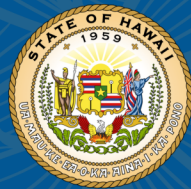


COMMUNITY REPORT

SENATE DISTRICT 18 | JANUARY 2025

Serving Mililani Town, Waipī'o Gentry, Crestview, Waikele, portion of Waipahu, Village Park, Royal Kunia



Michelle
KIDANI

Senate Vice President

Chair
Committee on Education

Vice Chair
Committee on Higher Education

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Committee on Ways and Means

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Aloha Friends and Neighbors,

A new year means the start of a new Legislative Session at our Hawai'i State Capitol, and I am proud to continue serving you as your Senator for District 18.

In 2025, one of my top educational priorities is to create a safe, effective learning environment for students, which includes improving school facilities and integrating technology to support diverse educational needs. Additionally, My colleagues and I are aiming to strengthen teacher and staff retention by developing recruitment pipelines through partnerships with middle and high schools, community colleges, and the University of Hawai'i. I'd also like to ensure long-term success for both students and educators by aligning academic pathways with workforce demands. Through fostering statewide collaboration and offering professional development, we can help educators succeed. We are working to improve student achievement by aligning curricula with real-world relevance, supporting Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs, and ultimately preparing students for the workforce to strengthen Hawai'i's economy.

I'm also pleased to share recent events I've had the pleasure of attending or taking part in, like Opening Day, the Chamber of Commerce Hawai'i's event centered on students, and the E Ho'owaiwai Ē Awards that recognized the Women's Prison Project. The Women's Legislative Caucus (WLC) legislative package was introduced this month as well, as a way to demonstrate us forging ahead with addressing issues that affect underserved populations in our communities.

I always look forward to working with you to address the issues that matter most, and ensure a brighter future for our district and for Hawai'i.



Opening Day is always a special time for me, especially since I get the chance to have family, friends, and my hardworking staff join me on the Senate Chamber Floor.



As Chair of the Senate Education Committee, I enjoy seeing our youth being introduced to the legislative process through visiting our State Capitol.



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Opening Day of the 33rd Legislative Session

Every year, the third Wednesday of January marks the beginning of the Legislative Session, as mandated by our state constitution. 2025's Opening Day was held on January 15. In all my years in public office, this has always been a symbolic, revered time for me since my colleagues and I begin our legislative process and celebrate another start to the Biennium. I continue to be thankful for your trust in allowing me to continue my work for the vibrant Senate District 18 and serving on the Senate Committee on Education, Higher Education, and Ways and Means.



Left [L-R]: Senator Kidani and floor guests Office of Hawaiian Affairs Chair Emeritus Carmen “Hulu” Linsey, constituent Bob Barrett, UHWO Government Relations Wendy Tatsuno, Ret. Justice Michael D. Wilson.



Left: Senator Kidani serenaded by the Hawaiian Airlines Serenaders; Right: Senator Kidani with Shirley Lee, constituent and President of “Raeleens,” Senator & friends’ Farrington HS/YMCA Social Club.



[L-R]: “shaka” with Waipahu Complex Principals Alvan Fukuhara of Waipahu Intermediate School; Zachary Sheets of Waipahu High School; Sheldon Oshio of Waikele Elementary School; Stacey Kawamura of Honowai Elementary School; Hanh Nguyen of August Ahrens Elementary School.

Chamber of Commerce Hawai'i's "Elevating Voices from the Classroom" Event

The "Elevating Voices From the Classroom" event was held by the Chamber of Commerce Hawai'i at the Capitol on January 17. This event, focused on developing Hawai'i's next generation of leaders, gave high school students the chance to pitch real community issues and solutions to lawmakers. The students also held a workshop to dive deeper into advocacy and civic engagement. This event encouraged students to find ways to make their voices heard and create positive change. I was pleased to spend some time with the visiting students in the Senate Chamber, and look forward to seeing the great things they'll contribute to our community in the future.



Students from all over the state gathered at the Senate Chambers to be recognized.



I had a chance to chat with the students seated in the gallery, along with my colleague Senator Donna Mercado Kim.



It is always an honor for me to present on the Senate Floor.



Students from my alma mater, Farrington High School, were part of the program - go Govs!

E Ho'owaiwai Ē Award for Women's Prison Project

'Ekolu Mea Nui is a non-profit organization committed to transforming Hawai'i's justice system through Native Hawaiian values and practices that promote healing, restoration and empowerment. On Sunday, January 19, I had the pleasure of attending the E Ho'owaiwai Ē Awards at the Lanikūhonua Cultural Institute, an event that honors groups and individuals who have demonstrated exceptional dedication to uplifting our community – especially those impacted by incarceration. As part of the Women's Prison Project, a coalition of legislators, community leaders, and prison reform advocates, our group was honored to receive an award for our efforts. I also offer my congratulations to Deborah Spencer-Chun, director of the Adult Friends for Youth, for receiving an individual award. I look forward to strengthening partnerships and continuing to support our community, and I encourage others to join our efforts in supporting incarcerated individuals by providing valuable resources for them.



It was a good afternoon at Lanikūhonua Cultural Institute for the for the Women's Prison Project to be recognized at the E Ho'owaiwai Ē Awards!

Women's Legislative Caucus

On January 22, members of the bipartisan Hawai'i Women's Legislative Caucus (WLC) hosted a panel discussion at the YWCA of O'ahu to present their 2025 Legislative package, continuing their efforts to improve the lives of Hawai'i's women, children, and families. The WLC is a formal, bipartisan, and bicameral group focused on advancing legislation that supports women, children, and families, with 23 women Representatives out of 51 members and 8 women Senators out of 25 members. You can view the entire 2025 Women's Legislative Caucus package by visiting the Hawai'i State Capitol website at www.capitol.hawaii.gov.



Senate and House members convened at the YWCA of O'ahu to unveil the 2025 legislative package focused on uplifting women in our communities; attendees were given the opportunity to ask the legislators about their plans and goals for the session.

Empowering Your Engagement: Public Access Room

Engaging in the legislative process can be a powerful way to make your voice heard and impact policy-making. However, it can also be a complex and overwhelming process, especially for those new to advocacy or unfamiliar with how laws are made.

To assist in your journey, numerous resources are available to simplify and enhance your engagement. One helpful resource is the Public Access Room (PAR), dedicated to facilitating public involvement in Hawai'i's legislative process. PAR offers a comprehensive understanding of Capitol operations, informative workshops, and a physical space for public use at the State Capitol, Room 401. PAR's services are provided by a non-partisan office without any service fees.

Explore a wealth of information on PAR's website, including a detailed guide to the legislative process, tips for navigating the Legislature's website, and advice for participating in public hearings.

How To Quickly Find Bills: Subject Search

Learn more about finding and tracking measures to create lists of bills and resolutions you're interested in, view the current status of numerous measures, and create easy-to-read reports.

1. Go to the Legislature's website (capitol.hawaii.gov) and click on the "Reports and Lists" link (or select it from under the "Laws & Research" tab).
2. Click on the "Subject Search" bar — the last one in the light blue column on the left. In the search box that appears, enter the exact word or phrase you'd like to find.

Note this only searches in the current bill draft's Measure Title, Report Title (keywords), and Description and does not search the full content of the bill or past versions. More info on tracking bills: <https://lrb.hawaii.gov/par/engagement-101/tracking-bills-at-the-legislature>

Hawai'i State Legislature website: <https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/>

The Public Access Room is a great resource for anyone who would like to learn more about our legislators, the legislative process, and more! Visit PAR on the fourth floor of the Hawai'i State Capitol.

PAR Contact Information: <https://lrb.hawaii.gov/par>
Phone: (808) 587-0478 | Email: par@capitol.hawaii.gov

Below, entrance to the Public Access Room at the State Capitol, Room 401.

