

For Immediate Release July 26, 2022

## Media Statement From Sylvia Luke, Candidate For Lieutenant Governor

David Shapiro called it in his [Volcanic Ash column on Sunday](#), “Hawai‘i Carpenters Union wields oversize political hammer.” The union’s campaign of retribution against my campaign for Lieutenant Governor has begun. I’m being punished because in 2017, I refused to saddle the residents of O‘ahu with a permanent tax increase to fund the rail project.

A TV advertisement paid for by Carpenters Super PAC Be Change Now began running this week. The ad uses a mishmash of disconnected facts to impugn my integrity and confuse voters. I have no quarrel with a union supporting a candidate. But these ugly tactics do our electorate a disservice.

As a public servant who aspires to one of the top leadership positions in the state, I have a duty to repudiate smears and disinformation. These kinds of ads disgust most voters and damage the entire election process.

Here are some important facts about the current ad, my relationship with the Carpenters Union and Be Change Now:

### TV Ad

This ad attempts to connect the indictment of a prolific campaign donor named Martin Kao on **federal** fraud charges to a five-year old **state** law supporting tenants forced to relocate by an ambitious harbor redevelopment project. There simply is no connection.

- Martin Kao has been indicted for fraudulently obtaining \$12.8 million in covid relief funds and also illegally funneling \$200,000 to the re-election fund of a U.S. Senator representing the state of Maine.
- HB 591 of 2017 expanded tax credits for companies who were forced to relocate so the state could develop a new container terminal. That law was approved by 72 out of 76 legislators – from both parties -- and

became law.

## Be Change Now

This Super PAC was formerly known as Pacific Resource Partnership or PRP. Publicly available media logs show that it has committed \$565,000 for TV and Radio ads on behalf of LG candidate Ikaika Anderson. That is 2.5 times more than Anderson has raised on his own. Anderson is the only candidate on the website [www.bechangingnow.org](http://www.bechangingnow.org) and he is the one candidate the Super Pac has endorsed.

## The Carpenters Union and HART

Shapiro correctly recapped my 2018 public statements repudiating Be Change Now's massive overfunding of individual campaigns. But my disagreements with the Carpenters Union began in 2017 when I refused to saddle the residents of O'ahu with a permanent tax increase to fund the rail project.

Now I'm the latest candidate to be smeared by this Super PAC because of a position on rail. As Shapiro pointed out on Sunday, PRP or Be Change Now has spent millions of dollars over the last decade attacking candidates for their opposition to rail.

- In 2012, PRP launched a smear campaign against anti-rail mayoral candidate Ben Cayetano, who sued the union for defamation and won a six-figure settlement from the union.
- In 2018, Be Change Now unsuccessfully smeared Honolulu City Councilwoman Carol Fukunaga in support of Fukunaga's opponent. I am used to the rough-and-tumble of politics. Super PAC spending has been protected by the U.S. Supreme Court. But, we must demand they behave with honesty and integrity. These tactics, all too common from Be Change Now, need to come to an end.