

SENATE DISTRICT 18 COMMUNITY REPORT

JANUARY 2023 – *Serving Mililani Town, Koa Ridge, Waipi'o Gentry, Crestview, Waikele,
portion of Waipahu, Village Park & Royal Kunia*

Aloha Friends and Neighbors,

We have officially welcomed 2023 with joyous celebration, and a chance for new beginnings filled with hope and promise. I am happy to share that our new legislative session began on January 18th, when we kicked off a long-anticipated return to an in-person Opening Day Ceremony. It was exciting to see members of the community once again filling the Capitol in another step towards normalcy as we transition out of the pandemic. While it has not been an easy road to navigate, I believe we have been united as a community and managed to continue living our lives despite such difficult times. I look forward to the 2023 legislative session and a new administration, as we begin a new and hopefully brighter chapter for Hawai'i.

I am happy to share several important changes to our office here at the Hawaii State Capitol. I have recently moved our office on the second floor at the Capitol to the Punchbowl/King St side of the building in Room 214, and I am proud to introduce my new Committee Clerk, Lisa Barnett. Lisa comes to us from the City's Department of Budget and Fiscal Services, and I have had the great pleasure of knowing and collaborating with Lisa for many years. I am thrilled to welcome her on my staff and look forward to the work we will accomplish together. My former Committee Clerk, Scott Fuji, has taken a position with our newly established School Facilities Agency (SFA), which is tasked with building new pre-K classrooms, teacher housing and new education facilities. My returning staff are Office Manager, Danicia Honda and Legislative Aide, Jade Snow, and my session staffers are Kim May and Katherine Ozawa. My staff and I look forward to welcoming visitors throughout the upcoming legislative session.

I continue to be committed to improving Hawai'i's education system by addressing teacher shortages and retention through programs such as dedicated affordable housing and educational pathways in partnership with local high schools and the University of Hawai'i system; supporting early childhood education initiatives, including universal pre-K programs; coordinating with various state agencies to establish educational and vocational tracks in K-12 schools for emerging industries; and pursuing school-level accountability.

My heartfelt mahalo nui to each and every one of you for allowing me to continue to represent the residents of our beautiful Central O'ahu community. I look forward to 2023 and am enthusiastic for the year ahead, working on behalf of all of our local families.



(L-R: Lisa Barnett, Kate Ozawa, myself, Kim May, Jade Snow and Danicia Honda)



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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OPENING DAY OF THE 2023 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Opening Day is always an exciting time at the State Capitol. After the quiet of the past few years, it was particularly exhilarating to see the hustle and bustle of family, friends, community leaders and constituents gathered in celebration of the 2023 session. It has been nearly 3 years since we have had the opportunity to gather together, with visitors stopping by legislative offices to share their congratulations and concerns. It is a wonderful part of the process I have missed and was so grateful to welcome back in such festive spirit. From congratulating new leaders to sharing warm aloha with friends and constituents, to an exuberant interview with Waipahu students, here are some of the many memorable moments I was so fortunate to share at my office on Opening Day. (Top Row L-R: DOE Executive Assistant Camille Matsutomi, myself and Superintendent Keith Hayashi enjoying the festivities; Lieutenant Governor Sylvia Luke and I chatting in my new office before session; celebrating the start of the 32nd legislative session with Adult Friends for Youth (AFY) President and CEO, Deborah Spencer-Chun, and AFY's Director of Operations & Special Programs, Lisa Tamashiro.



Bottom Rows L-R: Members of the Waipahu Aloha Clubhouse stopping by to share their aloha post-session; some of the talented Waipahu students interviewing legislators in collaboration with 'Ōlelo Media; catching up with Department of Defense leaders, Adjutant General for the State of Hawaii, Major General Kenneth Hara, and Deputy Adjutant General, Brigadier General Stephen Logan; a warm welcome back to the Senate floor for 'Ilima Intermediate School teacher, Sarah "Mili" Milianta-Laffin, who was instrumental in leading her students in the movement towards menstrual equality in 2022 and the passage of the [Menstrual Equity Bill](#); heartfelt celebration with Mililani Town Association President, Bob Barrett, and Board of Education Chair, Bruce Voss. Mahalo nui again to each and every one of you who made this year's Opening Day so unforgettable!

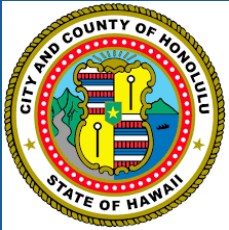


MILILANI UKA ELEMENTARY CAPITOL SITE VISIT

One of the highlights in January was welcoming the entire 3rd grade class at Mililani Uka Elementary School to their Capitol. My staff and I had the pleasure of touring the students around the Capitol grounds. Senate Communications Director Jacob Aki and Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms Park Kaleiwahea both did an excellent job in explaining the history and symbolism of the House and Senate Chambers. It was a breath of fresh air after long days of meetings to be able to welcome and deliver remarks to students at the Capitol; it also was a reminder of the tremendous work at the Capitol that will affect each and every one of them for years to come. Mahalo nui to their teachers for this wonderful excursion and learning experience.



NEIGHBORHOOD BOARD ELECTIONS



Make your voice heard and get involved in the only government-supported civic engagement system in the State of Hawaii since 1973 by applying online for the 2023 Neighborhood Board Election. No experience required and applicants must be over the age of 18 to register as a candidate for a two year term starting July 1st, 2023–June 30th, 2025. Registrations are open until February 17th and online voting begins April 28th – May 19th. Head the Neighborhood Board Commission site for more details or to submit your application: <https://web1.hnl.info/nbe/starter>

YAMAGUCHI PREFECTURAL ASSEMBLY RELATIONSHIP AGREEMENT

The Legislature signed a sister-legislative relationship agreement with the Yamaguchi Prefectural Assembly of Japan. The focus of this agreement is to develop people-to-people exchanges in the fields of business, education and culture, and periodic face-to-face visits to each other's legislative chambers and offices. I was honored to nurture the friendship between our legislative members alongside Senate President Kouchi, Senator Lee, Speaker Saiki and others. We forged wonderful connections with the Yamaguchi Prefectural leaders throughout our time together. I am proud of the bonds we have fostered as friends by choice, and now as sister states by heart.



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