

# Hawaii delegates thank National Guard

By [William Cole](#) January 22, 2021

*Updated 12:25 am*



COURTESY PHOTO

About 200 Hawaii National Guard personnel were sent to Washington, D.C., to help provide security during Wednesday's presidential inauguration.

U.S. Rep. Kai Kahele said Hawaii National Guard troops who were sent to Washington, D.C., were not among those jammed into a parking garage after being told to leave space in the Capitol Complex.

"I just checked in with the Hawaii National Guard at the Capitol," Kahele, a member of the Hawaii Air National Guard, tweeted Thursday evening. "Every soldier and airman has a hotel room when not on duty. They have assured me they are 'good & not to worry.'"

About 200 Hawaii Guard personnel remain in the nation's capital as part of a 25,000-strong force mobilized from Guard units across the country to provide security for the presidential inauguration.

CNN was among news outlets reporting that areas including the cafeteria of a Senate office building used as rest areas were made off-limits to citizen soldiers.

One Guard member told CNN his unit and others had been "banished to a corner of a parking garage" with one bathroom and one electrical outlet.

U.S. Sen. Mazie Hirono tweeted that "Guardsmen are arriving back at the Capitol tonight, but they never should have been forced to leave in the first place. We will get to the bottom of what happened here and hold those responsible accountable."

Hawaii's congressional delegation — Hirono, Kahele, Rep. Ed Case and Sen. Brian Schatz — met with the Hawaii troops Thursday to express their gratitude and take group photos.

"The 200 Hawaii National Guard soldiers and airmen arrived on the East Coast over the weekend and have performed various missions to protect the nation's capital following the violent insurrection on Jan. 6," the delegation said in a release.

President Joe Biden, meanwhile, directed the Federal Emergency Management Agency to fund local National Guard COVID-19 efforts at 100% instead of the more recent 75% under the Trump administration.

"This will save Hawaii millions of dollars and allow soldiers and airmen who are performing essential missions" to continue the work, Schatz said in a release.

About 800 mobilized Hawaii National Guard troops assist with vaccine distribution and contact tracing and help screen travelers at airports in the state, among other duties.

The 75% reimbursement for states was slated to expire at the end of March. Biden's 100% reimbursement runs through September, Schatz said.