



July 29, 2020

Aloha Governor Ige and Distinguished Hawai'i Leaders:

HALE Hawai'i is a grassroots organization that was created on Maui initially in response to the recent COVID-19 crisis. Hale Hawai'i's vision is to inspire hope in residents to envision a life free of COVID-19. As an island state, we have a unique opportunity to protect ourselves from the virus. If we do not, our isolation means that our people and health care systems will be easily overwhelmed, and our economy will suffer along with the people. We want to continue to be known as the Health State.

We are writing to you today to forward a petition for better quarantine enforcement (<https://sign.moveon.org/petitions/we-need-a-covid-19-free-hawai-i-and-effective-quarantine-enforcement>) that has garnered over 850 signatures in only 5 days since it was first posted. We believe this petition represents the views of the majority of Hawai'i residents – the constituents you are duty-bound to serve and protect.

The state's "honor system" quarantine requirement worked to prevent all but a handful of people from coming here for the first few months it was in effect. As a result of the quarantine and stay-home orders, our daily rate of new infections dropped to the single digits. Now, however, more and more travelers are coming here, both visitors and residents returning from mainland travel. And a much larger number are scheduled to arrive here in August because of the now-canceled plan to reopen for trans-Pacific tourism on August 1. Increasingly, tourists and returning residents are realizing that quarantine is not being effectively enforced, and they are ignoring the rules.

Ending the inter-island quarantine requirement, while helpful for those who wanted to visit family or vacation on other islands, provided a huge loophole for mainland visitors, because no checks were put in place to stop them from flying onto O'ahu and transferring to an inter-island flight. Inter-island travel appears to have been a factor in our recent rise in new cases. We want to thank Mayor Victorino for advocating to restart the inter-island quarantine, a measure we wholeheartedly support.

Other concerns that we have include the growing number of exemptions from quarantine, as well as the lack of enforcement of the rules for exempt travelers, who are supposed to quarantine except when actually working or doing essential errands. For example, a Hawaiian Airlines flight attendant is believed to have infected numerous residents at two gyms. Airline crews are at high risk for virus exposure at work, and should not be permitted to leave their lodgings during Hawai'i layovers.

We also believe the recently publicized idea about "resort bubbles" is dangerous and unworkable. A "resort bubble" would only create an environment where the virus is incubated and spread, as those at the resort would be socializing with each other and could easily catch it from each other at any point before their 14 days are up. It would create an environment very similar to cruise ships—and we have seen the danger posed by that environment. In fact, it would be worse, because unlike cruise ship crews, land-based resort workers go home to their families every day, and circulate in their communities during



their off hours. “Resort bubbles” would thus pose a huge risk not only to resort guests, but also to the surrounding communities.

We are asking our leaders to tighten quarantine requirements by following the Kauai proposed plan. (<https://halehawaii.cc/kauai-plan>) We need people to stay in designated quarantine hotels, at their own expense, so their compliance can be monitored effectively. Returning residents, inter-island travelers, and essential workers could be permitted to stay at their own lodgings instead if they consent to wearing an ankle bracelet or installing a GPS tracking app on their phones. When testing resources permit, the quarantine could terminate early for those who have tested negative twice, with the second test at least three days after the first. We are also asking that both the inter-island and trans-Pacific quarantine not be lifted unless and until community spread has been essentially eliminated, with safety benchmarks in place before announcing a date.

<https://sign.moveon.org/petitions/we-need-a-covid-19-free-hawaii-i-and-effective-quarantine-enforcement>

We know that our leaders want the best for Hawai’i’s residents, and we ask you to ensure our safety from COVID-19.

Sincerely,

*Kai Duponte, MSW*

HALE Hawai’i