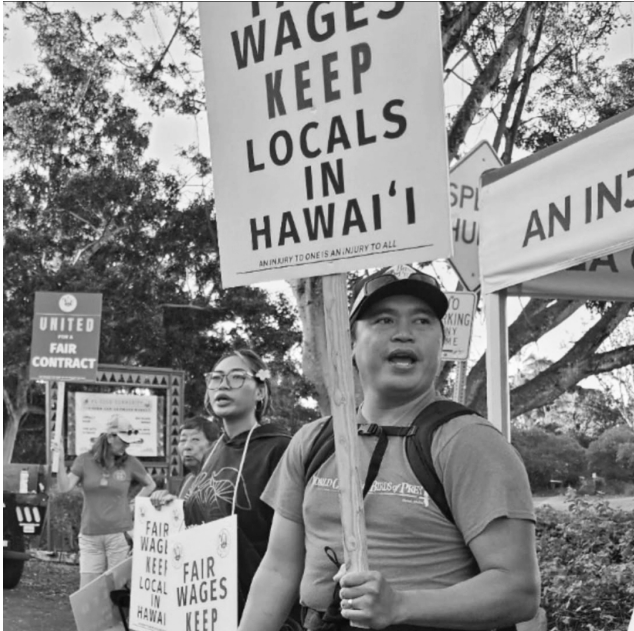




VOICE OF THE ILWU

Members Turn Up Heat on Outrigger, Hilton



Sam Varron (front) and Celena Molina make their voices heard at the Outrigger Kona Resort.

Workers at two major Big Island hotels—Outrigger Kona Resort & Spa and Hilton Waikoloa Village—are taking action to demand fair contracts. Faced with lowball wage proposals, short staffing, and employer stalling, ILWU Local 142 members have mobilized in force, using picket lines to turn up the heat on their employers.

Pickets See Young Workers

On January 30, workers at Outrigger Kona held the first picket at a Hawai‘i Division hotel in at least a decade, defying rain forecasts to send a clear message to management: they will not settle for crumbs. The company had entered negotiations in early January with the expectation that workers would roll over. Instead, union members proved they were ready to fight.

Outrigger Kona has long been one of the most anti-union hotels in Hawai‘i. While the hotel presents itself as a high-end luxury boutique resort in the unique, historic Keauhou region, its workers have faced wages that have lagged behind industry standards and other Kona coast hotels, excessive healthcare costs, and blatant disrespect from management.

Compounding this hostility, on Maui last year, Outrigger management engaged in anti-union activities at the Kā‘anapali Beach Hotel (KBH) in the middle of negotiations—a clear attempt to weaken the union’s bargaining power. On O‘ahu in 2024, the Outrigger in Waikīkī poured resources into a union-busting campaign as workers unsuccessfully attempted to unionize with Local 5.

Recognizing that the Outrigger thrives on employee fear and division, Outrigger Kona workers took action early. Hawai‘i Division leadership introduced open bargaining—a first for this unit—and conducted successful contract surveys and a mass button-up campaign. But as negotiations dragged on, management refused to budge on key issues like wages, prompting workers to escalate their fight.

Despite storm warnings, the January 30th picket saw very strong participation. Workers turned out in force for a pre-shift picket in the morning before negotiations, followed by a large afternoon picket from 3-5 p.m. The

The Jones Act: Fact vs. Myth

Recent news stories and editorials have reignited the debate over the Jones Act, the century-old maritime law requiring that goods transported between U.S. ports be carried on American-built, American-owned, and American-crewed ships.

Opponents, including Hawai‘i Congressman Ed Case and the corporate-backed Grassroot Institute of Hawaii, have claimed that the Jones Act drives up prices and limits economic opportunity for island residents. But these arguments fail to hold water. Here’s what you need to know:

Myth #1: The Jones Act Bars Foreign Vessels from Importing Goods Directly to Hawai‘i.

A common misconception is that only Jones Act-compliant vessels can dock in Hawai‘i. This is false. Foreign-flagged ships regularly arrive in Hawai‘i carrying internationally sourced goods. The Jones Act only applies to trade *between* U.S. ports, meaning that cannot load goods from an American port and deliver them to another American port. But goods

from Asia, Europe, and elsewhere can—and do—arrive on foreign vessels without restriction, directly from other countries and offload goods in Hawai‘i for Hawai‘i’s consumption. Foreign-flagged vessels are not prohibited from bringing goods into Hawai‘i.

In fact, in 2017, 61.3% of all ocean freight moving through Hawai‘i was carried by foreign ships engaged in international trade. The Jones Act does not dictate what Hawai‘i can import—it ensures that domestic shipping remains stable, secure, and beneficial to local workers.

Myth #2: The Jones Act Raises Prices for Hawai‘i Residents

One of the most persistent claims against the Jones Act is that it increases the cost of goods in Hawai‘i. However, a comprehensive 2020 study by Reeve & Associates and TZ Economics found that this is simply not true.

Their survey compared the prices of 200 consumer goods—including groceries, household items, clothing, and automobiles—at major retailers

like Costco, Home Depot, Target, and Walmart in both Honolulu and Los Angeles. The results showed that prices in Hawai‘i were, on average, only 0.5% higher than on the mainland, a negligible difference that cannot be attributed to the Jones Act alone.

In fact, 142 out of 200 items had identical prices in Hawai‘i and California, and for those that did cost more in Hawai‘i, competition between retailers often brought them back in line with mainland prices.

The study also found that shipping rates between the continental U.S. and Hawai‘i have remained flat over the last decade, even declining in real terms. By contrast, mainland trucking rates have increased by 28% in the same period. This means that Jones Act carriers have maintained steady and predictable shipping costs, helping to stabilize consumer prices rather than inflate them.

The real culprits behind Hawai‘i’s high cost of living? Housing, fuel, utilities, and medical care. These fac-

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Local Executive Council

Monday, May 5, 2025
Monday, June 2, 2025
Monday, July 7, 2025
Monday, August 4, 2025
Tuesday, September 2, 2025
Monday, October 6, 2025
Monday, November 3, 2025
Monday, December 1, 2025

Local Executive Board

Friday, June 13, 2025
Friday, September 12, 2025
Friday, December 12, 2025

Joint Local Board of Trustees & Centralized Fund Trustees

Thursday, June 12, 2025
Thursday, September 11, 2025
Thursday, December 11, 2025

ADDRESS LABEL

News from the Dispatcher



Workers pulling together: ILWU members stepped up to assist those who have been impacted by the devastating wildfires across Southern California with financial support and donating crucial supplies.

The power of solidarity ILWU’s response to the Southern California wildfires

In the wake of the devastating wildfires that swept through Southern California, the ILWU response exemplified the profound impact of our solidarity and compassion. The principle that “An Injury to One is an Injury to All” has never resonated more deeply than during this time of crisis, as members of UFCW Local 770 face job losses and displacement, due to the catastrophic consequences of the fires.

In response, ILWU Locals 13, 56, 63, 94 and the Southern California District Council (SCDC) mobilized to establish the Los Angeles Wildfire Relief Fund through the


ILWU Credit Union (Ralph Ruiz, Rob York), a testament to the power of unity in the face of adversity. The Los Angeles Wildfire Relief Fund aims to provide essential support by addressing the immediate needs of those affected by this tragedy. As funds continue to be collected, we are witness to the incredible generosity of the ILWU family. Donations have poured in not only from our local members but also from dockworkers on the East Coast, with a notable contribution of \$10,000 from the International Longshoremen’s Association (ILA). Additionally, local terminal operators within Southern California, such as Pacific Crane Maintenance Company (PCMC), have stepped up with equal generosity, matching this amount. These contributions highlight a united front for humanity, reflecting the labor movement’s spirit of cooperation during today’s difficulties.

The relief efforts conducted by the ILWU were comprehensive. Financial assistance was organized to provide necessities such as food and shelter for those affected. Additionally, the ILWU spearheaded initiatives for the collection and distribution of essential goods. Under the capable leadership of Local 56 President Albert Ramirez, Local 63 member Larry Manzo, Local 94 member and SCDC President Mickey Chavez, Local 63 and ILWU Brotherhood member Steve Linares, Local 63 OCU member and SCDC Vice President Lulu Bocox, as well Local 13 members Mike Barnhill, Jeff Mitre and officers Gary Herrera , Mario Medina , Sal DiCostanzo, an impressive response emerged.

Their collaboration not only collected generous donations, but also ensured their efficient transport to UFCW Local 770, showcasing the strength derived from cooperative

labor and community efforts. This partnership also included organizations such as Pasha Stevedoring, along with dedicated individuals like Teamster’s driver Eddie Rodriguez, exemplifies how labor unions and terminal operators can come together, reinforcing our commitment to prioritize the welfare of our communities. The actions taken by the Southern California Locals of the ILWU serve as a resounding reminder that in unity, we find strength. As we confront these challenges, let us celebrate the solidarity evident within our ranks. The bonds of brotherhood and sisterhood among labor members shine brightly, reminding us all of our collective responsibility to uplift one another amid adversity.

-Gary Herrera President Local 13



VOICE OF THE ILWU

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Chris West confirmed as first labor board member of HTA

On March 11, 2025, the Hawai‘i State Senate confirmed ILWU Local 142 President Christian West to the Hawai‘i Tourism Authority (HTA) Board, marking a significant step toward ensuring that Hawai‘i’s tourism industry serves not just corporate interests but the workers and communities that sustain it.

Since its establishment in 1998, the Hawai‘i Tourism Authority (HTA) has been governed by a Board of Directors responsible for setting policies and guiding the agency’s strategic direction. The board comprises 12 volunteer members appointed by the Governor of Hawai‘i, each serving four-year terms, with a limit of eight consecutive years.

West’s confirmation comes at a critical time for Hawai‘i’s tourism sector, which has faced mounting scrutiny over its impacts on workers, local communities, and the environment. As the leader of ILWU Local 142—which represents the majority of unionized hotel workers in the islands—West brings a perspective that has been historically underrepresented on the HTA Board.

Senators on the Committee on Economic Development and Tourism, chaired by Senator Lynn Decoite, of Moloka‘i, conducted the Senate confirmation hearing. Testimonies submitted in support of West’s nomination included those from the United Public Workers (UPW), University of Hawai‘i Professional Assembly (UHPA), Hawai‘i State AFL-CIO, Hawai‘i Government Employees Association (HGEA), UNITE HERE! Local 5, Operating Engineers Local 3, and International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Locals 1657 and 1186.

West took the hot seat, answering a number of questions from Senator Donna Mercado Kim (Senate District 14, O‘ahu) and Senator Glenn Waikai (Senate District 15, O‘ahu). Senator Wakai expressed his concern for a better tourism model. “When you look at tourism today, it’s a 21 billion dollar industry. So as we grow tourism, how do we make sure that it’s not just investment firms and wall street tycoons that are benefiting from tourism but how are local people really gonna take a bigger share of the benefits of the growth in tourism?”

West responded highlighting his experience in struggling with big hotels over this very issue. “In my opinion, and I have a strong opinion about it, if I want to raise my children here I should be able to do that. When we have companies that are making their money here in Hawai‘i but don’t necessarily reside here, I think that where organizations like ours come into play to make sure that it’s not a place where people come and exploit our resources and our local people to make money and not to leave their share back here with our workers.”

West aims to apply the logics of the union to advocating for policies that distribute tourism’s wealth more equitably—especially in rural and neighbor-



Christian West answers questions at Senate Confirmation hearing.

island communities that often receive fewer resources despite their heavy reliance on tourism.

West’s confirmation is a win for ILWU Local 142 members and for all working people in Hawai‘i. His appointment underscores the growing recognition that tourism is not just about visitor spending and corporate profits but about the workers and communities that make Hawai‘i special.

President to Local Executive Board: union strength in Units

President Chris West’s report to the first LEB meeting of 2025, which met on March 7, is printed in full below for members to read.

Aloha Brothers and Sisters,

Welcome all new members to the Local Executive Board of ILWU Local 142. I along with the other Titled Officers are excited welcome you and look forward to completing the work of this Local with you all. As we continue our work in representing and protecting our members, it is essential to reflect on our progress, address current challenges, and set clear goals for the future. Our union remains strong, but we must stay vigilant in the face of economic, political, and industry-wide changes.

Organizing and Mobilizing our Membership

Over the past triennium, we have focused on strengthening our membership through organizing efforts in most of our industries and divisions. While we have seen positive growth in Local 142 membership, we must continue to expand our reach and recruit new members to maintain our bargaining power and political influence. Organizing efforts in Tourism, General Trades and healthcare have shown promise, and we will continue to support campaigns to bring more workers into the union. Additionally, we are working to ensure that current members remain engaged, informed, and active in our union activities.

It is vital that we continue to rebuild and strengthen our unit structure throughout this Local by returning the power of this Local to its units. As a bottom-up organization, it is only through these efforts that we will grow this unions influence politically, corporately and individually amongst our membership.

Collective Bargaining and Contract Negotiations

Negotiations remain a top priority for our union. Over the past 3 years, through the efforts of our divisions and the negotiating committees, we have and continue to achieve record setting contracts. Our members deserve the right to not just “Fair wages”, but actual “Thriving wages” where we can continue to live and thrive here in our home....Hawaii. We have faced resistance from employers who seek to reduce costs at the expense of our working families, and we will no longer stand for this. We are committed to standing firm and using all tools available including mobilization of our members, public support, and, if necessary, job action to achieve just contracts. I would like to recognize our members of the Grand Wailea resort on the island of Maui for their diligence and solidarity in their recent ULP strike that set the momentum for their record-breaking contract and the bar for some of our other hotels also in negotiations.

Political and Legislative Action

Our union has remained active and powerful in advocating for pro-labor policies at the state and federal levels. We have been in discussions with lawmakers about protecting workers rights, holding corporations responsible, and ensuring fair labor standards. Local 142 has regained its influence within the state capitol and will continue to remind our politicians who they work for, us, the people. Through the efforts of our International VP Hawaii Brandon Wolff and our ILWU Local 142 Government Liaison Brensen Wailehua-Hansen, our politicians know that the ILWU Local 142 will be there to hold them accountable to our members. With upcoming elections, we must also mobilize our members to register and vote. To support candidates who align with our values. Our Political Action Committee has been working diligently to educate members about the stakes of these elections and how they can get involved. Education and Training

Investing in our members education is critical to the future of our union. Over the past 3 years, we have held several steward training sessions to ensure that workplace leaders are equipped with the skills needed to advocate for their fellow workers. FTO training and staff professional development continues to be a priority for Local 142. We will continue to recruit and train stewards so that we can hold our companies to the agreed

upon CBA’s and fight for safe working conditions. We are also looking at expanding educational opportunities, including workshops, Industry wide caucuses, legal rights, and organizing strategies. An educated membership is a strong membership

Community and Solidarity

Beyond our workplaces, ILWU Local 142 remains committed to the broader community. We have participated in outreach efforts, supported local charities, and stood in solidarity with other unions in their struggles. Our strength lies in unity, and we will continue to show up for workers everywhere. Our recent collaborative efforts with Local 5 UNITE/HERE and shared resources, have resulted in increased leverage with the corporations we also have collective bargaining agreements with.

In conclusion as we move forward, we must remain committed to the principles of solidarity, strength, and justice. There will be challenges ahead, but together, we will continue to fight for fair wages, safe workplaces, and respect for all workers. We will continue to fight for local working families across our divisions and I encourage all members to stay engaged, support one another, and uphold the proud legacy of the ILWU.

Mahalo for your dedication and hard work. Let’s keep moving forward together. Never forget, we are stronger together!

It's All Love at the Hawai'i Division Recognition Awards



Members, pensioners, and officers bid a fond farewell to Hawai'i Division Clerk II, Sui Ling Poy, after working 33 years for the ILWU.

There's an old saying, "you are what you celebrate" that nicely describes the Hawai'i Division's annual recognition awards. Held this past February in Hilo, the annual event pays tribute to Hawai'i Island's most active units and pensioners.

Harry Kamoku Hall was packed inside and out as this event is much anticipated and brings members together from across the massive island for fellowship and to honor the thing that makes the union strong - member activity.

This year's theme was "love" because who doesn't love growing participation in pensioner clubs and mobilized units? The team spirit of the division was seen as every person showed up in pink or red.

A hui hou to Sui Ling Poy and Colleen Antonio.

A heartfelt message of aloha and gratitude was shared with two long-time ILWU staff who are moving into retirement this year.

Sui Ling Poy, who served as a Hawai'i Division Clerk for 33 years. Division Director, Elmer Gorospe had these words to say, "Thank

you for all the years of services you have provided to our members, and pensioners from assisting them with issues when they come to the office and helping those pensioners fill out their pension annual affidavit and assisting our FTOs to sound more professional on paper. Thank you for the life-long commitment you have provided to this organization. Enjoy your well-deserved retirement!"

Hawai'i Division Organizer, Colleen Antonio was also recognized by the Division Director on behalf of the union, "Colleen held the position as organizer/mobilizer for Hawaii Division for well over 23 years, who was part of a team that successfully organized Outrigger Keahou, Sheraton Keahou, Queens North Hawaii Community Hospital just to name a few. Colleen also helps mobilized numerous units on the Big Island in preparation for their upcoming negotiation. Thank you for your years of service with the ILWU."

- 1-25 members: Hamakua Health Center
- 26-50 members: Foodland Waimea/Farms
- 51-90 members: Mauna Loa Macadamia Nut Co.
- 100+ members: The Westin Hapuna Beach Resort

Most Active Pension Club: Hilo Pension Club
Most Members Pension Club: Mauna Loa Macadamia Nut Pension Club

The Division then proceeded to recognize outstanding Units for their member engagement and activity. Pensioners, who turned out in large numbers were also recognized for growing the program and for their activity.

Events like the Hawai'i Division Awards and Recognition Banquet serve a deeper purpose than simply handing out plaques or saying "ma-halo" to longtime members. They reinforce the union's culture of solidarity, reminding everyone that the strength of the ILWU isn't found in contracts or offices, but in the people who show up, stand together, and carry the union forward.

Taking time out to celebrate—whether it's through heartfelt tributes, laughter-filled fellowship, or an entire hall dressed in shades of red and pink—builds a sense of belonging. It reaffirms that every contribution matters, from the pensioner who keeps the retiree club active to the unit leader who mobilizes their coworkers when it counts.

In a time when the pace of work and life can make people feel disconnected, these gatherings serve as a powerful counterbalance. They remind members that the union is more than a structure—it's a living, breathing community.



Sack-n-Save turns out! L-R: Unit Chair Victoria Lopez, Tracie Price, Elizabeth Wilson, Tara Roman, Antoniana Puu, Skyler Tiogango.



Calavo in the house! Back L to R: Jose Alvarenga-Galdamez, Rayjan Imasa, Joel Villanueva, Holokaikalani Wela, Matt Haywood. Front: Brandan Rodrigues, Unit Chair Aaron Mokulehua-Delacuesta, Mario Villanueva



Members of Unit 1518, The Westin Hapuna Beach Resort were recognized for most active Unit 100+ members. L-R: Chester Sims, Erin Nakamatsu, Syvell Tasaka, and Megan Pastor.



Shanelle Tavares (center) accepts the award for most active unit with 26-50 members on behalf of Foodland Waimea.



William Lagura from Mauna Loa Mac Nut stands with Business Agent Jennifer Yadao.

Hawai'i Longshore Division C.O.R.E.

The Hawai'i Longshore Division C.O.R.E. Committee is leading the way in the political action arena for Local 142. Monitoring legislation and labor law that impacts our industry and jurisdiction is the top priority. The C.O.R.E. Committee will champion efforts to protect all that affects Longshore and to support legislation and elected officials that share our values on labor, public safety, housing and education.

The committee meets at least once a month at the Union Hall on Atkinson to discuss bills currently being heard in session, receive real-time updates on our combined efforts in, on city council and legislative bills, and to get updated from our International V.P. Hawai'i on national and international related bills and policies, download with our full-time Longshore Political Liaison and plan forward the strategy our committee will take into ensuring our Rank & File's values and voices are heard and understood in all venues whether it be a City, State or Federal issue.

If you would like to get involved or would like the committee to investigate a specific bill, please reach out to a committee member close



to you for more information. The C.O.R.E. Committee would like to send a big mahalo for all that support

when called upon to submit testimony, sign waive and engage when duty calls. The best way to help is to

register to vote and get your family and friends to get registered to vote.

Meet Palani Simon, Director of the IBU Hawai'i Region



The ILWU Local 142 welcomes Palani J. Simon as the Regional Director of the Inland Boatman's Union of the Pacific. Simon stepped into the role one year ago after former Regional Director, Michael Anderson Jr., finished his term.

Simon was born and raised on O'ahu. He graduated from St. Louis High School in '93.

"I've always loved the water" Simon told the Voice. "My dad was a commercial fisherman. I would go out with him on the boat. And the first time I saw a tug and barge, I knew that's what I wanted to do."

Just as it is now, there were no schools in Hawai'i to become licensed to work on the tubboats. So Simon attended Leeward Community College's

Wai'anae Maritime Academy, founded by Captain Paul Kaipō Pōmaika'i. The academy provided entry level certification for local youth to work in the maritime industry as seamen, seamen, engineers, and other posts. Simon's certification allowed him to work as a deckhand for three years at P&R Water Taxi in Honolulu Harbor. He then entered the Pacific Maritime Academy in Seattle. He graduated in 2010 and has been a seaman for Sarse Brothers since 2008.

When asked what's in store as Regional Director of the IBU, Simon shared his first important goal, "I want to meet and shake hands with

all 300 of our members. I want to make sure I know our members and they know me." Simon's philosophy as a union leader is about members feeling connected to the union through engagement and strong representation.

"We are all stewards of the contract. I want each and every member to feel well represented. Right now, I'm focusing on representing them the best I can. But I also want to encourage

the members to enforce the contract themselves." When asked how he plans to do that, Simon shared a vision centering contract education, increasing steward trainings, and making sure the JLRC committees are motivated to solve issues.

Simon's interests as a maritime union leader extend beyond the current rank-n-file and to the next generation of mariners. Prior to the Voice's interview, he spent the morning interviewing high school graduates from Kohala High School as part of their application process for the Tongue Point Seamanship Training program. He does regular outreach to high school Juniors and Seniors across the islands.

"These are all ocean-loving kids, and we come from a seafaring culture. Now IF they can go to school and prove their competency and dedication, they become ideal candidates for the maritime company. So I'm looking forward to helping get the message out to our kids that this is an option for them."

We wish brother Palani the very best as the Hawai'i Regional Director. He can be contacted at palani@ibu.org.

Pickets:



Stella Karben, Michael Elvenia , Tiana Meyer and Dora Ramirez and Andy Ramirez of the Outrigger Kona stand together united for a fair contract.

impact was immediate. The morning picket applied enough pressure that management finally moved on wages. Meanwhile, guests began to complain that the labor dispute was affecting their stay, forcing the company to address the disruption.

One particularly notable moment came when a group of pilots staying at the hotel initially complained to a Business Agent about the noise disrupting their rest. But after a conversation about the nature of the picket, the pilots—union members themselves—shifted their frustration toward the hotel, arguing that the labor dispute was compromising their ability to perform their jobs safely. The pilots took their complaints straight to management, increasing the pressure on Outrigger to settle fairly.

The picket also marked a turning point for young workers at Outrigger Kona. Many had never been involved

in union action before but stepped up into leadership roles on the picket line. Their energy is now fueling efforts to unionize non-union workers at the hotel, who have been watching closely and are now moving toward organizing themselves.

Hilton Waikoloa Workers for Fair Share

Less than a month later, on February 25, workers at Hilton Waikoloa Village took to the picket line in one of the largest labor demonstrations in the Hawai‘i Division in recent memory. Over a third of the hotel’s 600-member workforce joined the five-hour picket, sending a powerful message to their employer.

Hilton Waikoloa is the second most profitable Hilton hotel in the world, owned by Park Hotels, the same company that operates Hilton Hawaiian Village. Despite its massive revenues and recent record contract negotiations

with Local 5 in Waikīkī, Park Hotels attempted to play hardball with ILWU members on the Big Island. Management’s initial wage proposal—just 62 cents per year over five years—was a slap in the face, especially considering that the company had just spent \$22 million renovating one of its four luxury towers.

Hilton Waikoloa workers had been preparing for this fight for nearly a year. Mobilization efforts began in April 2024 with membership meetings and contract surveys, followed by a petition campaign over stagnant wages. Workers added humor to their messaging campaign, dubbing the company’s current wages as “P.O.O.P.” wages—Priced Out of Paradise—reflecting the deep frustration of employees struggling to keep up with Hawai‘i’s soaring cost of living.

Among the most dedicated fighters in this contract battle are long-time Hilton Waikoloa workers who have been with the hotel since it opened. Some have delayed their retirement specifically to see this fight through, ensuring that future generations of hotel workers get the wages and benefits they deserve.

When contract negotiations began in early 2025, members saw firsthand just how little the company valued them. Open bargaining sessions drew widespread attendance, with nearly 150 members filtering in throughout the day to witness negotiations. Tipped workers, often uncertain about whether their interests align with non-tipped employees, were surprised to see strong proposals that would benefit them as well. Seeing their union leadership fight for their pay helped galvanize support across different classifications.

But Hilton management continued to stall, making only minor adjustments to their wage offers and failing to take

negotiations seriously. In response, workers escalated. They decided to take their fight outside the hotel, resulting in the February 25 picket.

The turnout was remarkable. Workers from every department—housekeeping, front desk, banquets, maintenance, food and beverage—showed up in force. Many spent their entire day off on the picket line. Solidarity extended beyond the hotel as well: ILWU members from West Hawai‘i Community Hospital and Mauna Kea Beach Hotel joined the fight, along with members from the Fairmont Orchid and Mauna Lani. One union member’s brother and friend, fresh off work at nearby grocery store Island Gourmet, stopped by to support the picket, while the daughter of two Hilton workers spent the entire day marching with the strikers.

Keeping it Hot in Kona, Kohala

Outrigger Kona members conducted one more picket on April 1, prior to resuming negotiations through the remainder of the week. Hilton Waikoloa members attended a Contract Action Team training and are currently mobilizing more members.

The full impact of these actions has yet to be seen as both hotels remain in negotiations as of early April. But the energy, courage, and empowerment of these strategic actions are changing the culture of ILWU negotiations to one of mass member participation and negotiation committees that can show the employer that the members have their back. Leaders from both hotels continue to assess negotiations and plan strategic actions accordingly.

Hotel workers on the Big Island are showing the impact of member unity and action. And as their struggle continues, both history and recent contracts tell us—when workers stand together, they win.



Vannessa Torres, who works in Big Island Breakfast, throws shaka at the Hilton Waikoloa picket.



Banquets represents! Front L to R: Merlyn Botelho, Marivic Antonio, Belinda Oandasan, Mel Taomia, Zenaida Penner and Annette Simao. Back: Kimi Song, Kaylen Taomia, Camille Kaina-Emmons, David Boyd, Kaniale Salis, and Winnie Ramos



Arnel Islaia of Property Operations brings the right energy to the crosswalk picket at the Hilton Waikoloa.

Open Bargaining Brings Members to Negotiations

Contract negotiations can often feel distant for many union members, while negotiating committees may struggle to engage the broader membership in the process. Open bargaining shifts negotiations from a closed-door process to a more inclusive and transparent approach, bringing workers directly into the fight for better wages, benefits, and conditions.

Open bargaining is a transformative approach to contract negotiations that shifts power from a select few negotiators to the collective strength of the entire membership. It is a strategy that embraces transparency, maximizes worker participation, and reinforces the democratic foundations of the labor movement.

At its core, open bargaining means that any union member can observe or participate in negotiations. Instead of limiting the process to a handful of elected representatives and legal counsel, open bargaining invites the rank and file to witness and exert pressure where needed.

“Workers need to see what the boss is saying in real time,” McAlevey writes in *A Collective Bargain: Unions, Organizing, and the Fight for Democracy*. “When they hear the employer dismiss their demands outright or belittle their worth, it fuels their

commitment to fight.” By eliminating the secrecy of closed negotiations, open bargaining clarifies the stakes for every worker and builds the confidence needed to sustain collective action.

The Hawai‘i Division has embraced open bargaining for their units. Mike Elevina, who sits on the negotiating committee at the Outrigger Kona Resort, seems to agree with McAlevey. “Open bargaining has been eye-opening, to say the least. For members to see how low a corporate company, that they’re supposed to take pride in working for, can come in with their opening offers is just SAD. It’s no wonder we got so many members on board to strike already.”

The impact of open bargaining is not just theoretical—it has been tested and proven in union fights across industries. McAlevey describes how unions that adopt open bargaining see a shift in power dynamics. “When hundreds of workers show up to negotiations, the employer knows they are facing a force far greater than a single union negotiator,” she explains. “They are dealing with an organized and mobilized workforce that cannot be ignored.” This collective presence not only strengthens the bargaining team’s position but also inoculates (prepares) workers against employer scare tactics or misinformation.

Open bargaining fosters deeper engagement and camaraderie among members. Instead of feeling disconnected from contract negotiations, workers become active participants in their union’s fight for better wages, benefits, and working conditions. This model challenges the passive relationship that some members have with their unions—one where they expect leaders to handle negotiations on their behalf.

Billy Joe Freitas, who works as a Steward at the Hilton Waikoloa Village, attended his unit’s first bargaining session in January. “One major thing that we have learned from attending a bargaining session is the negotiating committee works hard and fights hard for the betterment of our members. We also get to see firsthand how the Company thinks of us, and what they are offering. Attending our first bargaining session has been an eye-opener to see how important it is to be involved with the Union.”

While some union leaders may hesitate to embrace open bargaining, fearing that management will exploit divisions among workers or that it will prolong negotiations, McAlevey argues that these concerns stem from a lack of trust in the membership. “The strongest unions are the ones where members own their union,” she asserts. “If we believe in our own power, we

have nothing to fear from bringing more voices to the table.” Open bargaining, then, is not just a tactic—it is a declaration of faith in worker power.

When asked how open bargaining has impacted negotiations from a Business Agent’s point of view, Hawai‘i Division B.A. Dylan Gaspar responded, “I think open negotiations is the way to go. I have always been a fan of open negotiations and allowing our members to sit in. It allows members to learn, see the process first hand and what the company thinks of them, and discuss any issues or ideas they may have. It was crazy to see how many members actually walked through those doors, some stayed for 10 minutes and some stayed the entire session. It’s also a good way to get more members engaged and want to be part of the process from start to finish.”

In a time when corporate interests wield enormous influence and worker power is constantly under attack, open bargaining offers a path forward. The current Titled Officers invite Divisions and Units to consider opening bargaining as a way to revitalize units, build trust, and mobilize members. As McAlevey reminds us, “the boss’s greatest weapon is isolation. The antidote is transparency and collective action.”

Membership Services Department



Lloyd Matsubara, Erma Somera, Carter Romero, Randy Higa, Lori Naone, Fred Galdones, Melissa Nobreiga-Petrichko, Bobo Lapenia.

Earlier this year, Hawai‘i Division pensioners gathered for a wellness workshop lead by Randy Higa and Lori Naone, from Kaiser Permanente.

The workshop covered topics such

as exercise and mobility, food and nutrition, and brain health. Workshops like these are built into the pensioners program, providing ongoing access for our retirees to life education that is tailored to their stage in life.

The ILWU pensioners program is only growing and all pensioners are encouraged and invited to get involved. Upcoming workshops will include a presentation from the Hawai‘i Alzheimers Association and more! Contact your Division Pension Coordinator to get involved.

Sa unang bahagi ng taong ito, nagtipon ang mga pensioner ng Hawai‘i Division para sa isang wellness workshop na pinamumunuan nina Randy Higa at Lori Naone, mula sa Kaiser Permanente.

Sinasaklaw ng workshop ang mga paksa tulad ng ehersisyo at kadaliang kumilos, pagkain at nutrisyon, at kalusugan ng utak. Ang mga workshop na tulad nito ay binuo sa programa ng mga pensiyonado, na nagbibigay ng patuloy na pag-access para sa ating mga retirado sa edukasyon sa buhay na naaayon sa kanilang yugto sa buhay.

Ang ILWU pensioners program ay lumalaki lamang at lahat ng pensioners ay hinihikayat at inaaanyayahan na makibahagi. Kasama sa mga paparating na workshop ang isang presentasyon mula sa Hawai‘i

Alzheimers Association at higit pa! Makipag-ugnayan sa iyong Division Pension Coordinator para makilahok.

Division Pension Coordinators

Hawai‘i Longshore Division
Dennis Morton
808-949-4161

Hawai‘i Division
Dylan Gaspar
808-935-3727

Maui Division
Manny Baltazar
808-244-9191

O‘ahu Division
Corin Kekua
808-949-4161

Kaua‘i Division
Rhonda Morris
808-245-3374

Division Executive Board Meetings

Unit Officers must attend. Open to all Division members.

Hawai‘i Division Executive Board
Friday, April 25, 2025
Friday, May 30, 2025
6:00 p.m.
100 W Lanikaula Street. Hilo.
Please RSVP: (808) 935-3727

Maui Division Executive Board
Wednesday, April 16, 2025
Wednesday, May 21, 2025
6:00 p.m.
896 Lower Main Street. Wailuku.
Please RSVP: (808) 244-9191

O‘ahu Division Executive Board
Wednesday, April 30, 2025
Wednesday, May 28, 2025
Dinner 5:30 p.m. Meeting 6:00 p.m.
451 Atkinson Drive. Hale Hapaiko.
Please RSVP: (808) 949-4161

Kaua‘i Division Executive Board
Wednesday, April 9, 2025
Wednesday May 14, 2025
5:00 p.m.
4154 Hardy Street. Lihue.
Please RSVP: (808) 245-3374

Jones Act:



tors far outweigh the cost of shipping goods under the Jones Act. Blaming the Jones Act for expensive groceries or household items ignores the reality of Hawai‘i’s economic landscape.

Myth #3: Shipping Competition Guarantees Lower Prices for Hawai‘i

The claim that the Jones Act inflates prices in Hawai‘i by limiting competition ignores the reality of global shipping markets. While critics argue that allowing more foreign carriers would lower costs, history shows that foreign shipping companies exploit crises to maximize profits, unlike the Jones Act fleet, which operates under stable regulations ensuring fair pricing.

In late 2023 and early 2024, exempt from the Jones Act, major international carriers hiked rates far beyond actual cost increases—South Korean carrier HMM saw a 1,664% profit surge, and Japanese carrier ONE rose 969%. Shipping giants like Maersk and CMA CGM similarly exploited geopolitical instability, driving up prices even as fuel and operational costs remained steady. During the COVID-19 pandemic, these same foreign alliances—controlling 91% of transpacific trade—tripled or quadrupled profits, imposed arbitrary fees, and prioritized empty containers over U.S. exports

The Jones Act fleet, bound by U.S. regulations, forbids such profiteering, maintaining stable, predictable costs tied to real expenses rather than speculation. Without the Jones Act, Hawai‘i would be vulnerable to the unchecked pricing power of foreign oligopolies that prioritize shareholders over Hawai‘i consumers. Rather than inflating prices, the law protects Hawai‘i from the extreme price gouging that dominates international shipping.

Myth #4: The More Shipping Carriers, The Merrier

The idea that allowing more shipping carriers into Hawai‘i would improve service and lower costs ignores the unique realities of island logistics. Unlike mainland ports with vast storage capacity, Hawai‘i operates on a just-in-time shipping model, relying on frequent deliveries rather than mass warehousing. This system

is by design—land is limited, and the community has chosen not to devote scarce space to sprawling distribution centers or massive stockpiles of imported goods.

Hawai‘i’s port infrastructure is built to match the state’s actual consumption needs. The volume of imports and the number of dock spaces align with what the population requires, ensuring efficient turnover without unnecessary congestion. Simply adding more carriers would not lower costs but instead create logistical bottlenecks, increasing competition for limited dock space without increasing overall demand.

More importantly, the push for endless import expansion contradicts Hawai‘i’s values. The islands are not looking to become a hub for big-box retail domination or excessive consumerism. Instead, the long-term goal is to reduce reliance on imports, strengthen local food systems, and build greater self-sufficiency. Rather than flooding the market with excess goods, Hawai‘i must focus on sustainability—investing in local production, renewable resources, and economic models that prioritize resilience over unchecked expansion.

The Benefits of the Jones Act for Hawai‘i

It is important that Hawai‘i’s people, and especially ILWU members are educated about the ways that The Jones Act serves us.

Protection from Shipping Price Gouging – Unlike unregulated global shipping giants, Jones Act carriers operate under consistent pricing structures. During the pandemic, international shipping conglomerates like Maersk engaged in extreme price gouging, sending global freight costs soaring. Jones Act carriers, however, did not engage in this practice, ensuring that Hawai‘i consumers and businesses were shielded from the worst of the shipping crisis.

Reliable Supply Chains During Disasters – The Jones Act ensures that Hawai‘i has dedicated, regularly scheduled domestic shipping. During the pandemic, non-Jones Act ships were stuck in massive backlogs outside

ports like Los Angeles for weeks, while Jones Act carriers continued delivering essential goods to Hawai‘i without delay. The infamous toilet paper shortages had nothing to do with shipping disruptions—it was a result of panic buying and hoarding.

Environmental Protection – Jones Act ships must comply with strict U.S. environmental laws, reducing pollution and protecting Hawai‘i’s harbors and marine life. By contrast, many foreign-flagged vessels operate under weak or non-existent environmental regulations, increasing the risk of oil spills, ballast water contamination, and other ecological disasters. The world’s oceans have seen disastrous chemical spills from non-Jones Act vessels who are purposefully flagged in the most unregulated countries.

Sustainable Import Levels – Hawai‘i’s infrastructure is built around container shipping. Its limited land availability means there is no room for massive warehouses. The Jones Act ensures that shipments remain at sustainable levels that match Hawai‘i’s logistical capacity, preventing supply chain chaos.

Preservation of Local Maritime Jobs – The Jones Act supports 13,000 jobs in Hawai‘i’s domestic maritime industry, contributing \$787 million annually in worker income. These are high-quality, union-protected jobs in stevedoring, piloting, and ship crewing—industries that have been part of Hawai‘i’s economy for more than 200 years. Without the Jones Act, these jobs would be lost to exploitative global shipping corporations that rely on low-wage labor.

Who’s Behind the Anti-Jones Act Campaign?

Much of the opposition to the Jones Act is not grassroots, but rather backed by powerful corporate interests seeking to weaken labor protections and deregulate shipping.

The Grassroot Institute of Hawai‘i, one of the loudest voices calling for the repeal of the Jones Act, is funded by mainland think tanks like the Koch Brothers’ network and the Heritage Foundation. These groups promote an extreme free-market ideology that prioritizes corporate profits over worker protections, environmental regulations, and national security.

The Grassroots

Institute has pushed a successful propaganda campaign against the Jones Act for years. Many people in Hawai‘i believe they oppose the Jones Act because they have been provided with little alternative to the lies put out by this corporate-backed “think tank”. These are predatory politics that feed off of people’s very real struggles to survive here and they promote a false ideology—that handing all power to the “free-market” is the answer to working people’s problems. If that were true, we wouldn’t need unions.

Corporate interests that oppose labor and environmental regulations meant to protect working people and our oceans do not have our best interests in mind.

Repealing the Jones Act wouldn’t lower prices or create economic opportunities—it would hand control of Hawai‘i’s supply chain to the lowest-bidding, least-regulated global shipping firms. Once those firms gained control of the market in Hawai‘i, nothing stops them from then gouging shipping prices, which is prohibited by the Jones Act.

Defending Hawai‘i’s Future

The real threat isn’t the Jones Act—it’s the corporate-driven push for deregulation that would strip Hawai‘i of its ability to control its own supply chain and protect local jobs.

As Hawai‘i faces increasing challenges, from climate change to economic uncertainty, now is the time to strengthen our maritime protections, not dismantle them. The Jones Act ensures that Hawai‘i’s working families—not international shipping conglomerates—remain at the heart of our economy.



Non-Jones Act vessels, such as the Singapore-flagged Kalamazoo, unload cargo in Honolulu Harbor every week.