



**Aloha e Friends,**

I hope you and your 'ohana are well and that you dads out there had a great Father's Day. My sons treated me to a round of golf as an early Father's Day gift at the Klipper GC at Kaneohe Marine Corps Base, and my wife prepared a wonderful home-cooked meal to celebrate with some of my kids and grandkids on Sunday. 😊

I thought fondly of my own dad and wished he could be here... I'd also like to wish an AlohaCongrats to all the graduates out there from Island Pacific Academy, Kapolei High School, Campbell High School and the American Renaissance Academy. Also, to the Youth Challenge Academy grads! I wish you all much success in your future endeavors. *Best wishes to you and your 'ohana.*



As always, please contact me at (808) 586-6830 or [sengabbard@capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto: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: Instagram [@GabbardAloha](https://www.instagram.com/GabbardAloha), Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter [@SENNIKEGABBARD](https://twitter.com/SENNIKEGABBARD). Also, if you'd like to be added to my mailing list, you can send an email to [sengabbard@capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:sengabbard@capitol.hawaii.gov) with "mailing list" in the subject line.

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AGRICULTURE & ENVIRONMENT

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- ♦ Government Operations

**DISTRICT 21**

Kapolei, Makakilo, Kalaeloa, and portions of: Fernandez

**Listen Story Community Meeting**

Please join me at my next Listen Story Community meeting on July 22, from 9am-10am at the Kapolei High School Teachers' Lounge. I gave a complete 2023 Legislative Session Wrap-up at May's meeting. In case you missed it, you can [view the zoom recording on my YouTube channel here](#). You can also view past recordings of Listen Story meetings... (We usually meet each month, but skipped June due to all the school graduations, Father's Day and general busyness of the month. I do an in-person meeting each month, and virtually as well for those who can't make it in person. Hope you can attend in July. Send me an email if you'd like to get on the invite list.)

**International Yoga Day**



The International Day of Yoga was unanimously declared by the United Nations General Assembly in 2014, thanks to the efforts of Indian Prime Minister Modi in his UN address. In 2018 and 2019, I worked locally with the [Gandhi International Institute for Peace](#) (GIIP) to introduce a bill to designate June 21 as "International Yoga Day" in Hawai'i. Governor David Y. Ige signed the companion, House Bill 349, into ACT 102 on June 26, 2019. Hawai'i is the first state in the nation to officially recognize International Yoga Day. I was honored that Dr. Raj Kumar, president of the GIIP, invited me to be the keynote speaker, as we celebrated globally the 9th Annual International Yoga Day and locally Hawaii's 5th Annual International Yoga (cont. p. 2)



On June 21, 2023, Sen. Gabbard was the Keynote Speaker at the 5th Annual International Yoga Day event, hosted by the Gandhi International Institute for Peace (GIIP) at the MOA Wellness Center in Honolulu. Sen. Gabbard is pictured here with Dr. Raj Kumar, Founder of GIIP.

# DISTRICT 21 COMMUNITY UPDATES

(cont. from p. 1) Day on June 21. The international theme for this year's celebration was "Humanity." Our theme locally in Hawai'i was "Yoga for Health, Healing and Peace." I also presented an Honorary Certificate on behalf of the Hawai'i State Senate to the GIIP, in recognition of this auspicious day. You can [watch a brief clip of the event on KITV 4 news here](#). If you go to the [Legislature's website](#), you'll find [Act 102](#), the law we passed. The language is inspiring. It reads in part: "The legislature finds that yoga is a long-standing aspect of Indian civilization and gift to humanity. Its practice emphasizes moral, physical, and mental well-being resulting in physical, mental, and spiritual balance... Yoga is not just physical exercise; it is a spiritual path to control the mind and senses and to know one's higher self and purpose in life, and it encourages living in harmony with society and nature. Yoga is a way of life and can promote health and well-being and insight into addressing environmental concerns and facilitating world peace. More than three hundred million people around the world practice some form of yoga. Yoga embodies unity of mind and body; thought and action; restraint and fulfillment; harmony between man and nature; and a holistic approach to health and well-being. It is not about exercise but to discover the sense of oneness with yourself, the world and nature."



On June 23, Sen. Gabbard attended the Malama 'Aina Field School's students' presentation event, held at Kamehameha Schools Community Learning Center in Wai'anae.

## Mālama 'Āina Field School

On June 23, I was invited to participate in a very special and inspiring event on the Wai'anae coast (the west side of O'ahu). As the culminating activity of a 3-week, hands-on, project-based, summer enrichment program for elementary, middle and high school students on the westside, some very creative projects were presented by the Mālama 'Āina Field School to a packed room of proud parents and community leaders, at the Kamehameha Schools Community Learning Center. Headed up by Pauline Sato with the [Malama Learning Center](#), for the 11th consecutive year, and funded by Kamehameha Schools, the Mālama 'Āina Field School integrates STEM learning (acronym for Science, Technology, Engineering and Math education) with 'āina-based education, which encompasses the land, ocean, air, and all living things. The primary goal of the program is to strengthen students' skills in Science, Math, English, and Language Arts by connecting them to their 'āina and culture. The instructors are kumu (teacher, coach or guides) from the community, including: Pauline Sato, Jewelynn Kirkland, Chelsey Jay, and Evy Braum. This year's theme was related to finding solution pathways around sustainable agriculture. As Chair of the Agriculture & Environment Committee and Senator for the local area, the topics related to solving agriculture and environment issues sustainably in our beautiful Hawai'i nei were right up my alley.

At the start of the program, students are provided a Challenge Topic and tasked with finding a solution. They then build a prototype for the design and tell how it addresses their challenge. After researching the issue, hearing from guest speakers, and visiting farms along the Leeward coast, the student groups presented their solutions to four challenges unique to our island state: 1) How to help farmers deal with increased problems caused by climate change, particularly heat waves and unpredictable rainfall causing severe droughts and flooding; 2) How to combat the infestation of invasive Coconut Rhinoceros Beetles (CRBs), which are spreading across our islands, destroying crops and causing continued havoc for our farmers; 3) How to assist students and kupuna gain access to and purchase healthy and affordable food; and 4) How to help farmers identify where leaks are in their small and large scale irrigation (cont. p. 3)

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(cont. from p. 2) systems. From shielding crops from extreme heat and rain by building an akamai farm system in a greenhouse; to zapping CRBs with water from a backpack; to refurbishing Matson containers to control the environment while growing crops using a combination of soil, hydroponics, and aquaponics; to an app that helps farmers quickly identify leaks in their irrigation systems, I was impressed with the solutions the students brought to bear on these long-standing issues. It was amazing to see what they were able to accomplish in just 3 weeks' time! As I said – very inspiring!

## CIP (Capital Improvement Project) Funds

Great news for the Daniel K. Akaka State Veterans Home! The Governor recently released funds for the Daniel K. Akaka State Veterans Home for the purchase of furniture and equipment, in the amount of \$1,526,812. Located across Walmart in Kapolei, the nearly 90,000-square-foot facility will offer state-of-the-art physical and mental health services for O'ahu veterans. The clinic is currently scheduled to open in late 2024. Additional CIP funds include Kapolei High School receiving \$400,000 to finance the design and construction of improvements to comply with current ADA standards, and Barbers Point Elementary receiving \$600,000 to finance the design and construction of a new restroom or restrooms to service the school cafeteria.



The O'ahu Skyline Rail is opening June 30, 2023. Photo courtesy of the Honolulu City and County's Dept. of Transportation website.

## Skyline Rail Opening

The rail, connecting the East Kapolei Station to the Aloha Stadium Station, officially opens on Friday, June 30; riders can try the rail for free between 2pm-6pm. Starting July 1, the first full day of rail service, passengers will need to tap their HOLO card to [ride for free](#) through the 4th of July weekend (July 1-4). After the free-fare promo, a ride will cost the same as TheBus, which is currently \$3 for a single adult and capped daily at \$7.50. TheBus service and routes will be updated to provide access to the first nine rail stations on July 1, 2023; for bus routes click [here](#), and for bus timetables, click [here](#). All Skyline stations, (excluding Honouliuli Station, Ho'opili Station, and Leeward Community College Station) will have bus stops and

connectivity. The Skyline will operate from 5am – 7pm, Monday through Friday, and 8am – 7pm on the weekends. All rail stations will have a Ticket Vending Machine or HOLO card kiosk, which are required to ride the rail. HOLO cards will have to be tapped at the entrance fare gate to enter a station. For full details on the Skyline, including [Fares](#), [Park and Ride info](#), [construction updates](#), [the Skyline feedback form](#), and more, you can visit the [Department of Transportation Services website](#).

## Kalaeloa Master Plan

The Hawai'i Community Development Authority (HCDA) recently hosted a community meeting on June 13 to present the "administrative draft," or first draft, of the proposed amendments to the Kalaeloa Community Development District Rules, which are the land use regulations for Kalaeloa. For more info or to view the Draft Kalaeloa Master Plan or Administrative Draft Rules you can [click here](#). If you would like to offer input or comments for either Draft, you can email your comments to [kalaeloa@tortigallas.com](mailto:kalaeloa@tortigallas.com); comments are due by July 5, 2023.

## Hawaii Invasive Species Council (HISC)

[The Hawaii Invasive Species Council \(HISC\)](#) was established in 2003 to help rid our island paradise of harmful, invasive infestations from plants to insects, to other animals not native to Hawai'i. Not all non-native species are considered invasive, only those that cause environmental or economic harm, or harm to human health. Due to the unique geographic location of our state, serious problems arise when we bring non-native, competitive species from other parts of the world into our native Hawaiian ecosystems. The HISC is a partnership made up of government, private and non-profit organizations, and concerned individuals working to prevent and control these invasives and to educate the community about the threats they impose. In 2003, [Act 85](#) was enacted to provide statutory authority to the HISC to continue its special purpose to foster and organize coordinated approaches among various executive departments, federal agencies, and international and local initiatives for the prevention and control of invasive species. The Hawai'i State Legislature declared that the silent invasion of Hawai'i by insects, disease bearing organisms, weeds, and other pests is the single greatest threat to Hawai'i's economy and natural environment and (cont. p. 4)

# AGRICULTURE & ENVIRONMENT UPDATES

(cont. from p. 3) to the health and lifestyle of Hawai'i's people. I've been a member of HISC since 2009. In 2014, I had the opportunity to see the problem first-hand as I went on tours led by the managers of the island-based Invasive Species Committees on O'ahu, Big Island, Kaua'i, Maui, and Moloka'i to see the impact that invasive species are having on our environment. I witnessed the application of citric acid from fire hydrant-like dispensers on Maui to kill coqui frogs; and was in awe of Herbicide Ballistic Technology ([HBT™: Herbicide Ballistic Technology - YouTube](#)) invented by our own UH's Dr. James Leary, to control hard-to-reach miconia plants (OMG... helicoptering around shooting these herbicide paintballs at miconia deep in the jungle was awesome!) I observed strawberry guava biocontrol sites; and most importantly, got to see the incredible dedication of all the people who are on the front lines in this battle to protect our environment and way of life. Each year, I work with HISC to present Honorary Certificates to those hard-working individuals who've really made a difference. Here's a Facebook post from the [5<sup>th</sup> Annual Hawai'i Invasive Species Awareness Week](#) .

The Hawai'i Invasive Species Council held a public meeting on June 13. Discussions included progress and updates on the Hawai'i Interagency Biosecurity Plan. The 10-year-long Hawai'i Interagency Biosecurity Plan was launched by the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture in 2017, with implementation for 68% of actions having been started over the past six years. Biosecurity involves the set of measures taken to manage the risk from invasive species on the environment, economy, health, and lifestyle of people. I'm impressed with the work HISC has done and continues to do, to protect Hawai'i nei and keep paradise, paradise. 😊



**REPORT INVASIVE SPECIES**  
**643-PEST**  
**643pest.org**  
**CALL OR CLICK TO PROTECT HAWAII**

The Hawai'i Invasive Species Council held a public meeting on June 13, 2023. To report an invasive species, you can call the Invasive Species Hotline at 808-643-7378, or visit The Hawai'i Invasive Species Council's website, at [643pest.org - Pest Report](#).



On June 15, 2023, Sen. Gabbard attended the Youth Challenge Academy Class 58 graduation at the Tom Moffat Waikiki Shell. Pictured here, L-R; Sinaita'aga Atanoa, Director, Hawai'i National Guard Youth Challenge Academy in Kalaeloa, Posiano Penetito, this year's recipient of the \$500 Mike Gabbard Scholarship, and Sen. Mike Gabbard.

## Youth Challenge Academy Class 58 Graduation

Aloha Congrats to Class 58! Very proud of the 66 outstanding youth, who persevered through a 22-week Residential Program and year-long mentorship to reach their moment of graduation on June 15, 2023... the energy from the crowd gave me chicken skin. Each graduating cadet received an Honorary Certificate from me on behalf of the Hawai'i State Senate and one stand-out recipient, Posiano Penetito, received the Mike Gabbard \$500 scholarship. Posiano will begin studies at Leeward Community College Waianae Moku campus and plans to pursue teaching. You can [watch the graduation ceremony here](#). The [Hawai'i Youth ChalleNGe Academy](#) provides 16 to 19-year-old non-traditional #AtPromise youth a second chance to obtain their high school diploma and become productive citizens within the community, by producing program graduates with the values, life skills, education, and self-discipline necessary to succeed. The Academy was founded in August 1994 and is administered by the Hawai'i Army National Guard, with campuses in Kalaeloa here on O'ahu and in Hilo on the Big Island. Each cycle, the program accepts approximately 150 young people. Since its inception, the program has graduated over 5,765 students with 90% of them earning their High School Equivalency Diploma.

