

FROM THE OFFICE OF
SENATOR DRU MAMO KANUHA

District 3 – Kona and Ka‘ū

Volume 1, Issue 1 | July 2019



District 3 Priorities:

- Affordable Housing
- Education
- Economic Development
- Healthcare
- Infrastructure
- Advocating for Kona and Ka‘ū Coffee Industries
- Preserving our Environment, Natural Resources and Historical Sites

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ALOHA KĀKOU!

Thank you for your vote of confidence to represent District 3 in the Hawai‘i State Senate. It has been a very humbling experience to serve the community that I grew up in at the State level and I am so grateful for the opportunity.

My six years as your Hawai‘i County Councilman (and the first Chairperson from Kona) provided me an opportunity to not only make a real difference in the life of my constituents at the County level, it gave me valuable experience that allowed me to efficiently navigate the legislative process at the Hawai‘i State Capitol.

The 2019 legislative session was productive and full of accomplishments for Kona and Ka‘ū. This session began with a set of key priorities for our community and I truly believe that we have made great strides at accomplishing our goals.

There is a lot of work to be done to ensure a good quality of life for our community, and I am committed to listening and collaborating with you all to come up with solutions for the challenges our community faces.

It's been a great privilege to serve as your Senator and I welcome any feedback that you can provide. Please feel free to contact my team and I at any time.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dru Kanuha'.

Senator Dru Mamo Kanuha

Role in the State Legislature

During his first year, Senator Dru Mamo Kanuha was given the role of **Majority Caucus Leader** for the 30th Legislature of the State of Hawai‘i. As Majority Caucus Leader, Senator Kanuha presides over the Caucus' regular meetings – meetings that allow legislators of the same party to discuss legislation prior to voting on the Senate floor.

Before any legislation has the chance to be voted on by the entire Senate body, however, it is referred to different committees that bring focus to discussion on topics that are pertinent to the State.

Senator Kanuha is a member of four Senate committees. As Vice Chair of the **Housing (HOU)** committee, Senator Kanuha works directly on issues such as affordable and public housing, community development and the sheltering of the homeless. As a member of **Ways and Means (WAM)**, Senator Kanuha has a very unique role in working out the State's budget and taxation policies. Membership in the **Education (EDU)** committee affirms Senator Kanuha's commitment to strengthening our District's public schools and public libraries. Finally, membership in the **Government Operations (GVO)** allows District 3 a voice in maximizing government efficiency and overseeing the operation of State departments.

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Lifeguards, Physician Assistants and Clean Highways



Lifeguards for Kua Bay
Since 2013, there have been 10 spinal cord injuries and 30 significant emergency incidents that have required transport to a hospital from Kekaha Kai State Park. This session, **\$480,000** was secured in general funds for fiscal year 2020 and fiscal year 2021 for lifeguard services at Kua Bay.

Physician Assistants
In an attempt to address our State's physician shortage, Senator Kanuha introduced **SB1406 SD1 HD1** to authorize supervision of physician's assistants (PA) by physician groups, permits supervising physicians and groups to establish practice-appropriate record review policies, establishes continuing education requirements and authorizes audits to enforce compliance, and clarifies provisions relating to forfeiture and reinstatement of a license.

Clean Highways

In a response to constituent concerns about dumping at the intersection of Queen Ka'ahumanu Highway and Palani Road, Senator Kanuha introduced **SCR83** and **SR60** to request the Department of Transportation (DOT) to clean up the site. This parcel of land became a dumping ground for rubbish, and was finally cleared by the DOT in mid-April.



Notable 2019 Legislation

Kupuna Care
HB465 HD1 SD2 appropriated **\$4.1 million** to the Department of Health to fund the Kupuna Care Program.

Rapid 'Ōhi'a Death
HB1548 HD1 SD2 CD1 Appropriated **\$750,000** to study and combat rapid 'ōhi'a death.

Homelessness
HB157 HD2 SD1 CD1 appropriated **\$2 million** for construction of temporary units for temporary housing of the homeless through the **Ohana Zones Project**. **SB471 SD2 HD1 CD1** allocated **\$10.8 million** for other homeless programs.

Education **HB1070 HD1 SD1 CD1** provided **\$600,000** to the Grow Our Own Teachers Initiative to recruit supplemental education staff to address our State's shortage of teachers.

DaBux Funding
Provided **\$50,000** in matching funds for low-income families to double their purchase of locally-sourced produce.

Doubling Production and Exports
Appropriated **\$100,000** for doubling food production in, and exports out of the State by 2030.

Marijuana Decriminalization
HB1383 HD2 SD1 CD1 decriminalizes possession of 3 grams or less of marijuana.

Protecting Rays
HB808 HD1 SD2 CD1 outlaws capturing or killing any rays in state waters.

24M Secured for Capital Construction

Kealakehe Elementary School received **\$15 million** for construction of a new classroom building and various other improvements.

Ka'ū Hospital **\$500,000** received for renovation of bathrooms, kitchens and flooring.

Kealakehe High School received **\$3 million** for an all-weather synthetic track.

Ka'ū High and Pahala Elementary School received **\$200,000** for various improvements.

West Hawai'i Community Health Center received **\$220,000** in GIA funding.



Sen. Kanuha at the passing of **HB2 HD1 SD1 CD1**:
Relating to the State Budget

Kealakehe Wastewater Treatment Facility received **\$900,000** funds to match the County of Hawai'i for various projects.

Innovations Public Charter School received **\$200,000** for the construction of a community recreational center.

\$1.1 million was allocated to acquire land necessary to protect important native forest resources.

Konawaena High School received **\$1.1 million** for improvements to its softball field and **\$20,000** for various other improvements.

Ke Kula 'O 'Ehunuikaimalino received **\$207,000** for various improvements

Kailua Pier received **\$150,000** for replacement of an old loading dock.

Ho'okena Elementary School received **\$200,000** for various improvements.

Honalo Marshalling Yard Facility received **\$1.1 million** for various improvements as well as **Hawai'i 'Ulu Producers Cooperative** received **\$150,000** for the additional projects at the yard.

Japanese Cultural Center of Kona received **\$70,000** in GIA funding.

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Sen. Kanuha with Lt. Gov. Josh Green (left), Gov. David Ige (middle) and Chief Justice Mark Recktenwald (right) on January 16, 2019, Opening Day of the 2019 Legislative Session.



Sen. Kanuha with members of the Hawai‘i County Council at the State Capitol.



Hawai‘i Island delegation at Gov. Ige's signing of HB1180 HD1: disaster relief funding for Puna families affected by the recent eruption of Kīlauea.



Sen. Kanuha and Rep. Creagan honor the 2019 Librarian of the Year, Sara Kamibayashi, of Nā‘ālehu and Pāhala libraries.



Students lobbying at the State Capitol for stricter enforcement of laws against underage usage of e-cigarettes.



Students from the Kealakehe Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) Academy visiting the State Capitol.

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Looking Ahead

What to expect for the 2020 Legislative Session

Alleviating Traffic

While the recent widening of Queen Ka‘ahumanu Highway has benefitted West Hawai‘i’s roads, "crawls" around the district during morning and pauhana commutes are still far too prevalent. A bill was introduced this session to request funding to widen Kuakini Highway between Lako Street and Kamehameha III Road along with a follow-up resolution to request the DOT to prioritize this project, and will be revisited next session.

Ka‘ū Hospital

Located over 50 miles away from the nearest medical center, Ka‘ū Hospital’s four-bed emergency department serves over 3000 patients a year. Through discussion with Ka‘ū Hospital’s Administrator, Marilyn Harris, it has been identified that an expansion of the hospital’s Rural Health Clinic would help improve access to urgent care and outpatient behavioral health services – intended on alleviating pressure on the emergency department.

Advocating for Kona and Ka‘ū Coffee Industries

Counterfeit coffee has been a problem that has long plagued our community. Senator Kanuha introduced a variety of legislation this session to mitigate this problem and plans to continue working together with local farmers throughout Kona and Ka‘ū to ensure that the coffee being labeled as "Kona" or "Ka‘ū" Coffee reflects the quality of coffee that our district is famous for.

Affordable Housing and Workforce Development

As Vice Chair of the Senate Committee on Housing, Senator Kanuha introduced a variety of legislation to address Hawai‘i’s housing crisis. In addition to legislation to give priority to applicants for housing who work within 25 miles of housing sought, the Rental Assistance Program and Qualified Nonprofit Housing Trust Program were reevaluated. Senator Kanuha also plans to continue advocating for non-conventional housing approaches—such as tiny homes and micro housing units.

Agriculture and Environmental Protection

The passage of SR112 was championed by Senator Kanuha and requests the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) to prioritize the control of high-threat invasive species.

Senator Kanuha has also tirelessly advocated for all counties in Hawai‘i to incorporate the United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goals into their respective county codes.

Education

In addition to the funding secured for our district’s schools, Senator Kanuha is committed to improving access to education throughout West Hawai‘i. In conjunction to a study on the feasibility of a new teaching hospital, Senator Kanuha has advocated to include cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) instruction into the curriculum for public high school in the district. This session, a bill to initiate a tax-free holiday for school supply shopping will be revisited.



An afternoon photo of the Hawai‘i State Capitol captured by Senator Kanuha

Shorelines

As a site of big cultural significance, the issue of jurisdiction at Kahalu‘u Beach Park is one that came up a lot this session. SR168 and SCR209 were passed to request the different agencies with jurisdiction over the park – DLNR, Division of Boating and Ocean Resources (DOBOR) and the County of Hawai‘i – to identify and pursue the best course of action to collaboratively address issues at Kahalu‘u.

Another issue that will continue to be evaluated will be the balance of commercial and recreational usage of Kailua Pier. SR109 was passed to encourage the implementation of quarterly meetings between DOBOR and Division of Conservation and Resources Enforcement (DOCARE) to open dialogue regarding these issues.

Economic Development

Tourism has long been the driving force of Hawai‘i’s economy— comprising 21% of the state’s economy directly, with many of Hawai‘i’s largest industries revolving around a constant flow of tourists. To diversify our community’s revenue generating industries, SCR86 was passed to request Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT) to conduct a study on potential areas of economic development other than tourism in the County of Hawai‘i. Senator Kanuha has also been an advocate for alternative sources of revenue, such as Mega Millions and Power Ball, and increasing taxes on tobacco products to further replenish the State’s general fund.

‘A‘ohe hana nui ke alu ‘ia

No task is too big when done together by all