

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
KE KE'ENA O KA MEIA
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

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RICK BLANGIARDI
MAYOR
MEIA



MICHAEL D. FORMBY
MANAGING DIRECTOR
PO'O HO'OKELE

KRISHNA F. JAYARAM
DEPUTY MANAGING DIRECTOR
HOPE PO'O HO'OKELE

January 8, 2026

The Honorable Tommy Waters
Chair and Presiding Officer
and Members
Honolulu City Council
530 South King Street, Room 202
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Chair Waters and Councilmembers:

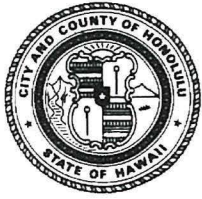
Pursuant to Section 13-103(b) of the Revised Charter of the City and County of Honolulu, I hereby appoint, subject to confirmation by your Honorable Body, Mr. Sterling Higa, as a member of the Economic Revitalization Commission. Mr. Sterling Higa will replace Mr. Reed Chung and serve a term to expire on December 31, 2030. I would appreciate your favorable consideration of Mr. Higa's appointment and request adoption by the City Council in the most expedient manner possible.

I have enclosed a draft resolution and Mr. Higa's personal information form for your review. For general inquiries you may have regarding this appointment, please contact my Chief of Staff, Andy Sugg, at (808) 768-4811.

Sincerely,


Rick Blangiardi
Mayor

cc: Mr. Sterling Higa
Office of Economic Revitalization
Ethics Commission



HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL
KE KANIHELA O KE KALANA O HONOLULU
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

No. _____

RESOLUTION

CONFIRMING THE APPOINTMENT OF STERLING HIGA TO SERVE ON THE ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION COMMISSION OF THE CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU.

WHEREAS, Section 6-109, Revised Charter of the City and County of Honolulu, 1973 ("Charter"), as amended, establishes an Economic Revitalization Commission ("Commission") consisting of nine members; and

WHEREAS, Charter Section 6-109, sets forth the duties of the Commission; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Charter Section 13-103, the members of the Commission are appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the City Council ("Council") and serve for staggered five-year terms; and

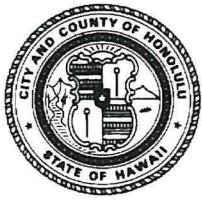
WHEREAS, by Mayor's letter, dated January 8, 2026, the Mayor has appointed Sterling Higa for a term to expire December 31, 2030; and

WHEREAS, Charter Section 13-103 requires that each appointee to the Commission be a registered voter of the City; and

WHEREAS, the Council of the City and County of Honolulu has reviewed Mr. Higa's qualifications and character and finds that he qualifies to serve on the Commission; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City and County of Honolulu that it confirms the appointment of Sterling Higa for a term to expire December 31, 2030; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Council expresses its gratitude and appreciation to Mr. Higa for his commitment and willingness to actively participate in city government; and



HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL
KE KANIHELA O KE KALANA O HONOLULU
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

No. _____

RESOLUTION

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Mayor, the Executive Director of the Office of Economic Revitalization, and Mr. Sterling Higa.

INTRODUCED BY:

DATE OF INTRODUCTION:

Honolulu, Hawai'i

Councilmembers

CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU
NOMINEE/APPOINTEE FORM

1. Position Nominated to: Commissioner, Economic Revitalization Commission
2. Name: Sterling Rand Koichi Higa
(First) (Middle) (Last)
3. Are you a citizen of the United States? -select- Yes
Are you a resident of the City and County of Honolulu? -select- Yes If yes, how long 1y 5mo
Are you a registered voter in the City and County of Honolulu? -select- Yes
4. Occupation: CEO
5. Name and address of employer or firm:
Ediphai (Dream Release LLC) 700 Kapiolani Blvd. #500
Honolulu, HI 96813
6. Does your employer do any business with the City and County of Honolulu? -select- No
If yes, state the nature of business and approximate dollar amount in the last five years:

7. Do you or does any member of your immediate family hold office or own stock in any firm?
-select- No
8. Does the firm do business with the City and County of Honolulu? -select- No
If yes, provide details including the name(s) of the firm:

9. Do you have any part-time employment, professional activity, or financial interests other than those indicated in the previous question? -select- Yes
If yes, provide details:
Own Sterling Strategy and Communications LLC
10. Do you foresee any possible conflict between your present work, financial investments, business transactions or any other activity which would be incompatible with the proper discharge of your official duties or hinder you from effectively carrying out the duties for which you have been appointed? -select- No
11. Are any members of your family employed by the City and County of Honolulu or any attached agency? -select- No
If yes, please specify the department and division:

12. Are there any incidents in your past that may jeopardize your nomination? -select- No
13. Have you ever been convicted of a felony? -select- No If yes, provide details:

14. Education:

BA Speech UH Manoa 2013
EdM, Education Harvard 2015

15. Provide a summary of major work experience for the last ten (10) years. Begin with your present job including military (attach additional sheets if necessary or resume):

4 years nonprofit (2010-2014) Nonprofit exec (2021-2025)
2 years middle school teacher (2015-2017) consultant (2022-
4 years university lecturer (2017-2021) software exec (2025-)

16. Community activities, etc. (also list any service on any other board or commission Federal, State or County):

HODA (July 2022 -) current chair

17. Have you ever been a member of a board or commission with the City and County of Honolulu?

-select- no

If yes, provide name(s) of board/commission:

18. Will you be able to commit to the full term of this appointment? -select- yes

19. Will you be able to commit to meeting dates and times? -select- yes

20. Are you regularly away from Honolulu? -select- no If yes, please explain:

21. Are you willing to make a confidential financial disclosure to the city Ethics Commission upon appointment and yearly thereafter? -select- yes

22. What do you understand to be the prime duties of your county appointment?

Advise the OER on economic development strategies

The above statements made by me are true, complete, and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief and are made in good faith.


(Signature)

12/7/2025
(Date)

The above statements made by me are true, complete, and correct to the best of my knowledge and
The completed form and any attachment(s) will be posted by the City Clerk and available on the City's DocuShare Website.

Sterling Higa

Mission-Driven Executive | Community Builder | Advocate for Hawai'i's Families and Future

Executive Summary

Mission-driven executive with 15 years of progressive leadership building organizations, advancing capital campaigns, and stewarding \$259M in public assets across Hawai'i. Proven success founding and scaling a statewide nonprofit, securing six-figure philanthropic commitments, and guiding complex real estate projects from community engagement through completion. Varied experience in strategic planning, board governance, and organizational development. Leads with faith, vision, and disciplined execution to strengthen communities and build lasting institutional impact.

Education

Harvard University – <i>Ed.M., Education</i>	2015
HBX Harvard Business School – <i>CORE Credential of Readiness</i>	2014
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa – <i>B.A., Speech</i>	2013

Professional Experience

Ediphai – <i>CEO</i>	June 2025 – Present
Co-founded faith-based platform that equips churches and ministries for learning, mentorship, and leadership development through digital discipleship tools.	
Polcom (formerly Sterling Strategy) – <i>Principal Consultant</i>	Oct. 2022 – Present
- Advise nonprofit executives, boards, and government agencies ranging from \$1M to \$100M+ on strategic planning, governance, and organizational effectiveness. - Facilitate multi-stakeholder planning processes that align boards, executive teams, and partners around shared priorities and measurable results. - Guided strategic planning for a \$100M+ law enforcement agency, enhancing cross-departmental alignment and operational efficiency.	
Housing Hawai'i's Future – <i>Executive Director</i>	Aug. 2021 – Jan. 2025
- Founded and scaled Housing Hawai'i's Future from concept to 501(c)(3) with \$201k annual revenue, establishing governance infrastructure and multi-sector partnerships. - Led resource development efforts, securing 25+ corporate sponsors and six-figure foundation grants; established the Stay Movement, mobilizing 2,000+ community members to support workforce housing advocacy. - Led diverse coalition of government agencies, nonprofit organizations, business leaders, and community advocates that successfully secured passage of Hawai'i's most significant housing legislation in 40 years, creating regulatory pathways for 10,000+ workforce housing units through comprehensive policy advocacy and legislative strategy.	
Hawai'i Pacific University – <i>Full-time Lecturer</i>	Aug. 2017 – Dec. 2021
- Taught communication, argumentation, and writing courses to 200+ undergraduate students annually. - Coached debate team to state and regional championships; recognized with the Golden Apple Award for distinguished teaching. - Mentored students to lead with clarity, humility, and civic engagement.	
Hawai'i Business Magazine – <i>Contributing Writer</i>	May 2020 – July 2021
- Wrote 13 feature stories on business, leadership, and innovation in Hawai'i's economy; hosted public panels and conferences connecting civic and business leaders. - Received the SPJ Award for Industry Reporting (2020).	
Honolulu Civil Beat – <i>Columnist</i>	Mar. 2019 – May 2020
- Authored regular columns on leadership, policy, and community life. - Recognized with the SPJ Award for Excellence in Column Writing (2019).	
SEEQS – <i>Performing Arts Teacher</i>	July 2015 – June 2017
- Designed and facilitated courses on creativity, communication, and sustainability for middle school students, emphasizing storytelling and civic engagement. - Integrated public speaking and project-based learning into interdisciplinary curriculum connecting environmental awareness, cultural values, and student voice.	

Sterling Higa

Youth Speaks Hawai'i – Program Director

Aug. 2010 – July 2014

- Directed multi-site youth development programs serving 2,000+ students annually across O'ahu and the Big Island, managing staff and volunteers across 8+ school and community partnerships.
- Oversaw program operations and budget, including curriculum design, volunteer recruitment and training, event production, and grant compliance reporting to foundation funders.

Board and Governance Leadership

Hawai'i Community Development Authority – Chair, Board of Directors

2022 – Present

- Appointed Chair of a 17-member state board stewarding \$259M in public assets across four development districts (Kaka'ako, Kalaeloa, He'eia, Pūlehunui) serving 20,000+ residents.
- Provide oversight of complex real estate projects including affordable housing developments, infrastructure improvements, and community facilities requiring multi-year planning, financing approval, and construction management.
- Guide community engagement processes for major development projects, ensuring transparent decision-making through public hearings, stakeholder consultations, and collaborative partnerships.
- Navigate complex public-private partnerships to advance economic development, affordable housing, and community benefits aligned with state policy objectives.

PBS Hawai'i – Community Advisory Board Member

2024 – Present

- Advise PBS leadership on community engagement strategies, educational programming priorities, and content reflecting Hawai'i's diverse communities.

EAH Housing – Hawai'i Advisory Council Member

2023 – Present

- Advise on statewide affordable housing strategy and policy for an organization managing 3,300+ units across 38 properties serving 6,000 residents on O'ahu, Maui, and Kaua'i.

House Maui – Advisory Council Member

2024 – Present

- Advise on post-disaster housing recovery and resilience strategy following Maui fires, supporting long-term community rebuilding and sustainable development.

Community Service and Fellowships

National and International Leadership

- **U.S.–Japan Council – Associate Leader & Emerging Leaders Program** | 2021–Present
- **Pacific Forum – Young Leader & Asia-Pacific Affairs Leadership Scholar** | 2020–Present

Hawai'i Leadership Development

- **Ka Ipu Kukui Fellows Program – Fellow** | 2024
- **Partners for Democracy – Inaugural Cohort** | 2022

Maui Leadership

- **Stand Up Maui 501(c)(3) – Board Member** | 2023–2024
- **Maui Nui Empowered 501(c)(4) – Board Member** | 2023–2024

Certifications and Professional Development

YMCA of the USA – Leader Certification | 2025

Rediscovering Hawai'i's Soul – Systems Leader | 2024

Awards & Recognition

- 20 for the Next 20, *Hawai'i Business Magazine* (2025)
- Golden Apple Award for Distinguished Teaching, *Hawai'i Pacific University* (2021)
- SPJ Award for Industry Reporting, *Hawai'i Business Magazine* (2020)
- SPJ Award for Column Writing, *Honolulu Civil Beat* (2019)

Office of the City Clerk
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU
STATE OF HAWAII

Voter Certificate

I, Glen I. Takahashi, City Clerk of the City & County of Honolulu, State of Hawaii do hereby certify that,

STERLING HIGA

a resident of the City and County of Honolulu, State of Hawaii is a duly registered elector (voter) of

Precinct, 04 Representative District, 25 State of Hawaii

Voter ID No: 1132439 Registration Date: 05/04/2010

Date of Birth

*In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the City and County of
Honolulu to be affixed on January 5, 2026.*

Signature Block

Signature of Elector



*Glen I. Takahashi, City Clerk
City and County of Honolulu
State of Hawaii*