

Senator Michelle Kidani

Twenty-ninth Hawaii State Legislature

(D) Senate District 18 – Serving Mililani Town, Waipio Gentry, Waikele, Village Park, Royal Kunia



Senate Vice President

Chair: Committee on Education

Member: Committee on Ways and Means

Member: Committee on Higher Education

Hawaii State Capitol
Room 228

Phone 586-7100

senkidani@capitol.hawaii.gov



2018—Year of the Dog
Kung Hee Fat Choy!

Aloha, friends and neighbors,

We learned late last week that the U.S. Department of Education has approved Hawaii's state plan for the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). During most of 2017, I was a member of one of the working groups that helped to articulate the plan that aims to give the state and campus leadership more authority to formulate policy and "localize" the way teachers teach, and students learn.

That's good news for principals and teachers. They know their campuses and students best and will now have a greater say in how teaching and learning are put into practice in their schools. That makes it all the more important that we work toward the goal of placing qualified and licensed teachers in all of our classrooms.

We made some progress on that goal in the past year. It is always gratifying to see the tangible results of my legislative work, especially when those results happen quickly. I came up with a new approach to dealing with the critical shortage of qualified, licensed teachers for our public school classrooms, especially at hard-to-staff campuses. I wanted to support folks already in the DOE system - Substitute Teachers, Emergency Hires and Education Assistants - who were ready to take a next step and earn their teacher licenses. I pushed for scholarship funds which were allocated in the budget we approved in the 2017 legislative session, and the College of Education under Dean Donald Young moved quickly to develop an online and after-hours class schedule to accommodate these working professionals.

Earlier this month, I was on the UH Manoa campus for orientation of the first group of more than 50 individuals who enrolled in the *Grow Our Own* program. It was an emotional and heartwarming moment - not only for me, but also for the new students. Many of them approached me, some with tears in their eyes, to let me know that they were so grateful for this opportunity for professional improvement. I could feel their passion for education, and for the students in their schools and classrooms, and I am so pleased to have been a part of this innovative approach to increasing and improving our corps of dedicated teachers.

I should note that in this first group of teacher-students seven are from the Mililani/Waipahu area. The College of Education says there is already a waiting list for the next group's sessions. I plan to aggressively advocate for additional funding to support the *Grow Our Own* initiative.

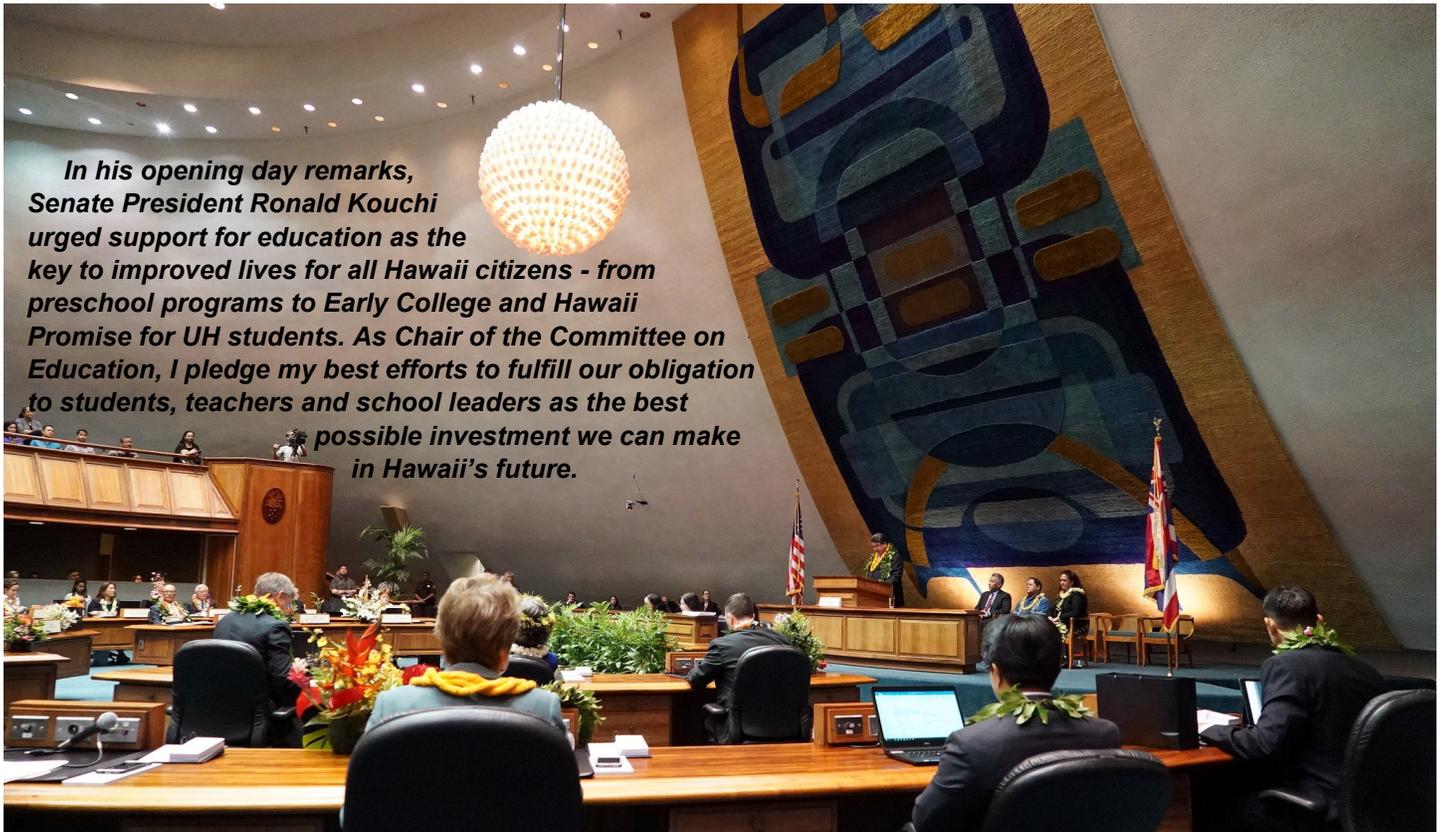
Mahalo to everyone who worked so hard to make this program a reality!
Me ke Aloha Pumehana,

Michelle



Among the educators taking advantage of the *Grow Our Own* teacher preparation initiative are Salamasina Fuimaono (above) from Waipahu High School, and Chantelle Bjorn (at right) from Mililani.





In his opening day remarks, Senate President Ronald Kouchi urged support for education as the key to improved lives for all Hawaii citizens - from preschool programs to Early College and Hawaii Promise for UH students. As Chair of the Committee on Education, I pledge my best efforts to fulfill our obligation to students, teachers and school leaders as the best possible investment we can make in Hawaii's future.



The Second Regular Session of the 29th Hawaii State Legislature convened on Wednesday, January 17. Our 60 working-day session will continue through the first week of May as we focus on the spending plan for the second year of the two-year budget we approved last year.

Hearings on supplemental budget requests have been underway since December and additional testimony will be presented as we consider specific bills that have been introduced.

Below are brief summaries of some of the bills I have introduced in line with my focus on public education from pre-school through college.

The opening of the Legislative session coincided with the **125th anniversary of the illegal overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy**, and thousands gathered during the day at Iolani Palace and the State Capitol to commemorate those events.

I am among eleven members of the Senate and House of Representatives who are proud of our Native Hawaiian ethnicity who were on stage during a formal program in the Capitol rotunda.

The opening of the legislative session and the commemorative events were an appropriate time to re-commit to a unity of purpose that should guide our government's work on behalf of all Hawaii citizens.

Here are some of the bills I have introduced to support public education:

- ◇ Bills that would transfer public school lands from the City & County of Honolulu and the Department of Land and Natural Resources to the DOE and give the DOE authority to sell, exchange or lease those lands
- ◇ Bills that appropriate funds to cover expenses for public school students from low-income families for such things as fees for SAT and ACT tests, and the costs of technical and workforce training programs
- ◇ A bill that would allow school principals the authority to enter into contracts for goods, services and construction valued at less than \$25,000
- ◇ A bill to officially establish a Farm-to-School program with DOE support staff
- ◇ A bill requiring the state to inventory unused facilities for possible use by Public Charter Schools
- ◇ A bill expanding membership of the Board of Education to include a teacher
- ◇ A bill authorizing small amounts in unclaimed property accounts to be deposited into a libraries special fund if unclaimed after five years
- ◇ A bill to establish a STEM educator scholarship program to address the shortage of STEM teachers in secondary schools

You can follow this legislation at www.capitol.hawaii.gov by doing a subject-matter search and sign up to receive notices when these bills have been scheduled for hearings. I encourage your participation as we deliberate these issues.

Notes from the Capitol



Since December, the Senate's budget committee – the Committee on Ways and Means (WAM) – has been hearing from State departments about their spending plans for the second year of the two-year budget we passed in 2017. Last week, WAM, chaired by my colleague, **Senator Donovan Dela Cruz**, and my Committee on Education, received a briefing from State public school Superintendent Christina Kishimoto (above).



This hearing is one of many which are televised on `Olelo Community Television (screen above right) throughout the legislative session. The broadcast schedule is available at www.capitoltv.org.



Opening Day Visitors



Waipahu Intermediate eighth grader Rachel Sabino (above) is a campus reporter for the *Junior Marauder Media`Olelo* training program. I was her very first interview; we talked about the Waipahu Intermediate "Dream Center." *Nice job, Rachel!*

I was honored to host several young student leaders in the Pre-Advanced-Placement *Participation in Democracy* class at Mililani High School. They had an opportunity to meet with lawmakers, listen to opening remarks in the House Chamber, and gain an understanding of the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy through the day's activities. That's MHS teacher Amy Perusso at far left in the photo above.



Meet my 2018 staff—with me from left: Jim Manke, Scott Fuji, Danicia Honda, Gerri Kaneshiro, Joan Manke and Marie Richardson. Always ready to help!



Mahalo, Friends of the Library of Hawaii

I was honored and humbled to be named Legislator of the Year by the Friends of the Library of Hawaii. The award, presented by Susan Li, Friends Board Director (at right), recognizes outstanding support for Hawaii's public libraries.

During the Friends annual legislative breakfast this week, we learned that the Hawaii State Public Libraries System is one of 100 communities challenged by Beanstack and Shark Tank's Mark Cuban to collectively read 1-million minutes during January in a **Winter Reading Challenge**. If we all read 1-million minutes together through January 31st, Mark will donate \$25,000 to the non-profit First Book that promotes literacy skills among children, and \$10,000 to top performing libraries for community programs. **Learn more, read more and log your reading minutes at Winter Challenge at www.librarieshawaii.org!**



What an amazing story!
Waipahu High



School senior Rovy Anne Dipaysa did something no other high school student in Hawaii has ever done. She accumulated enough credits to earn her Associate of Arts college degree – five months before she's scheduled to graduate with her classmates in the Waipahu Class of 2018! Rovy Anne received her Leeward Community College diploma at commencement in December. Her eventual goal is to be a nurse. Before they graduate in May, 11 of her WHS classmates will also receive their AA degrees. **Mahalo to everyone who has helped Waipahu's Early College studies program grow!**

Dear Senator Kidani.

A group of 135 fourth grade students and about 20 parent chaperones from Kanoelani Elementary School in Waipio Gentry visited the State Capitol in December. They toured the Senate and House Chambers and the fifth floor executive offices, and then, as a part of their learning experience, wrote thank you letters to our office. Mahalo to teacher Heidi Fukunaga who organized the excursion.

Jordan said: "I liked the Capitol's architecture. I will never forget the time I went to the State Capitol."
Lashelle wrote: Thank you for letting us experience so much! I will be sure to share it with everyone I know!"
From **Karly Rose**: "I learned how you have to get a bill if you're going to make a law. Thank you so much!"
Logan says: "I was amazed how when we went to the Senate. It look beautiful!"
And from **Kalei**: "I liked when we went into the place where you guys make laws. It looked super cool!"
Thank YOU, Kanoelani students, for learning about our Capitol and state government.

NEED HELP PAYING FOR PRESCHOOL?

WE
WILL BE
ACCEPTING
APPLICATIONS
1/2/2018-3/29/2018



PRESCHOOL OPEN DOORS

Applications accepted for children born August 1st, 2013 through July 31st, 2014 for program participation July 1, 2018 - June 30, 2019. Preschool Open Doors (POD) provides monthly preschool tuition subsidies to qualified families. Parents may choose any DHS-licensed preschool. Download an application at www.patchhawaii.org.

Applications must be received at the Oahu office by March 29, 2018 to be considered.

Return completed applications to:
PATCH Preschool Open Doors
560 N. Nimitz Hwy, Suite 218,
Honolulu, Hawaii 96817

OPEN DOORS
Fax: 694-3066
Email: PODAdmin@Patch-Hi.org



Call
POD Oahu
(808) 791-2130
POD Toll-Free
1-800-746-5620

You are invited!

This year's annual Character Counts Fair is scheduled for Friday evening, February 2, at Mililani High School's cafeteria. All public schools in Mililani have integrated this great values-education program into their school experiences, and the Fair is a wonderful opportunity for students and their families to share the ways in which they embrace the "six pillars" - **Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring and Citizenship.** Mahalo to our **Central District Teacher of the Year Gregg Iha** for his guidance and hard work to implement this program that has really taken hold in Mililani. Character Counts Fair activities and display booths open at 5 pm – **see you there!**

