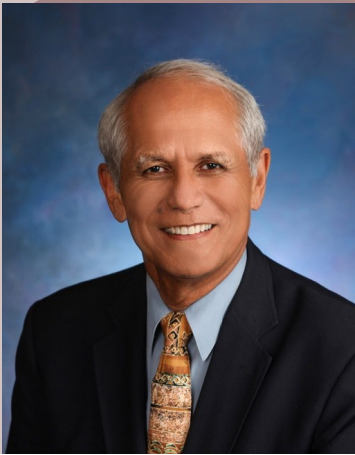


Senator Mike Gabbard



Aloha e Friends,

Happy New Year to you and your ohana! It's that time again! Our 2015 Legislative Session kicks off on January 21st at 10am. At noon, please join me for refreshments in my office, Rm. 201, at the State Capitol after the ceremony. As always, please contact me at 586-6830 or sengabbard@capitol.hawaii.gov if I can help you or your family in any way. Follow me on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/senmikegabbard> :)

Mike



COMMITTEE CHAIR

Energy & Environment

MEMBER

Health

Judiciary & Labor

Higher Education & the Arts

Staffing Set for 2015 Session

As the 2015 Legislative Session kicks off on January 21st my staff and I will be ready to serve Senate District #20 and the state as a whole. Meg Turner will be my Legislative Office Manager. Rock Riggs, who previously served in that position, will be switching over to Committee Clerk to assist me with the Energy and Environment Committee, which I continue to chair. Donna Lay will be back this session as Assistant Committee Clerk and Manjari Ferguson will be joining my staff as my scheduler and assist Meg with running the office.



"Listen Story" Meeting

My next "Listen Story" meeting will be held January 24th at the Ewa Mahiko District Park meeting room from 9am to 10am.

Keeping an Open Mind on NextEra

You've most likely seen the news that a Florida-based company called NextEra announced on December 4th that they're buying HECO. This is of course huge news for everyone who lives in the state. There have already been a lot of concerns expressed about the sale, including at least two lawsuits filed by HECO shareholders who question whether they are getting a good enough deal. At first look, the positives that come up with the deal are that NextEra is a huge company which brings a lot of resources and expertise to the table to help us modernize our grid and lower electricity costs. NextEra happens to be the largest developer of utility-scale solar and wind projects in the nation. At the same time, there are questions about NextEra's commitment to allowing customer choice as it relates to rooftop solar. As the Senate Energy and Environment Chair, I have been and will continue to be a strong supporter of rooftop solar. The bottom line is that the NextEra deal will take over a year to finalize. In the meantime, I will be working with my colleagues at the State Legislature and the Public Utilities Commission to ensure that this deal is in the public interest.



Senator Gabbard spoke to 95 graduating cadets at the Youth Challenge Academy in Kapolei on December 10th.

Continuing the Fight on Invasive Species

Rep. Chris Lee and I will be hosting an informational briefing at the State Capitol on January 13th at 10am in Rm. 225 to get an update on invasive species threats to our state. We'll be hearing from key state departments and organizations, such as the Nature Conservancy, the Hawai'i Invasive Species Council, the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Land and Natural Resources, Invasive Species Committees, and Watershed Partnerships. If you can't make it to the Capitol, you can view the briefing, streamed online at www.capitol.hawaii.gov.



Special Olympics Kapolei Groundbreaking

I participated in the groundbreaking for the Special Olympics Hawai'i Sports and Wellness Center in Kapolei on December 18th.

This facility will be an \$11 million sports and wellness center to serve adults and children with intellectual disabilities. It will be located adjacent to the Kroc Center on 2.5 acres of land. It will serve more than 3,500 athletes from across the state and will offer sports training and competitions, physical examinations, oral health screening, vision testing, and sport skills assessments.

I supported an appropriation of \$1.5 million for the project from the State Legislature in 2011. They will start construction in early 2015 and should be completed in 18 to 24 months.



Free Tax Return Prep Service

Sorry folks, the holidays are over and tax season is unfortunately here again. On a positive note, I'm joining with Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland and other legislators to sponsor a Free Tax Return Preparation workshop on the third floor of the State Capitol on January 31st from 9am to 2:30pm. In order to participate, you'll need to get an appointment by calling 808-426-3858. If

you made less than \$60,000 in 2014, you also qualify to e-file your state and federal tax returns for free at

www.myfreetaxes.com.

Upcoming Kapolei Public Library Events

The Kapolei Public Library will offer the following Saturday "free" afternoon programs in January:



- January 10th at 1pm – "The Many Benefits of Collaborative Law" – Attorneys Nolan Yogi and Lisa Jacobs will discuss how collaborative law developed more than 20 years ago as a form of alternative dispute resolution.
- January 17th at 1pm – "Meet Author Susan Scott" – Susan will discuss her newest book, "Call Me Captain: A Memoir of a Woman at Sea" which describes her sailing a 37-foot sail boat to Palmyra.
- January 24th at 1pm – "Pet Friendly Tips" – Veterinarian, Dr. Yoko Haneda, will share tips on how to take care of a new pet.
- January 24th at 1:30pm – "Pets as Service Animals" – Monica Roberts will discuss working with animals as companions and the service behaviors that can be trained to assist people on multiple levels.

For information about the events, please contact the library at 693-7050.



Senator Gabbard was invited to speak at the blessing ceremony for the grand opening of the AlohaNAP datacenter and network access point in Kapolei.



JV Boys Basketball Club

Congrats to Coach Leroy and the Boys JV Basketball team at St. Francis School in Manoa, who won the league championship on December 23, 2014. They finished the season with a 10-1 record. I had the honor of speaking to the team about a month ago.

Here's a brief excerpt from a note Coach Leroy sent me : "The progress our team made throughout the season was remarkable. We talked about a number of things including the talk you & Dr. Lum (one of our other speakers) gave them. They grew up this season, & it had nothing to do with basketball. The game was our opportunity to teach them life lessons. By hearing passionate stories from you & others, it helped them to understand values. With players from South Korea, China, Serbia, Samoa, Tonga & Hawaii, they learned to play as one. Always respecting the game & gaining a following they never knew they could. It was an honor & a blessing to be a part of this team. You are part of our championship run, thank you for all you do."

Honoring TruTag Technologies

Rep. Sharon Har and I presented TruTag Technologies Chairman, Dr. Hank Wuh, an honorary certificate from the State Legislature upon the Grand Opening of their new Manufacturing Plant and Advanced Research Center at the Kapolei Business Park on December 9, 2014.

TruTag Technologies, Inc. is the innovator of a security platform for product authentication and brand protection. As you know, counterfeiting of U.S. products is a huge problem that costs companies billions each year. TruTag's technology platform, featuring silica microtags that serve as durable, inert, covert "edible bar codes," for medicine, electronics, industrial parts and consumer goods.

Their microtags integrate into the very fabric of a product, independent of packaging and labels, much like fingerprints. TruTag Technologies, Inc. was founded by SKAI Ventures, a Hawai'i-based venture accelerator focused on transforming novel, ingenious ideas from scientists and inventors from around the world. TruTag's presence in Kapolei will attract world-wide attention, economic development, high-quality local jobs, and investment for the benefit of the entire state.

Looking for Extra Part-Time Work?

Are you looking for a part-time job that would allow you to make from \$25 to \$55 an hour using your language skills? If so, you might be interested in participating in court interpreter training that's coming up February 21-22, 2015.

The training is part of the Hawai'i State Judiciary's Court Interpreter Certification program. In order to qualify, you'd need to be bilingual, at least 18 years old, and eligible to work in the U.S. You'll also need to submit an application, which includes a \$120 registration fee. The application must be received in the Office on Equality and Access to the Courts by 4pm on January 23, 2015. To access the application and find out other related information, please visit:

www.courts.state.hi.us/courtinterpreting



Senator Gabbard co-presented TruTag Technologies Chairman, Dr. Hank Wuh, an Honorary Certificate from the State Legislature upon the Grand Opening of their new Manufacturing Plant and Advanced Research Center at the Kapolei Business Park on December 9, 2014.

Hemp: The Miracle Crop

This is a shortened version of an article I wrote that was published in the Honolulu Civil Beat on December 19, 2014:

What crop can be grown without pesticides and has over 25,000 uses? If you said hemp, you're right. But please don't confuse hemp with marijuana. Hemp contains significantly less THC. In other words, you can't get high from hemp!

One of the oldest plants ever cultivated, 12,000 years ago the Chinese used hemp to make shoes, clothes, rope and paper. The Declaration of Independence was written on hemp paper. George Washington was a hemp farmer. Henry Ford's original cars had hemp fenders. He took a sledgehammer to one and couldn't make a dent! And, the seeds have excellent nutritional value. I know because my wife, Carol has been putting them in my smoothies for years.

Unfortunately, as part of a smear campaign to confuse hemp with marijuana, the hemp industry died in 1937 with the Marijuana Tax Act, except briefly during World War II when a U.S. Department of Agriculture film, "Hemp for Victory," extolled its virtues and thousands of acres were planted. The 1970 "Controlled Substances Act" imposed further restrictions on hemp when it classified it as a Schedule I drug along with marijuana. Fortunately, the 2014 Farm Bill exempted 'hemp grown for research purposes.'

Last April, the Legislature passed a version of a bill I introduced that authorizes the UH College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources to establish a 2-year hemp remediation and biofuel research project. Professor Harry Ako will conduct the research at a UH extension site in Waimanalo. I'm working on another hemp bill this session to continue moving us forward.



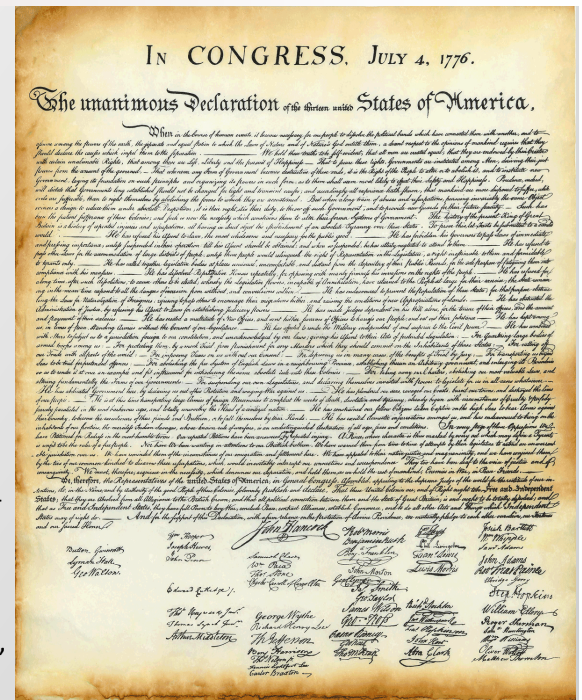
PHOTO COURTESY OF CIVIL BEAT

Hemp contains less than 0.3 percent of the psychoactive component THC, while marijuana contains between 5 and 20 percent.

Why not use hemp to help clean up our 'āina? Colorado, Kentucky and Vermont are also conducting pilot programs, and along with California, Maine, Montana, North Dakota, Oregon and West Virginia, have laws promoting the marketing of hemp.

I'm hopeful we'll also be able to grow and market hemp commercially. Imagine a local cottage industry selling Hawaiian Hemp Seeds, Honolulu Hemp Shampoo, or Hawai'i Island Hemp Oil? How cool would that be? Annually we import an estimated \$581 million worth of hemp products from overseas. That's money leaving our pockets that should be staying in our economy.

Find out more about this amazing plant from a documentary called, "Bringing it Home" and please contact your legislators to let them know you support hemp. Have a Happy New Year!



The Declaration of Independence was written on paper made from hemp.

Some law enforcement officials are concerned about differentiating hemp from marijuana. They worry that hemp fields will be used to hide marijuana plants. But the reality is that the plants look completely different in the field and cross-pollination reduces marijuana's THC potency. No pot grower would want that. Over 30 nations grow industrial hemp and there's no problem with police being able to tell the difference.

'Hempcrete' is used in construction materials in Europe. It's non-toxic and less expensive than traditional building materials and could provide a niche market in Hawai'i for people with chemical sensitivities. Hemp has also been used to help detoxify contaminated land, such as the ground around the Chernobyl nuclear power plant and Fukushima.

