



Senator Roz Baker

*Chair, Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection
6th Senatorial District— South and West Maui*

Aloha!

The 2015 Hawai'i Legislative Session is now in full swing. Bills have been moving through their committees and the public has been weighing in. If you are interested in following any bills at the Legislature or want more information please visit our website www.capitol.hawaii.gov to see other testimony, submit your testimony, read bills and committee reports and check a bill's status. It's easy to stay engaged.

Besides legislation, we have been busy with many important activities in our communities. Our office is helping to coordinate the annual Women's Legislative Caucus Easter Basket drive to provide hygiene necessities, school supplies and other items to help the families in need at the Institute of Human Services. We will be doing our annual fundraiser for the Maui Foodbank in early April. This year we will be bringing a little Maui sweetness to Oahu by selling boxes of Krispy Kreme doughnuts. We hope to break our previous fundraising goals! I have the honor of recognizing the Legacy of Life group as well as family members of those who donated organs and tissues to save others' lives. We have been working on the recognition certificates for groups and individuals who volunteer with Lahaina Tutor Program. Earlier this week the other Maui Senators and I got to meet with our Maui Boys and Girls Club Honorees. I truly enjoy the opportunities to visit with our Maui 'Ōhana when they travel to Oahu.

On the following pages there is information about some of the important bills we are working on that impact our community's well-being, our health and consumer protection.

A hui hou,

Dates to Watch

- **April 30 Final Decking for Non-Fiscal Bills**—Deadline to position non-money bills for final passage
- **May 1 Final Decking of Fiscal Bills**—Deadline for bills with an appropriation or money committee referral
- **May 7 Adjournment Sine Die**—Last day of the regular session when work on budget, bills, confirmations and resolutions has been completed

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Bills Affecting Our Community

HB1075 HD2 aims to assist Maui Memorial Medical Center to remain financially viable in today's challenging healthcare climate. Maui Memorial Medical Center is the only hospital serving our community and is in dire financial straits. Without significant funds it runs the risk of closing services or laying off staff. It seems more and more unlikely that our state budget is going to consistently be able to provide the extensive funding necessary to sustain MMMC or any of the Hawai'i Health System Corporation (HHSC) hospitals. HB1075 would allow the Maui Regional System to enter into an agreement with a private entity to transition one or more facilities into a new private Hawai'i nonprofit corporation. This new operating model and infusion of capital would enable HHSC and Maui Memorial to remain viable in order to provide high-quality healthcare in our communities. We are working tirelessly at the Legislature to find the proper balance and approach to make sure that the community on Maui can continue to receive quality medical care into the future. The status quo is not an option. Partnering with Hawai'i Pacific Health is a viable option. As always the devil is in the details.

Lipoa Point consists of two hundred and forty-four acres of natural pristine land, forest, coastline and open space with a number of access points to the ocean. The management of this complex land presents significant challenges for the department of land and natural resources. **SCR44** addresses these challenges by supporting the establishment of a Lipoa Point Management Council. The council, made up of community stakeholders, would be responsible for exploring options to protect and preserve the area's integrity, cultural and recreational access and protect the pristine marine environment. The Council would create a framework of long-term policies and goals to preserve and protect the area while ensuring the community retains safe access to the area. I recently submitted testimony to the Board of Land and Natural Resources in support of the right of entry in this area Save Honolulu Coalition so that the maintenance, security and care of the area can continue without lots of government red-tape. I anticipate a favorable decision by the Board, March 27.

Bills Increasing Consumer Protection

SB826 SD1, HD1 will provide a solution to condominiums that struggle to reach quorum at their annual meetings. SB826 SD1, HD1 is the work of various departments as well as concerned stakeholders to set up a balanced approach to help condominium owners, boards and associations more transparently and easily conduct necessary business. At the annual meeting, if quorum is not met, the quorum can be reduced but only after two duly noticed meetings to be held no more than ninety days from the initial meeting that failed to achieve a quorum. By allowing a reduced quorum, annual meetings will be able to adopt their tax resolution and elect the board of directors without being stymied by lack of a quorum. The measure also allows a majority of owners to terminate the managing agent's contract and requires associations of more than 50 units to prepare its budget and financial statements on the accrual basis to provide better clarity as to the financial position of the AOA.

As the demand for electric vehicles grows, so does the demand for electric vehicle charging systems. **SB1316 SD2, HD1** would enact a 60-day time requirement for boards of directors of apartment, condominium, cooperative housing or planned community associations to approve, or approve with reasonable restrictions, homeowner requests regarding EV charger station installations. It also requires that the boards ensure they have the electrical ability to service homeowners prior to their decisions. This measure could reduce energy consumption and ensure increased board responsiveness, best practices and accountability to homeowners.

SB16 SD2, HD1 clarifies when a towing company must release a vehicle to its owner by defining the term 'vehicle owner'. If a person is not the registered owner of a vehicle, but is operating the vehicle with the consent of the registered owner, they would be considered the vehicle owner for all purposes involved with a towing company. Such as picking up a vehicle from a tow lot. This clarity regarding the rights of vehicle owners and the duties of tow companies will decrease future disputes over who is lawfully in control of the vehicle.

Bills Impacting Our Health

SB791 SD1 and **SB40 SD3, HD1** are critical to our work to address autism in our state. SB791 SD1 would require insurance coverage for the diagnosis and treatment of autism spectrum disorders for children. SB40 SD3, HD1 would ensure the appropriate licensure and practice of applied behavior analysts. Applied behavior analysis is recognized as an effective, safe treatment for autism. When treatment is provided early in the life of an autistic child, it results in lower long-term costs and increases the child's chances of reaching full developmental potential. Behavior analyst licensing is necessary because health insurance plans in Hawai'i only will provide reimbursement for services for state licensed behavior analysts, and federal law requires behavior analysts to be licensed in order to participate in Medicaid. These bills will make a huge difference and have lasting, positive impacts on Hawai'i's children affected by autism and their families, and on our community.

HB940 HD1 is an important public health measure. It prohibits the use of electronic smoking devices (ESD), also called e-cigarettes, in places where smoking is prohibited. ESDs are currently not regulated by the FDA. The U.S. Surgeon General has gone on the record stating concerns about the contents, emissions of carcinogens and nicotine these devices deliver; nicotine alone has been linked with heart disease. Continuing to allow the use of ESDs in public places puts everyone at risk and renormalizes smoking behavior. This measure will also eliminate any confusion of the enforcement of smoke-free laws since the exhaled vapor from an ESD and exhaled smoke from cigarette or cigar will be treated the same.

SB1030 SD1 increases the minimum age to purchase tobacco products and electronic smoking devices (ESD), from 18 to 21 years. ESDs are unregulated by the FDA and are mainly used to deliver nicotine, which is highly addictive and linked to heart disease. Ninety-five percent of adult smokers begin smoking before they are 21. A March 2015 scientific report issued by the Institute of Medicine concludes that increasing the age of sale for tobacco products to 21 will significantly reduce the number of adolescents and young adults who start smoking; reduce deaths caused by smoking; thereby immediately improving the health of young people who will be deterred from smoking.

HB321 HD1, SD1 was drafted based on the Marijuana Dispensaries Task Force recommendations. As a member of the Marijuana Dispensary Task Force we worked together to create a well-rounded measure. It creates a regulated statewide dispensary system to assist qualifying patients to gain legal access to medical marijuana and relating products. It would include protections so that the county could not create zones prohibiting against marijuana production center or dispensaries as well as creating legal protections for owners and employees and persons in the vicinity of medical marijuana production centers and dispensaries. Hawai'i's medical marijuana law was enacted in 2000. While it recognizes the beneficial use of medical marijuana, the law does not allow for one to legally obtain medical marijuana if they are unable to grow their own supply. This measure is urgently needed by the over 13,000 qualifying patients so they can legally obtain their medicine and have assurance of its quality.

Kick Butts Day at the Capitol!

Senator Kalani English, Senator Gilbert Keith-Agaran and I were delighted to meet with several of the students from the Maui and Moloka'i Campaign for Tobacco-Free Hawai'i Kids coalition. Vice Speaker John Mizuno and I were honored to present them with a certificate commemorating this year's Kick Butts Day and recognizing their work.

During Kick Butts Day, youth across the country voiced their support for stronger tobacco laws. This session, teens from around the State are standing up for important tobacco issues, such as raising the minimum age to purchase tobacco and prohibiting the use of electronic smoking devices where smoking is prohibited. It's great to see teens in our community standing up against smoking and advocating for healthier communities! SB1030 SD1, HD1 which I introduced will increase the minimum age to purchase tobacco products from 18 to 21.



L-R: Michelle Magdirila (Moloka'i), Dustin Kaleiopu (Lahaina), Sen. Roz Baker, Leilani Sanchez-Garcia (Lahaina), Sen. Kalani English, Brylee Carillo (Pukalani), Sen. Gil Keith-Agaran, Jadelyn Carillo (Pukalani), Kuuleialohaonalani Salzer (Kula)

Bills Protecting our Families

One of the priorities this year for the Women's Caucus has been promoting the awareness and safety of domestic violence victims in our community. The following bills address these issues and aim to create accountability.

SB384 SD2, HD1 is a bill that would establish confidentiality programs to enable a victim of various crimes to relocate to a new address and keep it confidential. With social media and other online resources, it is easier than ever to obtain personal information. This program will increase a victim's ability to maintain privacy and safety.

SB388 HD1 requires the county police departments to post their policies relating to domestic violence, officer-involved domestic violence and standards of conduct on their official websites. Having clear policies available online will provide accountability and transparency, and will help to increase the public's confidence in our police departments.

HB448 HD1 amends the multidisciplinary and multiagency review process for domestic violence fatalities to include the review of near-deaths and suicides resulting from intimate partner violence. By including the review of near-deaths and suicides, the additional information collected from the review process will help us understand the events leading up to these outcomes, which in turn can be used to reduce fatal and near-fatal outcomes of domestic violence. By quantifying the crimes, the legislature and departments can make sure proper agencies have adequate funding to address the issue.

HB538 HD2, SD1 provides a method release a victim of domestic violence from a shared wireless plan with no fees or penalties. It is important for domestic violence victims to have the safety that a cell phone can provide. This bill provides a victim with the ability to receive a new number with no associated penalty or cost. Sharing a contract with the abuser can make it even more difficult for a victim to leave. The charges associated with terminating a wireless contract are costly for many victims who are often under financial control of their abuser. By eliminating those costs there will be fewer barriers to overcome when leaving an abusive relationship.



At this year's YWCA legislative breakfast where the Legislative Women's Caucus announced their legislative package for 2015.

From left to right: Deborah Mattheus, Rep. Della Au Belatti, Maureen Shannon, Denby Fawcett, Sen. Roz Baker. Front row left to right: Rep. Dee Morikawa and Rep. Linda Ichiyama.

