

O'AHU COUNTY DEMOCRATS

OF THE
DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF HAWAII'

a gathering place for political action

Dialogue with a Dem: Tommy Waters, City Council Chair



**City Council Chair
Tommy Waters**

Honolulu City Councilmember **Tommy Waters** (District IV) is a life-long resident of Hawai'i and has always been a staunch Democrat. Waters grew up in the Waialae area and is a graduate of Kamehameha Schools, the University of Hawai'i (UH) at Mānoa, and UH Richardson School of Law.

Waters served three terms in the State House of Representatives where he was Chairperson of the House Committee on Higher Education and Chairperson of the House Committee on Judiciary. As the councilmember for District IV and the current chairperson of the Honolulu City Council, Waters remains a committed member of the Democratic Party.

Mahalo to Region 2 for asking the City's top Democrat to answer a few questions about making a difference in moving Hawai'i toward a brighter tomorrow for all.

O'ahu Democrats (OD): What's your favorite thing about your Council District IV, and why do you find serving as its representative on the council to be rewarding?

Tommy Waters (TW): I enjoy the natural landmarks and diversity of Council District IV. From Wāwāmalu and Sandy Beach to the beautiful Hanauma Bay, I think that District IV is truly unique and it's part of my goal to ensure that we can continue to steward these natural resources for future generations of locals to enjoy.

I love serving as the Councilmember for District IV because I can serve as an advocate for so many residents to ensure that families can thrive here. Above all, I want to emphasize that I truly believe in embodying and demonstrating aloha through my actions. I ran a campaign on the phrase "leadership with aloha." I genuinely believe that Aloha is at the piko—at the center—of why I know as a community that we will emerge resilient. I believe aloha is the most powerful framework for how to lead.

We are a party that must embody the value of pūpūkahi holomua, which means to "unite in order to progress."

City Council Chair Tommy Waters

OD: What is the main issue facing your council district that you're currently grappling with, and how can Democrats get involved in working on the solution?

TW: I believe the main issue facing our Council District is the same issue facing our whole island: homelessness, the rising cost of living and the lack of affordable housing.

I have five siblings and I am the last one to live here in Hawai'i. My brother and sisters have all been priced out of our island home, and I'm scared to death to think that my daughter and son will grow up and be unable to live here due to the cost of living.

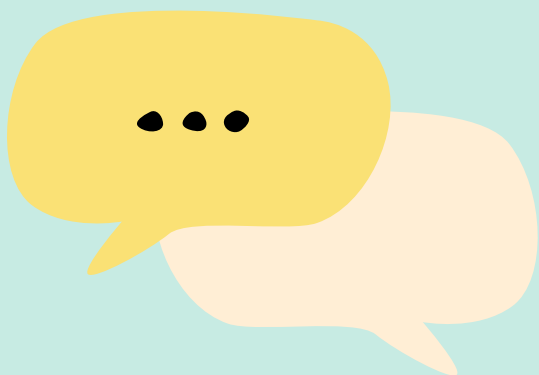
In order to fight for truly affordable housing, we will be pursuing the following:

- Addressing the root causes of homelessness;
- Embracing innovation as we rebuild our economy;
- Legislation that breathes life into our efforts around a more resilient planet and implements what we passed last year the Ola Resilience Strategy; and
- Efforts that embrace government's unique ability to provide land, infrastructure, and incentive to build the kind of community that we in Hawai'i want to have—not only for us today but for our kids, our grandkids, and many generations to come.

From combating the proliferation of monster homes in our residential neighborhoods to supporting public access to our beach and waterways throughout the whole City & County of Honolulu, I am here to provide leadership with aloha and serve you. The City Council is your house, and we welcome you to share with us your ideas, share with us your challenges, and share with us your hopes for Honolulu's future.

OD: What role(s) do you think the Democratic Party, its members and its organizing infrastructure should take on in the broader civic/public sphere on O'ahu?

TW: I think that when Democrats come together and turn out to advocate for policies that impact everyone, we are capable of tackling some of the most significant challenges that our county faces in the near future. One clear example that comes to mind is when I introduced Resolution 19-329, which initiated a Charter Amendment to create a youth commission for the City & County of Honolulu. When the O'ahu County Democratic Party endorsed the Creation of a City Youth Commission, the party rallied to support the Charter Amendment at the ballot box. As a result of these efforts, the Charter Amendment passed with 61.67 percent of Honolulu voters coming out in support of the creation of a youth commission.



I especially want to emphasize the need for Democrats to be involved in county elections. Despite the fact that these races are ostensibly nonpartisan, the fact of the matter is that the county makes decisions every single day, from accepting federal relief and support housing vouchers to the aggressiveness of tackling climate change, that are inherently political and partisan natured.

OD: What makes you proud to be a Democrat, and why should members consider taking a more active role in the party infrastructure?

TW: I am proud to be a Democrat because we are a Party that must embody the value of pūpūkahi holomua, which means to “unite in order to progress.” As a Party, we will be looking for innovative, out-of-the-box solutions to decades-old problems. We cannot allow for this time to be a step back for our community. We cannot afford for this time to be a step back for the government. This needs to be a time that we step up.

We are still living with many of the negative impacts and decisions to cut services that were made during the 2008 recession. We learned the lesson that our communities and our economy cannot afford to go into starvation and hibernation mode during times like these. We need to step up and invest in our communities, our infrastructure, and in economic sectors that will be sustainable. This is a time that our community needs leadership from all levels of government the most, and we are going to continue to advance solutions for the age-old problems that our community faced before the pandemic and that were exposed and exacerbated so dramatically during this pandemic.



Tommy Waters at a huki with Mālama Maunaloa sponsored by Region 1 in July 2021.

O'ahu County Democrats



The Digital Equity Committee is reminding residents that the FCC Emergency Broadband program is still accepting applications and will continue until the appropriated monies of over \$3 billion runs out.

Review the program

Read more about the program online at broadband.hawaii.gov/ebb/

Check if you qualify and apply

Visit www.getemergencybroadband.org to see if your household qualifies. If you are eligible, follow the link to submit an application.

Instruction videos are [available here](#).
A slideshow with instructions is [available here](#).

Contact your service provider

Search for participating providers [online here](#).

The Emergency Broadband Benefit Program
Connecting Hawaii Households to the Internet

The Emergency Broadband Benefit Program helps households across Hawaii pay for their household internet. Under the program, eligible households can receive:

- Up to \$50 a month towards broadband service from a participating provider
- Up to \$75 towards broadband service for households on Hawaiian Home Lands
- A one-time discount of up to \$100 to purchase a laptop, desktop computer, or tablet

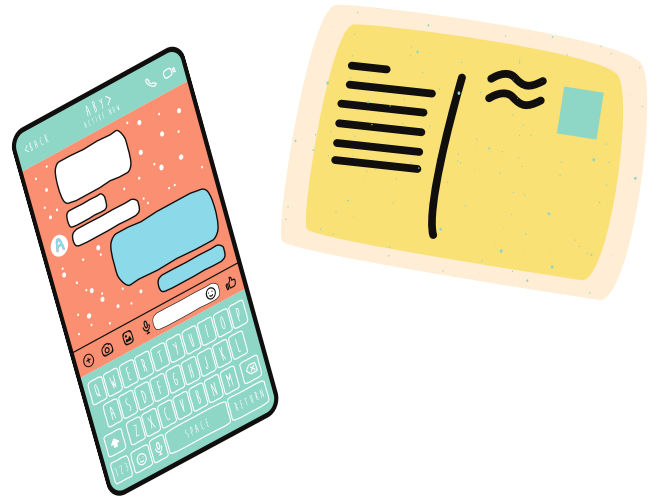


Join the Blue Wave Effort on Mobilize to Support Dems Across the Country

Help elect Democrats to the US Senate and House so we can pass President Biden's agenda!

O'ahu Dems Blue Wave has identified opportunities. Check out the O'ahu Dems Blue Wave on Mobilize. From this page, you can select a volunteer option like:

- **Send post cards** to toss up states-Wisconsin and Pennsylvania;
- Learn to **text with Fair Fight**, Stacey Abrams' dynamic team; or
- **Activate your social media** to fight disinformation



We must begin now to **WIN IN 2022**.

Email questions to oahudemsbluewave@gmail.com.

Click to Search
Mobilize

● Save the Date! ●

The Region 5 Legislative Priorities Meeting is coming up on **Tuesday, October 12 at 6:30 p.m.**

Empower yourself to make your voice heard with our elected officials in 2022! We will be:

- Discussing the issues impacting our community
- Reviewing about the legislative process
- Learning how to search, identify and track bills

Zoom Meeting ID: 845 7073 3087

Password: 378402

[Click here for Zoom meeting link](#)



More Upcoming Events

Did you know that all O'ahu Democrats meetings are open for everyone to watch? And it's easier than ever with Zoom!

Our various committee, Region, and O'ahu County Committee meetings are listed on the Calendar at www.oahudemocrats.org.

Correction:

Betty Vega was misidentified in the the July 2021 newsletter coverage of the Blue Wave Committee. Mahalo for your work, Betty!



Before You Go ...

We want to stay connected with you!

Whether you can volunteer your time, donate funds that allow us to sponsor events or just help us by sharing content with others, please take a minute to check out how you can get involved with O'ahu Democrats.

More information available at www.oahudemocrats.org

Volunteer

Donate



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**Oahu County
Committee - DPH**

Region Roundup – What's New in Region 5



A Community Day In Our Schools: A Day of Service

Region 5 participated in its first A Community Day in Our School on Saturday, July 31, 2021 from 8:00 am to 12:00 pm. This event was sponsored by Sen. Bennette Misalucha. We were partnered with Mana Loa-Nimitz Lion Club to paint the curbs, small crosswalks, and speed bumps in the parking lot at 'Aiea High School.



Attendees: Wayne Suzuki (team leader), Brent Toyama (team leader), Cindy Aban, Steve Canales, Shannon Kaaa, Charlie Ice, Susan Young, Ray Sugai, Carole Sugai, Gordon Comajis, Rep. Sam Kong, Lorna Strand

Aloha, my name is **Sam Kong**, and I represent House District 33, in 'Aiea.

Being the 'local businessman', owner of 'Aiea Florist, I got to know the many great politicians who came before me. Thus being so inspired by them and their awesome contributions to my District, I really wanted to also help and follow in their footsteps.

My background stems from being an Electronic Technician, to Author, to Businessman, and Community Volunteer. The last two actually helped me get elected, for I am in the CSC record books for not accepting any donations or spending any monies in contested races for 2014, 2016, and 2020. Only in 2018 did I actually campaign... mainly because I have a crazy but awesome team of volunteers.

Region 5 is da best! Because we have awesome members who truly care!

Legislator Spotlight



Rep. Sam Kong