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2022 candidate interview: Sylvia

Luke for lieutenant governor Hawaii Public Radio | By Catherine Cruz Published November 2, 2022 at 4:07 PM HST

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State Rep. Sylvia Luke has decided to step away from the powerful House Finance





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Sylvia Luke, Democratic candidate for lieutenant governor

Committee to make a run for lieutenant governor. Getting through the primary election was tough as political action committees targeted her in negative campaign ads -

Democratic running mate Josh Green. She said she's in daily contact with him. The chair of the state House Finance Committee has represented Honolulu neighborhoods for 24 years since 1998 and served on numerous House committees. The Conversation's Catherine Cruz spoke with Luke about what she hopes to bring to the No. 2 position in the executive branch of state government alongside Green.

which ended up backfiring. Luke said that experience strengthened her bond with her

SYLVIA LUKE: Since then, Josh and I have been coordinating a lot. We talk almost on a daily basis, and we talk policies and we talk campaigns. But you know, that's the number one thing that people ask me, how are you folks getting along? And we're getting along really great. I think we have really common vision and common interests

CATHERINE CRUZ, HOST: Two things that have developed with the Ige administration late in his term have to do with the Aloha Stadium and the Hawai'i Tourism Authority contracts for marketing and managing tourism. Big wildcard as to whether that's going to get resolved before the governor leaves or if they'll just let the time clock run out on the Aloha Stadium — and then the new administration deals with it. What are your thoughts on what's going on with the Aloha Stadium?

reasons that Gov. Ige gave are reasonable, and they're sound. The unfortunate part for that, the decision came really late. And then it was, again, he didn't seem as though he communicated with his departments and the Stadium Authority. And that's why I think, you know, they were on TV saying they had no idea, they were blindsided. So, you know, it was somewhat of the administration's inability to communicate to even his line staff. And then also, you know, to explain

It is unfortunate that the current administration

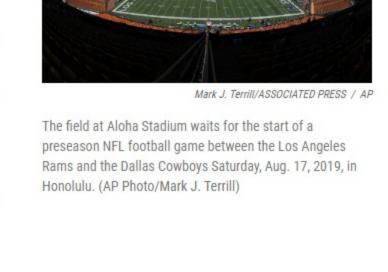
made a decision so late. I think some of the

and things that we want, are very eager to get done.

his decision. I think, for anything to happen substantively between now and when the change of administration occurs, I don't think it gives Gov. Ige enough time to make changes that will impact, even add to additional delays or whatnot. But I do think that there has to be a conversation, and we have to incorporate some of the concerns that the governor raised. The new administration comes in, you know, there has to be a conversation that includes the University of Hawai'i, that includes the Legislature, the community folks and get this going. I completely support the build-out of the stadium. But I think there is a pathway for us to move forward. And we're very

anxious to get started on that project as well.

the University of Hawaiii?



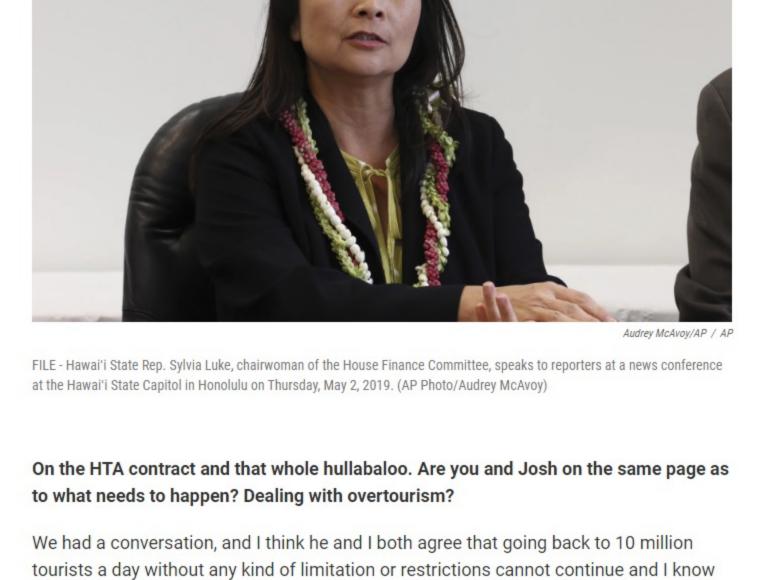
approach only because I think there was very little input given to the University of Hawai'i, as the stadium build-out was being planned. We need to include the clientele that we're planning to serve, and that includes the University of Hawai'i. I think that that

When you heard about this, were you under the impression that there was buy-in from

I did. (UH) President Lassner was in the room when Gov. Ige made the decision to pull

back on the RFP. And I think, at least, the university leadership agreed with that

will change some course as well.



up in the past and discussed in the past as well. There has to be some type of management tourism strategy. Until now, HTA has focused much more so on marketing, but HTA is attached to a state department and it is a state department

agency that needs to set the stage and vision for what Hawai'i tourism industry will look

like and what the tourism market will look like. And now more so, you know, the people

are calling for managed tourism - calling for tourists who will be respectful to the 'āina,

he has advocated for a \$50 green fee. And it's something that the Legislature has taken

you know, understand their kuleana — and be cognizant about places that they shouldn't go, you know, places that they can go. I think Hawai'i tourism should lead this effort in this pathway. I do completely support involving native voices and I'm glad that Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement was awarded. And they will be working in conjunction, actually, with Hawai'i Visitors and Convention Bureau in the meantime to look at how we can transition from simply just marketing to managed tourism. Here's the latest progress on the plan to better manage tourism at O'ahu ► LISTEN • 11:55

Is it your understanding that that's all on the up and up? Are there waivers that need to

My understanding, because there was a dispute, so initially CNHA challenged, and then

afterward, HVCB challenged, so I think the new agreement is that they work together to figure it out. Right. So you know, that was part of, I guess, kind of a resolution. So HVCB

will do some of the marketing, whereas CNHA will help guide the discussion about

over the entire portion, in the bidding and winning the contract again.

about how the lieutenant governor's role might be expanded?

to head some of those large initiatives.

managed tourism. But what we're hoping is that CNHA will use some of the historical

perspective and the expertise provided by HVCB, and then in the future CNHA can take

be in place in order for that contract to go forward?

HVCB.

the 2022 general election on Maui



regardless of whether there's a new administration or not. HTA will start on its work to merge cultural sensitivity brought by CNHA and then the marketing portion brought by

And in your conversations with Lt. Gov. Josh Green, have there been any discussions

That's a really good question, Catherine. And I think that's what a lot of people are wondering as well. As people know, I bring a lot of expertise and relationships that I've gained not just with legislators, but community members and department agency heads, within the department into this role. And I think Josh recognizes that. So automatically, he said, "Hey, you know, because early education and expanding pre-K is an important thing that I want to work on, an important initiative, you can basically run with that program." In addition to that, he has also indicated that I would be able to lead the efforts for the broadband expansion as well. And those two things were something

that I discussed during the campaign, and I believe those things are possible in the next

several years. So I'm just very thankful that the lieutenant governor is willing to allow me

Broadband and IT infrastructure was something that was kind of on the backburner and not really

centerpiece. But you know, the last two years,

necessity and it's almost like utility because if

cost of living, and that's I think, we're getting along

so well, you know, a lot of our interests are

aligned, a lot of our priorities are aligned. And

people realize even more that it becomes a

we're talking about not just in the health care industry, we're dealing with telehealth, a lot of the outdated IT systems. You mentioned the UI system, even for working at home, the ability to work from home and for educational equity, broadband and reliable broadband is really **GOVERNO** important for many people in our state. We know that the two of you are aligned on many issues, on dealing with homelessness... Courtesy Sylvia Luke / Facebook Sylvia Luke, Michael Victorino and Josh Green campaign for And women's rights, civil rights, housing issues,

because we work together in the Legislature, we know where each other strengths are,

anything for granted. We have a week to go and we're working really hard and we would

Anything you want to say just about the closure of Red Hill? Because that report has

just come out with more of a timeline of not just specifics on how to do it, but how to deal with the waste that's going to be generated as they prepare to shut those things

and we're willing to help each other succeed and help the state so we're not taking

be honored to be in this position to help the state.

water systems are safe.

down and then what do you use the tanks for afterward.

This is gonna be a long process and we need to do it right. Really to move the fuel out in a way that it doesn't cause more environmental hazard and more waste. It's really paramount. And it's really important for us to have the Department of Health folks and you know, working with Board of Water Supply to keep the Navy accountable, and the federal government accountable to make sure that they come through on this promise. I

think people have heard these kind of promises before and one of the disappointing

things is the Navy keeps changing the point of contact or people in charge. And the new

person comes in every so often and say the same thing. And I think people are tired of

hearing the same old thing. They want action and looking forward to working with our

departments and the federal delegation to keep this moving. We have to shut it down.

We have to shut down Red Hill fuel tank, and we got to ensure that our aquifer and

Confused about the timeline for the Red Hill fuel storage facility and contaminated water? Read this. Anything else that you want to add? This election is really important in light of what's going on in the federal government and implications of things, of people's rights. And all the things that's happening that impact health and safety of individuals. So I think it's really important to elect a team that's ready to go, ready to handle whatever is coming down.

We were hoping to air an interview with Republican candidate Seaula Tupa'i Jr. on

Thursday, but he declined several requests for an interview citing a busy schedule.

Gubernatorial interviews with Republican candidate Duke Aiona and Democratic

This interview aired on The Conversation on Nov. 2, 2022. The Conversation airs

candidate Josh Green will air Thursday and Friday, respectively.

Updated: November 3, 2022 at 3:30 PM HST Updated with a full transcript.

Sylvia Luke

Catherine Cruz

Election

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Catherine Cruz is the host of The Conversation. Originally from Guam, she spent more than 30 years at

KITV, covering beats from government to education. Contact her at ccruz@hawaiipublicradio.org.

The Conversation LG Sylvia Luke is tasked with troubleshooting Hawai'i's internet expansion Catherine Cruz, January 26, 2023



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