

# 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.

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**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 pūpūkahī 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.

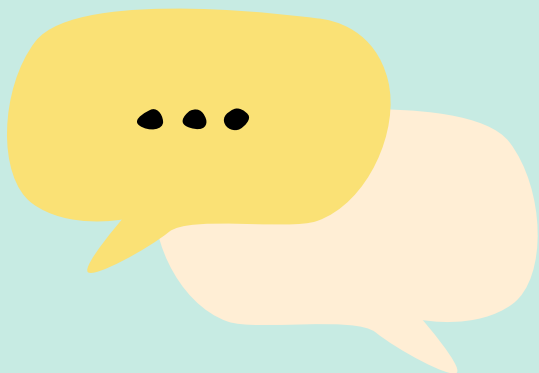
In order to fight for truly affordable housing, we will be pursuing the following:

- 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/](https://broadband.hawaii.gov/ebb/)

## Check if you qualify and apply

Visit [www.getemergencybroadband.org](https://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



## 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](http://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](http://www.oahudemocrats.org)

**Volunteer**

**Donate**



**OahuDemocrats**



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**Oahu County  
Committee - DPH**



# August 2021 -- Region 9 Roundup

Aloha Windward O'ahu Democrats!

As your new Region 9 Chair, I have been working hard with our Democratic Party of Hawai'i, District Chairs, elected officials, and community organizations on some exciting events for our Party members. In this newsletter, we would like to share some of the upcoming events that we have planned for you to:

- **Learn** about (1) O'ahu County Committee party initiatives, (2) how to participate in the legislative process, and (3) ongoing native forest restoration efforts in Windward O'ahu
- **Engage** in political action by sharing and discussing your legislative priorities with the Democratic Party of Hawai'i
- **Serve** our local community by participating in native forest restoration

I look forward to working with all of you in the coming weeks, months, and years. As registered party members, you have already shown that you have the passion to improve our local community and state. I hope that through these upcoming and future events, we can continue to stoke that passion as you learn more about the legislative process, engage in political action, and serve our local community.

Mahalo nui loa,  
Justin Akagi

## Region 9 Calendar of Events

### Wednesday, August 18, 2021, 6:15-6:45 p.m.

Region 9 General Member Meeting

[Click here for Zoom meeting link](#)

Meeting ID: 897 3661 8488 Passcode: 836285

Dial-In #: (213) 338-8477 (long distance phone charges will apply)

### Wednesday, September 29, 2021, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Region 9 Legislative Priorities Meeting

[Click here for Zoom meeting link](#)

Meeting ID: 846 6300 5847 Passcode: 594867

Dial-In #: (213) 338-8477 (long distance phone charges will apply)

### Wednesday, August 18, 2021, 7:00-7:30 p.m.

Let's Talk Story: Windward O'ahu Democrats  
Native Forest Restoration (info in Region Roundup)

[Click here for Zoom meeting link](#)

Meeting ID: 897 3661 8488 Passcode: 836285

Dial-In #: (213) 338-8477 (long distance phone charges will apply)

### Saturday, November 13, 2021, 3:00-5:00 p.m.

Planting: Windward O'ahu Democrats Native  
Forest Restoration (info in Region Roundup)  
Hāmākua Marsh (in person)

### Saturday, September 25, 2021, 4:00-6:00 p.m.

Preparing for Planting: Windward O'ahu Democrats  
Native Forest Restoration (info in Region Roundup)  
Hāmākua Marsh (in person)

**Note: Zoom meeting will be opened 15 minutes prior to scheduled meeting time to assist with check-in.**

# August 2021 -- Region 9 Roundup



## 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](mailto:oahudemsbluewave@gmail.com).

[\*\*Click to Search Mobilize\*\*](#)

## Windward O'ahu Democrats Native Forest Restoration

Hosted by Healthy Climate Communities  
Sponsored by Region 9

Region 9 Windward O'ahu Democrats are joining with Healthy Climate Communities for an exciting three-part series to:

1. educate our members on climate change and a native forest restoration effort in Windward O'ahu; and
2. provide service events for our members and their 'ohana to prepare and plant native trees at Hāmākua Marsh.

This is a family-friendly series and open to all Regions.

For more information, contact [jma.kagi@gmail.com](mailto:jma.kagi@gmail.com).



### Part 1 -- *Let's Talk Story: Windward O'ahu Democrats Native Forest Restoration*

Wednesday, August 18, 2021 from 7:00-7:30 p.m.

[Click here for Zoom meeting link](#)

Meeting ID: 897 3661 8488

Passcode: 836285

Dial-In #: (213) 338-8477 (long distance charges will apply)

In this first part of our three-part series, Dr. Lisa Marten (founder and executive director of Healthy Climate Communities) will host a talk story session to share about the history of her non-profit organization, discuss the process to begin native forest restoration efforts on state land, and cover some of her organization's progress and upcoming volunteer opportunities at Hāmākua Marsh.

# August 2021 -- Region 9 Roundup

## *Part 2 -- Preparing for Planting: Windward O'ahu Democrats Native Forest Restoration*

Saturday, September 25, 2021

4:00-6:00 p.m.

Location: Hāmākua Marsh

In this second part of our three-part series, Healthy Climate Communities will host our Region 9 Democrats (and any other interested O'ahu County Democrats or their friends) at Hāmākua Marsh to begin preparing the site for tree planting. Tools and gloves will be provided, but volunteers are required to wear covered shoes and sign a waiver. Sun protection is recommended. As a note, this event will be physically intensive -- recommended volunteer age is teenager or older.



## *Part 3 -- Planting: Windward O'ahu Democrats Native Forest Restoration*

Saturday, November 13, 2021

3:00-5:00 p.m.

Location: Hāmākua Marsh

In this third and final part of our three-part series, Healthy Climate Communities will host our Region 9 Democrats (and any other interested O'ahu County Democrats or their friends) at Hāmākua Marsh to participate in native tree planting. Tools and gloves will be provided, but volunteers are required to wear covered shoes and sign a waiver. Sun protection is recommended. Kūpuna and keiki are welcome to participate in this event.



**Healthy Climate Communities**, a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, works in collaboration with Hawai'i State Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR), local schools and other community groups to restore the watershed for Hāmākua Marsh, called Pu'u o Ehu. Since 2015, Healthy Climate Communities has planted thousands of native plants, including many endangered and rare native plants such as ko'oloa'ula (*Abutilon menziesii*) and mao hau hele (*Hibiscus brackenridgei*). Caring for native plants is a tough job made possible by installing drip irrigation, using ground cover and the hands of many volunteers.

For more information about Healthy Climate Communities, go to [healthyclimatecommunities.org](https://healthyclimatecommunities.org).

