

Politics

Campaign Cash Flowed To Hawaii Lawmakers As Hot Topics Debated

Lawmakers may not have settled the rail tax issue, but they did hold a lot of fundraisers during the session.

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By Chad Blair    / May 15, 2017

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May 3 was an important day for the Legislature, and a big news day in Hawaii.

Honolulu Mayor Kirk Caldwell and the other three county mayors urged Gov. David Ige [to extend the legislative session](#) so that lawmakers could reach agreement on legislation to pay for the Honolulu rail project.

Later that day, Ige said he would [do no such thing](#) until the state House and Senate come up with a rail tax plan that could pass.

By early evening, [rumors were flying](#) that Sen. Jill Tokuda, chairwoman of the Ways and Means Committee, and Speaker Joe Souki [would lose their posts](#).

In short time, the talk became fact.

What most people probably did not know was that 12 legislators, including Tokuda, were holding fundraisers that same evening. Honolulu may not have a way to pay to complete rail, but politicians still raise campaign cash even in the midst of political crisis.



A joint fundraiser flier that asked for donations of \$100.

Earlier this year Civil Beat wrote about all the legislators who raised money from the beginning of the session in [mid-January through March 21](#). This article lists those who raised money from March 22 through May 3, the day before the session adjourned.

Raising money for political campaigns while deciding the fate of hundreds of bills is not illegal, even though legislators are showered with donations from special interests. But some seem to recognize that it raises ethical questions.

Once again, a few lawmakers introduced a bill this year to stop the practice. But [Senate Bill 813](#), sponsored by Sens. Russell Ruderman, Les Ihara, Will Espero and Gil Riviere, was never heard.

Freshmen Reps. [Nadine Nakamura](#), [Chris Todd](#) and [Daniel Holt](#) each planned, but later canceled, fundraisers April 12. Nakamura listed Sherry Menor-McNamara, head of Chamber of Commerce Hawaii, as the person in charge of the fundraiser.

But Nakamura, Todd and Holt ended up raising money together May 1 at HASR Bistro, along with two other freshmen representatives, Sean Quinlan and Cedric Gates. Each asked for \$50.

Reps. [Kaniela Ing](#) and [Justin Woodson](#) held a fundraiser March 21 at Mandalay restaurant, with suggested donations ranging from \$25 to \$2,000. They were not included in the previous fundraiser story, as the notices were not posted online at the time the article was published.

State Legislators' Campaign Fundraisers, March 22 – May 5

Name	Fundraiser Location	Date	Amount
Rep. Richard Onishi	Ground Zero	Mar. 22	\$50 – \$1,000
Rep. Cedric Gates	Mandalay Restaurant	Mar. 22	\$100
Sen. J. Kalani English	Oahu Country Club	Mar. 22	\$250
Sen. Maile Shimabukuro	Mandalay Restaurant	Mar. 22	\$100 – \$1,000
Rep. Sylvia Luke	Oahu Country Club	Mar. 23	\$200
Rep. Ty Cullen	Oahu Country Club	Mar. 23	\$200
Rep. Gregg Takayama	Mandalay Restaurant	Apr. 12	\$50

Name	Fundraiser Location	Date	Amount
Rep. Linda Ichiyama	Mandalay Restaurant	Apr. 12	\$50
Rep. Mark Hashem	Mandalay Restaurant	Apr. 12	\$50
Sen. Glenn Wakai	WCIT Architecture	Apr. 12	\$100
Sen. Clarence Nishihara	WCIT Architecture	Apr. 12	\$100
Rep. Roy Takumi	Morton's	April 17	\$150
Rep. Sylvia Luke	MW Restaurant	Apr. 18	\$500
Rep. Scott Saiki	MW Restaurant	Apr. 18	\$500
Rep. Lauren Matsumoto	Pacific Club	Apr. 18	\$100 – \$250
Rep. Matt LoPresti	Mandalay Restaurant	Apr. 20	\$50 – \$1,000
Rep. Joy San Buenaventura	Mandalay Restaurant	Apr. 20	\$50 – \$1,000
Rep. Lynn DeCoite	Mandalay Restaurant	Apr. 20	\$50 – \$1,000
Rep. Jarrett Keohokalole	Mandalay Restaurant	Apr. 20	50 – \$1,000
Rep. Joe Souki	Wolfgang's Steakhouse	Apr. 25	\$1,000
Rep. Sean Quinlan	Mandalay Restaurant	Apr. 25	\$100 – \$1,000

Name	Fundraiser Location	Date	Amount
Rep. Nadine Nakamura	HASR Bistro	May 1	\$50
Rep. Chris Todd	HASR Bistro	May 1	\$50
Rep. Daniel Holt	HASR Bistro	May 1	\$50
Rep. Cedric Gates	HASR Bistro	May 1	\$50
Rep. Sean Quinlan	HASR Bistro	May 1	\$50
Sen. Jill Tokuda	Pacific Club	May 3	\$150
Sen. Roz Baker	Pacific Club	May 3	\$150
Rep. Calvin Say	Jade Dynasty	May 3	\$100
Rep. Sharon Har	Jade Dynasty	May 3	\$100
Rep. Jimmy Tokioka	Jade Dynasty	May 3	\$100
Rep. Ken Ito	Jade Dynasty	May 3	\$100
Rep. Sam Kong	Jade Dynasty	May 3	\$100
Rep. Cindy Evans	Hukilau Honolulu	May 3	\$100
Rep. John Mizuno	Hukilau Honolulu	May 3	\$100
Rep. Dee Morikawa	Hukilau Honolulu	May 3	\$100
Rep. Angus McKelvey	Hukilau Honolulu	May 3	\$100
Rep. Richard Creagan	Hukilau Honolulu	May 3	\$50 – \$1,000

Source: [Hawaii Campaign Spending Commission](#)

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