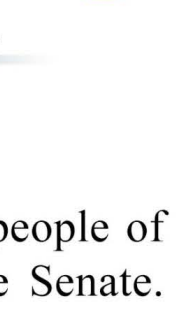




SENATOR GILBERT S.C. KEITH-AGARAN

hawai'i state senate district 5

January 2019 • volume 11 • issue 1



wailuku • waihe'e • kahului

A MESSAGE FROM GIL

Aloha Kākou,

I remain grateful to serve the people of Central Maui in the Hawai'i State Senate. Together with my colleagues from Maui, Senator J. Kalani English and Senator Rosalyn Baker, and our six Maui House colleagues, we will work to respond to community concerns.

January marks the opening of another legislative session and new fiscal biennium, which means new bills, new issues, new challenges, and new opportunities. As part of the committees on Ways and Means, Higher Education, and Water and Land, I will review measures on taxation and state financing policies, the University of Hawaii System and its programs, and public lands and water systems.

This session I introduced a number of bills to encourage discussion on automatic recounts in close elections, statewide voting by mail, and extending the deadline for counties to pass an ordinance to adopt a GET surcharge.

As always, I welcome input from the people of Central Maui on any of the issues being discussed this year. Your views are important and can hopefully be reflected in meaningful and timely ways as legislation moves forward.

Mahalo in advance for taking the time to contact my office at the State Capitol. Our ability to represent you depends on hearing from you as the session continues.

Sincerely,

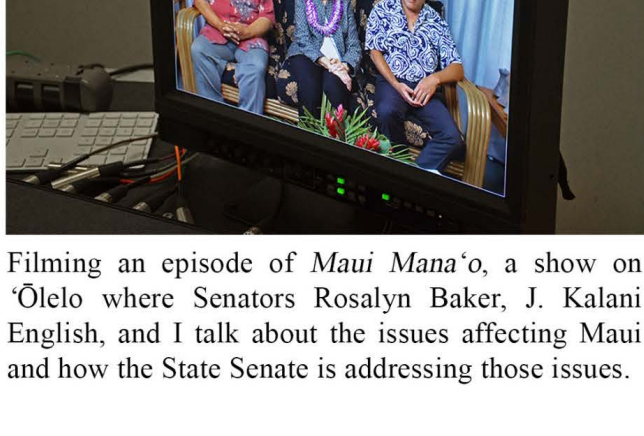
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- Opening Day at the Legislature
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- Notable Bills Introduced by Senator Keith-Agaran

PHOTOS



Maui Cattlemen visited Senator J. Kalani English and me during their annual legislative event.

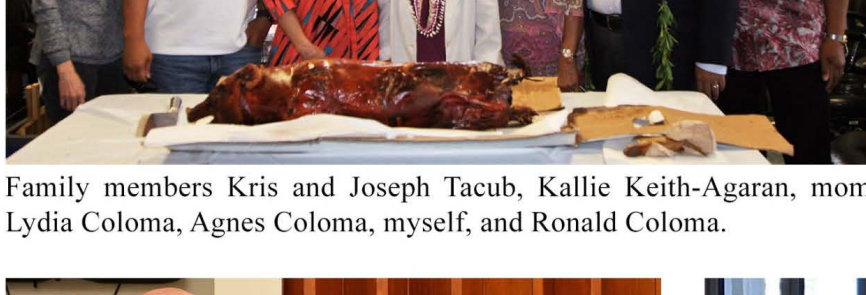


Donning our traditional barongs made of pineapple fiber, fellow Filipino legislators and I pose for the Fil-Am Courier's annual issue featuring Filipino legislators in Hawaii.



Filming an episode of Maui Mana'o, a show on 'Ōlelo where Senators Rosalyn Baker, J. Kalani English, and I talk about the issues affecting Maui and how the State Senate is addressing those issues.

OPENING DAY 2019



Family members Kris and Joseph Tacub, Kallie Keith-Agaran, mom Lydia Coloma, Agnes Coloma, myself, and Ronald Coloma.



Senator Donovan Dela Cruz and myself on the Senate floor before the Opening Day ceremony.



Maui Council Services Staff and myself.



Maui ILWU members.



More Maui ILWU members.



Being interviewed by an 'Ōlelo Community Media student.



Karye Kapoi and Boys and Girls Club Maui Executive Director Kelly Pearson.

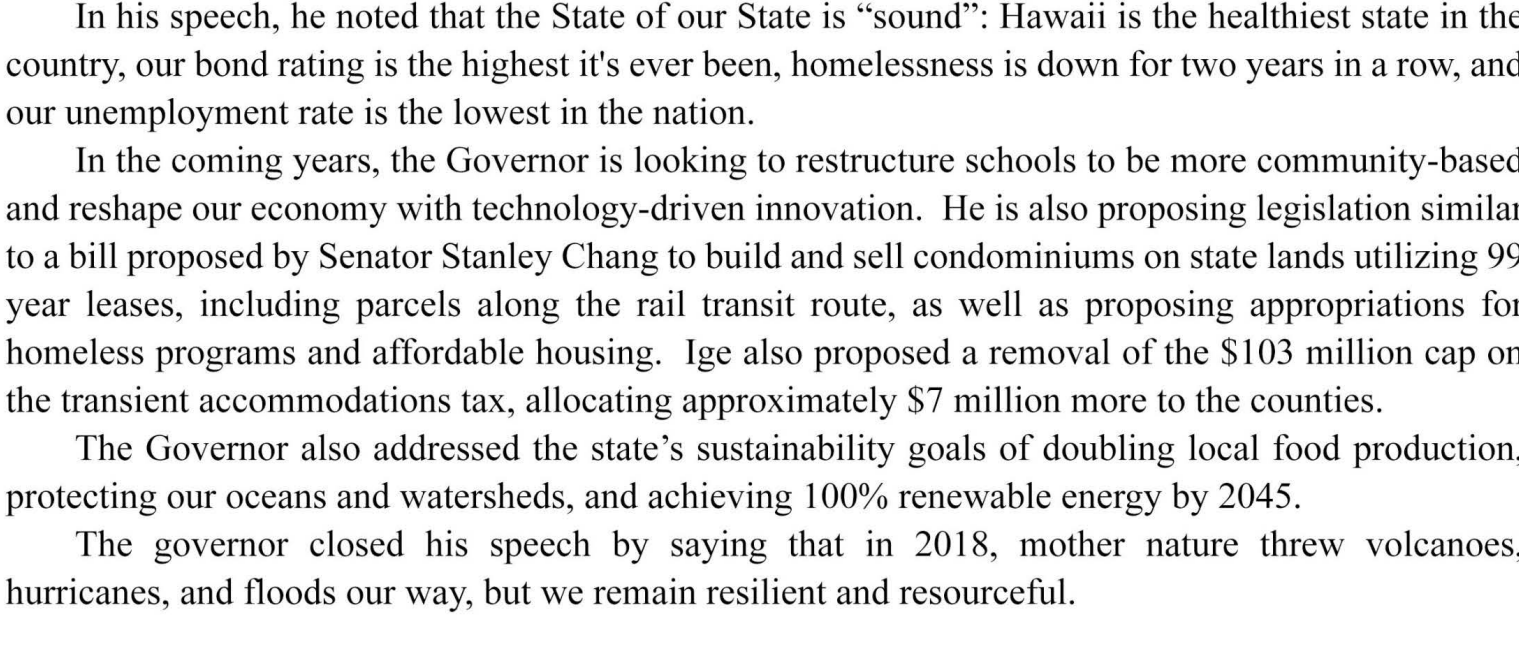


Maui Economic Development Board staff.



Governor Ige, my mother Lydia Coloma, and cousins Romeo and Agnes Coloma.

STATE OF THE STATE



Governor David Ige addressing the joint legislature during the State of the State address.

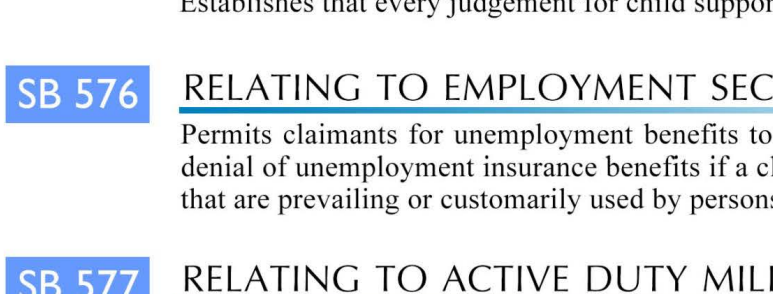
Governor Ige delivered his annual State of the State address on January 22 to a joint session of the legislature in the House of Representatives Chamber.

In his speech, he noted that the State of our State is "sound": Hawaii is the healthiest state in the country, our bond rating is the highest it's ever been, homelessness is down for two years in a row, and our unemployment rate is the lowest in the nation.

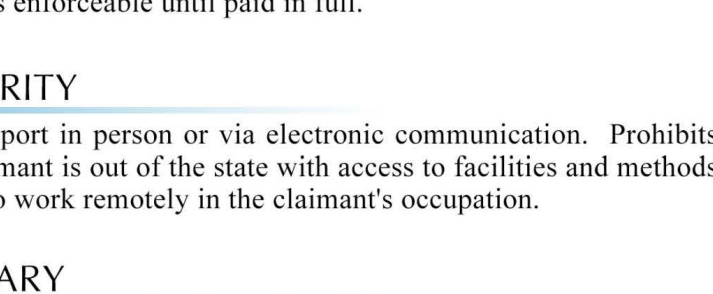
In the coming years, the Governor is looking to restructure schools to be more community-based and reshape our economy with technology-driven innovation. He is also proposing legislation similar to a bill proposed by Senator Stanley Chang to build and sell condominiums on state lands utilizing 99 year leases, including parcels along the rail transit route, as well as proposing appropriations for homeless programs and affordable housing. Ige also proposed a removal of the \$103 million cap on the transient accommodations tax, allocating approximately \$7 million more to the counties.

The Governor also addressed the state's sustainability goals of doubling local food production, protecting our oceans and watersheds, and achieving 100% renewable energy by 2045.

The Governor closed his speech by saying that in 2018, mother nature threw volcanoes, hurricanes, and floods our way, but we remain resilient and resourceful.



Maui legislators Senator English, Representative Wildberger, Senator Baker, U.S. Senator Mazie Hirono, Representative Hashimoto, Representative DeCoite, and myself.



Addressing the media following the speech with Senator Michelle Kidani.

Notable Bills Introduced by Senator Keith-Agaran

- SB 297 RELATING TO DIGITAL MEDIA**
Allows the transfer of an individual's digital media account to a devisee or heir upon the account holder's death.
- SB 299 RELATING TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION**
Requires the Board of Education to hold no less than six community meetings a year, with at least one meeting held in each county.
- SB 306 RELATING TO CONDOMINIUMS**
Requires the real estate commission to receive any complaints regarding disputes between a condominium association and a unit owner or any complaints referred to mandatory mediation, mandatory arbitration, or voluntary binding arbitration.
- SB 573 RELATING TO GROUP LIVING FACILITIES**
Specifies that until the Department of Health establishes the clean and sober homes registry, group living facilities may operate upon providing notice to the applicable county.
- SB 574 RELATING TO CHILD SUPPORT**
Establishes that every judgement for child support is enforceable until paid in full.
- SB 576 RELATING TO EMPLOYMENT SECURITY**
Permits claimants to unemployment benefits to report in person or via electronic communication. Prohibits denial of unemployment insurance benefits if a claimant is out of the state with access to facilities and methods that are prevailing or customarily used by persons to work remotely in the claimant's occupation.
- SB 577 RELATING TO ACTIVE DUTY MILITARY**
Requires the State to: pay, without duty, military personnel called to active duty at the same rate as their active duty counterparts; provide basic housing allowance (BHA); and provide service credit for time on active duty.
- SB 578 RELATING TO TAXATION**
Extends the period that a county may adopt a surcharge on state tax, under certain conditions, from March 31, 2019, to December 31, 2019. Allows a county with a population equal to or less than five hundred thousand that adopts a surcharge on state tax to use surcharge revenues for disaster relief.
- SB 579 RELATING TO TAX CREDITS**
Increases the allowable income tax credit for low-income household renters to an unspecified amount. Makes the earned income tax credit refundable for ten tax-years beginning after 12/31/2019. Increases the allowable amount of the refundable food/excise tax credit to an unspecified amount.
- SB 594 RELATING TO EDUCATION**
Establishes and appropriates funds for a state school meal subsidy program within the department of education to provide school lunch subsidies to children whose families do not otherwise qualify for the free and reduced price lunch program.
- SB 830 RELATING TO PUBLIC ACCESS**
Provides that where public access is required as a condition of a subdivision, either the county must accept dedication of and maintain the access or identify an entity to own and maintain the access. Authorizes the county to require the subdivider to establish a stewardship fund for maintenance purposes.
- SB 831 RELATING TO URBAN AGRICULTURE**
Requires the counties to incorporate urban agriculture principles and policies in land use planning.
- SB 834 RELATING TO SOLAR ENERGY**
Permits a county to create a process for the recording and enforcement of solar easements. Allows counties to require individuals claiming a solar right to record that right by filing a declaration with the county clerk. Permits a county to require the trimming of vegetation that blocks solar radiation from solar energy devices.
- SB 836 RELATING TO THE TRANSIENT ACCOMMODATIONS TAX**
Increases the allocation of funds from transient accommodations tax revenue to the special land and development fund to improve certain state resources and services.
- SB 837 RELATING TO FARMS**
Creates an exclusion from income tax for the farmer of fifty-one per cent of gross annual income or \$50,000 of gross annual income earned by a farmer from leasing activities.
- SB 842 PROPOSING AN AMENDMENT TO ARTICLE II OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE STATE OF HAWAII**
Proposes an amendment to the Hawaii State Constitution to allow a recount of votes cast in an election be conducted in a manner to be provided by law.
- SB 843 RELATING TO ELECTIONS**
Requires manual recounts of election votes when the margin of victory is equal to or less than one hundred votes cast or equal to or less than one-half of one per cent of the votes cast, whichever is less.
- SB 844 RELATING TO ELECTIONS**
Requires manual recounts of election votes when the margin of victory is less than two hundred fifty votes or less than one per cent of the votes cast, whichever is less.
- SB 845 RELATING TO ELECTIONS**
Enacts voting by mail uniformly for all elections commencing with the 2020 primary. Establishes a limited number of voter service centers that would remain open from the tenth business day preceding an election through the day of the election to receive personal delivery of mail-in ballots, accommodate voters with special needs, and provide other election services. Allows for additional places of deposit for personal delivery of mail-in ballots. Appropriates funds for the implementation and administration of the election by mail program. Requires the office of elections to submit a report to the legislature prior to the convening of each regular session from 2020 through 2025, regarding the implementation of a vote by mail system.
- SB 846 RELATING TO VOTING**
Requires the office of the lieutenant governor to establish a system to track the mailing and receipt of ballots returned by mail. Requires the county clerks to notify the office of the lieutenant governor immediately upon mailing and receipt of absentee ballots by mail. Appropriates funds to the counties.
- SB 849 RELATING TO VETERANS**
Requires the University of Hawaii to waive the nonresident tuition and fee differential for veterans of the United States Navy who served on an active ship or ship decommissioned after 2000 that is named after a person, place, or word associated with Hawaii.
- SB 851 RELATING TO DECEPTIVE TRADE PRACTICES**
Clarifies that a person offering free or reduced rate shipping to a consumer in another state but refuses to honor that shipping offer to a consumer in Hawaii has engaged in an act that is unfair and deceptive under certain conditions.
- SB 856 RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**
Requires the Auditor to perform a financial and management audit of the Department of Education, Superintendent, Board of Education, and complex areas every three years.
- SB 857 RELATING TO PAYMENTS OF SUPPORT**
Includes tips or gratuities paid directly to an individual by a customer of the employer and reported or declared to the employer under the definition of income used to calculate payments of child or spousal support.
- SB 861 RELATING TO JUDGES**
Changes the designation of judges of the intermediate appellate court, circuit courts, district courts, and family courts.
- SB 865 RELATING TO THE FAMILY COURT**
Makes decisions of the family court appealable to the supreme court instead of the intermediate court of appeals.
- SB 866 RELATING TO FORECLOSURE**
Provides that a minute order entered on a decree of foreclosure incorporating an order of sale or entered on an order confirming the sale of a foreclosed property shall operate as a final, appealable order.

Other notable bills introduced by myself this session include measures relating to prohibiting minors from riding in the back of pickup trucks, jury duty exemptions for emergency management workers, and appropriating funds for an international study program at the University of Hawaii. For a full list of measures I introduced this session, please visit <http://www.capitol.hawaii.gov>

MAKE YOURSELF HEARD!

Participating in the legislative process is easier than ever for neighbor island residents who are unable to visit us at the Capitol. The state legislature's website at www.capitol.hawaii.gov is the place to start. There you can search for measures that are being considered this session based on keywords, the name of a House or Senate member who introduced a measure, or by subject matter committee. When you register for an account using your e-mail address, you can create a clear personalized tracking list for accessing daily updated information to find out when a measure may be scheduled for hearing, and you can electronically submit public testimony for consideration by the committee conducting the hearing. If you have general questions concerning the legislative process and how a bill becomes law, please also see the website for the Public Access Room at www.irbhawaii.org/par/ or call them toll-free from Maui at 984-2400. You can reach our office toll-free through that number as well, or you can contact or e-mail us as provided below. Mahalo for participating in our democratic process!

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