

United States Senate

May 13, 2021

Governor David Ige
State Capitol, Executive Chambers
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Governor Ige:

I am encouraged and optimistic about Hawaii's great progress on vaccinations and our low and dropping case counts. As we continue to work to end the COVID-19 pandemic, our main objective should be to get as many people in our state vaccinated. To accomplish this, it is time that we begin to reward the people of Hawaii for being one of the most responsible states in the country in responding to COVID-19. We should not take undue risks and we should continue to follow the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC's) guidelines, but we can take additional steps to safely lift restrictions and return to more normal life.

To that end, I urgently ask you to reevaluate your prohibition on parents and guardians watching youth sports. We already allow people on beaches, we allow gatherings in bars, and we permit other outdoor activities, but we inexplicably do not allow parents and guardians to watch their own kids play sports outside in the sunshine and open air.

Additionally, I urge you to reevaluate your prohibition on all surfing competitions and outrigger canoe paddling regattas and races and recognize the distinction between the types of large surf contests that encourage fans to gather and smaller youth competitions run by the Hawaii Surf Association (HSA). Surfing and outrigger canoe paddling are an important part of our culture, and youth should be able to safely participate in competitions, regattas, and races.

Lifting your prohibition on parents and guardians watching their kids play youth sports and youth surf and outrigger canoe paddling contests can be done while remaining consistent with public health guidelines. Furthermore, it would reward hard-working families for their exemplary behavior and advance the efforts to get everyone vaccinated. I appreciate your attention to this matter and your collaboration during the COVID-19 pandemic, and I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



BRIAN SCHATZ
United States Senator