

Aloha e Friends,

I hope you and your 'ohana are well and that you had a relaxing Labor Day weekend with friends and family. As always, please contact me at (808) 586-6830 or sengabbard@capitol.hawaii.gov if I can help you or your family in any way.

I also invite you to follow me on social media: [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) @SenatorMikeGabbard, [Twitter](#) @SENNIKEGABBARD, and [YouTube](#) @SenatorMikeGabbard. Also, if you'd like to be added to my mailing list, you can send an email to sengabbard@capitol.hawaii.gov with "mailing list" in the subject line.

Best wishes to you and your 'ohana.



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ENVIRONMENT**

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- ◆ Government Operations

DISTRICT 21

Kapolei, Makakilo,

Kalaeloa, and

portions of:

Fernandez
Village, Ewa

Listen Story Community Meeting

Please join me at my next Listen Story Community meeting this month on Saturday, September 23, from 9am-10am at the Kapolei High School Teachers' Lounge. Joining us will be special guest, Tony Gaston with Hunt Companies, to give us an update on Kalaeloa roads and district developments. There will be time for Q & A. Following Tony's presentation, I'll give some brief community updates. You also have the option to attend virtually. Please email or call my office for a link to the Zoom meeting. You can view this and all the past recordings of Listen Story meetings on my [YouTube channel](#).

Maui Wildfires

Of course, the biggest and most devastating news in August were the fires that ripped through Maui and forever changed our lives. The sadness unleashed by this event will take years to recover from... 😞 In recognition of the planned worldwide prayer and remembrance for Maui wildfire victims that took place on September 1, 2023, the Senate Sergeant-at-arms broadcast an invitation over the PA system at the Capitol to join in a moment of silent contemplation and remembrance for those who have perished or are still missing. Over the past month, along with many other organizations, the Hawai'i State Senate collected, organized, and shipped hundreds of boxes of supplies to Lahaina.



On Sept. 5, Sen. Gabbard attended a meeting in Maui along with other legislators, State Dept. heads, and various Lahaina business folks. The meeting was hosted and organized by the [Lahaina Town Action Committee](#). At the conclusion of the meeting they sang, "Hawai'i Aloha."

DISTRICT 21 COMMUNITY UPDATES



On Aug. 19, Sen. Gabbard spoke at the International River of Life Christian Center Hawai'i Hope Awareness Community event in Wai'anae on Human Trafficking in Hawai'i. (Pictured with Pastor Chris Everett.)

Human Trafficking Event

On August 19, I spoke at the [International River of Life Christian Center Hawai'i](#) Hope Awareness Community event in Wai'anae. I was asked to give a few remarks on Human Trafficking in Hawai'i. Mahalo to Pastor Chris and Mikala for inviting me. It was an amazing experience. The grounds where the event was held were filled with booths offering a variety of services to the community, such as food, haircuts, a kid's zone, prayer tent, veterans services, and even a mobile dentist! There was a stage at the center of the event where numerous speakers offered their mana'o throughout the day. The most amazing part was being able to speak with this community that I've been serving and representing since 2003 as a City Councilman, and since 2006 as Senator for the neighboring District.

There are too many alarming statistics relating to human trafficking to quote here, but to share just a few:

- In Hawai'i, the average age of children when they were first sex trafficked is 11 years old;

- 3-in-4 victims are trafficked by someone they know;
- In 2018, the Honolulu County Human Trafficking Task Force got \$700,000 in federal money to deal with the issue; they conducted at least 40 investigations, but had no convictions...compared to Orange County, CA who got a similar federal grant in 2010 and prosecuted more than 770 felony trafficking cases... charges were filed in 94% of the cases, with 95% guilty verdicts... (Civil Beat, March 21, 2022). So what happened with Hawai'i? Why did it take 10 years to finally convict just 1 person of a heinous crime he committed in 2013, where he trafficked multiple girls aged 15 to 17 - and sexually assaulted one of them? This is a big problem which demands a big solution... Please [click here to watch the video montage](#) on my Facebook page from the Hope Awareness Community event to see what I propose.

Kuleana Coral Restoration Partnership Event

Mahalo nui loa to Kuleana Coral Restoration and Sheba® (Mars company) for inviting me to say a few words during their auspicious event on July 18, at Ko Olina Lagoons. I commend them for helping shed light on the dire situation of our dying coral reefs worldwide, and the urgent need to do all we can to protect them. What better time to announce their partnership than during Coral Reef Awareness Week (July 17-23). Kuleana Coral is the first nonprofit organization in West O'ahu helping to restore and protect Hawaii's coral reefs and native ecosystem. It was exciting to participate in the celebration of their blossoming partnership with Sheba, a for-profit company whose heart is in the right place.

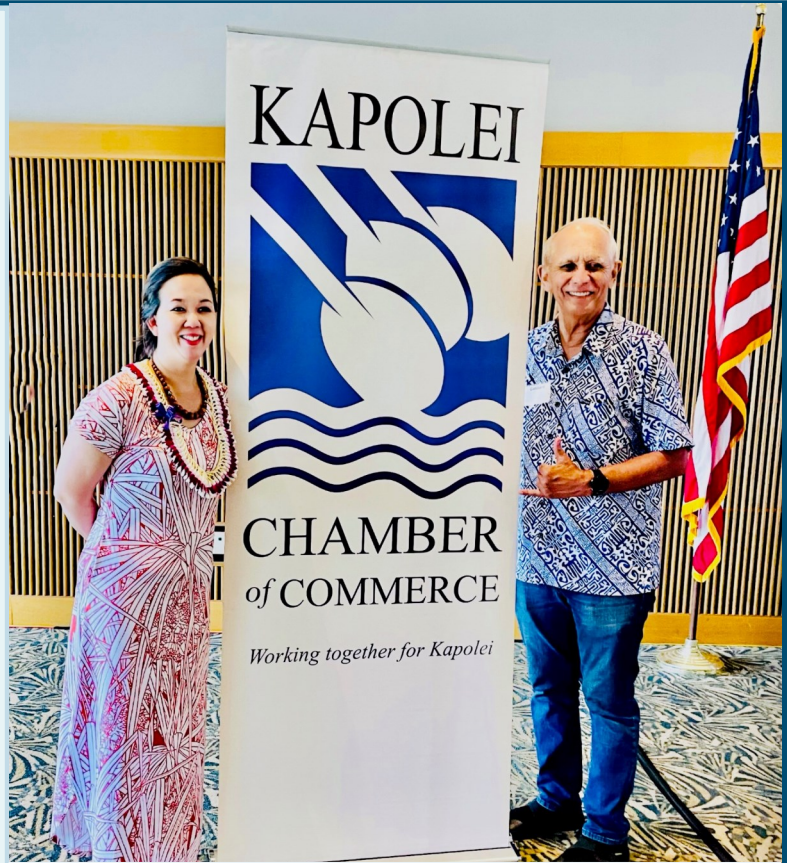
The ocean has always been a strong positive influence in my life. Since becoming aware of the importance of protecting our coral reefs, I've become more invested in spreading awareness of this critical issue. Did you know that even though coral reefs make up only 1% of the world's marine environment, they provide a home to almost a quarter of all marine species! Worldwide, 50% of our coral reefs were lost in 2014 and 2015 due to coral bleaching. The main factor that has contributed to the decline of our coral reefs is localized pollution, such as sewage, pesticide runoff, and chemical sunscreens. Sunscreens containing toxic chemicals not only harm our coral reefs, but are devastating to human (cont. P3)

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(cont. from p. 2) health and are linked to a host of illnesses. According to the US National Park Service, more than 6,000 tons of sunscreen end up in Hawaiian waters every year.

When I introduced SB2571 (Act 104) which became law in 2018, in collaboration with many partners, Hawai'i became the first jurisdiction in the world to ban sunscreens with the toxic chemicals oxybenzone and octinoxate to protect our coral reefs. Hawaii's leadership also prompted Aruba, Bonaire, Palau, the US Virgin Islands, the Marshall Islands, Taiwan, some natural reserves in Mexico, Thailand, and Key West to enact similar or more stringent legislation.

The secret of our success in getting this law passed was "laulima"...many hands working together to get the job done. This is truly a winning formula that I see happening with Sheba and Kuleana Coral... it's businesses, non-profits, government agencies, communities, and policy makers working together... putting aside petty differences and not quitting until our common goal is met. Globally and here at home, we're heavily reliant on corals and the ecosystem services they provide. Locally, coral reefs are deeply intertwined in Hawaiian culture. Another vital reason to protect coral reefs is because they serve as natural storm barriers, protecting our coastlines from erosion and climate-related hazards.



On Aug. 3, Sen. Gabbard attended a Kapolei Chamber Breakfast with U.S. Congresswoman Jill Tokuda at UH West O'ahu.

Kapolei Chamber Breakfast with Congresswoman Jill Tokuda

On August 3, I attended a Kapolei Chamber Breakfast with U.S. Congresswoman Jill Tokuda at UH West O'ahu. This was an awesome opportunity to talk story with Rep. Tokuda and learn about her work in Washington D.C. since being elected to office in November of 2022. Rep. Tokuda represents Hawai'i's Second Congressional District (CD2) which includes suburban and rural parts of O'ahu including parts of Kapolei and the Wai'anae Coast, the islands of Hawai'i, Kaua'i, Maui, Lana'i, Moloka'i, Ni'ihau, Kaho'olawe, and the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands. Elected in November 2022 to serve in the 118th Congress, Tokuda serves on the Committee on Agriculture, the Committee on Armed Services, and select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Pandemic. Rep. Tokuda has also been selected by her peers to serve as Vice Chair for Communications for the Congressional Progressive Caucus, Freshman Representative for the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus, and Region 2 Whip (includes Hawai'i, Alaska, Northern California, Guam, American Samoa, and The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands).



On July 18, Sen. Gabbard attended the partnership launch between Kuleana Coral Restoration and Sheba® at Ko Olina Lagoons.

AGRICULTURE & ENVIRONMENT UPDATES

2023 NCEL and NCSL National Forums

During August 10-16, I attended two conferences in Indianapolis, Indiana, that had been planned for months. It wasn't easy to navigate and focus on the conference amidst all the suffering and devastation being experienced here at home in Maui...

The 2023 NCEL National Forum (National Caucus of Environmental Legislators) took place Aug. 10-12. NCEL is a nonpartisan network created by and for state legislators who are committed to protecting and conserving the environment. This annual event brings state legislators together from across state and party lines to discuss common environmental concerns. The Caucus serves as a resource on environmental issues by providing legislative research and organized events, in addition to facilitating collaboration between lawmakers working on similar issues. One of the highlights of this conference was the outpouring of aloha from all the attendees for Maui... and the shared sense of how to prevent this type of thing from ever happening again – anywhere.



On Aug. 10-11, Sen. Gabbard attended the NCEL National Forum (National Caucus of Environmental Legislators) in Indianapolis, with legislators from across the country.

Another highlight was hearing from keynote speaker, Henk B. Rogers, Founder of Blue Planet Alliance; Founder and Chairman of Board for Blue Planet Foundation. “Henk is a Dutch-born entrepreneur and clean energy visionary who has



On Aug. 21-22, the Hawai'i State Senate confirmed the judicial appointments of Jordon J. Kimura, Erika E. Ireland, Robert J. Brown, and David M. Hayakawa.

dedicated the past decade of his life to ending the use of carbon-based fuels. As the principal and visionary philanthropist of Blue Planet Foundation, Rogers' efforts led to Hawai'i becoming the first state in the nation with a law requiring that 100% of the state's electricity come from clean renewable energy by 2045.

Rogers is now focusing beyond Hawai'i to help other jurisdictions enact mandates for 100% renewable energy in their regions. His newest initiative, Blue Planet Alliance, takes a 'mandate first' approach to initiate global climate change action by creating measurable and scalable results among individuals, organizations, cities, states, countries, and eventually, the world. The Alliance's mission is to get humanity to become 100% sustainable by 2045, and the vision is to create a world in which humanity and nature live in harmony.”

NCEL was followed by NCSL (National Conference of State Legislatures). NCSL is the largest gathering of state lawmakers and legislative staff in the country. More than 5,000 attend nationwide. One of the main events I attended during NCSL was a meeting of The Agricultural Task Force, of which, as the Senate Chair of Ag, I represent Hawai'i. NCSL's Agriculture Task Force was created to examine state and federal agriculture policy issues. The task force helps develop NCSL agriculture policy, studies critical agriculture and rural development issues facing the states, explores policy options to address these concerns, and serves as a conduit for state legislative communication with Congress.