

Hawaii

McKelvey Booted From Chairmanship In Rare Mid-Session Shake-Up

After hours of closed-door wrangling, three House chairmanships are changed in a move opposed by at least nine lawmakers.

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By Chad Blair    / March 13, 2017

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Rep. Angus McKelvey was removed from his chairmanship of the House Consumer Protection and Commerce Committee on Monday after hours of behind-the-scenes networking.

House Speaker Joe Souki acknowledged that some lawmakers had raised [“questions” about McKelvey](#), but didn’t elaborate.

“We’re always secretive,” Souki told reporters after the floor session. “It’s part of being a legislator.”

Some of McKelvey’s colleagues told Civil Beat over the weekend that some members were upset about his not consulting with them before pushing certain bills out of his committee, including a [pesticide regulation bill](#) last week.



Rep. Angus McKelvey talks to another lawmaker. Monday. In a rare mid-session move, McKelvey was ousted as chairman of the Consumer Protection and Commerce Committee.

Asked if the pesticide bill had anything to do with the musical chairs, Souki again emphasized that it was only a reassignment.

Why McKelvey amended the measure is unclear.

But Ashley Lukens, director of the [Hawaii Center for Food Safety](#), said after the vote Monday, “I do not think that Angus amended the bill to address the concerns of my food safety advocates. I think he amended the bill to kill it, which is precisely what the agrochemical industry needed to happen.”

Hello, Higer Ed

McKelvey, a Maui Democrat, will now chair the Higher Education Committee. He replaces Justin Woodson, who moved to head the Education Committee.

Longtime Education Committee Chair Roy Takumi takes the place of McKelvey chairing the Consumer Protection and Commerce Committee.

“All three of them look forward to working in their respective committees, and with respective chairs, and it was mutually acceptable by all members,” said Souki.

Not quite.

Nine members voted “no” on a voice vote to make the changes: Republicans Cynthia Thielen, Andria Tupola, Gene Ward and Bob McDermott, and Democrats Sharon Har, Jimmy Tokioka, Isaac Choy, Sam Kong and Speaker Emeritus Calvin Say.



Rep. Roy Takumi during Monday’s unusual floor session. The longtime chair of the Education Committee now leads the Consumer Protection and Commerce Committee.

changes.

At least 26 signatures were needed for the resolution to be floated. Souki said the House would not share who those signatures belonged to.

McKelvey himself was not around when the vote finally came, though he was on the floor earlier in the afternoon.

Souki characterized the unusual power shift in the middle of the session as one that is beneficial to all. A fellow Maui lawmaker, Souki also described McKelvey as “a very good friend.”

Thielen praised McKelvey’s work as CPC chairman, calling him fair, intelligent and measured.

After several abrupt floor recesses and an hour-long break, House Majority Leader Scott Saiki introduced a resolution to effect the committee

Pressed by reporters, Souki said the decision to remove McKelvey came last week.

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