



## **KOKUA COUNCIL LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES - 2009**

**ADVOCATE: Kokua council takes the lead in advocacy. The Council will testify and work to generate numbers of supporters to appear and/or testify on behalf of the matter. (No more than four issues.)**

### **LONG TERM CARE/HOME FOR LIFE**

1. **SUPPORT CAREGIVERS;** coordination of access to services (One-Stop Center), community based services, workforce development. Lead Advocates, Harry Mattson, 943-1857, Laura Manis, 597-8838
2. **ASSURE QUALITY OF CARE,** transparency of results of announced visits to care homes & foster homes., case management oversight, LTC Ombudsman. Lead Advocate, Lyn Moku, 532-0806
3. **CASH AND COUNSELING,** Continue support for task force devising plans to help fund caregivers. Lead Advocate, Jim Shon, 946-7878
4. **PAID FAMILY LEAVE TASK FORCE,** see other side. Lead Advocate, Jim Shon, 946-7878

**SUPPORT: Someone else takes the lead, the Council lead advocate will send in written testimony**

1. **AFFORDABLE HOUSING.** A shortage of rental units and new luxury housing has driven up prices, making them unaffordable for many people. Homelessness is increasing. Many government apartments are empty waiting funding for repairs. Lead Advocate, Tony Lenzer, 261-2095
2. **PREPAID FUNERAL TRUST REFORM,** Require increased refunding if policy is cancelled, require licensing of salespersons, more information to family members. Lead Advocate, Laura Manis, 597-8838.
3. **CENTER ON AGING,** assuring reestablishment of Center at U.H. for research and training. Lead Advocate, Tony Lenzer, 261-2095
4. **GRANDPARENTS SUPPORTING GRANDCHILDREN,** See other side, Lead Advocate, Laura Manis, 597-8838

**ENDORSE: The Council will sign off on testimony, petitions, or letters of support.**

1. **UNIVERSAL HEALTH CARE.** 10% of Hawaii's people now have no health insurance. Premiums are rising; benefits are decreasing. Lead Advocate, Marilyn Seely, 235-5466.
2. **SUPPORT FOR SENIOR CENTERS.** Harry Mattson, 943-1857

**INFORMATION ONLY.** Matters can be brought to the Council for informational purposes. The Council agrees to hear the issue, but declines to take a formal position on the matter i.e., LTC Commission, Health Insurance Regulation, Bed and Breakfast Issues, Pedestrian Safety, Department of Aging, Drug Policy Reform, Gambling, Prison reform.

**Kokua Council will also follow issues we have supported in the past.**

**See other side for a more detailed description of priorities.**

**(over)**

## SENIOR ADVOCATES WORKING TOGETHER

Kokua Council and other Senior advocacy groups are working together as a way to strengthen our effectiveness with public policy makers. The Senior Advocacy groups are Hawaii Alliance of Retired Americans (HARA); Policy Advisory Board for Elderly Affairs (PABEA); Faith in Action for Community Equity (FACE), Hawaii Caregiver Coalition (HCC), Hawaii Aging Advocates Coalition (HAAC), Na Tutu, Grandparents Coalition and PHOCUSED. Our 2009 Priorities are written in general terms so that we can be flexible as the bills are introduced for hearings later. However, as of this printing, we know that the Legislative Kupuna Caucus will be introducing certain bills covered under our designation of Long Term Care/Home for life. Listed below are our priorities described in greater detail.

### UNDER LONG TERM CARE/HOME FOR LIFE

#### ADVOCATE

**Public posting of annual care home and foster home assessments.** We are supporting a recommendation by the **Ombudsman's office** that the public have access to the same kind of information as is available for nursing homes. Residents and potential residents and their caregivers should have information relevant to quality of care in making their decisions.

**Policies to assist in balancing employment and caregiving.** In the 2008 Session, the Legislature considered the model of **paid family caregiver leave** in California and a recent one enacted in New Jersey, which provide for paid leave through the Temporary Disability Insurance program based on employee contributions. A taskforce has been working to examine the feasibility of a similar policy and to work out details for a proposal for Hawaii. A bill is needed to extend the taskforce and provide some resources for more data collection.

**Financial support for family caregivers.** A contract was executed to design a **cash and counseling** program for non-Medicaid caregivers. Funds could be allocated either to directly to caregivers or a 3<sup>rd</sup> party to be used for services the caregiver would choose with help from a case manager. A demonstration project is being proposed and external grant money being pursued to implement the project.

**One-Stop Center.** The Hilo Center will open in February, Oahu's virtual site is still being developed. Both Hilo and Oahu need state funds to continue.

#### SUPPORT

**Grandparents raising their grandchildren.** The 2008 Legislative Session established a taskforce to examine the issues and develop proposals for legislation. Bills are being proposed to address a number of legal issues, such as legal guardianship, and other problems in education, health care, respite, housing and financial resources

**UH Center on Aging Research and Education (CARE).** The UH Center on Aging has ceased to offer its degree programs due to the lack of financial resources to hire faculty. While a \$2 million grant was gifted to the university only \$100,000 is available each year. More funds are needed for the recruitment of a director for UH CARE and the development of the curriculum. We expect a bill will be introduced to add funds to the University budget for this purpose.

**Affordable Housing.** A shortage of rental units and new luxury housing has driven up prices, making them unaffordable for many people. Homelessness is increasing. Many government apartments are empty waiting funding for repairs. Lead Advocate,