



Senator
**RUSSELL
RUDERMAN**



Kea'au, Pahoa, Kalapana, Kapoho, Kurtistown, Mountain View, Glenwood, Volcano, Pahala

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Message from the Senator

I am honored and grateful for the opportunity to serve and represent you in the State Senate for the 2nd District. The 2013 Session has shaped up to be challenging but productive. My staff and I are committed to working to balance our economic, social, and environmental goals to achieve the quality of life we all desire.

With the 2013 Legislative Session at the half-way point, there is still so much to accomplish. As we head into the second half of this year's legislative session, I will continue to make sure that the issues that will have a direct and vital impact on the residents of the 2nd District are being addressed and that our best interests are being served.

This update aims to keep you informed of happenings in our community and legislative actions. Please know that I care deeply about your quality of life and want to hear from you.

As always, if you have any questions, need assistance, or more information regarding a particular issue, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Aloha,

Waters of Life Receives \$100k Strive HI Award Kea'au High awarded \$25k and Pahoa High & Intermediate and Kea'au Middle School receive awards of \$12,500

The Hawai'i State Department of Education (DOE) honored 32 schools for extraordinary achievements at the first annual Strive HI Awards ceremony with Waters of Life Charter School that receiving one of the top awards of \$100,000. The awards ranging from \$12,500 to \$100,000 recognized schools for their significant academic progress for two consecutive years and represent a one-time grant to further improvement efforts.

The Strive HI Awards were presented by Governor Neil Abercrombie, Schools Superintendent Kathryn Matayoshi and Schools Deputy Superintendent Ronn Nozoe.

"We are proud to be able to financially recognize the hard work of the teachers, students and staff of these schools," Supt. Kathryn Matayoshi said. "The Strive HI Awards reflect that the department is not only focused on intervention in current priority schools, but also encourages other schools across the islands to keep striving high."

For exiting "restructuring" – a sanction under the No Child Left Behind law – by meeting annual progress goals for two consecutive years, Waters of Life Public Charter School was honored with the top award of \$100,000.

Strive HI continued on page 6

District Talk Story Sessions Address Concerns Meetings in Pahoa, Kea'au, and Pahala offer opportunity for community involvement in the legislative process

In late February Senator Ruderman hosted a series of three Community Talk Story sessions in Pahoa, Kea'au, and Pahala. The purpose of these sessions was to hear directly from the community about their concerns and desires, and give the community an opportunity to meet their newly elected Senator Russell Ruderman. Public safety, health and education issues were the greatest concerns with utility rates and community recreation being important issues as well. The 2nd District showed its diversity of constituents and their input was quite educational and inspiring.

More than fifty constituents braved heavy rains to gather for a discussion on community concerns including improvements needed at the Pohoiki Swim Area, utility rate hikes, Albizia eradication, library services at Pahoa High School, and Banner Health Systems. A focus for the attendees was improving



safety on the area's main artery, Hwy. 130, which included a discussion of needed improvements on County connector roads. Councilman Greggor Ilagan joined in the first talk story session at Pahoa. Attendees had many questions about the proposed Pahoa round-about that is scheduled to go into construction this year at the intersection of Hwy. 130 and the Government road.

Talk Story continued on page 2

HISC Awards The Hawai'i Cattleman's Association For Eradication Efforts

On Monday, March 4th, the Hawai'i Invasive Species Council (HISC) held their awards ceremony and lunch at the Hawai'i State Capitol Auditorium.

Senator Ruderman presented the HISC MVP award to Dr. Tim Richards of the Hawai'i Cattleman's Association for their efforts in helping to eradicate the invasive Fireweed from the Big Island.

Madagascar Moths have been deployed as a bio-control agent to control the invasive fireweed plant. Fireweed is toxic to livestock and is spreading rapidly across the big island of Hawai'i and Maui.

Honorable mentions were Mālama O Puna and Tim Tunison for their work on red mangrove eradication and control of the coqui frog, respectively.



Sen. Russell Ruderman presenting Tim Richards of the Hawai'i Cattleman's Association with the HISC, Hawai'i County MVP 2013 Award for their efforts in helping to eradicate fireweed from the Hawai'i.

Lead by Rene Siracusa, Mālama O Puna is a grassroots environmental non-profit based in Lower Puna. The organization's invasive species programs are coordinated by Dr. Ann Kobsa, who has overseen a number of challenging projects. Mālama O Puna began working to remove red mangrove from Wai 'Opae in 2005, which led to federal funding with the goal of island-wide eradication.

Retired from his position at Hawai'i Volcanoes NP, Tim Tunison still continues to be involved in restoration of forests and control of invasive species. Tim has organized a coqui control program based in Volcano called The Coquistadors and has created a manual for the mechanical and chemical control of invasive plants on Kilauea.

Sen. Ruderman added, "I would also like to extend my congratulations and heartfelt thank you to Mālama O Puna, and Tim Tunison. They have both contributed significantly to the saving of our native species and economy from irreparable harm. Their efforts have made meaningful impacts in protecting our fragile ecosystems and native species while minimizing the negative environmental and economical impacts to our island and state." Δ

Talk Story *continued from 1*

Concerns were raised about impacts to the Kahakai intersection with Hwy. 130 and the ease of access to existing and proposed commercial centers with the current design of the round-about. Senator Ruderman emphasized that he is committed to working with DOT to ensure that the round-about incorporates as many safety concerns as possible.

Joining Senator Ruderman in Kea'au was Representative Richard Onishi and Council member Zendo Kern. The concerns of the Kea'au area included the possibility of a community swimming pool, the impact of having Banner Health Systems taking over the Hawaii Health Systems Corporation (HHSC) hospitals, getting community-wide broadband access, increased funding for animal shelters, and agricultural concerns such as the prevention of new pests and diseases.



The bill that Sen. Ruderman introduced proposing that the County of Hawaii be allowed to expend fuel tax revenues on maintenance of private subdivision roads was discussed and Councilman Kern noted that the Hawaii County Council had passed a resolution supporting the proposed legislation.

The final talk story session was held in Pahala where the Senator combined visits at the Ka'u hospital and Ka'u



High School on the same day. Senator Ruderman first made a visit to Ka'u Hospital where the head administrator, Marilyn Harris presented him with a brief history of the facility along with the current status on capital improvement projects. After touring the hospital facility and meeting staff, Senator Ruderman then attended a short ceremony at Ka'u High School



where he presented certificates to 30 8th grade girls for their participation in a program at the aviation center for girls on Oahu.

These students were the first group of neighbor island girls to attend the program and a short ceremony was held at the school with teachers and Principal Sharon Beck in attendance. The Principal then gave the Senator a tour of the entire campus highlighting the fact that one of the main buildings is well over 100 years old!



Later in the day, Senator had a talk story attended by 15-20 residents of the area to discuss community issues and matters of legislative concern. The group focused time on a discussion of the current proposal by Aina Koa Pono to build a biomass conversion facility in Pahala.

Other issues that surfaced were the unavailability of land for long term leasing to assist the very successful Ka'u coffee growing efforts. Use of reclaimed wastewater for irrigation was also discussed. Δ

Early Education Advocates Make A Stand And Let Their Voices Be Heard At The Capitol

Hundreds show to spur Lawmakers to pass legislation

On March 14th, Senator Ruderman joined hundreds of children, parents and education advocates as they gathered at the Capitol in a show of their support of Gov. Abercrombie's early education initiatives.

Sen. Ruderman briefly addressed the crowd in the State Capitol Rotunda and expressed his support, "I want to say that I am very impressed with the turnout today and that I fully support your efforts in getting legislators to pass these much needed bills. It was my own daughter who educated me on how important these programs really are to the early development of our children. Preschool raises achievement levels for all children and the rewards are immeasurable, both in the short and long term, to our communities and to our future." The House Committee on Education has



Senator Ruderman addresses the Early Education rally in the Capitol Rotunda.

adopted three bills (SB1084 SD1 HD1, SB1093 SD2 HD1, and SB1095 SD2 HD1) relating to early childhood education. The legislation passed through the Senate, but has yet to be heard by the House Judiciary and Finance committees.

The current proposals face an uphill battle as Senate and the House are still debating the state budget for the 2013-15 fiscal years, which will cover operating costs for all state departments and district capital improvement projects. Funding for a multimillion-dollar preschool program would depend on what funds, if any, are left over.

An amendment to one of the preschool-related bills would allow the state to fund "license-exempt" institutions in addition to regular preschool centers starting in the



Representative Takashi Ohno, Dr. Kanoelani Naone, and Senator Russell Ruderman.

2014-15 school year was passed by the House Education Committee.

That gives advocates hope that the state could fund Family Child Interaction Learning, a program in which parents could attend early education along with their children.

These programs cost much less than traditional preschool while achieving statistically significant educational results. Studies have shown that interactive learning costs are one-third the cost of learning at conventional preschool centers and that future savings in the areas of law enforcement, welfare, and prisons are markedly improved when children have access to early education programs. Studies have also shown that states can stand to gain as much as \$7 in future benefits for every \$1 that is spent on these programs now. To follow these bills and any other legislation, go to www.capitol.hawaii.gov Δ



The rally at the Capitol brought out hundreds in a show of solidarity to let lawmakers know the importance of this legislation.



Public Funding for Elections and Sustainable Building Among Legislation Moving Through the Legislature

Senate Bill 381 Senate Draft 2 Relating to Comprehensive Public Funding for Elections passed with amendments by the House Judiciary Committee on March 12, 2013 and will be moving on to the House Finance Committee. The bill, which changes the funding formula for the comprehensive public funding pilot project in the County of Hawaii, would average the amount of money used by winning candidates in the last two election periods for all county district races and limit the number of candidates in the pilot program per election period.

Among the amendments made by the House Judiciary Committee was one to reduce the number of candidates to eighteen from twenty-five.

Also making its way through the Legislature is House Bill 111 House Draft 2 Relating to Sustainable Alternative Building Code, which authorizes the use of certain land, subject to county approval and oversight, for research, development, and testing of sustainable agriculture, development, waste management, and resource management through planned community use. The bill was scheduled for hearing on Thursday, March 21, 2013.

The videoconferencing bill, House Bill 358 House Draft 1 is alive and well and has passed out of the Senate Committee on Technology and the Arts and will be moving on to the Senate Ways and Means Committee. Δ

Senator Russell Ruderman
Hawai'i State Senate
2nd District

*"The Natural Choice
for Puna and Ka'u"*

**Member of the
Senate Committees on**
Education
Energy and Environment
Water and Land
Ways and Means



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DOT Reducing Speed Limit on Hwy. 130

The Department of Transportation (DOT) will soon be making changes to the speed limits along Highway 130 from Maku'u Drive to Ainaloa Boulevard.

The DOT, in regards to reducing the speed limit from 55 mph to 45 mph on Highway 130 between Shower Drive and Maku'u Drive and in the vicinity of Leilani Boulevard, is recommending extending the speed reduction from Maku'u Drive to Ainaloa Boulevard. This will encompass all of the entering side streets from Shower Drive to Ainaloa Boulevard and a work order to make the sign changes will be issued.

The DOT did not recommend reducing the speed limit in the vicinity of Leilani Blvd. as the accident history of the 3 most recent years of data available the DOT did not find a problem that reducing the speed limit would correct. The lack of driveways and accesses along this section of roadway supports the posted speed limit.

Alternatively, the DOT did recommend using an advisory speed limit of 45 mph to warn drivers of the intersection and that the DOT can add the advisory plaques to the existing intersection warning signs. A work order will be made to add the new signs. Δ

U.S. Navy Honored For Hawaiian Stewardship and Renewable Energy Initiatives in Hawai'i

On March 12th, the Hawaii State Senate honored the Navy for its dedicated and continued efforts in Hawaiian Cultural Stewardship and for their renewable energy initiatives throughout Hawaii.

In honoring the Navy, the State Senate presented the Navy with a Certificate of Recognition and enjoyed a luncheon on their behalf sponsored by Senator Maile Shimabukuro.

During the luncheon Sen. Ruderman took advantage of a rare opportunity to spend time with some of our service members.

I thoroughly enjoyed the time I had to talk with our service members. said Sen. Ruderman. As someone whose father served our country, I have the utmost respect for our military men and women and their initiatives to better steward the land and in helping to improve our communities." Δ



Kids Take on Big Tobacco at the State Capitol

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), there are more than 1,100 tobacco related deaths in Hawaii a year. In Hawaii alone another 1,500 kids become daily smokers every year. The State Department of Health says that \$42 million is spent here each year on marketing to attract more "replacement smokers."

Ten students from East Hawaii came to meet with Sen. Ruderman to make their stance known by supporting legislation that would require all tobacco products to be displayed behind the counter. They spoke about the importance of putting flavored products, like mini-cigars, and displaying advertising and marketing 48" or higher out of the line of sight and away from areas where candy and toys are located.

The students commented on how they (and some of their peers), feel like they are being

used as unwilling guinea pigs in testing such products and that getting access to them is quite easy despite a state law requiring a person to be 18 or older to purchase them.

The State Attorney General has opposed the idea due to concerns that it may violate freedom of speech. Product placement restrictions have been deleted from the bill and a proposal to make it illegal to sell electronic cigarettes to kids under 18 is still alive in the legislature.

While many electronic cigarette stores claim that they don't sell to anyone under the age of 18, they also don't want to be lumped in with tobacco products since there is no tobacco involved, only liquid nicotine which is then vaporized.



Sen. Ruderman meeting with REAL students from Senate District 2 on the Big Island addressing concerns about tobacco and its accessibility by minors.

Both SB652 and HB672 have been passed with amendments by the respective committees on Health and have been moved on for further consideration by the Consumer Protection Committees. Δ

Sen. Ruderman Visits Kua o ka La Public Charter School

"Kua o ka La Public Charter School is not your typical Charter School."

That was the first reaction of Senator Russell Ruderman as he toured the Kua o ka La PCS facilities on a recent Saturday visit.

"I find it most impressive that the students are doing everything. From the building of farming areas to planting, to preparing and cooking the harvest of their efforts." Sen. Ruderman added.

Kua o ka La PCS is a Hawaiian culturally driven school that focuses on systemically nurturing the whole of the child by educating the students with the teachings of traditional and modern technologies in an effort to prepare their students with modern skill sets that are necessary to succeed in today's world.

One of the schools goals is to develop integrated agricultural and culinary programs, including the necessary infrastructure, utilizing a culturally responsive approach that supports a healthy and sustainable lifestyle for our Native Hawaiian students.

One of the successful outreach efforts of Ho'oulu Lahui, Kua o ka La PCS is their presentation of the Puna 'Ulu Festival. Now in it's second year, the festival showcases 'Ulu (breadfruit) and niu (coconut) with cooking contests, breadfruit trees and coconut palm trees for sale, presentations, and cultural demonstrations of food production and preparation.

Students exhibited demonstrations in live 'ulu and poi pounding, modern and traditional cooking methods, tapa cloth apparel, and educational presentations about the



L to R: Kamehameha Schools Community Programs Director Alapaki Nahale-a, Sen. Russell Ruderman, Principal Susan Osborne, School Food Coordinator Mariposa Blanca, and State Charter School Commissioner Richard Hageboom.

horticultural aspects of their farming which included the presentation of a needs assessment of the importance of 'ulu and niu in the community.

Sen. Ruderman added, *"I would like to thank Kamehameha Schools Community Programs Director Alapaki Nahale-a, Principal Susan Osborne, School Food Coordinator Mariposa Blanca, and State Charter School Commissioner Richard Hageboom for my tour and education of the Kua o ka La PCS facilities. I would also like to express my appreciation for the hard work and success of the students here at Kua o ka La PCS. You should be very proud of yourselves and your achievements here, they are phenomenal."*

To learn more about Kua o ka La New Century Public Charter School or the 'Ulu festival, go to www.kuaokala.org or www.hawaiihomegrown.net/breadfruit Δ

Senators Honor World War II Veterans

Senator Ruderman joined the other members of The Hawai'i State Senate in honoring members of the Tuskegee Airmen during floor session on March 1st.

The Tuskegee Airmen are members of the 332nd Fighter Group and 477th Bombardment Group that flew missions from Sicily to Normandy during World War II. The Tuskegee Airmen are also the only African American pilots who served in combat.



Senator Russell Ruderman and the Hawaii State Senate joined in honoring the Tuskegee Airmen on the Senate floor.

Hawai'i residents Romaine Goldsborough and Philip Baham, along with Alexander Jefferson of Michigan, were presented a Certificate of Recognition. Romaine Goldsborough was represented by his wife at the presentation. Δ

Strive HI *continued from 1*

"I want to congratulate the principals, teachers, staff, and students at these Strive HI schools for leading the charge in transforming our public education system," Gov. Abercrombie said. "They are setting an excellent example by showing what can be achieved when everyone strives higher toward a common goal."

The Strive HI Awards also celebrated schools that ranked in the top 5 percent in the state for reading or math growth, providing grants of \$12,500 for each subject area – or \$25,000 for schools reaching the mark in both subjects. These high-performing schools are boosting student reading and/or math proficiency at the fastest pace among all Hawai'i public schools.

Finishing in the top 5 percent in both categories and earning a \$25,000 award was Kea'au High finished in the top 5% for both Math and Reading.

Kea'au Middle and Pahoa High & Intermediate both were awarded \$12,500 for Math.

The award money must be used for upgrades at the schools, which could include the purchase of technology infrastructure, musical instruments, science lab and equipment, as well as other academic/financial plan-approved expenditures.

"Receiving this type of recognition is a strong message in support of our local educators and especially the students," said Senator Russell Ruderman. "I want to offer my congratulations and support to the faculty, staff, and students of Waters of Life Charter School, Kea'au High School, Kea'au Middle School and Pahoa High & Intermediate schools. I believe that it is imperative we, as a community, invest in our children's education. This is a great acknowledgement that indeed, our schools are moving forward, and that these schools have made a significant difference towards proficiency in the education of our children."

The DOE's "Strive HI" campaign reflects the department's commitment to transform public education in the 50th state by preparing students for success, leading education transformation and building a brighter future.

Strive HI award funds are part of the state's Race to the Top (RTTT) federal grant received in 2010. U.S. education officials recently removed Hawai'i from the RTTT "high-risk" status for progress in two specific areas, which cover standards, assessments, and data system development and use. Next year's Strive HI Awards will be based on each school's performance under the state's new accountability system metrics that go into effect in the 2013-14 school year. Δ

Public Events Calendar

MARCH

28 AG DAY AT THE CAPITOL

State Capitol Honolulu, HI, 9 AM to 2 PM
4th Floor

23 SPRING EQUINOX GARDEN PARTY

Hale Mohalu-Opihikao
13-698 Opihikao-Kamalii Rd.
When: 2 p.m. March 23
Fundraiser for the nonprofit Puna Community Medical Center. Music by guitarist Andrea Raz-zauti and violinist Adonija Imgrundh. Wine tasting from Volcano Winery selections. Pupus in picturesque setting. Wine tasting and auction at 2; concert at 4 p.m. Ticket \$50; call 965-7061, 965 2000. Contact: Steve Sparks, 965- 7061, asinsparks@gmail.com

APRIL

5 ART AT THE CAPITOL

The Hawai'i State Legislature will open its doors for the 5th Annual "Art at the Capitol" in conjunction with the Hawaii State Art Museum's First Friday festivities on Friday, April 5, 2013 from 4:30 to 7 p.m. This is a unique opportunity for the public to view over 460 works of art by local artists placed in the offices of legislators, executive offices and Public Access Room. Also on display in room 217 will be some of Senator Ruderman's own photography work. Art placed in public areas of the State Capitol are part of the State Foundation on Culture and the Arts' "Art in Public Places" program. Free. Contact information: 586-6460.

6 MERRIE MONARCH ROYALPARADE

Kapapala Ranch's GENEVIEVE "JON" CRAN has been named Pa`u Queen for the Merrie Monarch Royal Parade to be held on Saturday, April 6 at 10:30 a.m. in Hilo. The parade begins and ends at Pauahi Street and winds through downtown Hilo along Kilauea Avenue, Keawe Street, Waianuenue Avenue and Kamehameha Avenue. The horses and riders will be adorned with lei made by Mona Chow. Cran is the wife of the late Gordon Cran, who served as pa`u marshall of the Merrie Monarch parade. The Cran family operates the 32,000-acre Kapapala Ranch between Pahala and Volcano.

Also in the parade from Ka`u will be contestants in the Miss Ka`u Coffee Pageant, which is scheduled for Friday, April 27 at Pahala Community Center.

10 Celebration of Saramae Sanders 107th Birthday at the Palace Theater in Hilo.