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### Politicians' response rated poorly

By Dan Nakaso

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Government officials at state and city levels fare poorly across the board on how well they handle the issue of homelessness, but Oahu residents in the latest Hawaii Poll say they believe that Gov. David Ige should lead the effort to fight the problem.

Neither Ige, Mayor Kirk Caldwell, the City Council nor the state Legislature got high marks among poll participants. But a plurality of those surveyed — 32 percent — said they believe Ige should be out front on tackling it. Only 18 percent said they believed Caldwell should be the point person on homelessness.

The Hawaii Poll also found little belief that the state and city are working together to deal with the problem.

Only 3 percent of respondents said they felt that the state and city are working together “very well.”

Nearly half — 48 percent — responded “not very well.”

And 77 percent said political conflicts are preventing progress — such as the Council’s rejection of Caldwell’s request to fund more positions to address homelessness. Instead, the Council filled two similar positions for its own staff.

“We can and should do a better job of working together to make progress,” Ige said in a statement. “When the problem wasn’t as extreme, we could work in our own silos and see results. No longer. It’s about sitting down with each other personally— not through our staffs — and holding each other accountable. I am leading the effort to better coordinate and expect that we will make progress.”

Caldwell noted that the Hawaii Poll was conducted July 24-29 and wrapped up just as Ige on July 27 announced the formation of the Governor’s Leadership Team on Homelessness.

The committee will meet for the third time Monday afternoon. It’s comprised of Ige, Caldwell, state Sen. Jill Tokuda, state Rep. Sylvia Luke, state Director of Human Services Rachael Wong, City Council Chairman Ernie Martin and representatives of U.S. Sens. Brian Schatz and Mazie Hirono.

“We finally have the county and state working together,” Caldwell said. “People have a right to be concerned, but we’re doing the right thing. They want to see action, and they’re going to be very frustrated if they see talk and not action.”

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