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## **Governor Josh Green Signs Bills to Strengthen Campus Safety**

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**Honolulu, HI**—This afternoon, Governor Josh Green signed two bills into law to strengthen protections for survivors of sexual violence at the University of Hawai‘i. House Bill 554 improves trauma training for UH administrators and staff, increases access to sexual violence prevention education for students, and implements amnesty provisions to ensure that victims of campus-based sexual assault are not held responsible for the harm they have endured. House Bill 580 expands victim-counselor privilege to include confidential advocates employed by the university.

“According to UH’s own data, there are approximately 3,000 students who are victims of sexual assault and 4,500 students who are survivors of sexual harassment in any given year,” said Kris Coffield, Executive Director of Imua Alliance. “The two bills signed by the governor today represent the most significant step Hawai‘i has ever taken in addressing the crisis of sexual violence in our state’s college system.”

House Bill 554 was authored by Imua Alliance, in partnership with the Every Voice Coalition and students from the UH community. Victim advocates and students have been fighting for the measure’s passage since 2020, when the bill was first introduced at the State Legislature.

“Over the last four years, we have built a movement that is devoted to helping survivors heal and obtain justice,” said Coffield. “With these policies now in place, we are sending a strong signal that sexual violence has no place at our islands’ higher education institutions.”

Coffield is himself a survivor of campus-based sexual violence, having been sexually assaulted during his time as a UH student. He publicly disclosed his experience shortly before beginning work on legislation to strengthen campus safety protocols.

“As a survivor of campus-based sexual violence, this issue is very personal to me,” said Coffield. “It took me years to speak publicly about my trauma because support services were not available to me when it happened. I hope these new laws will guarantee that future survivors are treated with compassion and will empower students to stop rape culture from spreading at UH.”

*Imua Alliance is a nonprofit victim service provider for survivors of human trafficking and a leader in coordinating sexual violence prevention education in Hawai'i.*

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