 2018). [https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/session2018/bills/HB1716\\_CD1\\_.htm](https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/session2018/bills/HB1716_CD1_.htm)

<sup>2</sup> State of Hawai'i Revised Statutes, §352D-11 (2019).

<sup>3</sup> HB 1466 HD1 SD1, 2017 Reg. Sess. (Hawai'i 2017). [https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/session2017/bills/HB1466\\_CD1\\_.pdf](https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/session2017/bills/HB1466_CD1_.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> SB 1220 SD1, 2017 Reg. Sess. (Hawai'i 2017). [https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/session2017/bills/SB1220\\_SD1\\_.pdf](https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/session2017/bills/SB1220_SD1_.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> HB 1716 HD1 SD1 CD1, 2018 Reg. Sess. (Hawai'i 2018). [https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/session2018/bills/HB1716\\_CD1\\_.htm](https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/session2018/bills/HB1716_CD1_.htm)