

2023 Wrap-Up



State Representative Gregg Takayama • District 34 • Pearl City • Waimalu • Pacific Palisades



REPRESENTATIVE
GREGG TAKAYAMA

October 2023

Aloha Neighbors:

We were all shocked and heartbroken at the loss of lives and property in the

Maui wildfires on August 8th. Thank you to the many of you who donated generously to the ongoing recovery efforts.

One of the top priorities of the 2024 legislative session will be rebuilding Lahaina and Kula, as well as prevention of future wildfires on Maui and the rest of Hawaii. At the same time, the tragedy is a reminder of the continuing danger we face from hurricanes and other natural calamities.

My goal is to work for a safer and

healthier community we can proudly hand down to future generations. I'll continue to keep you informed and hope you will share your thoughts and concerns as well.

Mahalo!

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2023 Summary: Putting People

This year's Legislature enacted several measures of special importance to Pearl City residents.

Our large number of senior citizens and their families will benefit from a public awareness campaign on **Alzheimer's Disease and related dementias** that will provide information on where caregivers can find help and steps they can take to delay the onset of the disease.

The \$1 million campaign has long been a high priority for the legislative Kupuna Caucus, which I co-chair, because Alzheimer's Disease and related dementias already affect more

than 30,000 persons in Hawaii and are such a rapidly growing concern.

Another measure establishes an **Illegal Fireworks Task Force** and provides \$1.25 million to plan and carry out law enforcement operations to interdict illegal fireworks and develop a comprehensive strategic plan to stop the importation of illegal fireworks and explosives into Hawaii.

Current laws are ineffective in curbing illegal use of fireworks, with the use of illegal fireworks increasing in recent years and

[See SUMMARY on page 2](#)



Students from **Highlands Intermediate School** visited the Capitol on March 20 to inform lawmakers about the youth vaping epidemic, resulting in passage of a measure to raise taxes on all vaping devices.



Gregg's office organized a drive in April to collect clothing for the **YWCA Dress for Success** campaign, helping formerly homeless and incarcerated women seeking a second chance. Legislators and staff donated a record amount of more than 80 bags of women's items.

2023 Summary: Putting people first

SUMMARY from page 1

aerial fireworks being exploded in Pearl City and other neighborhoods throughout the year.

Several measures introduced by Rep. Gregg Takayama were passed into law.

Home renovations. Reduces cost of home renovations by eliminating the need for approval by an architect or engineer when submitting City permit applications for projects involving single-story homes costing up to \$180,000 (up from \$40,000); and for two-story homes up to \$162,000 (up from \$35,000).

For example, a homeowner hiring a contractor for a renovation project costing \$60,000 will not be required to have an architect or engineer to “stamp” the plans, saving typical fees of 3-4%, or about \$2,000.



Several **Momilani Elementary School** teachers were recognized at the Capitol in February for achieving National Board Certification. From left, Maile Yasui, Dawn Kanoho and Lynn Wakahiro.



Pearl City resident **Shely Chang**, counselor at Ka'imiloa Elementary School, was honored as 2023 Hawai'i School Counselor of the Year and former Pearl City educator **Aaron Tominaga**, principal at Waipahu Elementary, was recognized as the 2022 National Distinguished Principal of the Year.

This exemption for small home renovation projects has not been adjusted for higher costs since 1979 and was suggested by a retired Pearl City contractor. HB 217, **Act 177**

Anger counseling. Requires certain criminal offenders to complete an assessment and either domestic violence intervention or anger management course as part of their sentence. HB 1344, **Act 23**

Prescription labels. Requires pharmacies to provide prescription drug label information in special large-print formats for visually impaired persons upon request. This addresses the problem of persons sometimes mistakenly taking the wrong drug or incorrect dosages because of problems deciphering standard-print labels on medications. HB218, **Act 256**

Blind and visually impaired services. Establishes a Neighbor Island pilot program to supplement existing services for blind and visually impaired persons who are unable to access services on Oahu and appropriates \$93,000. HB870, **Act 253**



Pearl City High School's **Daphne Okunaga** was honored as 2023 Teacher of the Year for the Leeward District Pearl City-Waipahu Complex.



The **House Judiciary Committee** chaired by Rep. David Tarnas, with Gregg as Vice Chair, spearheaded passage of 20 new state laws on ethics and campaign reforms.

School improvements receive funding



Over the past summer, workers installed new rooftop ventilation fans at **Highlands Intermediate School cafeteria**.



Gregg and other community volunteers cleaned up trash and weeds along the sidewalks fronting **Lehua Elementary School** on July 29.



More than 300 youngsters participated April 1st in the annual Easter egg hunt at **Momilani Community Center**.

The 2023 Legislature approved nearly \$10 million for improvements to Pearl City schools.

PEARL CITY HIGH SCHOOL'S MICHAEL D. NAKASONE PERFORMING ARTS CENTER (formerly known as the Pearl City Cultural Center Auditorium): \$4 million to replace its lighting and dimmer system, and other electrical improvements.

HIGHLANDS INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL: \$2.2 million for plans and construction of a large, covered bus stop and seating area to shelter the 350 students who ride school buses every day.

PEARL CITY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL: \$1.4 million to replace campus water lines.

MANANA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL: \$1.1 million for planning and construction of restroom facilities for its portable classrooms.

PEARL CITY HIGHLANDS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL: \$1 million for electrical upgrades to accommodate air-conditioning and other equipment.

In addition, construction is advancing on several important school projects which were funded in recent years.

PEARL CITY HIGH SCHOOL: \$1.6 million was released to enable

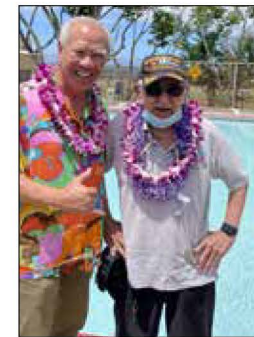
construction of a health science classroom. The funds will renovate and equip an existing classroom building and is expected to be completed in February 2025.

\$400,000 was released to resurface the campus driveway near the athletic fields.

LEHUA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL: \$7.5 million for design of needed infrastructure and building replacements required due to ground erosion on the current campus.

PALISADES ELEMENTARY SCHOOL: \$5.5 million for construction of a covered playground and restrooms, with completion expected by July 2025.

HIGHLANDS INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL: Projects totaling \$300,000 for improvements to the cafeteria ventilation system, plus new ceiling fans for Building B classrooms and replacement of library air-conditioning equipment.



Long-time swim coach **Ken Suenaga** was honored on June 8 when the Pearl City District Park swimming pools reopened after being closed for six years for repairs.

HONORING Outstanding Citizens

Each year, Gregg presents a citizenship award to a deserving student at each district school. The 2023 winners:

Pearl City Elem.



Koltan Baltero

Palisades Elem.



Zyann Au-Miyamoto

Waiuu Elem.



Evangeline Wong

Pearl City Elem.



Aaron DeGuzman

Pearl City Highlands Elem.



Dylan Kwon

Waimalu Elem.

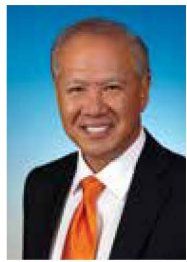


Reanne Gail Barbasa

Momilani Elem.



Keidan Chen



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The Taiwan national martial arts team visited Momilani Community Center for a demonstration on August 29, joined by Gregg and Senator Henry Aquino.



Volunteers with Lions Clubs and other groups celebrated Earth Day on April 22nd by painting out graffiti along the Pearl Harbor bike path.



(Above and below) Representative Gregg Takayama and other members of the Friends of the Pearl City Public Library raised several thousand dollars for children's reading programs at its August 13 book fair.



Gregg and former Senator Clarence Nishihara were among Pearl City Lions Club members serving breakfast at the annual Valentine's Day fundraising breakfast.

