



Hope Bennett, Chair
Caroline Kunitake, Vice-Chair
Jennifer Li Dotson, Member
Valerie Lam, Member
Helen Stewart, Member
Renee Sonobe Hong, Ex-Officio

Honolulu County Committee on the Status of Women *Kōmike Kāko 'o Wāhine o ke Kalana 'o Honolulu*

CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

925 Dillingham Boulevard, Suite 200 • Honolulu, Hawai'i 96817

MEETING MINUTES

Friday, April 4, 2025

1:00 p.m.

Kapālama Hale, Conference Room 260
925 Dillingham Boulevard, Honolulu, Hawai'i
Via ZOOM

1. Call to Order

Committee Members present: Hope Bennett, Caroline Kunitake, Jennifer Li Dotson, Valerie Lam, Helen Stewart and Renee Sonobe Hong

Staff Resources Personnel for the Committee present at the meeting:
Shane Akagi, Administrator, DCS, Office of Grants Management (OGM)
Rebecca Espinoza, DCS/OGM
Katherine Hutchinson, DCS/OGM
Lauren Jagla, DCS/OGM
Spenser Kunishige, DCS/OGM
Tammy Ngo, DCS/OGM
Marsha Tamura, DCS/OGM
Kathleen Kelly, Deputy Corporation Counsel, assigned to the Committee

Attendees:

Llasmin Chaine, Executive Director, Hawai'i State Commission on the Status of Women
Ana Malia Kia
Makanalani Gomes
Natalia Villegas

The meeting of the Honolulu County Committee on the Status of Women (HCCSW) was called to order by Chair Hope Bennett (Chair) at 1:04 p.m.

2. Approval of Minutes: March 7, 2025 Meeting

Chair Bennett asked for a motion to approve the Minutes of the March 7, 2025 Meeting. Vice-Chair Kunitake made the motion, Member Lam seconded. No discussion and no objections. The motion was passed unanimously.

3. Public Testimony on all Agenda Items

There was no oral (in person or online) testimony or written testimony for this meeting.

4. Administrative Update from the Department of Community Services

Mr. Akagi shared with the Committee that all recommendations for interested candidates were forwarded to the Mayor's Chief of Staff. Chair Bennett inquired about the budget, to which Mr. Akagi clarified that the budget review is ongoing and that HCCSW funding request remains intact, despite broader discussions and adjustments happening due to potential federal cut backs. He outlined the ongoing budget process, with the final budget expected to be approved in June.

Member Dotson joined 1:13pm

5. Update on SB 1202, SB 350, HB 549 and HB 692

Chair Bennett shared that she submitted testimony for HB 549 and HB 692 and both bills remain active. Vice-Chair Kunitake shared that she submitted testimony for SB 1202. She explained that the bill passed through the necessary Committees and has been enrolled to the Governor. Member Lam provided an update on SB 350 stating that the bill passed its first House reading and a procedural notice was submitted to the Governor. While there are no hearings currently scheduled, the Committee agreed that Member Lam continue to track the bill and wait for further action before submitting testimony. The Committee discussed the importance of planning ahead for the fast-moving Legislative process and emphasized the value of including Legislative tracking resources in future orientation materials.

6. FOR DISCUSSION AND ACTION: Support for Paid Family Leave Bills HCR 179 / HR 175 and SCR 145 / SR 117

The committee discussed a Paid Family Leave resolution that Hawai'i Children's Action Network (HCAN) introduced after the Paid Family Leave bill died. Vice-Chair Kunitake shared that the resolution has not yet been scheduled for a hearing. Member Lam motioned for the Committee to support Paid Family Leave resolutions, Vice-Chair Kunitake seconded. No discussion and no objections. The motion was passed unanimously.

Member Lam motioned to appoint a Committee Member to track the Paid Family Leave resolutions and present the Committees position on it. Vice-Chair Kunitake seconded. No discussion and no objections. The motion was passed unanimously. Vice-Chair Kunitake volunteered to track the Paid Family Leave resolution and

present the Committees position. Chair Bennett concluded the discussion with appreciation for Vice-Chair Kunitake's willingness to take on the task.

Ex-Officio Member Sonobe Hong left the meeting at 1:45pm

7. FOR DISCUSSION AND ACTION: Posting Paid Family Leave Report on the Hawaii State Commission on the Status of Women website

A motion was approved at the last meeting allowing authority for the Hawai'i State Commission on the Status of Women to post the Paid Family Leave poll results onto their website. Ms. Chaine, agreed to post the poll results when its ready to be shared.

8. FOR DISCUSSION AND ACTION: Allowing Committee Members Who Track Bills to Reach Out to Other Organizations and County Committees to Solicit Support

Vice-Chair Kunitake shared her experience with SB 1202, stating that there was little outside support and stressed the need for better coordination with other organizations ahead of future legislative sessions. Chair Bennett asked Ms. Kelly for clarification regarding Committee Members independently reaching out to nonprofits or other organizations to encourage testimony. Ms. Kelly confirmed that Committee Members are able to reach out without needing formal authority, as long as they don't misrepresent the Committee's official stance. Ms. Kelly shared that Committee Members are free to encourage others to submit testimony and no formal action or formal motion needed.

9. FOR DISCUSSION AND ACTION: Development of an HCCSW Orientation Binder

The Committee discussed creating a clear and defined onboarding process for new members. Vice-Chair Kunitake proposed drafting an orientation binder to guide future Committee Members by collaborating with the Hawai'i State Commission on the Status of Women and other County Committees. Member Lam made a motion to appoint Vice-Chair Kunitake to draft an orientation binder for HCCSW and collaborate with the Hawai'i State Commission on the Status of Women and other County Committees as well as illicit feedback and collaborate with current HCCSW Members. Vice-Chair Kunitake seconded. No discussion and no objections. The motion was passed unanimously.

10. Update from the Hawaii State Commission on the Status of Women

Ms. Chaine shared plans to strengthen collaboration between the Hawai'i State Commission, County Committees, and the University of Hawai'i Commission on the Status of Women. She shared plans to have a Member from the Hawai'i State Commission attend HCCSW meetings regularly and mentioned their agenda will have a standing agenda item for County updates. She encouraged mutual participation and collaboration, especially during legislative sessions.

11. FOR DISCUSSION AND ACTION: Area of Focus Topics for Upcoming Year: Youth Leadership Initiative, Advocacy Day

Chair Bennett updated the Committee on youth leadership initiatives, noting outreach to the Girl Scouts of Hawaii was unsuccessful but highlighted the Girls Talk Back program as a potential model. She proposed exploring an Advocacy Day at the State Capitol, inspired by similar efforts in other states, to engage the public and potentially involve youth. Ms. Chaine supported the idea and suggested partnering on a Girls Day event where high school juniors shadow female Legislators. The Committee expressed support and Chair Bennett will collaborate with Ms. Chaine and report back to the Committee. No action to this agenda item is needed at this time.

12. FOR DISCUSSION: Agenda Setting for the Next Meeting

Committee Members were encouraged to email the DCS office or Chair Bennett with agenda items they may want to add on the agenda for the next meeting. Chair Bennett thanked Vice-Chair Kunitake for her helpful contributions.

13. Next Meeting: May 2, 2025

The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, May 2, 2025 at 1:00 p.m. as a remote meeting via Zoom with an in-person location at Kapālama Hale.

14. Adjournment

With no further items on the agenda, Chair Bennett adjourned the meeting at 2:30 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

SHANE AKAGI, OGM Administrator

APPROVED:

CAROLINE KUNITAKE, Vice-Chair

DATE
