



# SENATE DISTRICT 18 COMMUNITY REPORT

AUGUST 2022 – *Serving Mililani Town, Waipio Gentry, Waikele, Village Park & Royal Kunia*

Aloha Friends and Neighbors,

I hope you are all well and have been staying cool in the immense end-of-summer heat! It has been a busy month for our State with the start of a new school year. I want to send my heartfelt aloha to our students, staff and teachers who welcomed their first month back to school with the start of the 2022-2023 school year! This wonderful capture of Waipahu Elementary students captures my sentiment and enthusiasm for all to come



from our brilliant keiki! The Senate reconvened for a brief Special Session this month for the circuit judge confirmation of Annalisa M. Bernard Lee for the second circuit court. I am thrilled to announce progress on two well-deserved projects within our district school system, \$2.5M for Kaleiopu'u Elementary School for the renovation and expansion of their cafeteria, and \$6.3M appropriated to Kanoelani Elementary for the renovation and expansion of their cafeteria as well! These projects have been long-awaited and needed to support students and staff. I am so proud to have been able to help secure these funds to improve these facilities. Congratulations to Principal Ahu, Principal Blomberg, and the Kaleiopu'u and Kanoelani communities.



## SENATE VICE PRESIDENT

Chair:  
Committee on Education

Vice Chair:  
Committee on  
Higher Education

Member:  
Committee on  
Ways and Means

Member:  
Special Committee on  
COVID-19

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Over the years, I have been fortunate to work alongside incredible leaders like Senator Rosalyn Baker of Maui, who we said our aloha to as she announced her retirement from the Senate this year. Senators Misalucha, Hirono, DeCoite, Jill Tokuda, and I were thrilled to gather over lunch to celebrate Senator Baker. I am so grateful for her years of friendship, leadership and dedication to Hawai'i, and I am wishing her the very best upon her retirement.



Keiki O Ka 'Āina's Early Childhood offers a wealth of wonderful education programs to support local families. From home visits for moms to be, to parent participation, preschool programs, parenting skills and more, they have a variety of options for families with children from birth through the age of 5. Head online to their website for more information or how to enroll in these important programs for your 'ohana at [www.koka.org](http://www.koka.org)



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## STUDENT DEBT RELIEF & HAWAII PROMISE SCHOLARSHIP

President Biden just announced his student loan forgiveness plan, which offer debt relief for countless individuals who have been saddled by student debt. The plan includes extending the student loan repayment pause until December 31, 2022; cancelling \$20K in student loan debt for Pell Grant recipients and \$10K for non-Pell recipients; improve the student aid system by creating a new repayment plan that caps monthly payments at 5% of the borrower's discretionary income; improving the Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) program by helping borrowers who have worked in the nonprofit sector, military, or in federal, state, tribal, or local government, receiving appropriate credit toward loan forgiveness; and forgiving loan balances after 10 years of payments and covering borrowers' unpaid monthly interests. Head to [whitehouse.gov](https://www.whitehouse.gov) for a full list of details from the Biden administration. In addition to those efforts, the University of Hawai'i Community College's new Hawai'i Promise Scholarship program is offering free in-state tuition for qualified UHCC students in need of financial support to pay for college. Hawai'i Promise covers direct education costs—including tuition, fees, as well as an allowance for books and supplies. Head online to [hawaii.edu/promise](https://hawaii.edu/promise) for more information or apply online now for the Spring 2023 school year.



## UH COLLEGE OF EDUCATION OPENING REMARKS

I was glad to join Dean Nathan Murata and the UH College of Education community for their College Wide Meeting at the Stan Sheriff center. It was a wonderful opportunity to hear Dean Murata share the accomplishments of the COE, its plans for the future as well as the success of its Grow Our Own program. I am proud to see how GOO has evolved and nurtured new educators to pursue their academic interests and to become the amazing teachers they are today. It was particularly heartening to hear Ke'elikōlani Middle School's 8th grade English teacher Brandon Galarita share his own experience and how the funding I started was instrumental in helping him become a teacher. Hearing him describe the profound impact the support of the program has had on his life was so inspiring and heartwarming. I am so grateful to Brandon and the countless educators here in Hawai'i who give so much of their time, talents and hearts to our keiki. I also announced that I was able to double the funding for GOO to \$1.2M this year to attract more teachers like Brandon.



## MILILANI SOLAR PLANT RENEWABLE ENERGY LAUNCH

I attended with Senator Donovan Dela Cruz the launch of O'ahu's first solar and battery storage project in our district at the Mililani Agricultural Park. Established by Clearway Energy Group, this is the first ever utility-scale solar-plus-storage project in the state. It will provide 39MW of clean, renewable energy. This makes significant strides forward towards our green energy goals, working to become less dependent on imported oil and decreasing our electricity bills in place of renewable energy.

