

# COMMUNITY REPORT

## SENATE DISTRICT 18 | MAY 2025

Serving Mililani Town, Waipī'o Gentry, Crestview, Waikele, portion of Waipahu, Village Park, Royal Kunia



### *Aloha Friends and Neighbors,*

The 33<sup>rd</sup> Legislative Session came to a close on May 2<sup>nd</sup> and here are several key initiatives which I helped to pass. If signed into law, the funding could bring meaningful change to classrooms and student experiences across our state.

**SB1300 SD1 HD1 CD1**, RELATING TO SCHOOL MEALS - appropriates critical funding to expand free school meals and provide support for families classified as ALICE – Asset-Limited, Income-Constrained, Employed. Beginning in the 2025–2026 school year, thousands of students who currently qualify for reduced-price lunches will receive free school meals.

**HB300 HD1 SD1 CD1**, relating to the state budget - includes significant funding to advance key priorities within the Department of Education. These targeted investments will support innovative learning, promote gender equity in athletics, and strengthen connections between schools and local communities.

- **Ho‘ākea Program – \$8,000,000**

Appropriates funds in FY26 and FY27 to support the continuation and expansion of the Ho‘ākea Program, a unique partnership with the Polynesian Voyaging Society that engages students in hands-on learning grounded in Native Hawaiian culture.

- **Mathematics and Financial Literacy - \$927,248**

Appropriates funds and 6 positions to expand curriculum initiatives and for instructional support for classroom teachers.

- **Public Pre-Kindergarten Learning - \$13,264,299**

Appropriates funds and positions in FY26 and FY27 for 108 teachers and teacher assistants and other expenses. This money will ensure all children eligible for preschool have access to high-quality early learning opportunities. This is an initiative led by Lieutenant Governor, Sylvia Luke.

- **Girls Flag Football – \$726,100 reoccurring funds**

This is a meaningful step forward which advances gender equity in school athletics and expands opportunities for student engagement and development by officially recognizing girls flag football as a DOE sport.

During the summer months, I continue working with our DOE, supporting thoughtful progress in our public education system, culture, and community, and creating lasting learning opportunities for our youth. Mahalo for staying engaged and informed and I hope that you and your families have a very safe and restful summer!

*Colleagues from the Senate and House, as well as Lieutenant Governor Sylvia Luke, came together to celebrate the end of the Legislative Session.*

*Mahalo for a successful session!*



*Michelle*  
**KIDANI**

**Senate Vice President**

**Chair**

Committee on Education

**Vice Chair**

Committee on Higher Education

**Member**

Committee on Ways and Means

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## Priority Bill SB1300 on Meal Subsidies Passes State Legislature

No child should have to worry about where their next meal will come from – especially not when they are trying to learn. Students who are fed are better able to focus, learn, and grow. That is why I authored and introduced SB1300.

Beginning with the 2025–2026 school year, and continuing in 2026-2027, the bill appropriates \$565,000 each year for thousands of students across the state who currently qualify for reduced-price lunches to receive free school meals. This will expand upon the federal free meals subsidy by providing free meals for approximately 34,000 Hawai'i students over the next two years.

Additionally, in the 2026–2027 school year, the bill appropriates \$2.8M for the program to expand further to include students from families earning up to 300% of the federal poverty level. This would ensure more students being able to focus on learning without the barrier of hunger or financial hardships, at a cost of \$2.8 million.



*At the Conference Committee Vote of SB1300 with Senator Dru Kanuha.*



*With First Lady Jaime Green, a strong and vocal supporter of this bill.*

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## Release of funds for Community Projects

### ***Okinawan Cultural Center:***

\$400,000 in funds released for the Hawai'i United Okinawa Association (HUOA) will replace and repair 23 parking lot light poles at the facility. By supporting necessary improvements such as lighting repairs, we are helping ensure this community hub remains a safe and welcoming place for generations to come.

### ***Kanoelani Elementary School:***

As part of my ongoing efforts to improve public schools, I secured \$150,000 in Capitol Improvement Project (CIP) funding for lighting improvements for Kanoelani. The funding for 10 new light poles is a critical investment in the safety and well-being of our students and faculty as they host and participate in various evening events on campus.

### ***Mililani Uka Elementary School:***

\$1.5 million in funding for telecommunications improvements were released as part of the CIP for Mililani Uka. This will support the design, construction, and renovation of essential telecom infrastructure, to assure the school is equipped with modern technology.

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## 3rd Annual Food Drive Fest



*With Lieutenant Governor Sylvia Luke*

Lieutenant Governor Sylvia Luke hosted her 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Food Drive Fest on April 16<sup>th</sup>. This event brings together legislators and local business to support the Hawai'i Food Bank - raising awareness and providing essential food assistance.

Lieutenant Gov. Luke's commitment to the HI Food Bank is commendable. The Hawai'i Food Bank is an important cornerstone of our state; they nourish thousands of family daily through their efforts.



## Kanoelani End of Year Ceremony

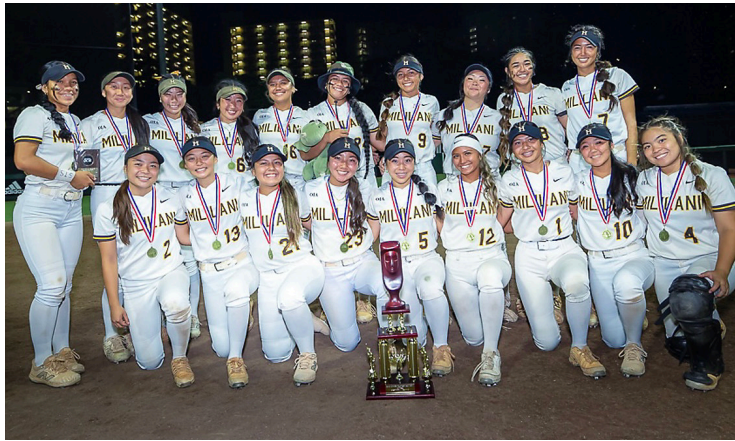
I had the joy of attending Kanoelani Elementary School's Grade 6 End of Year Ceremony, where I had the honor of presenting awards to two truly outstanding students. These young leaders were recognized for their academic excellence, strong character, and their dedication to making a positive difference in their school and community.

I wish all students and graduates a wonderful summer and success in their new journey. Congratulations to all the graduates!



[L-R]: Principal Neil Blomberg, students, and myself

## State Softball Champs: Mililani Lady Trojans



Mililani Girls Softball Team

Photo courtesy of Parish808 Photography/Parish Kaleiwahea

The HHSAA girls softball had their State Championship game with two formidable teams: Maryknoll vs Mililani High School. Well-fought on both sides, however, I am very proud to say that the Trojans secured their Division I Championship title in a 10-7 comeback! As a former high school athlete, sports played a key role in shaping my personal and academic growth. I hope every student has the opportunity to discover their own passion in school—whether in athletics or other activities. Congratulations to the Mililani Lady Trojans softball team and Coach Rose Antonio, on their State Championship Win! I am very proud of each Trojan that brought this well-deserved victory.

Fun Fact: I coached Rose Antonio and her twin sister, Joy, when they played softball!

## Girls Flag Football: Inaugural Season

The Inaugural Season of the Girls' Flag Football has come to an end. It was an intense, emotional, and exhilarating season – one that I am not likely to forget.

In February, Hawai'i became only the 12<sup>th</sup> State to sanction girls flag football as an official sport. This historic move gives our female students the opportunity to represent their schools and potentially earn college scholarships. I am also pleased to announce that the Mililani Lady Trojans came 3<sup>rd</sup> in the State Championship!

Congratulations to each young girl who participated and competed this year, including my granddaughter. While the season may be over, I want to thank every player for blazing the trail for Girl's Athletics with grit and determination!



HHSAA Semifinal: Mililani vs. Campbell  
Photo courtesy of Lori McKeown, ESPN Honolulu

## Mililani Public Library: Summer Reading Challenge

The Mililani Public Library is kicking off their Summer Reading Challenge, from June 1 to July 31! The theme this year is Mele (song, anthem, or chant in 'Ōlelo Hawai'i). This challenge is open to all, with the grand prize being four roundtrip tickets on Alaska Airlines.

I encourage you all to participate, not just for the prizes but to foster a love of reading within yourself.



Flyer Courtesy of Hawai'i State Public Library System



## Mililani High School Culinary Showcase

Each year, Mililani High School opens to the public to highlight what students are learning and have learned in their culinary classes. I was impressed by the skill and talent of the students, not to mention the delicious food! Their passion shined through their menu and their professionalism reflected the training received.

Our tasting menu included spicy ahi on crispy rice, seafood pan roast, and a braised pork belly bao bun, culminating in a wonderful crêpe bar and crème brûlée. An ono dinner and wonderful experience!

## Hawai'i Women Lawyers Power Panel

I was honored to sit beside and join the Hawai'i Women Lawyers "Power Panel" alongside Lieutenant Governor Sylvia Luke, Attorney General Anne Lopez, and Vice-Speaker of the House Linda Ichiyama.

The Panel centered around International Women's Day theme #AccelerateAction, where we discussed our stories, strategies, and challenges as women in leadership roles and government. We responded to questions from high school students from Roosevelt, Moanalua, Punahou, Farrington, and IPA-Kapolei, as well as law students, HWL members, and the YWCA community.

I had the pleasure of reminding attendees, especially women in male-dominated industries, "You have every right to be there, just as they do!"



*L-R): Vice-Speaker Ichiyama, Attorney General Lopez, Myself, Lieutenant Governor Luke*



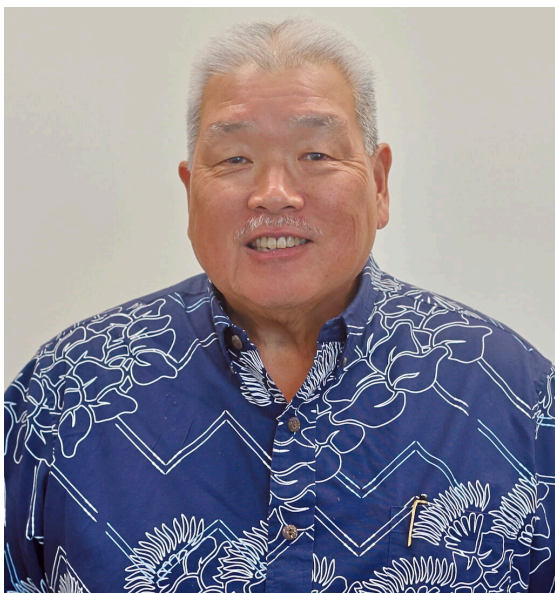
*With students from Roosevelt, Moanalua, Punahou, Farrington, and IPA-Kapolei*

## Remembering Hawai'i State Department of Education Deputy Superintendent Dean Uchida

Dean Uchida was a pillar of our educational community, remembered for his service, leadership, and dedication to the people of Hawai'i during his celebration of life this month.

He served as Deputy Superintendent of Operations at the Hawai'i State Department of Education, and previously held critical leadership roles as Director of the Department of Planning and Permitting for the City & County of Honolulu, and as Senior Project Manager and Advisory Group Lead at SSFM International.

His legacy will live on in his quiet yet impactful contributions to public education, and he will be remembered for his dedication, wisdom, and aloha.



*{Photo Courtesy of Hawai'i DOE}*