

#160

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State Senator and Hawai'i Air National Guard Lieutenant Colonel Kai Kahele has voluntarily answered the call to state active duty for Hawai'i's COVID-19 response. In compliance with federal government regulations, Team Kahele will continue Kai's campaign for Congress while he is serving his mission. This questionnaire was completed by the Kahele for Congress campaign staff.

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Page 1: Candidate Information

**Q1**

Office You are Seeking

U.S. Representative, Hawai'i CD-2

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**Q2**

Party

Democratic Party

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**Q3**

First Name

Kai

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**Q4**

Last Name

Kahele

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**Q5**

Email

info@kaikahele.com

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**Q6**

Phone

808-783-4069

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**Q7**

Campaign Website

kaikahele.com

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Page 2: COVID-19 Response and Recovery

**Q8**

What steps do you think our state and/or counties should take to aid this recovery? Some examples could include how you think federal funds should be spent, diversifying the state's economy, etc.

If elected, Kai's first priority is to improve the economic conditions in Hawai'i. Economic stability is a daily, primary concern for every family in Hawai'i made worse by the current COVID-19 crisis. In terms of immediate recovery, Kai will work closely with our federal delegation and state leaders to obtain the necessary relief for Hawai'i's working-class families and small businesses while ensuring that we properly address public health concerns. In the long-term, Kai plans to create more economic opportunities in all sectors—from agriculture to health care. For example, as a state senator, Kai introduced a bill directing the State of Hawai'i's Department of Agriculture to develop a strategic plan that would double local food production and increase food exports.

Additionally, we need to increase public sector spending to help stabilize the economy and local businesses. Specifically, Kai believes that 1) the state should take advantage of the historically low interest rates and maximize Hawai'i's participation in the Federal Reserve Debt Purchasing Program; 2) we should invest in our nation's infrastructure—including affordable housing, rural broadband, and school infrastructure; 3) we should embrace military construction spending, which is a critically important revenue stream for Hawai'i's households and businesses.

Moving forward, Kai will also help Hawai'i meet the standards and guidelines to reopen Hawai'i as a travel destination among "international travel bubbles," similar to how Australia, New Zealand, Japan, and Korea are promoting their tourism and travel.

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**Q9**

Please share some of the efforts you have led or participated in response to COVID-19.

Kai's military background has prepared him to always be ready for the call of duty and to serve the community. When the State of Hawai'i activated Hawai'i National Guard units to assist with the state's COVID-19 relief efforts, Kai volunteered to serve on active duty in his capacity as a lieutenant colonel with the Hawai'i Air National Guard, U.S. Air Force. Whether it is joining COVID-19 response missions or leading a grassroots movement to stop the Big Island's spread of dengue fever in his hometown of Miloli'i back in 2015, you can count on Kai to exercise leadership when it is needed most.

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**Q10**

Respondent skipped this question

Additional thoughts/comments:

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Page 3: Tobacco and E-Cigarette Regulations

**Q11**

Respondent skipped this question

What policies do you think the state and/or counties should enact to reduce tobacco and e-cigarette use?

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**Q12**

Please indicate your position on the following policies:

- |   |                         |
|---|-------------------------|
| Apply a tobacco tax to e-cigarettes, such as a percentage of the wholesale cost or taxing e-liquid by volume. | <b>Strongly Support</b> |
| Prohibit the sale of all flavored tobacco products, including menthol cigarettes and flavored e-liquids.      | <b>Strongly Support</b> |
| Restrict online sales of e-cigarettes to tobacco retailers only, in order to curb illegal sales to minors.    | <b>Strongly Support</b> |
| Increase the tobacco tax on cigarettes to help smokers quit and prevent new users from starting.              | <b>Strongly Support</b> |
| Funds from the tobacco settlement and tobacco taxes should fund tobacco prevention and cessation efforts.     | <b>Strongly Support</b> |
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**Q13**

Additional thoughts/comments:

As a state senator, Kai sponsored and passed legislation to make the University of Hawai'i campuses smoke and tobacco free.

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Page 4: Healthy Eating + Active Living

**Q14**

What steps do you think the state and/or counties should take to ensure food security for all of Hawaii's people, and to significantly increase food self-sufficiency for our state?

As a state senator, Kai introduced and cosponsored a number of bills related to strengthening Hawai'i's food security. Kai supports establishing an agriculture accelerator program; funding the acquisition, administration, maintenance, and management of agricultural lands and irrigation systems to improve food security; and developing a strategic plan that would double local food production and increase food exports.

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**Q15**

**Respondent skipped this question**

In 2019, Hawai'i made a commitment to adopt Vision Zero, an initiative to eliminate all traffic fatalities and severe injuries, while increasing safe, healthy, equitable mobility for all. What policies and infrastructure changes should the state and/or counties make to achieve this goal?

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**Q16**

Please indicate your position on the following policies:

We must significantly increase public investment in food systems workforce development, including programs such as farm to school, agriculture and food systems education (PreK-12 and higher education), and farmer training programs. **Strongly Support**

The state should continue to invest in a Double Up Food Bucks program, which doubles the value of SNAP benefits when buying fresh, locally grown produce at participating retailers. **Strongly Support**

Enact a one-cent per-ounce fee on sugar-sweetened beverages. **Strongly Support**

Use revenue from a sugar-sweetened beverage fee for obesity prevention programs. **Strongly Support**

Make health and physical education (PE) courses a curriculum requirement, rather than an option, for middle school students. PE is currently a requirement for elementary and high school students. **Strongly Support**

Implement a red light camera program to deter red-light running and help curb traffic fatalities and injuries. **Strongly Support**

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**Q17** Respondent skipped this question

Additional thoughts/comments:

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Page 5: Oral Health

**Q18**

Please indicate your position on the following policies:

Reinstate coverage of preventative dental benefits for Adult Medicaid participants. **Strongly Support**

Fluoridation of community water supplies is an effective way to prevent tooth decay. **Strongly Support**

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**Q19** Respondent skipped this question

Additional thoughts/comments:

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Page 6: Alcohol Regulations

**Q20**

Please indicate your position on the following policies:

- |   |                         |
|---|-------------------------|
| Increase in alcohol taxes.  | <b>Oppose</b>           |
| Repeal of the alcohol takeout laws that allow people to buy and take home liquor-based mixed drinks from restaurants.                       | <b>Strongly Support</b> |
| Repeal of alcohol delivery laws that allow restaurants to deliver beer and liquor-based mixed drinks to people's homes.                     | <b>Strongly Support</b> |
| Increase in enforcement that helps ensure that youth do not access alcohol through existing laws allowing for alcohol takeout and delivery. | <b>Strongly Support</b> |
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**Q21**

Respondent skipped this question

Additional thoughts/comments:

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Page 7: Marijuana Regulations

**Q22**

Please indicate your position on the following policies:

- |   |                         |
|---|-------------------------|
| Do you support legalizing recreational marijuana sales in Hawai'i?  | <b>Strongly Support</b> |
| If recreational marijuana is formally proposed by the state, how strongly would you support that marijuana be regulated by the Department of Health?              | <b>Strongly Support</b> |
| If recreational marijuana is formally proposed by the state, how strongly would you support that the price of marijuana be regulated?                             | <b>Strongly Support</b> |
| If recreational marijuana is formally proposed by the state, how strongly would you support that the promotion and advertisement of marijuana sales be regulated? | <b>Strongly Support</b> |
| If recreational marijuana is formally proposed by the state, how strongly would you support that marijuana potency be regulated?                                  | <b>Strongly Support</b> |
| If recreational marijuana is formally proposed by the state, how strongly would you support that the number and placement of marijuana outlets be regulated?      | <b>Strongly Support</b> |
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**Q23**

Respondent skipped this question

Additional thoughts/comments:

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Page 8: Economic Justice

**Q24**

What are your immediate plans to help make Hawai'i more affordable for its residents?

Economic stability is a daily, primary concern for every family in Hawai'i. Homelessness, substance abuse, and food insecurity are all products of an economic system that has left many behind. Kai will work to see that no member of our community has to choose between buying medication and putting food on the table. Kai believes that our most vulnerable communities deserve to be properly cared for and treated with dignity. He supports a living wage that allows working-class families to get ahead and will work to address the labor shortages across the full range of occupations and skill sets. Kai also support fiscal and monetary policies that keep both interest rates and the costs of goods and services low.

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**Q25**

What is the role of government in addressing housing affordability issues and what would you do to encourage the production of more affordable homes for Hawai'i residents?

Kai supports homeownership for every family in America and believes that housing is a basic human right. As the former Executive Director of a nonprofit organization, Kai personally worked with agencies like the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to secure funding for neighbor-island housing initiatives. He will continue to work with HUD and other federal agencies to bring much needed resources to Hawai'i. This will help to ensure that Hawai'i builds an affordable housing inventory to meet the needs of our people and that the chronically homeless will have access to permanent housing with the support network they need to deal with substance abuse and mental health disorders.

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**Q26**

Please indicate your position on the following policies:

Increase the state's minimum wage in a series of annual steps to a living wage of \$17 per hour. **Strongly Support**

Create a statewide Paid Family Leave Program, which would allow up to 12 weeks for employees to provide care for a newborn, bond with a new child, or care for a family member with a serious health condition. **Strongly Support**

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**Q27**

**Respondent skipped this question**

Additional thoughts/comments:

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