

Homelessness

1. What should the City do about homelessness which is different from what the City is doing now? For example, what is your stance on the effectiveness of sweeps? Would you continue this practice, or use a different method? Do you have an idea for a new program? Should any existing program be expanded or modified? Should any existing program be reduced or cut? How much in additional funding would it take to implement your ideas?

I support the sit-lie ban and “compassionate disruption sweeps” as law and order must be maintained; however, sufficient shelters and affordable housing must become abundant. I support the Housing First initiative and non-governmental organizations’ efforts with the chronically homeless. Affordable housing is relative to a percentage of income and household size. Developers have “skirted” affordable housing requirements in the past. That will not happen in my administration. We also must emphasize workforce housing (also referred to as middle-income housing), usually meant for apartments with average-income rents slightly above the rents required to qualify for low-income subsidies. Off-island purchases of housing units for speculation must be severely limited, and I will veto “sweetheart” deals to place money into the general fund in lieu of building affordable units. Many do not want to turn Honolulu into another Hong Kong but offer no answers for making housing affordable to buy or to rent. The tax base shrinks as more people move to affordable mainland locations. Processes must be “streamlined” and some restrictions removed to enable building up rather than out to keep our people here. Distinct areas would be designated for high-rise affordable clusters that are near jobs, have minimal visual impact, are governed by strict guidelines, and will remain affordable in perpetuity. The above does not require additional funding but will require more political cooperation between the mayor and the Honolulu City Council and a major effort to keep “special interests” from influencing decisions relative to homelessness and affordable housing.

Health

2. Reopening our economy to tourism may bring a second wave of COVID-19 infection that could be worse than the first, and that may necessitate imposing restrictions on business, travel, and activities. What is your assessment of the measures taken so far to keep Hawai‘i safe from COVID-19, and what changes, if any, would you make in approach if a second wave of COVID-19 warrants new restrictions?

This really is an issue oriented more for the State than the city/county. Any new plan for O‘ahu must be coordinated with State and Federal plans and requirements. It also must fit the needs for individuals’ planning. I would like to see TSA testing at both the departure and arrival ends of any traveler’s journey. I also will work to keep the military as a full participatory member of our island community and will use my military and legal background in working with senior officers to ensure the Services are transparent as to providing complete information on COVID-19. Obviously, our focus must be on the most vulnerable members of our island population to ensure their relative isolation and self-quarantining. Recent trends, however, indicate those at the least risk can still contract the virus so perhaps city officials should be addressing the somewhat “cavalier” attitudes of the young. If COVID-19 is still an issue next January, I will work with the Governor and the State Department of Health to determine which nations and mainland states show the most susceptibility to the virus and should, therefore, be restricted from sending tourists to Hawaii.