

Senator Michelle Kidani

Twenty-ninth Hawaii State Legislature

(D) Senate District 18 –



Senate Vice President

Chair: Committee on Education

Member: Committee on Ways and Means

Member: Committee on Higher Education

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Aloha friends and neighbors,

This month at the Capitol we again set aside public-school spring break as a time to recognize excellence in teaching and some wonderfully talented students who have earned national and even international honors. We presented our honorees with congratulatory Senate certificates and welcomed public charter schools, the UH College of Education, and early childhood education advocates to the Capitol as we celebrated good things about our schools. You'll find several photographs from the week's activities elsewhere in this newsletter.

Before the Mililani Neighborhood Board's next meeting, there will be a gala celebration of the Mililani Town Association's 50th anniversary. The musical performances - Saturday evening, April 21 - will be capped by a huge fireworks extravaganza at John Kaulinana Stadium at Mililani High School.

The beginnings of Mililani Town date back six decades to 1958, when then land-owner Castle & Cooke first discussed its vision for an upscale, planned community that would eventually be home to thousands of families. Ten years later, sales of the community's first 800 homes began, and MTA was founded shortly thereafter to serve as the principal property owner's organization.

Within a dozen years of the first home sales in 1968, Mililani's population numbered 22,000, and a few years later Mililani was named Hawaii's All-American City by the National Municipal League. Ground was broken in 1990 for Mililani Mauka, and the final homes in the community were sold in 2008 - forty years after the town was born. Mililani has been named one of Money magazine's Best Places to Live in the U.S., and Mililani High School - a point of tremendous pride for the area - consistently places at or near the top in the annual ranking of Hawaii's Best High Schools compiled by U.S. News & World Report.

I am proud to have raised my family in Mililani. I just began my 19th year as a member of MTA's Board, currently serving as Vice President. Congratulations to **President Bob Barrett**, our fellow board members, and to **General Manager David O'Neal** for carrying on best practices in guiding property use, operating our seven top quality recreational facilities, and always encouraging positive interactions among neighbors, businesses, and civic organizations.

See you at the celebration!

Me ke Aloha Pumehana,

A million mahalos to CTAA for your outstanding production of **James & The Giant Peach!** Top-notch singers & dancers, and a pre-show dinner of exceptional dishes prepared by Mililani High School culinary students made for a wonderful evening. My staff and I participated in both.
Can't wait 'til next year's show!



Bravo, Central Theatre Arts Academy!

At the Legislature . . .

We are a little more than half-way through our 60-working-day Legislative session, with Senate bills being heard in the House and vice versa. In addition, several resolutions are now on the table. Here are some that may be of interest to Mililani area residents:

- ◆ **Senate Concurrent Resolution (SCR) 86 / Senate Resolution (SR) 54:** Senator Dela Cruz and I introduced this resolution to ensure that when schools in the new Koa Ridge housing development are up and running, they will be assigned to the Waipahu-Pearl City school area complex – not Mililani schools which are already overcrowded. The resolutions acknowledged that Waipahu and Mililani High Schools are in the top three largest enrollment campuses and already over-capacity.
- ◆ **SCR 64 / SR 34:** To provide additional security at Hawaii public schools, the resolutions request Federal funding available through grants from Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) to pay for placing school resource officers (qualified law enforcement officers) on Hawaii public school campuses. In addition, **SCR 65 / SR 35** requests that the Honolulu Police Department determine the cost of placing its officers at schools on Oahu as is done at some schools on the neighbor islands.
- ◆ **SCR 180:** I introduced this resolution to promote the appropriate use of locally produced foods as part of the farm to school program. The resolution would allow flexibility in school lunch menus to broaden the definition of some “mandated” foods and allow local farmers to substitute items to match their growing and harvest schedules. Furthermore, **SR 131** would ensure that public charter schools have the same access as non-charters to benefits of the free and reduced-price food service for families eligible for federally subsidized meals under the U.S. National School Lunch Program.

Follow the progress of bills and resolutions, check hearing schedules, and even submit testimony at the Legislature’s website: <https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov>



So proud to know the legendary Melveen Leed as a Mililani Neighbor

Hawaii’s entertainment elite performed in celebration this month as world-renown recording artist **Melveen Leed** was presented a Lifetime Achievement Award by the Pan Pacific Southeast Asia Women Association. I was in the audience of family and fans at the Hawaii Convention Center (at left) for an evening of music and memories. As a follow-up to the banquet, I invited Melveen to the Senate (below) to be recognized for her award. To open our session, she favored us with a rendition of *The Queen’s Prayer* – by Queen Liliuokalani. The Queen wrote the prayer in March 1895, while she was imprisoned at ‘Iolani Palace following the overthrow of the monarchy.



Our Senate presentation attracted Melveen’s family and friends. To her right is husband Mike Reyes, and to her left is daughter Kaula Sempio. Others present included the women in blue in the front row – Mary Tori Keegan of the Association that honored Melveen and Mililani resident Kumu Hula Iwalani Tseu



That’s our Mililani neighbor **Sheri Rolf** with the lei in the center of this photo. Sheri was honored by the Senate for her nearly three decades of volunteer work as coordinator of the Hawaii Foodbank annual food drive that kicked off in late January.

To Sheri’s left is husband Dave; to her right is mom Betty Sanders, who stayed over a few extra days on her annual winter trip from Wisconsin to be with Sheri for this presentation. My fellow Senators and I donated the two baskets of canned goods and other non-perishables so Sheri would not leave empty-handed.



Food Drive Day this year is Saturday, April 21st – please kokua!

Education Week @ the Capitol



Left to right, Prudential Spirit of Community Award winners cited for their community service projects: Mililani resident and Ho`ala School sophomore **Emily Smith** and her mother **Noriko Lancaster**; **Justin Wong**, Roosevelt High School; and **Mahealani Sims-Tulba**, Sacred Hearts Academy. At right above, SPECTRUM/Pizza Hut Educator of the Year **Colette Kajiwara** and her husband **Glenn**. Colette is director of the Storefront Alternative Learning Center in Wahiawa.



Our keiki depend on us to make wise decisions for their futures. Dozens of youngsters, parents and early childhood education advocates came to the Capitol for **Education Week, March 19-23**.



DOE Teachers of the Year: Honorees (below, with lei) from left: **Gregg Iha**, Mililani-Central District; **Amanda Fretto**, Kauai District; **Naomi Salaveria**, Honolulu District; **Cristin Priolo**, Hawaii Public Charter Schools; and Mililani resident, Teacher of the Year **Vanessa Ching**, Leeward District. Not present: **Erika Kaneo**, Hawaii Island District; **Francine Hughes**, Maui District; and **Del Onaga**, Windward District.



Congratulations MHS Varsity Girls – OIA Champs!

I enjoyed the end-of-season banquet to celebrate the Mililani High School Varsity Girls Soccer Team and their OIA Championship.

Championships have become a tradition for the Lady Trojans. The 2017-2018 girls won the school's third straight OIA league title this year – and their 17th championship overall – to build on that legacy. Mililani gave up only two goals during the entire regular season and through the OIA playoffs. In the State Tournament, the team advanced through the quarterfinals to the semifinals when a tough loss to eventual champion Tolani sent them to a match for third place against Kaiser. A final win there capped the girls' great season at 14 wins and just 3 losses.

A few days after the banquet, **Head Coach Ray Akiona** announced that he is retiring – after 17 years leading the team. *Aloha, Coach Ray, and congratulations to players, coaches and families for another wonderful season.*



Taiko Time!

At a well-attended breakfast event at **Kanoelani Elementary** in Waipio Gentry, **Principal Stacie Kunihisa** put together a wonderful program of entertainment – and enlightenment! – for elected officials and business people in the community. The **Community Connections** event was aimed at encouraging sponsorship relationships between local businesses and Kanoelani students and teachers who schedule special events through the year. The school already enjoys widespread community support and is a true source of pride for Waipio.

Thank you, Kanoelani, for inviting me to join you. The student entertainers (above) made sure everyone was awake!

Highlighting Hawaii's Manufacturers

More than two dozen manufacturers of everything from innovative foods and beverages to essential household products visited the Capitol this month to acquaint lawmakers with the wide variety of goods they produce.

Manufacturing Day is an annual event during the legislative session. We are especially proud of the success of Mililani resident **Bob Barrett** (above), whose Coastal Windows manufacturing plant in Waipio employs dozens and has won recognition for employee benefit programs and quality products. Bob is also President of the Mililani Town Association.



APPLICATIONS NOW AVAILABLE ONLINE

John S. Martinez
SCHOLARSHIP



Sydney Millerd
Waipahu High School
Class of 2016



Noah Rodrigues
Mililani High School
Class of 2017



The National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators (NHCSL) awards scholarships each year to high school seniors of Hispanic heritage who live in a district represented by a Senator of Hispanic heritage. The scholarships - in the amount of \$3,000 - are named in memory of the late Connecticut lawmaker, **John S. Martinez**, who served a term as NHCSL Chair, and who was a true champion for “closing the achievement gap” through education.

I have been active in the Caucus for many years, and Hawaii has been fortunate to see three students whose families live in my district receive these scholarships – **Isis Usborne** from Mililani High School's Class of 2014, **Sydney Millerd**, Waipahu High Class of 2016, and **Noah Rodrigues**, Mililani Class of 2017.

We are especially proud of this since the Caucus only awards eleven of these scholarships nationwide each year. I urge qualified students to apply. You can download the application online at: <http://www.nhesl.org/>. *Good luck!*

DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS IS MAY 18, 2018