

Legislative Update from...

# Senator Mike Gabbard

March

2013



### COMMITTEE CHAIR

\* Energy and Environment

### MEMBER

\* Judiciary and Labor

\* Transportation and International Affairs

\* Technology and the Arts

### District 20

Kapolei, Makakilo, and portions of Ewa, Kalaeloa, and Waipahu

*Aloha Friends,*

I'll be honoring the Kalaeloa Public Safety Team at the Capitol at 11:30am on March 15<sup>th</sup> for all their hard work in making Kalaeloa a safer place to live and work. Here are a few things I'd like to share with you. Please contact me at 586-6830 or [sengabbard@capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:sengabbard@capitol.hawaii.gov) if I can help you or your family in any way.



### "Listen Story" Meeting

My next meeting will be on Saturday, March 16<sup>th</sup> at 9am at the New Hope Leeward Ministry Center (94-050 Farrington Highway, Suite A1, Waipahu).

### Rockne Freitas Appointed UH West Oahu Chancellor

Congrats to Rockne Freitas who was approved by the UH Board of Regents on February 21<sup>st</sup> as the new UH West Oahu Chancellor, starting May 1, 2013. Dr. Freitas currently serves as VP for Student Affairs and University/Community Relations at UH. He also previously served as Chancellor of Hawai'i Community College from August 2004 to June 2010. Current Chancellor Gene Awakuni will have the title of Chancellor Emeritus and be reassigned as a Senior Adviser to the President from May 1, 2013, until his retirement date in early July. A big mahalo to Dr. Awakuni for all his great work in getting the new Kapolei campus built and being such a fantastic leader!

### Green Champions Honored in the State Senate

I honored the Super Green Champions and the State Capitol building, as the winner of the Capital 10 Energy Challenge, during a floor presentation in the State Senate Chambers on February 15<sup>th</sup>. Our Green Champions are one of the main reasons why we're making great progress in reducing our energy load in state buildings. Green Champions are 30 state employees who volunteered to lead energy conservation efforts within their departments. They were trained and supported by specialists with the Energy Conservation Through Behavior Change<sup>®</sup> team from NORESKO, an energy services company contracted by the Department of Accounting and General Services (DAGS). The four Super Green Champions recognized were: Paulette Abe of the House of Representatives Sgt. at Arms; Jon Chin of the Department of Business, Economic Development, & Tourism; Roxanne Moore of the Department of Taxation; and Will Tungol of the Department of Human Services. I launched the Capital 10 Energy Challenge in partnership with DAGS & NORESKO in January 2012 to further the conservation efforts already in place. The challenge was modeled after the EPA's "Battle of the Buildings", a nationwide event that challenged state offices to reduce energy consumption. Each of the ten Capitol District Buildings was asked to identify and adopt methods to maximize energy savings. After a year of participation, the ten buildings were able to significantly reduce their energy consumption by a combined 7%. The State Capitol building won the competition with a 16% energy reduction. Mahalo Green Champions for your efforts!



Pictured are Jimmy Kurata, Will Tungol, Senator Gabbard, Brandon Matsuoka (standing in for Paulette Abe), and Jon Chin.

## Walmart Goes Solar

I was able to check out Kapolei Walmart's new solar PV system on February 27<sup>th</sup>. The Kapolei project is part of a larger effort that also includes solar projects at their Kahului and Kona stores. Each of the stores now has a 311 kW rooftop solar system that is made up of 1,600 panels. The solar projects will provide 12% to 16% of each store's electricity needs. The company has the larger goal of being supplied 100% by renewable energy. I congratulate Walmart for making this wise decision to reduce their electricity bills and do good for the environment through solar PV.



## Free Seminar to Help You Spot and Avoid Fraud

AARP is partnering with the Financial Regulatory Authority, the Office of Securities Commissioner, and the Hawai'i Better Business Bureau to host a free seminar called "Outsmarting Investment Fraud" at the Filcom Center in Wai-pahu on March 13<sup>th</sup> from 9:30am to 11:30am. You'll learn: the surprising facts about who's at risk, common tactics used by today's con artists, simple steps you can take to protect yourself, how to verify if investment professionals are legitimate, and what to do if you suspect investment fraud. You can register online at [www.aarp.cvent/fraudwaipahu](http://www.aarp.cvent/fraudwaipahu) or by phone at 877-926-8300. Refreshments will be served.



## Kisco Senior Living Moving Forward

For all your seniors, I recently got word that Kisco Senior Living is starting the first \$26 million phase of the Leihano at Kapolei community on 40-acres of Kapolei land, located at the corner of Kama'aha Avenue and Ft. Barrette Road. The initial phase, called 'Ilima at Leihano, comprises 84 rental apartments for seniors and is projected to be completed in mid-2014 on 7-acres of land. The project had been put on hold because of our economic recession.



Senator Gabbard met with Stephen Maybir, of the Palolo Tenants Association, in his office at the State Capitol on February 27th to discuss federal benefits for legal residents under the Compact for Free Association.



Senator Gabbard met with participants of Goodwill Industries of Hawai'i's Adult Day Health program at his Capitol office on February 12th. Included in the photo is his sister, Barbara Gabbard (bottom row, fourth from left).



Senator Gabbard was paid a visit by the Ka Pa'alana Preschool ohana at his Capitol office on February 12th. Ka Pa'alana offers educational opportunities for youngsters on the Leeward Coast.

## Auwahi Wind Farm Dedication at Ulupalakua Ranch

I gave a speech at the dedication of Auwahi Wind Farm at Ulupalakua Ranch (Maui) on February 22<sup>nd</sup>. Auwahi is a 21 MW joint project of Sempra U.S. Gas & Power and BP Wind Energy that includes 8 wind turbines. It will generate enough electricity to provide power for 10,000 Maui homes and has a 10 MW battery capable of storing 4.4 MW of energy. Construction on the project began in March 2012 and involved 180 workers. It will continue to employ 4 full-time workers.



Here's the text of my remarks:

*I'd first like to say a big mahalo and congratulations to Sempra and BP for helping us get a step closer to reaching our energy goals. It's appropriate that we are here on the island of Maui to celebrate this wind project. Maui has world class wind which Ke Akua has fortunately blessed us with. According to Hawaiian legend, the demigod Maui built a kite larger than any house, but the wind could not lift it into the sky. So Maui called on the priest Kalei'oku, who had the calabash (ipu – a hollowed out gourd) of the perpetual winds. Maui summoned the winds of Waipio and the winds of Hilo to come quickly and to come with power. The priest opened his calabash. The makani, the winds, heard Maui's call and rushed to him. The makani blew on Maui's kite so hard that it ripped out of his hands. However, Maui soon learned to harness the makani and used his kite to aid him in making swift voyages to different islands. Like the demigod Maui, you are learning to harness the makani to benefit the people here. Mahalo."*

## Readiness Center for the 29<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade Combat Team at Kalaeloa

The National Guard broke ground on a \$100 million readiness center for the 29<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade Combat Team on February 14, 2013. The 55,199 square-foot center will provide 900 soldiers with the brigade's headquarters, support battalion & special troops battalion classrooms, an assembly hall & auditorium, and a modern kitchen. The first of three phases will cost \$30.4 million (the latter phases could be impacted by sequestration). It will be the first new building constructed on O'ahu for the Army National Guard since the completion of the regional training institute in Waimanalo in 2000. We, at the Legislature, authorized federal funding for the project in the 2011-2013 State budget.

## "Mr. Kalani" Retires from Barbers Point Elementary

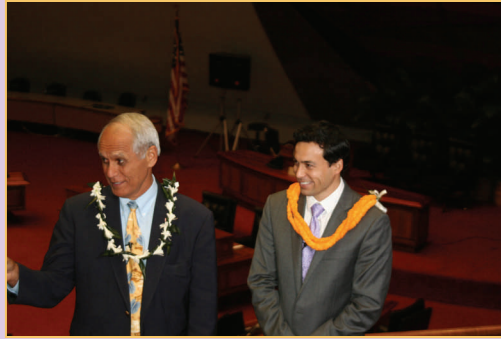
Barbers Point Elementary recently held a retirement party for Kalani Gonsalves, who served as a custodian for the school for 33 years. He was forced into early retirement last June after being diagnosed with bone cancer. Mr. Kalani, as he was affectionately referred to on campus, will be remembered for his tireless service to our keiki and the people of Kapolei. My thoughts and prayers are with him and his family as he battles this illness.



Senator Gabbard and Rep. Ty Cullen talked about their responsibilities as legislators with 5th grade students of Mauka Lani Elementary School (Makakilo) in the Senate Chambers on February 13th.



Senator Gabbard co-chaired an informational briefing of the Senate Energy & Environment/Commerce & Consumer Protection committees and the House Energy & Environmental Protection/Consumer Protection & Commerce committees on February 21st related to on-bill financing programs. Also pictured (left to right) are Rep. Romy Cachola, Rep. Derek Kawakami, Rep. Cynthia Thielen, Rep. Chris Lee (co-chair), Sen. Roz Baker (co-chair), and Sen. Russell Ruderman.



Senator Gabbard and Rep. Chris Lee were interviewed by Teri Okita of Hawai'i News Now for the *Hawai'i: The State of Clean Energy* program in the House Chambers on February 13th.



Senator Gabbard and Rep. Chris Lee served as panelists at the Women in Renewable Energy (WiRE) breakfast on energy policy at the Pacific Club on February 26th. Pictured are Asia Yeary (EPA Sustainability Coordinator & Grants Project Officer), Julie Hong (Booz Allen Hamilton Environmental Scientist), Senator Gabbard, Rep. Lee, PUC Chair Mina Morita, Traci Ho Kim (DBEDT Branch Chief, Innovation, Planning & Policy), and Yvette Maskrey (Honeywell International Hawai'i District Manager).



## Green Infrastructure Financing Program Would Be Huge for Lowering Electricity Bills

One of the key Energy bills this session is SB 1087. This proposal was put forward by Governor Abercrombie and would establish the regulatory framework for a Green Infrastructure Financing Program, better known as on-bill financing. It would provide a perfect avenue for low-income folks to reduce their electricity bills, because they would be able to get low interest loans to purchase clean energy systems, like solar, and pay it off over the long-term on their utility bills. It would also allow renters, churches and non-profits to potentially tap into the program. A recent OmniTrak Survey of Hawai'i homeowners found that 70% would make the investment if low-interest loans were available for energy-saving home improvements. It's got the support of the PUC, HECO, and business, environmental, labor, and consumer groups. The seed money could possibly come from the Public Benefits Fee, which is a 1.5% surcharge that's tacked onto the electricity bill for Hawaiian Electric ratepayers and is now used by Hawai'i Energy to administer our solar water heater rebate program and ENERGY STAR rebate program. The state would use that seed money to leverage public and private capital for the issuance of revenue bonds to pay for the program which would be administered by a new green infrastructure authority. An initial \$100 million bond issuance could finance between 5,000 to 10,000 PV systems. With this program, Hawai'i would be the first in the nation to use a bond structure to finance a commercial lending program for solar.



Senator Gabbard listened to testimony from Mick Fleetwood, founding member of Fleetwood Mac, during a February 8th hearing of the Judiciary & Labor Committee on SB 465. The bill would allow civil actions against paparazzi for invasions of privacy. Also, testifying was Aerosmith lead singer, Steven Tyler.

## Kudos to Mayor Caldwell for Road Repaving and Bus Service Restoration Plans

I was extremely pleased to hear of Mayor Caldwell's bold initiative to get City streets repaved by 2017. In reviewing the list, we noted that in Senate District 20 there are 9 streets in Waipahu, 26 in Ewa, and 53 streets in Makakilo set to be repaved starting this year. The entire list can be found here: <http://www1.honolulu.gov/ddc/projectsall.pdf>. It was also great news to learn that starting on March 23<sup>rd</sup>, the City will restore weekend and holiday bus service frequencies for the CountryExpress Route C (Makaha to Kapolei to Ala Moana Center) back from every 60 minutes to every 30 minutes. Starting in May, the City will also restore weekday bus service for Route C from every 45 minutes to every 30 minutes.