

**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**  
GOVERNOR  
KE KIA'ĀINA



**CATHY BETTS**  
DIRECTOR  
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

**JOSEPH CAMPOS II**  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

**STATE OF HAWAII**  
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I  
**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**  
KA 'OIHANA MĀLAMA LAWELAWE KANAKA  
Office of the Director  
P. O. Box 339  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

DIR 23.47

July 13, 2023

The Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi, President  
and Members of the Senate  
Thirty-First State Legislature  
State Capitol, Room 409  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

The Honorable Scott K. Saiki, Speaker  
and Members of the House of Representatives  
Thirty-First State Legislature  
State Capitol, Room 431  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear President Kouchi, Speaker Saiki, and Members of the Legislature:

Enclosed is the report to the Governor and Legislature submitted per section 352D-11, Hawaii Revised Statutes, the Annual Report of the Hawaii State Youth Commission for the State fiscal year 2023.

Per section 93-16, HRS, the report is available to review electronically at the Department's website, at <https://humanservices.hawaii.gov/reports/legislative-reports/>.

Sincerely,

Cathy Betts  
Director

Enclosure

c: Governor's Office  
Lieutenant Governor's Office  
Department of Budget & Finance  
Legislative Auditor  
Legislative Reference Bureau Library (one hard copy)  
Hawaii State Public Library, System State Publications Distribution Center (two hard copies, one electronic copy)  
Hamilton Library, Serials Department, University of Hawaii (one hard copy)

**REPORT TO THE THIRTY-SECOND HAWAI'I STATE LEGISLATURE 2023**

IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF

Section 352D-11, Hawai'i Revised Statutes, Annual Report of the  
Hawai'i Youth Commission, State Fiscal Year 2023

Hawai'i State Youth Commission  
OFFICE OF YOUTH SERVICES  
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
July 2023



## **Annual Report**

**July 2022 – June 2023 (FY 2023)**

**The Hawai'i State Youth Commission (HiYC)**

Prepared by

Logan Yogi and Jade Frank

Member of HiYC & Legislative Topic Lead

Submitted to

Governor Josh Green, MD, and The Hawai'i State Legislature

### **HiYC Mission Statement**

The Hawai'i State Youth Commission (HiYC) 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.

## **1. Introduction**

In 2018, the Legislature established the HiYC to engage and empower youth to articulate their voices and perspectives to the Governor and Legislature on legislative policies, programs, and budgets concerning the youth of Hawai'i.<sup>1</sup> The 15 HiYC members (ages 14 to 24) are appointed by the Governor, the Senate President, and the Speaker of the House. Current membership includes representation from Kaua'i, O'ahu, Lāna'i, Moloka'i, Maui, and Hawai'i Island.

HiYC continued to face and meet challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic and persevered and developed effective ways to connect electronically to grow as one strong commission with the spirit of aloha as its foundation. As will be evident throughout this report, HiYC thrived through distances and achieved many goals through the multiple challenges encountered throughout its third year of existence.

---

<sup>1</sup> See Act 106, Session Laws of Hawaii (SLH) 2018.

## 2. Summary of SFY 2023 Year

### A. General Business Report:

- The Commission held full-member meetings once a month from July 2022 through December 2022 and twice a month starting in January 2023.
- All HiYC members were involved in learning about and connecting through online meetings.
- HiYC took concurrent steps forward on multiple levels, including:
  - The Aloha Spirit law with values of aloha and mālama at HiYC's core helped to set a foundation of members bonding and developing (virtually and effectively) as ONE HiYC team/'ohana.
  - All members completed essential training to meet the requirements to function as a State Commissioner:
    - *Ethics Commission training* with follow-up consultation from Lynnette Santiago & Kee Campbell-trainers, and Daniel Gluck, Executive Director,
    - All Hawai'i State requirements to be a commissioner and start HiYC were met.
  - Advanced training on legislative processes was provided to members, especially those on the Campaign Teams, by HiYC Legislative Lead Jun Shin.
  - HiYC members were also offered (and some completed) various training and event opportunities focused on youth issues and civic engagement.
- HiYC undertook a project to provide over \$7,000 worth of bottled water to the community affected by the Red Hill jet fuel spills.

### B. Executive Team Report:

The Executive Team of the Hawai'i State Youth Commission (HiYC) primarily focuses on 1) internal commission administration and 2) external and public-facing communications. Members of the Executive Team consist of the elected officer positions of Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary, Legislative Leads, and additional volunteer committee members as applicable.

The Executive Team continues refining the Three (3) Team System, which divides commission responsibilities between the Executive, Legislative, and Connections and Leadership Development Team.

The Executive Team laid out the commission's structural foundation, organization, and protocol, knowing we would carve out systems for future cohorts.

The Executive Team accomplished several other foundational milestones for the HiYC, including:

- Improved the cadence, scheduling, and culture of Commission meetings,

- Refined and passed the commission By-Laws and internal Commission procedures,
- Filled many Youth Commissioner vacancies,
- Conducted multiple elections and provided Officer Transition Documents and training for the next cohort of officers, and
- Coordinated a bottled water distribution community event for residents who continue to be impacted by the Red Hill fuel spill.

As a passionate and dedicated group of youth, the HiYC met for full-commission meetings weekly during the State of Hawai'i legislative session and bi-monthly when the Legislature was not in session. Members of the Executive Team tended to the day-to-day operation of these meetings, including creating and publishing meeting agendas, facilitating meetings, taking minutes, and authorship and distributing weekly email newsletters to commission members.

In addition to internal commission administration, the Executive Team oversees external communications, public relations, and social media operations. These responsibilities are fulfilled by the Communications Sub-Team of the HiYC, led by our Communications Director. This year, the Communications Sub-Team was focused on setting the foundation for our public presence in the community. The HiYC created our social media protocol with the Department of Human Services. The innovative *Roadmap for Communication and Youth Engagement* plan details our external communications protocol -- empowering the timely, connected, and candid expression of youth voice.

Along with the completed external communications protocol, the Communications Sub-Team of the Executive Team accomplished the following:

- Designed and adopted the official Hawai'i State Youth Commission Logo,
- Designed and purchased Hawai'i State Youth Commission merchandise,
- Created and moderated Facebook and Instagram pages for social media,
- Designed and published the official HiYC webpage, and
- Created original content designs for all media and public communications.

As the team tasked with the internal commission administration and external communications, the Executive Team spent this third year focusing on how small details in protocol, structure, and procedure lead to greater accomplishments for the Hawai'i State Youth Commission. We focused on setting up inclusive meetings, clear channels of communication, and a solid introduction to the public. With a strong foundation, the HiYC can focus next year on expanding projects, community outreach, and further empowering youth voices.

### **C. Campaign Team Report:**

Under the HiYC's founding goal of increasing youth participation in the public policymaking process, the HiYC created a Legislative Team to provide youth voice and insight on

bills through the 2023 legislative session.

The Legislative Team is led by Jun Shin, appointed by the commission, and provided an analysis of the 2023 Legislative Session below. The commission then adopted and subsequently focused its efforts on three overarching priorities. With vacancies now filled, the commission has effectively mobilized efforts to see our chosen priorities represented, advocated for, and supported throughout the 2023 legislative session.

#### Legislative Session 2023 by Jun Shin:

The Hawai'i State Youth Commission did its best to submit written and verbal testimony throughout the session on its legislative priorities. One of our significant accomplishments was that the Legislature didn't hear from just 1 or 2 of us; legislators received testimony and emails from several youth commission members, including commissioners who were newer to the process and received "on-the-job" training by more experienced members.

The other accomplishment is that the commission had a housekeeping bill introduced and passed in the same session, Senate Bill 869 (Act 135, SLH 2023), which is a rare feat in legislative advocacy. The final version of the bill, amending subsection 352D-11(f), Hawai'i Revised Statutes, clarifies that only a majority of commissioners are needed to conduct official business. The measure's passage is due to a couple of factors: first, the commissioners did an excellent job of showing up to push for the bill, and our youth and our passion were on full display. Second, the measure itself was not controversial, especially after the commission made the tactical move to compromise and not fight for previous language that would have also authorized the Hawai'i State Youth Commission to appoint an Executive Director, which had legal concerns and could have made it harder to move the bill forward.

There was also behind-the-scenes support, the bill's introducer, Senator Stanley Chang, and the Executive Director of the Office of Youth Services. Cathy Betts, Director of the Department of Human Services, Leanne Gillespie, Executive Director of the Office of Youth Services, and Judy Clark, Executive Director of the Hawaii Youth Services Network, also submitted written testimony supporting the measure.

Moving forward, the commission needs to continue to think about its role and level of involvement in the legislative process. If commissioners are content with just participating in the process from January to May by mainly offering our thoughts on bills through testimony and also contacting legislators from time to time, a reactive role to bill proposals in future sessions, topic committees should mainly improve on bill tracking and making sure that the commission provides testimony at all hearings and coordinates emails at critical points in the legislative session.

On the other hand, if the youth commission is interested in building capacity to be more proactive, it will need to set its legislative priorities and begin working on them before the

session begins. This would require more time, energy, and potential resources to be dedicated to legislative work. Regardless of how the commission approaches legislative sessions in the future, its outreach effort is critical to setting its priorities and building support.

One recommendation is that the commission do more internal education for its members on the issues that matter to the youth of Hawai'i by inviting policy experts and advocates to present on topics of interest at commission meetings. If the HiYC works on building capacity to become more proactive and effective at the Legislature, it will need to build credibility. To do this, commissioners must become more knowledgeable on the issues, collaborating with more organizations and coalitions working on similar issues. This proactive approach would also include meeting with legislators, staff, and executive branch leaders before the session to answer questions and address concerns early on.

Regarding outreach, this commission needs to build credibility and strength by building a youth constituency that regularly works with and can mobilize as needed. Allies, opponents, and decision-makers must know that we have numbers. The commission will also need to draw attention to issues through traditional and nontraditional media, including social media, local primary news sources (Honolulu Star-Advertiser, Civil Beat, etc.), and news outlets specific to specific groups of people (Ka Leo, Catholic Herald, Midweek, Filipino Chronicle, etc.).

Having more than one legislative team member on O'ahu during the session would be preferable. Still, if that is not possible, the Legislative Lead must continue to be someone based on O'ahu. Since many of the current commissioners are mainly students, some of whom may also be working, there will be continued challenges in maintaining a presence at the Capitol during the session. Having a continued presence is crucial, not only in terms of having people who can testify in person but in maintaining contact with legislative offices and on-the-ground allies, as well as gathering intel and observing bill movements and the many different changes and obstacles it might run into throughout the process.

Three priorities for the 2023 legislative session:

A. Education Lead: Charla Teves

As students who either currently attend or previously attended high school in Hawai'i, we understand the importance of advocating for keiki to have a quality experience when attending school – especially regarding the academic, health, and social resources available. With an improvement in these resources, we believe the state's youth will have a more enjoyable experience inside and outside the classroom.

B. Environment Lead: Jade Frank

Environmental justice remains an immediate concern for the youth of Hawai'i, who will inherit both the responsibility for our islands and the challenges of the climate crisis. The HiYC

maintains a commitment to the preservation of our native ecosystems and natural resources, as well as to promoting equity within Hawai'i's communities and our processes for addressing climate change.

C. Public Health Lead: Zoey Duan

As representatives of the youth of Hawai'i, the commission is committed to promoting inclusivity, opportunity, and progress in Hawai'i. This includes the *health* of Hawai'i's youth. Through advocacy and discourse, the HiYC hopes to be the catalyst for policies that decrease health inequities, increase healthcare accessibility, and strengthen both the physical and mental health of youths and communities in Hawaii.

Throughout the 2023 Legislative Session, Team Leads were responsible for tracking legislation they deemed pertinent to their respective priority. Team Leads could develop "legislative packages" of the bills they were tracking and come to the Commission for approval to submit testimony. The Commission then voted on which legislative packages to support, with the option of amending the packages to include or exclude specific bills. As the legislative session went on, the Team Leads proposed additional bills to support or oppose by the Commission. Team Leads testified on the following bills throughout the session:

Education Bills	Environment Bills	Public Health Bills
(i) SB 154	(i) HB 1162	(i) SB 759
(ii) HB 936	(ii) SB 304	(ii) SB975 SD2 HD3
(iii) SB 1344	(iii) HB 1052	(iii) HB948 HD2
(iv) SB 941	(iv) SB 1350 SD1	(iv) SB830 SD2
(v) SB942	(v) HB 444 HD1	(v) SB1447 SD1
(vi) HB 1076	(vi) SB 635	(vi) HB537 HD2
(vii) SB 496	(vii) SB 186	(vii) HB 79
(viii) HB 5551	(viii) SB 376 SD2 HD1	(viii) HB 157
(ix) SB 1245	(ix) SB 84 SD1	(ix) HB 59
(x) HB 827	(x) SB 658	(x) HB 54
(xi) SB 1238	(xi) HB 442	(xi) HB 69



Education Bills	Environment Bills	Public Health Bills
(xii) SB 759	(xii) HB 239 HD1	(xii) HB 80
(xiii) SB 508		
(xiv) HB 182		
(xv) SB 842		

Additionally, the Commission submitted testimony on SB 869, Relating to the Youth Commission. This bill passed, allowing a change to the Youth Commission’s Quorum meeting requirement.

The Legislative Team, being the policy driver of the commission, was tasked with maneuvering through the workings of Hawai’i’s government throughout its third year. We were tasked with creating training for commission members about the basics of the Hawai’i State Legislature and how a bill becomes law before we could even select bills we wanted to support or oppose.

**D. Connections and Leadership Development Team Report:**

The Connections and Leadership Development Team focuses on outreach and relationship building with organizations, youth allies, groups, and programs that advocate for youth voices to be heard. This includes HiYC connections with government officials such as legislators, state programs, and staff that link directly to HiYC.

Research and Community Outreach efforts through the past year included collaborative Connections with:

- a. Partnerships between the Center for Tomorrow’s Leaders, Hawaii Youth Services Network, Hawaii Youth Climate Coalition, Punahou School, and various other school counselors and groups from across the islands were formed to provide information about HiYC and recruit new commissioners.
- b. The HiYC collaborated with Shut Down Red Hill Mutual Aid to lead a water distribution event for the affected community and discussed points of further collaboration and plans to connect with the constituents impacted by the Red Hill fuel spill to discuss policy solutions.

**E. Budget Report:**

Vice Chair Logan Yogi worked with HiYC members to accommodate the various budgetary needs, priorities, and projects of HiYC. One of the goals that the Commission wanted to achieve this term was to turn legislative advocacy into action for the betterment of youth in Hawaii. As such, in collaboration with Shut Down Red Hill Mutual Aid and a generous donation

from the community, we undertook the project to provide hundreds of gallons of water to affected families.

**3. Goals for the Term from July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024:**

- Expansion of HiYC Community Outreach. We hope to build the HiYC community for the 2023-2024 term through initiatives to highlight existing youth-led projects, survey youth legislative priorities, connect with non-profits, and identify and reach out to marginalized youth populations.
- Transition plans for new HiYC Elected Officers. Officers for the 2023-2024 HiYC Term have not been elected yet. New officer elections will take place in August 2023.
- Legislative Team Management. We hope to develop a better delegation system for the legislative leads to ensure that the entire burden is not placed upon them. Additionally, HiYC plans to get more involved in the legislative process, in addition to testimony writing. These goals include reaching out, forging connections with legislators, and preparing for the legislative session earlier to lobby for bills and maybe spearhead our own bills.
- Development of the HiYC Connections & Leadership Development Team. Plans include the development of roles and goals for Specialized Leads and Teams for areas which may include Education, Pacific Islanders, an Ambassador or Alumni component, a Logistics Team, a Writing Team, and possibly other areas to cover specific groups and areas that are not already covered under the Executive and Campaign Teams. We would also like to contact more organizations like the City & County of Honolulu Commission, the Hawai'i County Commission, and other neighbor island organizations.
- Strengthen and Expand Communications and Social Media Presence. A strong Communications and Social Media presence is essential to meeting all goals of the HiYC. The HiYC hopes to develop further its content creation and social media outreach to connect with all youth communities. The HiYC also hopes to continue working with government officials to create a Hawai'i State Youth Commission Webpage to publicize meeting information and community resources so the HiYC can become the Youth Resource Hub for the entire state.

**4. HiYC SUMMARY:**

The HiYC has seen tremendous growth over the past fiscal year, both internally and externally. We plan to develop the commission's educational, cultural, and political diversity in future recruitment cycles.

Through increased legislative involvement in the 2023 session, the youth voice was substantially more present at the State Legislature than ever. The HiYC pursued a record amount of bills in education, public health, and environmental justice, and several bills among the public health legislative priorities were passed this session. Following these major legislative accomplishments, the commission aims to increase its involvement with the community,

Hawai'i State Youth Commission  
Annual Report  
Fiscal Year 2023

provide strong advocacy for the youth of Hawaii, and form solid partnerships with legislators and leaders in the upcoming years to build a better Hawai'i for future generations of youth to enjoy.

Young people are the future. The HiYC will continue to advocate to the Governor and the State Legislature to hear youth voices when considering the implication of programs, budgets, laws, and policies on youth. Through increased community involvement and outreach efforts with nonprofit organizations and schools, we want to represent the youth's voice best and create positive and meaningful change in our home.

Links to:

- A. [Act 106 \(SLH 2018\), Relating to a Youth Commission](#)
- B. [Act 135 \(SLH 2023\), Relating to the Youth Commission](#)