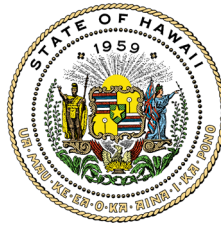


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Policy Advisory Board for Elder Affairs (PABEA)
Legislative Committee Meeting
EOA Large Conference Room (250 S. Hotel St., Suite 406)
And via Zoom

MEETING MINUTES
Friday, August 1, 2025

PABEA Board Members Attendance: William Kinaka, Stephen Lung, Sara Medeiros, Shelly Ogata, Marilyn Seely, Barbara Service, Gary Simon, and Rick Tabor (Chair)

AAA/Community Members/EOA Staff Attendance: Peter Fritz, Charlene Iboshi, Emily Ishida (KAEA), Norma Kop (EOA), Erin Samura (HCOA), Kathy Wyatt, Sara Yuan, and Cristina Valenzuela (EOA).

Absent: Poki'i Balaz, Suzie Schulberg, Joanne Kealoha (excused), Roberta Murray (excused), and John Hau'oli Tomoso

- I. Call to Order and Roll Call
The Chair (Rick) called the meeting to order at 9:32am. Roll call was taken and with five members present there was quorum.
- II. Review and Approval of Minutes
Committee members reviewed the May 1, 2025 draft meeting minutes. Sara requested clarification on the bill status for SR163 and asked what passed. Cristina clarified that HR30, HCR31, SR163, and SCR203 are the same resolution. SR163 was adopted as a resolution, which requests the University of Hawaii'i to explore the feasibility of establishing an Alzheimer's Disease Research Center and identify the requirements for receiving federal funding from the National Institute on Aging for Alzheimer's Disease Research. Resolution does not carry the same weight as a bill and does not include funding.

There were no additional comments or objections to the meeting minutes. The May 1, 2025 meeting minutes were approved as is.
- III. PABEA Legislative Committee Expectations
Rick reviewed expectations for the legislative committee. These included:

1. Meeting will be recorded via Zoom. All PABEA members attending virtually must leave their video camera on.
2. Please mute your audio until you are called on. For those attending virtually and in person please be aware and considerate of any background noise that may affect the sound (e.g. shuffling of papers, side talk, etc.).
3. Per Sunshine Law any announcements or suggested discussion items will need to be listed on the agenda. Please contact the Chair no later than the 15th of the month prior to the upcoming meeting date if you would like to provide an agenda item or announcement/s so that it may be included in the agenda for the meeting.

Rick clarified that the meeting is not the place to start talking about something that's not listed on the agenda. If you think of something that you want to discuss at the meeting reach out to him so that it may be included in the next agenda. Cristina said that the agenda must be posted for public viewing no later than 6/7 business days prior to the meeting.

Shelly suggested adding "Potential Agenda Items" as a standing agenda item. Sara pointed out that there may times the committee may need to meet as an "emergency response" to an issue. C. Valenzuela clarified that PABEA can meet on an emergency basis should the need arise.

3. Assignment of bills: PABEA Board Members on the Legislative Committee will be assigned as the "Lead" on PABEA legislative priority bill/s.

Rick clarified that the expectation is that members will take the lead on bills. If you have a special interest (i.e. homeless, hearing aids, etc.) you will likely be assigned to take the lead on the issue.

5. The "Lead" person monitors and tracks the bill/s that they are assigned to.
6. At each committee meeting, be prepared to give an update about the bill/s.
7. The "Lead" is responsible for submitting testimony on behalf of PABEA.

Rick recommends sharing your testimony with PABEA and said that "as the lead you don't have to be the only person writing testimony. The more (testimony submitted) the better, especially if money's involved." His hope is that all PABEA write and submit testimony. Rick and Marilyn also talked about the impact of submitting oral testimony.

PABEA members can only submit testimony on behalf of PABEA if those bills or priority issues were voted and approved by PABEA. When submitting testimony use "Preamble for PABEA Testimony".

8. Preamble for PABEA Testimony
Rick read the recommended preamble to use when submitting testimony on behalf of PABEA:

“I am first and last name [“Chair, Vice Chair, member] of the Policy Advisory Board for Elder Affairs (PABEA), which is an appointed board tasked with advising the Executive Office on Aging (EOA). My testimony does not represent the views of the EOA but of PABEA.”

Comments:

- Sara asked when members can start to promote a particular bill and where that’s listed on the agenda. Rick said that “we have to get it on the agenda”. Cristina suggested that if there is a specific bill/priority issue that you’d like PABEA to support to contact the Chair about it and request that it be added to the agenda, and the Chair can assign a member as “Lead” to that bill/priority issue.
- Rick said that now is the time to start thinking about what issues are of interest to you and to talk with the legislators about it. Legislators may want to sponsor the bill.

IV. Guest Speakers

Rick said that he’d like to open each meeting with a 15-minute presentation and hear from those sponsoring the bills, such as legislators and/or organizations, like Alzheimer’s Association, to gain a better understanding of a bill. He stated that PAR (Public Access Room) will be providing a training to all PABEA so that more members are able to write testimony. PAR will be scheduled for PABEA’s October meeting.

Other ideas for speakers include but are not limited to:

State Council for Developmental Disabilities, Alzheimer’s Association, Chairs of Legislative Committees (e.g. Senator Joy San Buenaventura), founder of Hearing 4 Hope, a young woman who had to get hearing implants due to COVID and is interested in more research on hearing aids so what happened to her, with a lack of supports, doesn’t happen to others, Kupuna Caucus Chairs: Senator Sharon Moriwaki and/or Representative Cory Chun, speaker on homelessness, and reverse mortgage. Suggestions for guest speakers will remain open on the agenda and members are encouraged to reach out to the Chair to share your ideas.

V. Discussion on PABEA Legislative Priorities

A. 2025 Aging & Disability Related Bills Signed by Governor and 2025 Aging & Disability Related Resolutions Adopted (see document “2025 Legislative Update” attached)

Cristina briefly reviewed some of the bills that passed in the 2025 legislative session. The bills reviewed were related to supported decision making, a fall prevention campaign, a guardianship/conservatorship pilot program, cognitive assessment for dementia, the extension of the State Rent Supplement Program for Kūpuna, and the Medi-Medi project.

Comments:

- Marilyn asked for clarification on the supported decision-making bill. Cristina explained that the bill was introduced and supported by the

State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD) to formally and legally recognize an individual's ability to make their own decisions with the support of a trusted person. Agreement can involve healthcare, financial, housing and other issues.

- Sara brought up a concern that bills are not easy to understand and should be written in plain language. Rick suggested asking about it when Senator Moriwaki or Representative Chun talk to the group.

B. 2025 PABEA Legislative Priority Bills that Didn't Pass, and Will be Reintroduced in 2026 Legislative Session.

Cristina explained that whether the bill was deferred or did not pass out of a committee and move forward the bills listed above will resurrect next legislative session exactly where they died or stalled. Similar bills may also be reintroduced next session. Unlikely for deferred bills to move forward.

1. Kupuna Caucus Bills:

- i. Caregiver Tax Credit (HB701 HD3 SD1)(Lead = Gary)
Establishes a Family Caregiver Tax Credit for nonpaid family caregivers. Requires the Department of Taxation to submit annual reports to the Legislature. Appropriates funds to the Executive Office on Aging. Applies to taxable years beginning after 12/31/2026. Effective 12/31/2050. (SD1)

Gary said that it will be a priority bill for AARP next year and recommends that PABEA prioritize the Caregiver Tax Credit bill again. Gary will continue to take the lead on it.

- ii. Medicaid Funding (HB702 HD1) (Lead = Barbara)
Appropriates funds to increase the funding for Medicaid in-home services, conditioned on the Department of Human Services obtaining the maximum federal matching funds. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD1)

Barbara does not have any info on the bill. Committee will follow up on the bill at the next meeting.

- iii. SNAP funding (HB704) (Lead = Barbara and Sara)
Establishes the Hawai'i Food Security Special Fund to restore Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefit levels to those provided in federal fiscal year 2023. Requires reports to the Legislature. Appropriates funds.

Rick said that there are some changes at the federal level that will need to be dealt with. Sara volunteered to take the lead on the bill/issue along with Barbara.

- iv. Paid Family Leave (Lead = Gary)
Requesting the Senate Standing Committee on Labor and Technology and House of Representatives Standing Committee on Labor to convene a legislative working group to develop recommendations for establishing and implementing a Paid

Family and Medical Leave Program for the State.

Gary said that there is a working group that will be meeting on August 14th. He will continue to take the lead on that priority issue.

2. Other Legislative Bills and Resolutions That Didn't Pass

These bills were not one of PABEA's legislative priorities for the 2025 session but were discussed at legislative committee meetings.

i. Hearing Aids Coverage (SB1494 SD2) (Lead = Rick)

Requires health insurance policies and contracts issued on or after 1/1/2026 to provide optional coverage for the cost of hearing aids at a minimum \$1,500 per hearing aid for each hearing-impaired ear every thirty-six months. Effective 7/1/2050. (SD2)

Rick will support the hearing aid bill again this year and will continue to take the lead on the issue. He'll follow the lead of Senator San Buenaventura and Senator Moriwaki and was encouraged to continue to advocate for the issue.

ii. GE Tax Hearing Aids (SB1495 SD1) (Lead = Rick)

Exempts from the general excise tax, gross receipts received by a hospital, infirmary, medical clinic, health care facility, pharmacy, or a practitioner licensed to administer drugs to an individual, from the sale of hearing aids. Effective 12/31/2050. Sunsets 1/1/2027. (SD1)

Rick will continue to take the lead on this bill/issue.

Comments:

Peter Fritz shared that he was the one who wrote the hearing aid bill and the GET hearing aid tax bill. He believes that the bill is the right way to go for those policies that don't have the benefits. The success of the bill depends on who becomes the next Insurance Commissioner. Regarding the GET tax he said that the bill was fine until one legislator decided to expand it to all medical devices and then it didn't go anywhere. When the tax is applied to everything it's difficult for Department of Tax to get an estimate of the cost.

Peter also started to discuss a bill about a certified mailing for notices of long-term health care policies. He wrote the bill but ran into some differences. Rick asked Peter if he can contact him about the issue/bill so that he can include it in the next agenda. He explained that committee could only discuss what's listed in the agenda.

iii. Alzheimer's Disease Research Center(HR30/HCR31 and SR163/SCR203) (Lead = Rick)

Request the University of Hawai'i at Manoa to investigate the

feasibility of establishing an Alzheimer's Disease Research Center (resolution)

There was confusion on this resolution, which Cristina stated earlier SR163 passed. She said that it was initially a bill then was introduced as a resolution later in the session but later retracted this statement. She will follow up on whether there was an initial bill.

3. PABEA Priority Bills to be Reintroduced & Bill Assignments Potential
See discussion above.

4. Legislative Bill Topics and Recommendations for 2026 PABEA
Legislative Priorities. Examples include but are not limited to:

- Reintroduction of hearing aid bill
- New resolution reg. human rights
Couple months ago, the federal administration took human rights off as a priority. Rick emailed out information about it, and Senator Karl Rhoads responded that he was interested in sponsoring a resolution on human rights. Rick shared that there's a movement in Hawai'i, from various people including Nainoa Thompson to promote human rights and world peace. He thinks the Legislative Committee and PABEA should be a part of it because it affects kūpuna. If you'd like more information on it reach out to Rick.
- Uniform Health Care Decision Act (SB1323 SD2 HD2 CD1)
Cristina said that the bill was introduced last session, which consolidates all laws and replaces all advance health care directives and includes advance mental health care directives. Although the bill moved forward and passed out of conference committee it was deferred in the final reading of the bill. Legislators mentioned that there was still work to be done on the bill.

There were concerns from the community that prior to introduction of the bill there was no public input or discussion on the bill, particularly from advocates with expertise on the matter, such as Kokua Mau. The bill was introduced by the Attorney General's Office and is 77 pages.

Marilyn said that there may be some good things in the bill, but the entire healthcare, elder law, and direct service provider community was left out of the discussion. She also said that there were many groups that protested the bill, and that in the past elder advocates were heavily involved in the advance healthcare directive bill. She said that Kokua Mau will be meeting about it, so she'll know more tomorrow.

Shelly asked if this bill was the same or separate as the guardianship bill. Cristina said that it's two separate bills.

- Other bills/priority issues for consideration
 - Sara suggested homelessness, including SB1218 (Homeless Services Fund).
 - Long Term Care Insurance (LTCI) notice of cancellation letter

Peter suggested that Hawai'i join other states to enact a bill that would prevent the unfair termination of long-term care policies. He shared a story about a family whose insurance policy was cancelled because they never received the notice about their insurance policy. The family had to go on Medicare or some other supplemental benefit. Peter said that this issue can be solved by using certified mail which tracks the mail. He will email and share with the committee copies of the bill, his testimony, and articles on the matter. He suggested getting the support of the Alzheimer's Association. Many of their chapters in other states have supported similar bills. Rick said that he will add the bill as an agenda item for next month and Peter can discuss it further.

- Disaster/Emergency Preparedness
Rick suggested the committee should look at emergency preparedness bill again.
- Non-Medicaid Senior Issues
Marilyn suggested "non-Medicaid senior issues". She mentioned that companies in California are looking at data and the needs of this specific population. With pending cuts to Medicaid by the current federal administration this population will grow, and "localities" will need to address the need. Webinar about this topic is available on You Tube. Rick shared that the Meals on Wheels website states that there are 70,000 food insecure people in Hawai'i. Shelly asked if the State has data on the impact of the Medicaid cuts. Cristina said that Medicaid is under the Department of Human Services. Marilyn said that the legislature and the Governor will have their priorities, and the committee must follow what those priorities are and keep advocating for PABEA's priorities.

5. PABEA Legislative Priorities Timeline

Rick said that the legislative committee will need to determine and present at the PABEA Board meeting in December 2025 its recommendations for legislative priority issues/topics for the coming legislative session. Cristina explained that the timeline for the Committee and PABEA to determine its priority bills is short and

limited but is dependent on when Kupuna Caucus determines its legislative package and when bills are introduced. PABEA members can only submit testimony on behalf of PABEA for bills that PABEA has formally voted and approved. Last year the legislative committee provided recommendations of topics or issues to PABEA for final approval and these topics or issues were listed on the agenda. When legislative session started, and bills were assigned bill numbers those specific topic/issues along with their related bill numbers were added on the agenda.

VI. New Business: Vice Chair Nominations

Rick asked the group for nominations for the Vice Chair of Legislative Committee. Sara was nominated. She declined and suggested that it be someone living on O'ahu, who can participate in person on legislative visits. Marilyn nominated Gary. He accepted the nomination Vice Chair. All committee members voted "Aye" for Gary Simon as Vice Chair of PABEA Legislative Committee. There was no opposition.

VII. Announcements

Rick shared the following announcements:

1. PABEA Meeting scheduled on Friday, August 1 at 12p.m. Hybrid meeting held in person in the EOA Large Conference Room 406 and remotely via Zoom.
2. Kupuna Caucus meeting is scheduled on Friday, August 1 at 2pm via Zoom.
3. Hawai'i Pacific Gerontological Society scheduled on Thursday & Friday, September 11-12, 2025 at Ala Moana Hotel. For more information see <https://hpgs.org/conference/>

The date for the next PABEA Legislative Committee meeting is scheduled on **Friday, September 5 from 9:30-11am**. Meetings are held in-person in the EOA Large Conference Room 406 and remotely via Zoom.

Meeting adjourned at 10:51 A.M.

Respectfully submitted by Cristina Valenzuela