

FROM THE FRONT PAGE

BIDEN From the front page

over the plan until the cusp of November's elections.

The president's remarks underscored a growing sentiment among Democrats that after months of bargaining with Manchin that only made the president's top-tier domestic priority ever smaller, it was time to declare victory. Reducing pharmaceutical costs, helping consumers purchase health coverage and trimming federal red ink are Democratic priorities and passage would let them flash achievements before voters that Republicans are on track to solidly oppose.

"Families all over the nation will sleep easier if Congress takes this action. The Senate should move forward, pass it before the August recess, and get it to my desk so I can sign it," Biden said in a statement released by the White House.

He thanked Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., who has spent months negotiating with Manchin, for "his dogged and determined effort to produce the strongest possible bill" and "even offering significant compromises to try to reach an agreement."

That seemed like an unspoken dig at Manchin, whom Biden's statement did not mention and who in December sunk a much broader, \$2 trillion, 10-year version of the package. Though its final scope remained unclear, a slimmed-down measure contoured to Manchin's latest demands could generate around \$288 billion in savings over 10 years by letting Medicare negotiate prices for the pharmaceuticals it buys, requiring rebates from drug makers if price increases exceed inflation and other cost reductions. It would spend just a fraction of that on health insurance subsidies that expire in January, with the rest going to deficit reduction, according to early estimates.

In a sign of movement, Democrats planned to begin vetting the prescription drug language next week with the Senate parliamentarian, said a Democratic aide, to make sure there are no provisions that violate the chamber's rules and must be dropped. The aide was not authorized to discuss the plans publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

Manchin, whose vote is necessary for Democrats to succeed in the 50-50 Senate, had also said Friday that if party leaders want to pursue a broader measure aimed at global warming and raising taxes on the wealthy and corporations, they should wait until later this summer. He argued that would allow time to see what happens to inflation and interest rates this month.

"Let's wait until that comes out so we know we're going down the path that won't be inflammatory to add more to inflation," Manchin said on "Talkline," a West Virginia talk radio show hosted by Hoppy Kercheval.

After months of citing inflation fears among his reasons for seeking to trim Biden's overall package, Manchin raised sharpened concerns this week after the government said annual inflation hit 9.1% in June, the heftiest increase in 41 years. Polls show inflation is voters' top concern as November elections approach in which Republicans could well win control of the House and Senate.

In his statement, Biden said action on climate and clean energy "remains more urgent than ever" but acknowledged a willingness to accept delays in congressional action.

"If the Senate will not move to tackle the climate crisis and strengthen our domestic clean energy industry, I will take strong executive action to meet this moment," he said.

Biden's options for executive action or Environmental Protection Agency regulations could include rejecting permits for oil and gas drilling on federal lands and waters, tightening pollution allowed from coal-fired plants and restricting natural gas pipelines.

Biden's comments marked the latest retreat he and congressional Democratic leaders have made since initially pushing wider-ranging goals early last year that would have cost \$3.5 trillion or more. Those priorities would have also provided free pre-kindergarten, low-cost child care, paid family leave and more. They ultimately fell victim to Democrats' slender majorities in Congress and changes in the political and economic climate that have seen voters' concerns over the inflation and the economy intensify.

Any plan that emerges faces certain unanimous opposition from Republicans, who argue its boosts in spending and taxes would further inflame inflation.

Manchin had told Schumer on Thursday that he could not support a bill now that would include other party goals like battling climate change and raising taxes on the wealthy and large corporations, according to a Democrat briefed on those talks.

The two lawmakers have been negotiating over a package that had been expected to reach around \$1 trillion over 10 years, with about half used to reduce federal deficits.

Manchin said he considered his talks with Schumer "still going." Yet his latest stance provoked a mixture of anger and pragmatism from fellow Democrats.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., told reporters she was unsure what remained in her party's proposal but added, "I would be very, of course, disappointed if the whole saving the planet is out of the bill." A spokesperson for Schumer did not return requests for comment.

Rep. Pramila Jayapal, D-Wash., who leads the Congressional Progressive Caucus, said she was skeptical about Manchin's acceptance of a health care-focused package. "Look, the guy has changed his mind" before, Jayapal told reporters. "So let's see. I have no confidence."

"If there was a guarantee that we could get the bigger deal in September, I'm open to that," said Rep. Richard Neal, D-Mass., who chairs the tax-writing Ways and Means Committee. "But to go to the altar, at some point we need to say, 'I do.'"

Delaying action until after the August break would leave Democrats facing a dangerously ticking clock. Special budget powers expire Oct. 1 that would let them push the legislation through the 50-50 Senate over solid GOP opposition, with Vice President Kamala Harris' tie-breaking vote.

Kona woman dies in crash, 19-year-old arrested on suspicion of negligent homicide

By **JOHN BURNETT**
Hawaii Tribune-Herald

A 63-year-old Kailua-Kona woman died Thursday night after a two-car collision that occurred at the intersection of Mamalahoa Highway (Highway 190) and Akina Place in North Kona.

The decedent has been positively identified as Rhonda Dee Freedman.

Officers responding to a 9:18 p.m. call determined that a white 2019 Nissan Rogue driven by a 19-year-old Kailua-Kona man was heading south on Mamalahoa Highway when it crossed over the double solid yellow lines and struck head-on a white 2018 Nissan

Versa driven by Freedman.

Freedman was taken to Kona Community Hospital, where she was pronounced dead at 10:51 p.m.

The 19-year-old man driving the Nissan Rogue and his 17-year-old female passenger were not injured in the collision.

According to a police log, the Rogue's driver, Trevor Shoemaker-Hassey, was arrested on suspicion of first-degree negligent homicide, DUI under 21, reckless driving, reckless endangering, fourth-degree sex assault, second-degree endangering the welfare of a minor and promoting dangerous compounds.

Police said Friday that Shoemaker-Hassey, who

hadn't been charged with any of the alleged offenses, remained in custody at the Kealahou Police Station while the investigation continues.

An autopsy on Freedman's body has been ordered to determine the exact cause of death.

Anyone who may have witnessed the collision is asked to contact Officer Len Hamakado at (808) 326-4646, ext. 229 or len.hamakado@hawaiicounty.gov. Tipsters who prefer to remain anonymous may call Crime Stoppers at (808) 961-8300 in Hilo.

Freedman's death is the 22nd official traffic fatality compared to 12 at this time last year.

Email John Burnett at jburnett@hawaiitribune-herald.com.



Associated Press

Lisa Raskin, a teacher at Jefferson Union High School District, poses on Friday for a photograph inside her new one-bedroom apartment in Daly City, Calif.

AFFORDABLE From the front page

shortage and rapidly rising rents, the working-class district could serve as a harbinger as schools across the U.S. seek to attract and retain educators.

"This is absolutely a solution for other districts. As we've gone through the process, we've learned of so many other districts interested in doing what we've done," said Andrew Lie, a school board trustee. "For us to be at the front end of this new wave of teacher and staff housing is actually pretty exciting."

"It's like a great gift coming from the district," said math teacher Eleonor Obedoza of her family's new three-bedroom apartment.

In West Virginia, the American Federation of Teachers recently helped open a building with apartments for teachers and retail shops that officials hope will revitalize the rural town of Welch.

Teachers were traveling "hours and hours to get to school and back," said Randi Weingarten, AFT union president. "So this became an idea to spark economic development and to create housing."

Jeff Vincent, co-founder and director of the Center for Cities & Schools at the University of California, Berkeley, said such housing complexes are rare, but he expects more school districts to explore the concept given the benefits of teachers living in the communities where they work, so they can get to know students and families better.

But such projects face obstacles, including pushback from residents. Vincent urges districts to be cautious.

"One of the biggest barriers is the need for people to think outside the box," he said. "There are skeptics of whether schools should be doing this with their land."

Roughly a quarter of the 500 employees at Jefferson Union were resigning or retiring every year and the district, where teacher salaries for the 2022-23 year start at \$60,000, could not compete with wealthier schools that pay new teachers \$76,000 or more. So in 2017-2018,

officials came up with a plan to address recruitment and retention, including a \$75 million housing complex for teachers and staff financed in part by a \$30 million bond measure approved by voters in 2018.

The district also has a more ambitious plan to lease school property for a 1,200-unit development that would mix retail with market-rate housing and generate revenue to beef up teacher salaries. But the Sierra Club's local chapter and others have expressed objections. They want more units at below-market rents and taller buildings to preserve more open space, including a decades-old garden scheduled for razing.

So far, the district is opposed to those changes, inflaming critics.

"It's terrible the schools have to come up with schemes to build housing to pay teachers," said Gladwyn d'Souza, a Sierra Club member who supports workforce housing but says there should be more homes for everyone.

Tenants at the school district complex can stay up to five years, hopefully using the time to save up for a down payment on a house. But those too are becoming more difficult to buy. A 2016 study by Redfin found that only 20% of homes for sale across major U.S. metro areas were affordable on an average teacher's salary of \$62,800, down from 34% in 2012.

Boston high school English teacher Shirley Jones-Luke, who bought her house nearly two decades ago, said there's no way she'd be able to afford one today in the rapidly gentrifying neighborhood of Dorchester where she's taught for years.

"It's important to students to know that their teachers live in the same communities as them, shop at the same stores," said Jones-Luke, who is Black. "They realize the teachers aren't out of touch because we live in the same 'hood. I know what's going on in the 'hood just as much as they do."

In California, the 2016 study found only 17% of homes

were affordable on the average state teacher salary of roughly \$74,000, down from 30% in 2012. The average teacher could afford 0.2% of homes in San Francisco and none in Silicon Valley, where the median sales price of a home was \$1.5 million in June.

California lawmakers in 2016 made it easier for districts to build workforce housing on school property, but some efforts have stalled over financing and residential pushback. Five workforce housing complexes currently exist in Los Angeles, Santa Clara and San Mateo county school districts.

After two decades of trying, San Francisco Unified plans to break ground this summer on a 135-unit complex for educators. It could be ready to lease in 2024 — two years behind schedule.

"It was a fight to get it, and it isn't built yet," said Cassondra Curiel, president of United Educators of San Francisco. "It'll alleviate pressure, and it'll be great for those folks who get in there. The bottom line and the objective truth is, it's not enough."

Jefferson Union was the rare success story, building the new complex on a former parking lot of an old high school currently used for district offices.

The apartments range in monthly rent from \$1,356 for a one-bedroom to \$2,511 for a three-bedroom, which officials say is 58% of market rate. There are multiple washers and dryers on every floor, a bike room and meeting rooms where teachers can socialize or collaborate on lessons.

Taylor and Darnel Garcia, both 27, despaired of ever moving out of a two-bedroom in-law unit that was too small for them and their children, ages 3 and 6. The administrative assistant and her husband, a mechanic for the school district, pondered whether they could afford to stay in the Bay Area.

"We were kind of floating in the unknown for a while," she said after moving into their new three-bedroom apartment in May.

NEWS

Police ID man arrested in connection with fatal crash

By West Hawaii Today Staff

Hawaii Island police on Monday identified the 19-year-old man arrested on suspicion of drunken driving and negligent homicide in connection with a Thursday night crash that left a woman dead.

The suspect was identified Monday as

Trevor K. Shoemaker-Hassey, of Kailua-Kona, according to the Hawaii Police Department.

The department previously did not release his name, though West Hawaii Today requested the information on Friday.

Shoemaker-Hassey was released pending further investigation

within 48 hours of his arrest Thursday night, in accordance with law.

Police allege Shoemaker-Hassey was driving a white 2019 Nissan Rogue on Mamalahoa Highway when the vehicle crossed the centerline near Akina Place and collided head-on with a 2018 Nissan Versa

driven by 63-year-old Kailua-Kona resident Rhonda Dee Freedman, according to police.

Shoemaker-Hassey and his 17-year-old female passenger were not injured in the collision.

Police arrested Shoemaker-Hassey on suspicion of operating a vehicle under the

influence of an intoxicant, negligent homicide, reckless endangering and reckless driving.

An autopsy has been ordered to determine the exact cause of death.

Anyone who may have witnessed the collision should contact Officer Len Hamakado

at (808) 326-4646, ext. 229, or email at len.hamakado@hawaiiicounty.gov.

Those who prefer to remain anonymous may call Crime Stoppers at (808) 961-8300.

This is the 22nd traffic fatality this year compared to 12 at this time last year.



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Tribune Herald



See Below:

Friday, August 26, 2022

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Cell tower planned for Hilo

180-foot-tall structure would be located off Kaumana Drive

By **MICHAEL BRESTOVANSKY**
Hawaii Tribune-Herald

Developers hope to build a 180-foot cellular tower

at the top end of Kaumana Drive in Hilo, according to filings with the Windward Planning Commission. At next week's meeting of

the commission, California-based company Renegade Towers LLC will present an application for a use permit to build a telecommunication facility on a parcel of land near the intersection of Nolemana Street and Kaumana Drive, close to the Daniel K. Inouye Highway.

The parcel in question is a residential-zoned 14.6-acre lot owned by the Edward Lamar Britton III Trust. Renegade Towers is proposing that the unmanned facility would be located within a 2,800-square-foot area of that parcel, about 130 feet from Kaumana

Drive, and more than 1,000 feet away from two residences on the property. The application says the facility will improve local cellphone coverage both in the nearby community and further mauka on Daniel K. Inouye

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KELSEY WALLING/Tribune-Herald

Jerome Duarte, left, and Cheyann Gabriel sit on top of scaffolding Thursday while raising money for Special Olympics Hawaii during the Cop on Top fundraiser in front of the Hilo Walmart.

Cop on Top fundraiser underway

After a two-year hiatus due to the pandemic, the Hawaii Police Department is sponsoring the 19th annual Cop on Top fundraiser for Special Olympics Hawaii.

The three-day event began Thursday and ends 3 p.m. Saturday at the Hilo and Kailua-Kona Walmart stores. For all three days, law enforcement officers are spending

their off-duty time perched on top of a 15-foot scaffold at the Walmart stores, where they will eat, sleep and raise awareness for Special Olympics Hawaii.

Donations collected from Cop on Top directly benefit Special Olympics Hawaii and its efforts to provide year-round sports programs for athletes.

'A great love story under God'

Man mourns loss of Kona-born wife who was killed in car crash

By **JOHN BURNETT**
Hawaii Tribune-Herald

A successful Florida businessman whose wife of four decades was killed last month in a two-car collision in North Kona described her as "an angel on Earth." Steve Freedman said he bears no ill-will toward the 19-year-old man who was arrested after the crash July 14 that took the life of 63-year-old Rhonda Dee DePontes Freedman. "He didn't know her, but he would've loved her," Freedman said of Trevor Shoemaker-Hassey, the driver of the 2019 Nissan Rogue that



Rhonda Freedman is all smiles in this undated family photograph. police said crossed the double-solid center line on Highway 190 at the intersection of Akina Place and struck Rhonda Freedman's 2018 Nissan Versa head-on. "She was the best aunty. She was the most favorite aunty."

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Judge orders unsealing of redacted affidavit in Trump search

By **ERIC TUCKER**
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A judge ordered the Justice Department on Thursday to make public a redacted version of the affidavit it relied on when federal agents searched the Florida estate of former President Donald Trump to look for classified documents.



TRUMP



REINHART

The directive from U.S. Magistrate Judge Bruce Reinhart came hours after federal law enforcement officials submitted under seal

the portions of the affidavit that they want to keep secret as their investigation moves forward. The judge set a deadline of noon Friday for a redacted, or blacked-out, version of the document.

The order means the public could soon learn at least some additional details about what led FBI officials to search Mar-a-Lago on Aug. 8 as part

of an ongoing criminal investigation. Documents already made public show the FBI retrieved from the property 11 sets of classified documents, including information marked at the top secret level. Search warrant affidavits typically contain vital information about an investigation, with agents spelling out to a judge the justification for

why they want to search a particular property and why they believe they're likely to find evidence of a potential crime there. But affidavits routinely remain sealed during the course of pending investigations, making the judge's decision to reveal portions of it in this investigation all the more striking.

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Always keep going to the beach **FUN AND SAFE** by following these ocean safety tips to prevent drowning and spinal cord injuries!

- Swim in designated swimming areas protected by lifeguards (visit hawaii beachesafety.com for a list of lifeguarded beaches)
- At the beach, always check for warning flags
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- Young children or inexperienced swimmers should wear life jackets
- Waves and ocean currents are unpredictable and surprise even the strongest swimmers!
- Snorkeling? Go with a buddy and learn basic skills before getting in the water!



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LOVE From the front page

Freedman said he had “41 unbelievable years” with his wife, 40 of them as her husband.

Freedman owns and operate Sparktacular Inc., a fireworks and professional pyrotechnics company based in Jupiter Beach, Fla.

“We built the company together the last 26 years,” Freedman said. “The reason Rhonda was back in Hawaii was to take care of her mother. She’s an 86-year-old Hawaiian and Filipina woman. And I came back here to take care of her mother. And then the accident happened after I went back to the mainland.”

Rhonda Freedman died about an hour-and-a-half after the 9:18 p.m. collision.

Shoemaker-Hassey wasn’t injured, nor was his front-seat passenger, a 17-year-old girl. He was arrested on suspicion of DUI, negligent homicide, reckless endangering and reckless driving, and later released pending further investigation.

Police and prosecutors have two years to investigate and to press any potential charges against Shoemaker-Hassey.

This year has been a particularly deadly one on the Big Island’s roads.

As of Thursday, there have been 25 official traffic fatalities in 2022, just one less than for the entire year in 2021.

Freedman said his wife was from the “Kahikina bloodline,” with relatives among numerous prominent Hawaiian families in West Hawaii.

He said she was the Hawaiian International Billfish Tournament’s Miss Billfish in the 1970s, placed in numerous pageants — including top three in the Miss Hawaii pageant — and was a trained hula dancer.

The Miami-born Freedman and Kona-born Rhonda DePontes met in California, where she was working at a mortgage company owned by Freedman’s father.

“My father said, ‘You’ve got to meet this girl. This girl looks different. She’s incredible,’” Freedman said. “I asked her out on a date, and from that day on, we never split. We had a great family life. She was a great Christian woman ... and believed in Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit and making her way to God.

“I didn’t know, back then, that I’d have the best thing in my life possible. I was blessed,” he said. “It was a great love story under God.”

Freedman, who grew up Jewish, was baptized as a Christian because of his wife’s example, he said.

The Freedmans have four grown children: Sam, 36; Max, 34; Alanah, 31; and Lou, 28. Alanah has a November wedding scheduled, while Lou is set to be married in April 2023.

“She was looking forward to having grandkids,” Freedman said. “We always said we had a couple of grandkids, but they were our



Steve and Rhonda Freedman in an undated family photo.

dogs, our three bull terriers. She loved our nieces and nephews, and even the children of friends who weren’t in the family. She was the hanai type, for sure.”

Freedman described his wife as “an amazing mother” and said the precedent was set for her to be a wonderful grandmother, as well.

“She instilled the love of Jesus into all of them from

the beginning,” he said. “They love their mother. She taught them to excel but to be true from the heart. She was at every function, school or whatever, for them.

“She was there for them for everything. Everything.”

A celebration of life is scheduled for Sept. 25, Freedman said.

Email John Burnett at jburnett@hawaii-tribune-herald.com.

Hawaii Tribune Herald

Thursday, March 9, 2023

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See Below:

Animal control agency OK'd

New entity will take over duties from the police department

By MICHAEL BRESTOVANSKY
Hawaii Tribune-Herald

A new Hawaii County animal control agency will be formed in July, bringing with it 45 new county jobs. The Hawaii Police

Department took over the county's animal control duties in 2021 after the county terminated its contract with Hawaii Rainbow Rangers, the previous contract holder.

But after nearly two years, County Council

members introduced in February a bill that would create a dedicated Animal Control and Protection Agency.

The bill stipulates that the agency will be made up of an administrator, who answers to the county managing

director, and an unspecified number of staff. A companion resolution introduced and passed at Wednesday's County Council meeting set that number at 45 civil service positions.

County Finance Director Deanna Sako



SAKO

during the police department's animal control efforts have not been attractive to

prospective employees. Police Maj. Aimee Wana said the jobs include administrative positions, kennel technicians and more.

The county will allocate \$2 million to the new agency, the same amount

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KELSEY WALLING/Tribune-Herald

From right, Cadet Almonte and Cadet Asidon from the Youth Challenge Academy cheer for a honking truck as they wave signs Wednesday along Highway 11 in Hilo to support lowering the legal blood alcohol concentration, or BAC threshold, from 0.08% to 0.05% for those operating a vehicle.

Lower drunken driving threshold gains ground

Gov. Green has said he supports measure moving through Legislature

By GRANT PHILLIPS
Hawaii Tribune-Herald

Hawaii could become the second state to lower the legal blood alcohol concentration, or BAC threshold, from 0.08%

to 0.05% for those operating a vehicle. Senate Bill 160 was passed by the Senate on March 3 and crossed over to the House, where it cleared its first reading on Tuesday.

On Wednesday, a group of roughly 50 individuals including members of the Hawaii Police Department, the Youth Challenge Academy, school crossing guards, students and

people in recovery met for a sign-waving in Hilo to support the bill.

"Across the state, we've had really good community-level support," said Sally Ancheta, East Hawaii Drug Free Coalition coordinator, who helped organize the event. "This bill is just about

See DRIVING Page A7

Muddy path ahead after housing audit

County code changes might be needed before program can be fully improved

By MICHAEL BRESTOVANSKY
Hawaii Tribune-Herald

Hawaii County's affordable housing credit program needs to be reshaped, but not before the county code itself can be revised, county officials said.

In February, a report by county auditor Tyler Benner revealed that the Office of Housing and Community Development was unable to properly monitor and record the movement of affordable housing credits due to "inadequate internal controls."



BENNER

Under the county's affordable housing policy, developers who agree to build more than the minimum number of new affordable housing units required by the county can earn affordable housing credits, which can be transferred to other developers.

But because OHCD lacks sufficient tools to track those credits, their movement between developers has become largely opaque, a fault that allowed a former county housing official to commit wire fraud using the affordable housing program.

Alan Scott Rudo, a housing community development specialist from 2006 to 2018, pleaded guilty in August to conspiracy to commit honest services wire fraud by awarding affordable housing credits to false limited liability companies established by alleged co-conspirators, and then selling those credits to other developers for a profit.

Rudo's share of that profit was at least \$1.8 million.

Following that fiasco, North Kona Councilman Holeka Inaba requested an audit of the program, which discovered that the resale of affordable housing credits is rampant and the OHCD doesn't have the

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'A matter of life and death', Roth says of health care 'emergency'

Mayor urges funding for hospital expansions and hiring of staff

By JOHN BURNETT
Hawaii Tribune-Herald

Mayor Mitch Roth called the state of health care on Hawaii Island "an emergency situation."

"Hawaii County is really lacking in health care resources," Roth said Wednesday in an livestreamed interview. "I think we've got about a 50% shortage on health care workers. We have hospitals that

really need repair and need to come up to the state of the art." Roth said that when he suffered a heart attack on Jan. 9, 2021, in Kona, that Kona Community Hospital "was not an option."

Roth was taken by ambulance to Queen's North Hawaii Community Hospital and subsequently was transferred to Hilo Medical Center.

"We really need to be building things up,



ROTH

we've been having some great conversations

especially when you think about the Life Flights being canceled for awhile," he said. "... So

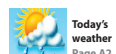
with the governor, with the state and with the hospitals themselves." Roth isn't the only one concerned about the island's hospitals, especially Kona Community Hospital. Steve Freedman,

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ROTH

From the front page

whose 63-year-old wife Rhonda Dee Depontes Freedman died July 14 after a two-vehicle collision in Kona, said Wednesday he wonders why she was taken to KCH instead of the more modern North Hawaii hospital.

“She was alive for an hour and a half,” Freedman said. “The paramedics that took her (to the hospital) couldn’t even believe that she had died. They knew she was in an accident, but she was up, she was coherent, she was talking.

“They made a decision on their own to take her to Kona hospital. which we find out, is a hospital that doesn’t have a trauma team for what she needed. The state thinks that a level III (trauma center) hospital is sufficient for Kona. And it’s not.

“And my wife is dead today because they don’t have the proper tools at the hospital, and they need to upgrade it.”

HMC and QNHCH also are level III trauma centers, the same as KCH. The Queen’s Medical Center in Honolulu is the state’s only level I trauma care hospital.

Tripler Army Medical Center, also in Honolulu, is the state’s only level II trauma hospital, but accepts only military-connected patients. Maui Memorial Medical Center hopes to be certified level II for trauma care later this year.

There has been talk for some time about building a new hospital at an estimated cost of \$300

million to replace the 94-bed KCH, which was built in 1974. Hilo Medical Center is in the midst of a \$50 million upgrade to add 36 acute beds to its current total of 166, and an additional 19 Intensive Care Unit beds.

“When I was in the hospital in Hilo, there’s 11 ICU beds, and all of those beds were filled up,” Roth said “Today, as we sit here, I can guess from my conversations with the hospital that there are 25 to 30 people who are sitting in an emergency room as overflow.”

Roth, who said his priorities are to get the \$50 million in funding for the Hilo upgrade and \$20 million for Kona, acknowledges that the scarcity and price of housing in Hawaii are feeding the shortage of health care professionals.

He advocated for the passage of House Bill 920. The measure, introduced by Puna Rep. Greggor Ilagan, would allow counties to adopt a building code for single-family dwellings, additional dwellings, duplexes, and noncommercial structures that is less stringent than the state building code.

“Like the rest of the state, we’re dealing with issues on how long it takes for permits to get through, and we’re trying to find every way we can to make those permits go through a little bit quicker,” Roth said.

Roth noted that the state code, patterned after an

international code, has provisions for snow load ratings on roofs and a that a licensed engineer certify the house can withstand winds up to 130 mph.

“We don’t have a lot of snow in Hawaii, so we should be able to make some changes there to reduce the cost of housing,” he said. “... However, for a licensed engineer to sign off, you have to have licensed engineers. And it’s taking people between eight to 12 months to find a licensed engineer that’s willing to charge you about \$1,000 to put a stamp on (architectural plans) saying that the wind speed is OK.

“... The County Council really should have the ability to make changes. And we’re really happy to see that the other islands have been jumping on board and supporting this bill, as well.”

The measure has passed the House and its first Senate floor vote, but hasn’t yet been referred to any committees.

Roth said he’s also consulting with government agencies, landowners and private developers to build workforce housing around the Hilo and Kona hospitals.

“For me, this is a matter of life and death,” he said. “... So when I look at our legislators, I’m optimistic that they’re going to make some good decisions to make sure that we get the funding.”

Email John Burnett at jburnett@hawaii-tribune-herald.com.

Man free on bail in manslaughter case arrested for unrelated DUI

By **JOHN BURNETT**
Hawaii Tribune-Herald

A 20-year-old Kailua-Kona man who already faces a manslaughter charge for a fatal collision in 2022 was arrested Wednesday on suspicion of driving under the influence.

According to Hawaii Police Department spokeswoman Denise Laitinen, Trevor Shoemaker-Hassey was taken into custody at 11:08 p.m. Wednesday on Queen Kaahuanu Highway just north of Nani Kailua Drive.

Shoemaker-Hassey also was booked on suspicion of driving with a suspended license and without insurance.

“The officer observed the vehicle directly in front of him veer to the west toward the outer shoulder, crossing the solid white line with both the front and rear passenger tire until the line was in the middle of the vehicle,” Laitinen said.

Shoemaker-Hassey was released from police custody at 1:27 a.m.



**SHOEMAKER
-HASSEY**

Thursday without the charges he was booked for being filed, pending further investigation.

Shoemaker-Hassey is free on \$75,000 bail after being indicted on March 21 by a Kona grand jury on charges of manslaughter, first-degree negligent homicide, DUI, DUI under 21, reckless driving, second-degree reckless endangering, harassment and promoting intoxicating compounds.

The charges stem from a two-car collision on July 14, 2022, at the intersection of Mamalahoa Highway (Highway 190) and Akina Place in North Kona that killed 63-year-old Rhonda Dee Freedman of Kailua-Kona.

According to police, officers responding to a 9:18 p.m. call that evening determined that a white 2019 Nissan Rogue driven by Shoemaker-Hassey was southbound on Mamalahoa Highway when he crossed over the double-solid yellow lines and struck Freedman’s white 2018 Nissan Versa head-on.

Freedman was taken to Kona Community Hospital,

where she died at 10:51 p.m.

Shoemaker-Hassey and his 17-year-old female passenger weren’t injured in the collision.

He pleaded not guilty to the charges March 23, and Third Circuit Chief Judge Robert Kim ordered Shoemaker-Hassey to appear for trial in Kona on Aug. 15.

Kim ruled that the Office of the Public Defender is incapable of handling Shoemaker-Hassey’s case based on staffing shortages and the severity of the charges.

Shoemaker-Hassey is now represented by Kona attorney Andrew Kennedy.

In addition, a penal summons complaint was issued May 19 for Shoemaker-Hassey for driving under the influence of drugs on Dec. 1, 2022, according to court records.

That penal summons has yet to be served, but Shoemaker-Hassey is scheduled for an arraignment and plea in that case at 8:30 a.m. Aug. 24 at Kona District Court.

Email John Burnett at jburnett@hawaiitribune-herald.com.

A8 Wednesday, October 4, 2023

Hawaii Tribune-Herald

NEWS

Prosecutors: Driver facing manslaughter charge a 'serious danger to community'

By JOHN BURNETT
Hawaii Tribune-Herald

Prosecutors are seeking to revoke bail for a 20-year-old Kailua-Kona man who faces a manslaughter charge for a fatal traffic collision in 2022.

According to the motion filed Sept. 18 by Deputy Prosecutor Charles Murray III, Trevor Shoemaker-Hassey was arrested Sept. 17 on suspicion of driving after his license was suspended for DUI and third-degree promotion of a dangerous drug.

Shoemaker-Hassey, who was free on \$75,000 bail, was pulled over by police near the Triangle Park parking lot on Kuakini Highway in Kailua-Kona after officers spotted him



SHOEMAKER-HASSEY

driving with "an unconscious female passenger in his vehicle, who was later determined to be suffering from an overdose related to opiate use," the motion states.

"Within the driver's side door of the vehicle ... police observed a syringe containing a brown- and amber-colored liquid (consistent with heroin)," according to the document.

The motion states that Shoemaker-Hassey's "continued operation of a vehicle in defiance of his license suspension, as well as allegations of drug use connected to operating said vehicle" indicate he "poses a serious danger

to the community."

According to a police log, Shoemaker-Hassey was taken into custody by police at about 6 p.m. Saturday and charged via bench warrant with violating terms of his bail. Prosecutors had sought no bail for the bench warrant, but Kona Circuit Judge Wendy DeWeese set Shoemaker-Hassey's bail for the arrest warrant at \$100,000.

Shoemaker-Hassey is scheduled for a hearing at 9:30 a.m. Oct. 9 before 3rd Circuit Chief Judge Robert Kim regarding the motion to revoke his bail.

Shoemaker-Hassey posted \$75,000 bail on March 21 after being indicted by a Kona grand jury on charges of manslaughter,

first-degree negligent homicide, DUI, DUI under 21, reckless driving, second-degree reckless endangering, harassment and promoting intoxicating compounds.

The manslaughter and negligent homicide charges are alternatives to be considered by a jury and/or judge, and Shoemaker-Hassey can't be convicted of both.

The charges stem from a two-car collision on July 14, 2022, at the intersection of Mamalahoa Highway (Highway 190) and Akina Place in North Kona that killed 63-year-old Rhonda Dee Freedman of Kailua-Kona.

Officers responding to a 9:18 p.m. call that evening determined that a white 2019

Nissan Rogue driven by Shoemaker-Hassey was southbound on Mamalahoa Highway when he crossed over the double-solid yellow lines and struck Freedman's white 2018 Nissan Versa head-on.

Freedman was taken to Kona Community Hospital, where she died at 10:51 p.m.

Shoemaker-Hassey, then 19, and his 17-year-old female passenger weren't injured in the collision.

In a separate case, Shoemaker-Hassey was charged via penal summons in May for driving under the influence of drugs on Dec. 1, 2022, according to court records. He's scheduled for arraignment and plea Oct. 16 in Kona District Court. Shoemaker-Hassey's

license was suspended for a year on Dec. 1, 2022.

In addition, on July 19, 2023, Shoemaker-Hassey was arrested on suspicion of DUI after an officer reportedly witnessed him swerve on Queen Kaahumanu Highway in Kailua-Kona just north of Nani Kailua Drive.

He also was booked on suspicion of driving with a suspended license and without insurance.

Those charges are still under investigation and haven't yet been filed.

As of Tuesday, Shoemaker-Hassey remained in custody at Hawaii Community Correctional Center.

Email John Burnett at jburnett@hawaiitribune-herald.com.

Hawaii Tribune Herald

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See below:

Trump accepts nomination



New York Times

Former President Donald Trump, the Republican presidential nominee, speaks Thursday about the shooting last Saturday on the fourth and final night of the Republican National Convention at the Fiserv Forum in Milwaukee.

Presidential hopeful offers dramatic account of the assassination attempt

By NATHAN LAYNE, JOSEPH AX and JEFF MASON
Reuters

MILWAUKEE/REHOBOTH BEACH, Delaware — Donald Trump described on Thursday how he narrowly survived an attempt on his life, telling a rapt audience at the Republican National Convention in his first speech since the attack that he was only there “by the grace of Almighty God.” “I heard a loud whizzing sound and felt something hit me really, really hard on my right ear,” he said in Milwaukee, a thick bandage still covering his ear. “I said to myself,

“Wow, what was that? It can only be a bullet.” When he told the crowd that he was “not supposed to be here,” the delegates chanted back, “Yes you are!” With photos of a bloodied Trump showing on screens behind him, Trump praised the Secret Service agents that rushed to his side and paid tribute to the volunteer firefighter who was killed, Corey Comperatore, kissing his fire helmet. The former president struck an unusually conciliatory tone during the speech’s opening moments, when he formally accepted the party’s

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Is Joe Biden ready to leave the race?

People close to president say he appears to accept he may have to

By MICHAEL D. SHEAR, PETER BAKER and KATIE ROGERS
NYTimes News Service

WASHINGTON — Several people close to President Joe

Biden said Thursday that they believe he has begun to accept the idea that he may not be able to win in November and may have to drop out of the race, bowing to the growing demands of many

anxious members of his party.

One of the people close to him warned that the president had not yet made up his mind to leave the race after three weeks of insisting that almost nothing would drive him out. But



PELOSI



RASKIN

another said that “reality is setting in,” and that it would not be a surprise if Biden made an announcement soon endorsing Vice President Kamala Harris as his replacement. Some people in Biden’s

camp have told Democratic allies that the president’s resolve to stay in the race has been most shaken by three developments: The decision by Rep. Nancy Pelosi, the former speaker, to weigh in so strongly, new state polls showing that his path to an

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JAMM AQUINO/Honolulu Star-Advertiser

The NATO flag is shown on the dock as German Navy sailor Martin Kubell disembarks the FGS Frankfurt Am Main during a tour of RIMPAC’s participating ships, on July 3 at Pearl Harbor in Honolulu.

NATO protection for Hawaii is not clear-cut

By KEVIN KNODELL
Honolulu Star-Advertiser

In response to recent prodding by congressional lawmakers on whether NATO’s mutual defense treaty applies to Hawaii and whether it can

be amended to explicitly include it, the U.S. State Department has responded with a partial answer. A senior State Department official said the agency believes that U.S. allies

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Husband of crash victim sues other driver, blasts plea offer

2022 collision killed Rhonda Freedman in North Kona

By JOHN BURNETT
Hawaii Tribune-Herald

The family of a woman who was killed in a North Kona traffic crash two years ago is suing the driver of the other car, his parents and a car rental company, seeking more than \$14 million in damages.

The wrongful death civil suit was filed June 27 in Kona Circuit Court by Steven Freedman, the husband of Rhonda Dee Freedman, who died at 63 shortly after the July 14, 2022, collision at the intersection of Mamelaha Highway (Route 190) and Kahikina Place.

Also listed as plaintiffs are the couple’s adult children: Max Kahikina Freedman, Alanah Molly Keiki Wahine O Kahikina Freedman and Lou Kaainoa Freedman.

Named as a defendant is Trevor Shoemaker-Hassey, the then-19-year-old driver of the white 2019 Nissan Rogue police say crossed a



FREEDMAN



SHOEMAKER-HASSEY

double-solid yellow line and struck head-on the 2018 Nissan Versa driven by Rhonda Freedman. Co-defendants in the suit are Shoemaker-Hassey’s mother, Iayon Shoemaker; his father, Robert T. Hassey; and Enterprise Rent-A-Car Company of Hawaii — which, according to the suit, leased the Nissan to Iayon Shoemaker. The complaint alleges Shoemaker-Hassey drove “recklessly and/or negligently,” causing the collision with Rhonda Freedman’s vehicle. It further claims that “Shoemaker negligently and/or recklessly entrusted the leased

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SUE From the front page

vehicle to her son ... with the knowledge that defendant Shoemaker-Hassey was a careless and reckless driver and posed a serious risk of harm to the operators of other vehicles," including Rhonda Freedman.

Steven Freedman said in his complaint that he and his family have been deprived of "life-long love and affection" due to his wife's death.

Shoemaker-Hassey faces charges of manslaughter, first-degree negligent homicide, driving under the influence of alcohol, promoting reckless driving, second-degree reckless endangering and harassment for the fatal crash.

He can't be convicted of both manslaughter and negligent homicide, because the latter is a lesser offense.

Since the fatal crash,

Shoemaker-Hassey — then free on \$75,000 bail — was arrested in Kailua-Kona on July 19, 2023, on suspicion of DUI, driving after his license was suspended for DUI and without insurance.

He was released from custody pending further investigation, and those charges haven't been filed.

In addition, Shoemaker-Hassey was arrested on Sept. 17, 2023, on suspicion of driving after his license was suspended for DUI and third-degree promotion of a dangerous drug.

According to a motion to revoke his bail filed in October 2023 by prosecutors, Shoemaker-Hassey was pulled over by police near the Triangle Park parking lot on Kuakini Highway in

Kailua-Kona after officers spotted him driving with "an unconscious female passenger in his vehicle, who was later determined to be suffering from an overdose related to opiate use."

The motion stated that Shoemaker-Hassey's "continued operation of a vehicle in defiance of his license suspension, as well as allegations of drug use connected to operating said vehicle" indicate he "poses a serious danger to the community."

No charges were filed in that case, but Shoemaker-Hassey's bail was raised to \$175,000, and he remains in custody at Hawaii Community Correctional Center.

Recently retired Third Circuit Chief Judge Robert Kim in April denied a motion to free Shoemaker-Hassey

on supervised release — a form of cashless bail — or to reduce his bail.

Also since the collision, Shoemaker-Hassey was cited or arrested for the following offenses, and later convicted: using electronic mobile device while driving on Oct. 12, 2022; speeding, 69 mph in a 55 mph zone on Oct. 23, 2022; inattention to driving, driving left of center and disregarding a solid white line on Oct. 27, 2022; and reckless driving and disregarding solid white and solid yellow lines on Dec. 1, 2022.

Shoemaker-Hassey has a trial scheduled for Sept. 3 in the fatal crash case, and a hearing on pre-trial motions set for Aug. 12.

A plea deal has been extended by prosecutors, in which Shoemaker-Hassey

would plead guilty or no contest to manslaughter and second-degree reckless endangering and the remaining counts would be dismissed.

The state also would not oppose Shoemaker-Hassey being sentenced as a young adult defendant, in which the maximum sentence for a Class A felony manslaughter conviction would be eight years imprisonment. Manslaughter usually carries a maximum sentence of 20 years.

Shoemaker-Hassey and his attorney, Jason Kwiat, have been given until July 31 to accept the plea deal or make a counter-offer.

The offer doesn't sit well with Steve Freedman, who sent a scathing email to county Prosecutor Kelden Waltjen and several deputies, including

Charles Murray III, the prosecutor assigned to Shoemaker-Hassey's criminal case.

"I have experience(d) first-hand all the proceedings ...," Freedman wrote. "Never once was there a thought about our family, it was always how you can accommodate the criminal.

"... We seek justice, accountability, truth. Your offer is not that. Trevor has a record that positions him to be an endangerment as evidenced in Rhonda's senseless death. The laws should provide for protection for all innocent law abiding people, not (protecting) the ones that commit offenses, break laws and are irresponsible, rendering themselves reckless."

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