



2019 Election Overview

The NCO is happy to announce that we have reached new milestones this year with the 2019 Neighborhood Board Elections. Some notable achievements include having 556 candidates, which is a 2.8% increase from 2017 and the second most in NCO history, a 10.26% voter participation rate, which is the highest since the elections went online in 2009, and having 63 contested races compared to 45 in 2017. We also filled 406 Board seats, 10 more than the 2017 Elections.

This year, there were 18,450 votes cast from a total of 179,748 ballots distributed. The decrease in total votes cast was due to large districts such as Kalihi, Waikiki, Hawaii Kai, Salt Lake, and Mililani having uncontested races, meaning that a ballot was not be sent to voters in that area.

Coming off of one of the lowest voter turnouts in State election history, the NCO was concerned that this would affect participation with the Neighborhood Boards. However, through the tremendous outreach efforts by the NCO staff and the steadfast support from the community, it is evident that grass-roots democracy is thriving.



Message from the Executive Director



Aloha,

With the start of the new board term in July 2019, the NCO is looking forward to working with new and familiar faces. We would like to congratulate all newly elected board members, and thank everyone who participated as well. To those who did not get elected, do not let this discourage you. You can still engage with the Neighborhood Boards and make your voice heard. Please stay involved with your community to make Oahu the best and safest place to live.

There are currently many issues that need to be addressed, and I would like to encourage everyone in the community to take part in making a difference.

Mahalo

Shawn Hamamoto,

Executive Director

2019 Neighborhood Board Installation Ceremony

The 2019 Installation Ceremony was held on Saturday, June 29, 2019 at the Neal S. Blaisdell Center Pikake Room. Starting off the agenda was Executive Director Shawn Hamamoto with a presentation about the Neighborhood Board system, followed by a Sunshine Law training session by the Office of Information Practices, a special guest appearance by a community advocate and former Miss Universe 1997 Brook Lee, and the swearing in. Family and friends cheered as the new members were sworn in by reciting the oath of office and called up one by one. This marks the beginning of a new board term which will run from July 2019 through June 2021.



2019 Neighborhood Board Installation Ceremony



Current City and State legislators, who were former Neighborhood Board members, were invited to be recognized at the installation. State Senator Karl Rhoads, House Representative Daniel Holt, House Representative Dale Kobayashi, House Representative Stacelynn Eli, and City Councilmember Tommy Waters attended to support their communities and congratulate the newly elected members. The community greatly appreciated the attendance of our current legislators as they serve as an example of what can be achieved through engaging with the community and are role-models to many people. Mahalo for your continued support!

Introducing Miss Universe 1997: Brook Lee

The NCO recently had the pleasure and privilege of working with the one and only Brook Lee, who in 1997 captured the Miss Universe Title. After a stellar career in the entertainment industry locally, nationally and internationally, Brook moved back to Hawaii last year. Today she is host of the Modern Wahine Hawaii television series and works on other various projects.

Brook was raised with a strong civic background, and we are fortunate that she has decided to volunteer some her time to help promote our Neighborhood Board System. In addition to making guest appearances at the June Neighborhood Commission meeting and the 2019 Neighborhood Board Installation Ceremony, she has also connected NCO to many Hawaiian Civic groups as to encourage participation in our neighborhood boards.

On the horizon, Brook will be working with NCO to produce a PSA about our neighborhood boards. Brook truly has a big heart for the community, and we are grateful for her assistance and look forward to continuing to work with her!



'Ōlelo Hawai'i

At the 2019 Neighborhood Board Installation Ceremony Mr. Hailama Farden attended to watch as his wife, Mrs. Elena Farden, took the Oath of Office for her new position on the Makiki Neighborhood Board. While there he graciously provided the NCO with an impromptu 'Ōlelo Hawai'i translation of our Oath of Office which the new Board members recited as the highlight of our ceremony. Recently we had the chance to speak with him to learn more about his history with the language, and the history of 'Ōlelo Hawai'i itself.

Mr. Farden grew up with native 'Ōlelo Hawai'i speakers in his family and in high school he studied the language while attending Kamehameha Schools. Eventually, he would earn a degree in Hawaiian studies with a focus on Hawaiian language and performing arts from UH-Hilo. After graduating he became a Kumu 'Ōlelo Hawai'i at Kamehameha Schools, and over time was promoted to their Regional Director for Kona O'ahu. He was also the President of 'Ahahui 'Ōlelo Hawai'i and currently the president of the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs.

'Ōlelo Hawai'i has a tumultuous history in its own home. Once the Hawai'i Kingdom proudly taught future generations in the language and printed both 'Ōlelo Hawai'i newspapers and textbooks, however, it was banned as a medium for education in 1896. While 96 to 98 percent of the populace could read, write and speak it before, a sudden decline followed, now only 28 known original native speakers exist outside of the Ni'ihau community. Despite Kamehameha Schools implementing classes to teach 'Ōlelo Hawai'i in 1923, their program met backlash and was closed around 1931. While a cultural resurgence began in the 1960s, it wasn't until 1993 that interest in 'Ōlelo Hawai'i itself, learning and using the language, truly began to reemerge.

When talking on the phone with Mr. Farden he congratulated both the NCO and his former classmate Brook Lee for doing the Oath in 'Ōlelo Hawai'i as a means to honor the language. To that, we would like to take this time to show our appreciation for Mr. Farden's personal favor to us, his willingness to educate us further, and our ability to work together to honor this beautiful language.

NCO Engagement

NCO is continuing our efforts to promote community participation with the Neighborhood Boards. Recently, Executive Director Shawn Hamamoto presented to the Kamehameha Schools Alumni Association and the Oahu Council of the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs. The NCO was invited to speak to these organizations to inform them of the current board vacancies and increase Native Hawaiian participation with government. The NCO strives to be as inclusive as possible and welcomes anyone who is interested in serving their community.



NCO Bulletin

Hurricane Season:

The NCO would like to remind our readers to be careful as hurricane season began in June and will continue until the end of November. During this time it's imperative that everyone stay informed and stay safe. For more information we recommend visiting the City's Department of Emergency Management at www.honolulu.gov/dem and signing up for the HNL.info smartphone app.



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NeighborhoodCommission



"Aloha! I was honored to serve on both the Kaimukī and Mānoa Neighborhood Boards, and have seen the positive role the boards can play in the community. They exemplify participatory democracy at its finest!"

-Mayor Kirk Caldwell
@MayorKirkHNL

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