



HAWAI‘I CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION **KOMIKINA PONO KIWILA O HAWAI‘I**

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[DRAFT] MINUTES

Hawai‘i Civil Rights Commission Office

via Zoom

January 20, 2026

11:30 a.m.

Commissioners: Chair Alphonso Braggs, Jon Matsuoka, Arsima Muller, Raymond Nichols

Staff: Deputy Executive Director Heather McVay, Administrative Assistant Sandy Yoshimura, Chief Counsel Constance Yonashiro, HCRC Kai Shuto, Executive Director Marcus Kawatachi (joined late)

Public: Peter Fritz

Chair Braggs called the meeting to order at 11:32 a.m.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the December 16, 2025 meeting were approved as circulated.

Chief Counsel’s Report

a. Update on docketed cases

- i. *KAWATACHI/ DIEDERIKS vs. Ali‘i Builders, LLC;*
 - *Contested case hearing date: January 27, 2026*
- ii. *KAWATACHI/PAYNE v. WAGNER;*
 - *Contested case hearing set for January 30, 2026*
- iii. *KAWATACHI/RESURRECCION vs. K’S DRIVE-IN;*
 - *Contested case hearing set for February 12, 2026*
- iv. *KAWATACHI/DIAS v. MASUNAGA*
 - *Contested case hearing set for April 20, 2026*

2026 Legislative Session Discussion, 2026 Bills relating to civil rights (Senate Bills (“SB”) and House Bills (“HB”)):

HCRC staff overview of upcoming session:

Chief Counsel and Deputy Executive Director McVay discussed HCRC staff support for the commissioners during the upcoming legislative session. Commissioners will vote on specific bills and based on the discussion and position of the Commissioners, HCRC staff drafts testimony and submits to the legislature. If the Commission has not yet taken a position on a bill of importance, in the past, HCRC staff may provide comments identifying that the Commission has not yet discussed the bill and report back to the Commission at the next meeting for an official position.

HCRC staff anticipated that there will be bills, new and carried over, regarding state compliance with federal agencies, such as ICE, sanctuary cities, and bills regarding the regulation and use of algorithmic (or AI) discrimination.

Commissioner Muller asked if carryover bills and bills that are substantially similar to past bills will need commissioner voting and discussion. HCRC staff mentioned that the commissioners voted to take the same position on past bills that are the same or substantially similar in the November 2025 commission meeting. Staff stated that it will report back to the Commission if any of those carryover bills are heard during this legislative session.

Discussion on HB1522, which extends the statute of limitations to file a complaint of discrimination with the HCRC. The only change to HRS § 368-11 is changing the length of time from 180 days to “one year” after an alleged discriminatory act.

Commissioners unanimously approved the motion to support the HCRC bill extending the statute of limitations to file a complaint of discrimination to one year.

Public Testimony: Peter Fritz discussed anticipated bills from the Deaf Blind Taskforce, brought by Senator Buenaventura, including SB1496 (2025) previously discussed about public accommodations and SB1493 (2025) relating to emotional support animals. Mr. Fritz also discussed sunshine law bills aimed at simplifying boards and commissions agendas so that individuals with disabilities have easier access to important items on the agenda, rather than listening to excessive pages of instructions prior to agenda items.

Announcements

- a. Next commission meetings set for January 27, 2026, February 3, 2026, and February 10, 2026. Chair states that we will try to secure dates for the next three meetings in advance

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:55 a.m.

Draft minutes circulated by Constance Yonashiro, Chief Counsel.

Approved by Commission, as circulated, on _____.