

**Faith Action Questionnaire**  
**Bud Stonebracker**  
**July 6, 2020**

**Environmental Justice**

Accountability Questions: Please respond only 'Yes' or 'No' to the following questions:

1. Will your administration support bills to reduce single use plastics on O`ahu? **Yes.**
2. Do you commit to creating a new culturally-grounded, sustainable tourism model that benefits local residents' quality of life? Such a model will prioritize health and prevent overcrowding, root experiences in Native Hawaiian values, and strengthen- not just market or deplete- our natural resources? **Yes.**
3. Will your administration do what is necessary to protect O`ahu's main drinking water supply from being contaminated by leaks from the 77-year old US Navy Red Hill fuel tanks? **Yes.**
4. Do you commit to increasing jobs aligned with the state's transition to a clean energy economy, especially jobs that meet or exceed the self-sufficiency standard established by DBEDT, which currently stands at \$17.63/hour?

***I am studying this issue and can commit to promoting appropriate and cost-effective clean-energy jobs that contribute to a healthy economy and environment.***

5. **Please explain and expand on your responses to the above Accountability Questions (questions 1-4). Maximum of 300 words:**

Quality of life on Oahu depends on a balance of environmental and economic health; we simply cannot build and sustain one at the expense of the other. I believe in linking economic development with eco-friendly initiatives where it makes sense. I believe our farm in Waimanalo along with other private and community efforts done in the same spirit around the island are the way forward. These models for sustainable food production make better sense for Hawaii where we currently import so much of our produce. It is tragic that we import mangos from Peru and bananas from Ecuador when we could grow nutritious, readily available fruits and vegetables here. I believe traditional farming will serve as a destination for agri-tourism. This will create jobs, lessen the impact of "city tourism" and promote a new relationship between Hawaii's keiki and kupuna.

In the interest of preserving the island's waters, I support both the ban of single-use plastics as they are a major source of ocean pollution and the careful monitoring of the Red Hill fuel tanks. Regarding the latter, the U.S. Navy owns 20 fuel tanks at Red Hill, which are located just 100 feet over an underground aquifer that provides drinking water to thousands of Central Oahu residents. Studies show the tanks have leaked as much as 200,000 gallons of fuel since the 1940s. I will join in the effort to ensure the current 20-year agreement between the Navy, EPA and Hawaii Department of Health results in measures to protect the city's water supply.

6. **Please answer the following questions with a maximum of 300 words:**

**A) What is your plan for utilizing the Office of Climate Change, Sustainability and Resiliency?**

I will carefully weigh their recommendations and implement those that are cost-effective, publicly supported, and have a legitimate, measurable impact on the island's environmental health. For example, I thought the organization's resolution to establish a food security and sustainability administrator (R19-242) was absolutely on-target. I agreed wholeheartedly with the office's claims that Hawaii was ill-prepared for a food emergency, being far too dependent on imports to sustain its population. Additionally, I'm on-board with the office's strategic plan goals of transitioning to a clean-energy fleet by 2035 and working to assure our infrastructure is able to quickly recover from natural disasters, such as tsunami and hurricanes.

**B) What is your solution for creating alternative economies to tourism on O`ahu?**

The advance toward real food independence is a significant and logical first step in diversifying the economy. Food independence will be my highest priorities. The city should also continue to pursue movie productions, bio-tech research, and clean-energy initiatives, to include increasing solar power and electric transit capabilities.

**Affordable Housing**

**Accountability Questions: Please respond only 'Yes' or 'No' to the following questions:**

7. **Affordable Housing Development.** Aloha United Way published a report which determined that 37% of Hawaii's families are ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) who work but do not earn enough to cover the basic necessities of life. These families earn \$75,000 a year or less and can only afford to pay up to \$1,500 a month for housing.  
**In view of Honolulu's critical shortage of affordable housing, do you commit to working with the State to use government land and subsidies to develop 10,000 affordable housing units a year for the ALICE population? Yes.**
8. **DPP.** The lengthy period of time it takes for the Department of Planning and Permitting to process and approve building permits drives up the cost of developing housing.  
**Will you support funding for a study of the Department of Planning and Permitting that would accomplish the following: (1) identify the reasons for the lengthy processing of applications and (2) recommend best practices to reduce processing times? If so, will you ensure the implementation of those best practices as well as funding DPP so that it is sufficiently staffed? Yes and No.** *This study would be insufficient to fix the deeper problems in the DPP. We recently saw the audit of the DPP outlining all the areas they were failing to provide adequate service to the citizens. The mayor should immediately address that audit with recommendations, reprimands or staff changes. In a business, the manager responds to the customers. The city mayor should do the same. I don't believe we need another layer of bureaucracy in the form of a formal study with recommendations. The Mayor's office should be able to make its own assessments and implement immediate changes without more years of study. However, a study into a full restructuring of the DPP, with recommendations for changes would be a study worth supporting.*
9. **Vacancy Tax.** Wealthy people who live on the mainland or in foreign countries who buy housing on O'ahu drive up the price of housing for everyone. They typically live in these homes for only

part of the year. Oakland, California passed a law designed to discourage non-residents from owning homes there. The law imposes a tax, separate from the property tax, on residential properties that are vacant for most of the year. **Would you support a tax of at least 1% of the assessed value of residential properties that are vacant for most of the year? No.**

**10. Please explain and expand on your responses to the above Accountability Questions (questions 7-9). Maximum of 300 words:**

The city must restructure the DPP to make it more responsive to the needs of the people. It can take five years for the average person to get a permit for simple home improvements or expansion, while others who have connections or pay to grease the wheels can obtain fast-track approval for large developments, some of which are unpopular with the neighborhoods they impact. There is however a better way to do business in Hawaii. Included in my plan to restructure the DPP to provide timely permitting, we will offer a two-year plan for residents to come into full compliance for non-conforming nits. Most home owners have additions that are not permitted. These nonconforming units have been handed down through "as is" home sales and through no fault of the new owners. This, coupled with the difficulty in obtaining a permits and the generally unresponsive reputation of the DPP, causes homeowners to avoid building additions or seeking new permits. I'm referring to projects that people undertake to improve and/or expand their homes without permitting because they simply couldn't wait for the multi-year approval process. This fast track back permitting plan would allow them to bring their homes into compliance, freeing them up for new loans, sales or further upgrades.

Secondly, I would ensure DPP implements recommended structural changes based on audits of its operations. The city needs to break DPP out of its long-time intransigence, forcing it to cut its response times significantly and be more flexible and equitable in its permitting process. In terms of affordable homes, the 2019 Hawaii Housing Planning Study claims Honolulu will need more than 20,000 units over the next five years to meet the needs of its citizens; this includes roughly 15,000 units for those considered income constrained. At current rates of development, we will not meet that demand. The city must open up more public land for development of low-density, affordable housing units as well as lift restrictions that prevent citizens from developing their private lands to add housing capacity. It would also help end the practice of developers advertising available low-cost housing, but locking buyers out until they can sell the units at higher prices. For our native Hawaiians, I would give them priority for affordable housing units to help relieve the obscenely lengthy waiting times on the Hawaiian Homelands list.

**11. Describe a situation where you found yourself in the minority position on a controversial issue and you advocated for what you thought was right. Maximum of 300 words:**

As a state representative for District 15 in 2003, I took on the longstanding policy of quarantining inbound pets. The policy kept our folk's dogs and cats in quarantine, away from their owners for as long as four months and cost individuals up to \$1000 per pet. The quarantine law was an ingrained tradition for roughly eight decades, and there was little interest in changing it despite the fact no pet had ever tested positive for rabies. I took up the fight, gathered supporters, and was able to get a bill passed that did away with the quarantine requirement for people who provided required vaccination documentation. It gives me

immense pride to know that I was part of an effort that grew from my love for our 'species extended family', our pets.

### **Economic Equity**

**Accountability Question: Please respond only 'Yes' or 'No' to the following question:**

12. Congress seems to be moving toward another round of coronavirus relief. In the previous round, different jurisdictions sought different degrees of input from the community to determine how their relief money would be spent. There were also varying degrees of transparency among jurisdictions to show how the money was actually spent.

**Do you commit to establishing a task force composed of community members, with substantial representation of ALICE and the unemployed population, to determine how the next round of coronavirus relief money should be spent? Do you also commit to reporting detailed plans for spending the money to the public, as well as a detailed accounting of the actual expenditures? Yes.**

13. **Please explain and expand on your response to the above Accountability Question (question 12). Maximum of 300 words:** I'm an outspoken proponent of transparency and accountability in government. As mayor, I would work to ensure any future flow of coronavirus relief money into the city would be used for its intended purposes and distributed according to federal guidelines. I would confer with any appropriate members of the community to facilitate this.

**Please respond to the following question with a maximum of 300 words:**

14. The coronavirus has started people thinking about how the environment and economy can be improved. One idea is to reduce the number of tourists and to expand other sectors of the economy. The coronavirus has also spurred thinking about how overly reliant we are on the mainland, especially for food, and that we should become more self-sufficient.

**What is your vision for creating a more self-sufficient, economically diverse Honolulu and what would you do as Mayor to work towards that vision?**

Please see my response to questions 5 and 6.

### **Homelessness**

15. **What should the City do about homelessness that 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?**

This issue requires sympathetic and creative measures that will help transition the houseless off the streets and into safer community-oriented environments. Public-private partnerships in local communities are helping us to do this. They need more assistance though. In Waimanalo, for example, we have a resident that allows more than 20 houseless people to live on her private property in a community-within-a-community she calls Hui mahi'ai 'āina. This is the kind of community-oriented activity the city should encourage and empower through funding and policy support. It works because it allows the houseless to remain within their native communities (where many have family ties) rather than forcing them into distant shelters. No top down solution to the houseless issue will work without considering local sentiments. The sit-lie ban is well-intentioned because it seeks to prevent build-up of houseless communities in

public and business areas; however, I think it is largely ineffective because the targeted population simply picks up and moves to another public area. This is the case with many of the bulldozed and clearcut areas in my neighborhood. Those people will just move to another area. It neither solves the problem nor serves the greater justice. I believe that when we support community efforts to provide shelter for those living on the streets and in the parks, then we can truly enforce the measures to move them. Once safe places in area communities are in place, the police shall enforce illegal camping vigorously.

### **Health**

- 16. 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 make in approach if a second wave of COVID-19 warrants new restrictions?**

I agreed with the state's early measures to hinder the virus' initial spread, and I think we did a good job keeping the numbers low. However, at this point, further lock-down measures are overkill. We can open up travel, business, and school without many of the prophylactic mandates thus far issued. Many of our hotels will simply not open with the requirements they are placed under. We must shed these ideas and embrace the science which tells us that this virus will pass through largely asymptomatic. Most young people are naturally strong enough for Covid19 to pass through with mild symptoms on par with the flu. Indeed, only 1 in 5 of all covid deaths were in the working age under 65 years old. 80% of those who died were older than 65 which means the virus passed through only mildly effecting the working age while hitting the elderly harder. We can open confidently by specific guarding after those in the vulnerable age groups.

We simply cannot survive a long-term depression of our economy. We are being suffocated by a blind madness to stop a virus that must run its course as all viruses do. Schools will suffocate under their new mandates. The students will suffer along with the teachers. The parents will not be happy. The businesses will struggle under the new capacity rules and mask regulations. Every citizen will suffer a loss of civil rights as their phone is tracking them and giving your private data to the government. These are serious losses of civil rights which will have far graver impacts on our society than the coronavirus. Government mandates and lockdowns are the problem now more so than the coronavirus.

Our Hawaii economy is much like an aquarium with thousands of diverse fish and coral features. But in its current state, our aquarium isn't equipped to sustain its own ecosystem and produce food for the fish; thus, we have to add food from the outside. We need tourism and the thousands of jobs and billions of dollars that comes with it. Do we have to sustain it at the same busy levels we have seen? Maybe not; but if we don't open up to tourism at a substantial level, the city may never recover. There will be an exodus and long term depression. Property values will plummet and tax revenues will sag. Will the city try to raise taxes to uphold current spending? Not on my watch. And the emergency lockdown mandates have another ill effect.

Science bears out that lock-downs are negatively affecting citizens' mental and physical health. Crime will rise along with suicide and drug use. Homelessness will increase and the city will begin to look like a ghost town. Stores will be boarded up. Graffiti, violent crime and social problems will rise. This does not bode well in a community that could lose funding for its police force. We can avoid this only if we take a sober look at our situation and make the needed changes.

I believe we can open our economy and do it safely. We will monitor the proverbial curve by our contact with local hospitals. If we see rises or trends in the wrong direction we will offer strong recommendations for our people. They are smart enough to know when to be careful. Additionally, as we monitor the number of COVID cases, we can adjust the level at which tourism-related businesses operate based on spikes or decreases, and severity of cases. Keep in mind that a majority of people who contract coronavirus experience only mild symptoms, and in many cases, are asymptomatic. We must avoid making vital policy decisions based on media induced panic and politicians rather than scientific data and practicing doctors.

#### **Public Safety**

- 17. If elected, what is your plan to reform and strengthen accountability within the HPD, and with the larger community? Do you support the concept of community-based policing? If so, what steps would you take to implement it?**

Hawaii's police have been a shining example of non-discrimination in our nation. We haven't seen anywhere near the racial tension problems that have arisen in many U.S. cities. We want to keep it that way locally by policing with aloha. While our officers have done well, they need further support and training. Right now they are under extreme scrutiny in Honolulu, even with current bills in the legislature, and much of it is without due process.

Reform does, however need to come in law enforcement. And those in law enforcement know what needs reforming. They must be given support in the process of reform by having a seat at the table. Far too often politics gets a seat at the table instead of the cop on the street. We need to listen to what the officers have to say. The Honolulu Police Commission has lost a few members recently. Two quit in frustration that they were not being listened to and another, for altogether different reasons resigned as her husband was running for mayor, a curious implication. We need closure from the recent scandal that rocked our department as well as added transparency moving forward.

#### **Rail**

- 18. In light of the shortfalls in funding rail, are you in favor of reducing the length of the rail line, or are you in favor of ending at Ala Moana Center, as planned? If so, how would you get the funding needed to address the shortage?**

HART estimates the cost to finish the rail project's most difficult stretch – from Middle Street to Ala Moana – will cost only \$444 million. This isn't much when compared to the project's overall cost of \$9 billion. However, given the project's track record, it is not unreasonable to expect this figure to balloon exponentially given the complexity and time it will take to work through the downtown area. By curbing the rail's last four miles and ending it at Middle Street – at least for the next several years – the city can get the rail up and running sooner to relieve traffic between West Oahu and Honolulu. We will fill the gap with express bus service from Middle Street to Waikiki, Town, and Ala Moana. This action would us allow re-purpose funds to road

repair and water system upgrades, and allow the island to “heal” economically for a period of time. We may find that future advances in transportation technology (i.e. self-driving cars) and a less-tourism-dependent economy may eliminate the need for the rail to push into the downtown area. If, however, Honolulu citizens see the need for the final stretch, the city could seek the remainder of the federal commitment (\$750 million) to resource it.

**Closing Question: Please respond with only ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ to the following question:**

**Accountability**

19. The focus of today's event is accountability. Will you commit to providing regular updates for Faith Action and the rest of the community, and meet with Faith Action as appropriate on your progress regarding your commitments made here today? **Yes.**