



Democratic Party of Hawaii Kupuna Caucus

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A New Perspective on Economic Recovery

We, the Seniors of the Democratic Party, urge the adoption of the following policy:

No less than twenty-five percent of a Hawaii-focused economic recovery and stimulus package be devoted to maintaining and expanding the non-profit social service sector to ensure immediate positive economic impacts and to provide the quality of life our community deserves.

The Kupuna Caucus of the Hawaii Democratic Party, working with key non-profit organizations, urges public policy makers and elected officials to reassess their economic recovery strategy.

We need not embrace economic stimulus in a one dimensional, even counterproductive way. We often cut budgets and eliminate jobs in the social service sector to save money – believing they are a financial burden on our community, unlike public works projects. The Kupuna Caucus, however, agrees with economists who say social infrastructure relief also rebuilds the economy.

We believe relief for Kupuna health, economic and social needs will help the economy more rapidly than some public works projects that may require a longer lead time before people are hired.

It is economically unsound to think of jobs in the non-profit service sector not as an essential infrastructure, but as a drain on our economy, expenditures that should be limited as much as possible.

Many non-profits employ people who provide needed services for our citizens, and who immediately pour their pay checks back into the local economy. These are Hawaii's most valuable economic resources. They teach preschoolers, provide a wide range of home-based support for seniors living at home, offer case management for those in social or medical transition, prepare and deliver meals on wheels for the isolated, create mental health and substance abuse programs, lead productive activities for troubled youth...and many more. Most pertinent to economic health, they immediately spend their wages in Hawaii. They are an asset, not a debit.

It is time we stood up and valued their contribution to the community, and to the economy. It is time we recognized that this sector should NOT be reduced, but maintained and even expanded to help recovery. The economic health of our State depends on a thriving and robust service sector that moves its wages and wealth rapidly throughout the rest of the entire economy.

Many of the non-profit organizations that employ these people deliver needed services to our most vulnerable citizens – our safety net – one of the most important civic and moral obligations in an enlightened society.

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Brian Schatz, Chairman, Democratic Party of Hawaii

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