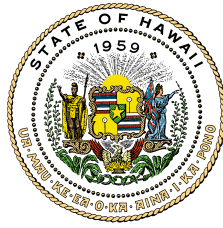


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KE KIA'ĀINA O KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII

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250 SOUTH HOTEL STREET, SUITE 406  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-2831

**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, February 6, 2026**

**PABEA Board Members in Attendance:** William Kinaka, Stephen Lung (arrived 10:13am), Sara Medeiros, Shelly Ogata, Marilyn Seely, Barbara Service, Gary Simon (Vice Chair), and Rick Tabor (Chair)

**AAA/Community Members/EOA Staff Attendance:** Derrick Ariyoshi (EAD), Caroline Cadirao (EOA), Rowena Dagdag-Andaya (MCOA), Kau'ionalani Fukuda (HCOA), Charlene Iboshi, Emily Ishida (KAEA), Joanne Kealoha, Norma Kop (EOA), Cristina Valenzuela (EOA), Jason Wong (EOA), and Sara Yuan

**Board Members Absent:** Poki'i Balaz and Suzie Schulberg

- I. Call to Order  
Chair Rick Tabor called the meeting to order at 9:36am and roll call was taken. With 7 board members present there was quorum.
- II. Review and Approval of Minutes  
The revised draft meeting minutes for December 5, 2025 and the draft January 9, 2026 meeting minutes were distributed. There were no objections to the December 5, 2025 and the January 9, 2026 meeting minutes, and the minutes were approved as is.
- III. Old Business  
State Plan on Aging Integration with Legislative Focus Areas:  
Caroline explained how the focus areas (e.g. food, shelter, and safety) align with the State Plan's 5 goals and noted how "food" aligns with Goal 1: Adults have opportunities to live well. Within Goal 1 are objectives that list Title III services and supports, such as nutrition programs. Shelter, high cost of living, affordable housing, houselessness, access to healthcare, Medicaid, hearing loss, fraud, scams, and disaster preparedness tie into Goal 2: Hawaii's older adults are

prepared for future health threats and disasters and Goal 3: Hawai'i's older adults in underserved groups have equitable access to programs and services. She concurred that these focus areas are aligned with the state plan goals.

#### IV. New Business

- A. PABEA Bylaws, Governor's Legislative Directive and EOA Capacity  
Caroline Cadirao, the EOA Director, reviewed PABEA bylaws relating to Legislative Committee- *This Committee shall have responsibility for reviewing federal, state, and county legislation affecting older adults and their caregivers. It is the responsibility of the Committee to recommend to the Board its recommendations for the Director's consideration regarding legislative or regulatory action.*

*The Chairperson of the Board shall designate at least one (1) member of the Committee to advise the Director to: 1) assist in coordinating the development of legislative proposals; 2) draft testimony that supports the position of the Director; and provide written and/or oral testimony at hearings. A copy of the Board's testimony shall be provided to the Director at least 24 hours, if possible, prior to the scheduled hearing. Copies of Board testimony shall be filed with the Executive Office on Aging.*

Noting the December meeting minutes, Caroline clarified the Governor's Directive explained the Governor's directive limiting new programs and funding requests for the 2026 legislative session. She emphasized that this is the first year the departments received a directive regarding bill proposals of "no new programs, no new monies". Departments were limited in the number of bills they could be proposed in the Governor's Admin package (Department of Health was allocated 12 bills out of 100 in total). The directive was likely due to the economic uncertainty and what's been happening at the federal level. EOA is respectful and supportive of the directive. Additionally, Caroline noted that EOA is at capacity with limited resources and limited staffing and affects the agency's ability to take on new projects (e.g. HANAI Memory Clinics).

#### Discussion/Comments:

- o Marilyn noted the long-term care financing bill and the support it received. Caroline to find out if the bill is one of DOH's bills in the Governor's legislative package.
- o Bill asked how short staffed EOA is? Caroline responded that EOA currently has about 10/11 vacancies, representing 39% of staff positions.
- o Sara asked to clarify EOA comments in testimony for bills requesting new initiatives and monies for EOA. Caroline explained that in testimony EOA is appreciating the intent and offering comments and noted that the proposed bills (e.g. HANAI Memory Clinic) have good ideas/concepts but EOA requests to revisit the initiative for future planning.

EOA is being selective about which bills to support based on current capacity and the Governor's directive. Caroline asks the committee to consider EOA's limited resources when deciding which bills to support.

#### B. 2026 Legislative Discussion

Rick proposed the committee review the 11 bills (Note: Chair said 11 bills but there are actually 12 bills) listed on the agenda, have discussion, vote on whether to support the bill or not, and then assign a member to take the lead on the bill to monitor and submit testimony. He noted that Cristina emailed the committee a detailed list of EOA's legislative tracking sheet, highlighting different categories including PABEA board related (green), Kupuna Caucus priorities (orange), and stakeholder bills (peach).

The group reviewed each bill in the order listed on the agenda, voted on support or opposition, and assigned follow-up leads. The committee approved support for eight bills and agreed to table three bills.

- 2026 Kupuna Caucus Bills:

1. Caregiver Tax Credit (HB1972/SB2863)

Establishes a family caregiver tax credit for nonpaid family caregivers. Requires the Department of Taxation to submit annual reports to the Legislature. Appropriates moneys. The tax credit applies to taxable years beginning after 12/31/2026.

Gary moved to support the Caregiver Tax Credit bills, and Shelly seconded the motion. Chair Tabor opened the floor for discussion. For discussion notes see below "Caregiver Tax Credit" under "Discussion/Comments". The committee voted unanimously to support the bill. There was no opposition. Vice-Chair Gary will take the lead on these bills.

2. KupunAloha (HB1973/SB2864)

Establishes within the Department of Health the KupunAloha program to provide in-home health care and support services to eligible participants who do not otherwise qualify for government assistance for these services. Appropriates moneys for the program.

Chair tabled the vote for the next meeting for more research and discussion. For discussion notes see below "KupunAloha" under "Discussion/Comments".

3. Hearing Loss State Plan (HB1974/SB2865)

Requires and appropriates funds for the State Health Planning and Development Agency to develop and publish a state plan on hearing loss.

Shelly moved to support the Hearing Loss State Plan bills, and Sara seconded the motion. Chair Tabor opened the floor for discussion. For discussion notes see below "Hearing

Loss State Plan” under “Discussion/Comments”. The committee voted unanimously to support the bills, with no opposition. Chair Tabor will take the lead on these bills.

4. Kupuna Rent Supplement Program (HB1975/SB2866)  
Repeals the sunset for the State Rent Supplement Program for Kupuna. Appropriates funds to the Hawai'i Public Housing Authority for the State Rent Supplement Program for Kupuna and for positions to support the program.

Shelly moved to support the Kupuna Rent Supplement Program bills, and Sara seconded the motion. Chair Tabor opened the floor for discussion. There were no questions or further discussion. The committee voted unanimously to support the bills, with no opposition. Sara will take the lead on these bills.

5. First Responder Dementia Training (HB1976/SB2867)  
Requires the Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency, fire chiefs, Law Enforcement Standards Board, and Department of Health to provide or require the provision of at least 1 hour of dementia-specific training for first responders, including law enforcement officers, fire first responders, and emergency medical services personnel. Requires the Executive Office on Aging to review and recommend dementia-specific training curricula that address the recognition and signs of Alzheimer's disease and related types of dementia.

Shelly moved to support the First Responder Dementia Training bills, and Sara seconded the motion. Chair Tabor opened the floor for discussion. For discussion notes see below “First Responder Dementia Training” under “Discussion/Comments”. The committee voted unanimously to support the bills, with no opposition. Chair Rick will take the lead on these bills.

- Other Bills Discussed for Consideration

6. Cryptocurrency ATM Transactions- AARP (HB2003/SB2387)  
Establishes limits on transactions through digital financial asset transaction kiosks. Requires operators of digital financial asset transaction kiosks to use blockchain analytics and tracing software to prevent fraud; make certain disclosures; provide receipts to customers; provide full refunds under certain circumstances; provide live customer service and a dedicated communications line for the Attorney General, Office of Consumer Protection, Department of Law Enforcement, and county police departments.

Shelly moved to support the Cryptocurrency ATM Transaction bills, and Sara seconded the motion. Chair

Tabor opened the floor for discussion. For discussion notes see below “Cryptocurrency ATM Transactions” under “Discussion/Comments”. The committee voted unanimously to support the bills, with no opposition.

Vice-Chair Gary will take the lead on these bills.

7. HANAI Memory Network (HB1853/SB2269 and SB2589)  
Establishes the Hanai Memory Network Program within the Executive Office on Aging to create a network of dementia care specialists and support systems to assist individuals with dementia and their caregivers. Appropriates funds.

Stephen motioned to support the HANAI Memory Network, and Shelly seconded the motion. Chair Tabor opened the floor for discussion. For discussion notes see below “HANAI Memory Network” under “Discussion/Comments”. Three members (Stephen, Gary, and Marilyn) voted to support the measure. Three members (Sara, Shelly, Bill, and Barbara) opposed the motion to support the HANAI Memory Network bills.

The committee voted not to support the bill at this time and will reconsider the bill next year.

8. Hearing Aids Coverage (SB1494 SD2) (2025 Carryover Bill)  
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.

Shelly moved to support the Hearing Aids Coverage bills, and Bill seconded the motion. Chair Tabor opened the floor for discussion. For discussion notes see below “Hearing Aids Coverage” under “Discussion/Comments”.

Gary voted to support the bill. Stephen, Shelly, Sara, and Bill opposed supporting the bill. Barbara and Marilyn abstained from the vote. The committee will not support the Hearing Aids Coverage bill this year.

9. Long-Term Care Financing (HB1804/SB2554)  
Establish a joint legislative Long-Term Care Financing Advisory Commission to examine the feasibility of different financing options for long-term care services and supports. Permits the Commission, through the Legislative Reference Bureau, to contract for services of a part-time project director and prepare proposals for contracts for consultants to support the work of the Commission. Requires the Commission to submit reports to the Legislature.

Appropriates funds.

Shelly moved to approve that PABEA support the Long-Term Care Financing bills, and Sara seconded the motion. Chair Tabor opened the floor for discussion. For discussion notes see below “Long-Term Care Financing” under “Discussion/Comments”. The committee voted unanimously to support the Long-Term Care Financing bills as PABEA priorities.

- 2025 Kupuna Caucus Bills (Carryover bills)

10. Caregiver Tax Credit (HB701 HD3 SD2/SB879)

Establishes a family caregiver tax credit for nonpaid family caregivers. Requires the Department of Taxation to submit annual reports to the Legislature. Appropriates moneys to the Executive Office on Aging. The tax credit applies to taxable years beginning after 12/31/2026. Effective 12/31/2050. HB2464 similar to HB701 HD3 SD2

Shelly moved to not support 2025 Caregiver Tax Credit bills (HB701 HD3 SD2/SB879). Sara seconded the motion. Chair Tabor opened the floor for discussion. For discussion notes see below “2025 Caregiver Tax Credit” under “Discussion/Comments”.

Shelly later amended her motion to approve support for the intent and purpose, and not the agent, of the 2025 Caregiver Tax Credit bills. Sara seconded the motion. Committee board members Sara, Shelly, Stephen, Gary, Barbara, and Marilyn voted to support the intent and purpose of HB701 HD3 SD2 and SB879. Committee board member, Bill, opposed the motion. Gary will take the lead on these bills

11. Medicaid In-Home Services Funding (HB702 HD1/SB877)

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.

Shelly motioned to approve support for the Medicaid In-Home Services Funding bills. Stephen seconded the motion.

There was no discussion on the bills. Committee board members Marilyn, Gary, Barbara, Sara, Stephen, and Bill voted in favor. Shelly abstained. Stephen will take the lead on these bills.

12. SNAP; Hawai'i Food Security Special Fund (HB704/SB881)

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.

Cristina noted that the intent of the bill may have been addressed last year through another avenue, making the bills potentially moot. Chair Rick tabled the discussion to gather more information.

Discussion/Comments:

- Sara asked to include the Physicians Protection Act bill (aka Rural Healthcare bill) in next month's agenda. Cristina noted later in the meeting that the bill, HB1965, is on the legislative tracking sheet but is not highlighted.
- Rick reminded members to share their written testimony with the group so others can review it and offer support. He emphasized that even if one person is taking the lead, anyone with time is encouraged to submit their own testimony, the more submissions, the better. He added that attending the hearing in person or joining via Zoom to give testimony is very helpful. When speaking, members should avoid repeating their full written testimony; instead, briefly agree with previous points and add any new insights.

Cristina also reminded members to send her their submitted testimonies so they can be filed with EOA.

- Sara asked for clarification on the source of the listed bills and if there was discussion on what bills the group was interested in. Rick explained that they represent the bills and issues the group has been interested in and discussed so far. Cristina added that the list includes Kupuna Caucus bills as well as bill proposals presented by guest speakers. She noted that she inadvertently omitted the Rural Healthcare/Physician's Protection bill and will add it to the list in the March agenda.
- Caregiver Tax Credit - Rick reported that the Caregiver Tax Credit bill, HB1972, has had a hearing and passed. Caroline explained that the difference between this year's bill (HB1972/SB2863) and last year's 2025 Carryover bill (HB701 HD3 SD2/SB879) is that EOA is no longer listed as the agency responsible for verifying caregiver expenses. In this year's bill, only the Department of Taxation is designated.
- KupunAloha- The measure proposes \$2million for the program. Caroline said that EOA noted that it is submitting comments on the bill and that the bill currently lacks detail about the program. She explained that EOA will work with the State Health Planning and Development Agency and the Department of Health to integrate the program into the existing aging services (e.g., ADRC, Kupuna Care) to avoid duplication and ensure coordinated services.

Several members asked questions about eligibility and the types of

services that would be provided, including in-home health support. Shelly expressed concern about supporting the bill without more information. Bill agreed and asked whether it was premature to take a position.

Derrick clarified that the model includes volunteer support, with funding intended to build volunteer capacity and support integrated, client-based services. He emphasized the need for thoughtful planning to ensure all components align. Rowena added that the bill appears to propose a care-transition program designed to bridge service gaps after hospital discharge and suggested further discussion on how the program would function and align with current aging services.

- Hearing Loss State Plan- Chair Tabor disclosed that he serves on the task force that developed this proposal and noted that the group is continuing to gather information on Hawai'i's hearing-loss needs.

Stephen asked what the committee was voting on. Chair Tabor clarified that the vote concerned which bills on the agenda the committee will monitor and support. Cristina added that these selected bills will be presented to the PABEA board today for final approval.

- First Responder Dementia Training – Barbara asked whether the bill had already passed. Cristina explained that a similar measure became law in 2021 as Act 155, which added a new section to HRS 321. However, Act 155 did not require dementia training for first responders. The new 2026 bill repeals that law and mandates at least one hour of dementia training for first responders by changing the language from “may” to “shall.” She added that the bill does not request an appropriation. EOA supports the measure and can provide the necessary dementia training resources.
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- Cryptocurrency ATM Transactions (AARP)- Vice Chair Gary reported that HB2003 was deferred by the CPC Committee on Thursday, February 5th. SB23887 is being heard today. He was unsure why the House bill was deferred.

Stephen asked how the bill relates to older adults. Vice Chair Gary explained that older adults are frequent targets of fraud and scams. Sara added that cryptocurrency kiosks located in grocery stores allow unrestricted deposits and purchases. She noted that some older adults have emptied their bank accounts and deposited the money into someone else's cryptocurrency account, with many cases occurring in Kona. Rick stated that the bill aims to introduce safety measures for these transactions to help protect older adults.

Cristina referenced a 2023 FBI report indicating that cryptocurrency fraud is a leading cause of financial loss, totaling billions of dollars.

Charlene added that this is currently the most common scam occurring in Hilo, Kona, O'ahu, and other areas. Rick noted that many incidents go unreported.

- HANAI Memory Network- Cristina noted an additional bill, SB2589, proposing four memory clinics and four dementia care specialist positions. Bill expressed concern about the workload and staffing needs, especially given Caroline's earlier comments about EOA's staffing shortages. Sara added concern that only Hilo might ultimately receive services.

Rick referenced last year's bill mandating cognitive assessments for Medicare patients and explained that SB2589 aims to fill service gaps for individuals unable to access assessments.

Cristina shared that EOA's written and oral testimony highlighted state fiscal uncertainty, staff shortages, and limited capacity to implement the initiative. She recommended revisiting the proposal when the State and EOA are more fiscally and operationally stable. She also emphasized that, based on discussions with the Alzheimer's Association, the initiative would require initial planning and implementation funding as well as ongoing funds to sustain operations.

Barbara expressed concern that if PABEA does not support bills like KupunAloha and the HANAI Memory Network, these issues may lose visibility but supporting them without available funding creates a "catch-22."

- Hearing Aid Coverage – Shelly asked for clarification on the bill's "optional" coverage provision. Chair Rick explained that insurers would not be required to cover hearing aids under the current language. He noted that members of the Deaf-Blind Task Force opposed making coverage optional. Sara questioned the value of the bill if coverage remained optional. Rick added that Senator Joy San Buenaventura believed the bill had a better chance of passing with the optional provision.

Sara asked whether Medicare covers hearing aids. Stephen explained that Medicare Advantage plans provide limited coverage, but traditional Medicare does not. Rick emphasized that the broader issue is ensuring adequate coverage, given the high cost of hearing aids. Stephen also questioned how much impact a mandatory coverage requirement would have, since the State does not regulate Medicare. Shelly expressed uncertainty about what the bill would ultimately accomplish.

- 2025 Caregiver Tax Credit Bill (HB701 HD3 SD2/SB879) – Bill asked for clarification on the difference between the 2025 Caregiver Tax Credit bills (HB701 HD3 SD2 / SB879) and the 2026 Caregiver Tax Credit bills (HB1972 / SB2863). Cristina explained that the

2025 bills require EOA to administratively verify caregiver expenses, which would require an additional staff position. Gary noted that last year's proposed tax credit was \$5,000, while the 2026 bills propose a \$3,000 credit. He added that supporting both bills is helpful because the administrative requirements for EOA could still be changed in conference.

Bill commented that EOA does not handle tax functions. Gary responded that the core purpose of the bill is to provide unpaid family caregivers with a tax credit to reduce their tax burden.

Cristina added that the Department of Taxation, in its testimony, stated it can process the tax credits but is not equipped to determine which expenses are legitimate. Stephen agreed that the committee should support both bills if they continue to move forward. Marilyn suggested supporting the intent and purpose of the bills while requesting that another agency administer the program. Gary agreed to align last year's bill with this year's version.

#### V. Legislative Handouts

The following handouts were distributed to attendees. Available links to the handouts are listed on the agenda.

1. State Council on Developmental Disabilities: 2026 Legislative Priorities
2. Legislative Resources
  - 2026 Hawai'i Directory of Public Officials
  - [2026 Session Calendar](#)
  - [Which Bills Apply to my Bill?](#)
  - [Use Your Voice at the Legislature](#)
  - [Communicating w/ Hawai'i State Legislators: Tips for Success](#)
  - [What Does It Take for a Bill to Become Law?](#)
  - [Tips on Testimony](#)
  - [How to...Find Bills](#)
  - [How to...Set Up a Measure Tracking List](#)
  - [How to... Submit Testimony](#)
  - [How to...Receive Hearing Notices by Email](#)
  - [2025-2026 Legislative Directory: Email, Room, & Phone Directory](#)
  - [2025-2026 House of Representatives: Leadership & Committee Assignments](#)
  - [2025-2026 Senate: Leadership & Committee Assignments](#)
  - **[Public Access Room](#)**  
State Capitol Room 401  
Phone: (808) 587-0478  
[par@capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:par@capitol.hawaii.gov)

Cristina noted that the EOA Legislative Tracking Sheet was emailed to committee members and reminded everyone that it is a working draft to be finalized over the weekend. She encouraged members to contact the Public Access Room with

questions about bill status, using the legislative website, or other legislative matters.

- VI. Suggested Agenda Items for the Next Meeting
  - A. HB1965, related to Primary Provider Protection
  - B. Uniform Health Care Directive bill

Chair Rick encouraged members to email him for additional agenda items for the March meeting.

- VII. Announcements
  - 1. RAC (Recognition & Awards) Committee meeting held remotely via Zoom and was scheduled on Thursday, February 5 @ 9:30am.
  - 2. PABEA Meeting scheduled Friday, January 9th at 12pm. Hybrid meeting held in person in the EOA Large Conference Room 406 and remotely via Zoom.
  - 3. Kupuna Caucus meeting scheduled for Friday, January 9th at 2pm via Zoom.

The next PABEA Legislative Committee meeting is scheduled for **Friday, March 6<sup>th</sup> from 9:30-11am**. Meetings are held in person in the EOA Large Conference Room 406 and remotely via Zoom.

Meeting adjourned at 11:11 A.M.

*Respectfully submitted by Cristina Valenzuela*