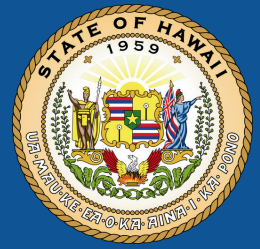


# COMMUNITY REPORT

## SENATE DISTRICT 18 | APRIL 2024

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



### *Aloha Friends and Neighbors,*

It has been quite a busy legislative session filled with committee hearings and testimonies from our citizens. We now enter conference, the final stage of the legislative session. During conference, committee members from the Senate and House meet to resolve differences in their respective versions of bills. This intensive process ensures that bills passing through the legislature reflect the best interests of our community while addressing concerns and perspectives brought up by both chambers. Here are updates on several important bills going into conference:

**[SB2475 SD2 HD2: RELATING TO EDUCATION.](#)** This measure establishes a Harm to Students Registry to ensure safer learning environments and hold accountable those who have committed egregious actions towards students, preventing them from securing employment at other educational institutions.

**[SB2943 SD2 HD1: RELATING TO WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT.](#)** The shortage of commercial drivers license (CDL) drivers directly impacts the State's education system, where over 200 additional CDL drivers are required to fully cover school bus routes statewide, causing some students to ride public transit. This measure aims to establish a working group within the Department of Transportation to address the scarcity and availability of CDL drivers in the State.

**[SB2476 HD2: RELATING TO DENTAL HYGIENISTS.](#)** To make tooth decay prevention among Hawai'i's children a priority, we must take proactive steps to address this critical healthcare need. This bill permits licensed dental hygienists to perform preventive dental sealant screenings and apply preventive dental sealants in a school-based dental program.

**[HB500 HD1 SD1: RELATING TO EDUCATION.](#)** This bill is designed to provide students with a platform to conduct student-led conferences, athletic activities, support for workforce readiness initiatives and work-based learning opportunities. This is meant to engage students in a more meaningful, well-rounded education.

Additionally, \$7 million in capital improvement project funds has been released for design and construction of safety improvements along Kamehameha Highway from Kuahelani Avenue to Lanikuhana Avenue.

My colleagues and I (below) gathered to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Hawai'i Women's Legislative Caucus Easter Basket Drive. Donations were collected to provide essential resources for women and children in need for organizations such as the Domestic Violence Action Center, the Institute for Human Services, the Mohala Mai Women's Prison Project, Parents & Children Together, and the Salvation Army Hawai'i. Mahalo for your continuous support and engagement!



*Michelle*  
**KIDANI**

**Senate Vice  
President**

**Chair**  
Committee on  
Education

**Vice Chair**  
Committee on  
Higher Education

**Member**  
Committee on  
Ways and Means

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## Waipahu High School Football Championship Certificate Presentation



**Congratulations** to the Waipahu High School football team for winning the Division I State Football Championship! It was an honor to recognize the entire team who joined us with Head Coach Bryson Carvalho and Assistant Coach Lehua Saturnio. Go Marauders!

## Senate Confirmation of Mililani's Elynne Chung to the Board of Education

The Senate is responsible for confirming individuals appointed by the Governor to serve as directors to executive agency departments and members of state boards and commissions. Retired educator and community leader Elynne Chung was nominated by Governor Green to the Hawai'i State Board of Education (BOE). Elynne has more than 40 years of service with the Hawai'i State Department of Education, including 20 years as an administrator. It was my pleasure to work with Elynne while she was a long-time principal of Mililani Middle School from 2010 through 2022, overseeing a student population of more than 1,700 students. Under her leadership, attendance rates, academic performance, and leadership skills among students significantly improved. By cultivating a respectful and nurturing learning environment at Mililani Middle School, Elynne's tenure reflects her meaningful impact on the surrounding community. Congratulations Elynne, and all the newly confirmed members of the BOE!



*Left (L-R): Sen. Dela Cruz, Elynne Chung, and I; Right (L-R): Newly confirmed Hawai'i State Board of Education Members Wesley Lo, William "Bill" Arakaki, Elynne Chung, Chairperson Roy Takumi, myself, Kaheleonolani Dukelow, and Superintendent Hayashi.*

## Senate Confirmation of Village Park's Kau'i Burgess to the Early Learning Board

Retired government relations strategist and Native Hawaiian advocate Kau'i Burgess was nominated by Governor Green to the Early Learning Board (ELB). Kau'i resides in Village Park and recently retired from a nearly 20-year career at Kamehameha Schools (KS), where she made significant contributions to early childhood education. Her professional journey began at Ke Kula 'o Nāwahīokalani'ōpu'u, transitioning to roles at Alu Like Inc., and Hui Mālama O Ke Kai. During her tenure at KS, she was instrumental in leading efforts for the successful passage of pivotal legislation, including Act 46, which expands universal public preschool access to all 3 and 4 year-olds in Hawai'i by 2032 and played a key role in securing \$200 million in funding for Hawai'i's preschools. I have greatly valued working alongside Kau'i, whose efforts have created a lasting legacy, significantly enhancing educational opportunities for our keiki. Congratulations Kau'i, and all the newly confirmed members of the ELB!



*Left (L-R): Kau'i Burgess and I; Right (L-R): Director of the Executive Office of Early Learning Yuuko Arikawa-Cross, newly confirmed Early Learning Board Members Stephanie Shipton, Alanna Bauman, myself, Kau'i Burgess, and Lt. Governor Luke.*

## Career and Technical Education: Panel Discussion and Leilehua HS Site Visit

I was honored to be invited to speak as a panelist alongside Senator Dela Cruz and Waipahu Intermediate School's Future Farmers of America Advisor Ken Kozuma at the Region V Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE) Conference held at the Hawai'i Convention Center. Our panel focused on formalizing sister-school relationships between Hawai'i and international high-performing schools. We explored how these partnerships, based on real-world practices, can foster innovation and economic growth. We discussed ways to enrich Hawai'i's education and economy, emphasizing the strategic value of cultural exchanges and sharing best practices among sister-schools.



I highlighted the importance of a K-12 public education system that prepares students for workforce development and learning from successful international programs and technologies to benefit our state.

The Senate Ways and Means committee conducted a site visit to Leilehua High School with ACTE Leadership. The Department of Education, Hawai'i P-20, and Leilehua High School presented on current and proposed advancements in CTE, especially within agricultural technology. The experience reinforced the significance of collaborative endeavors between the Legislature, state agencies, and community stakeholders in preparing our students for the workforce. As Chair of the Senate Education Committee, I am committed to working with our educational partners to expand CTE opportunities in order to address present needs and future challenges in education. I am inspired and optimistic about the potential these partnerships could unlock for our students!



*Top right (L-R): Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism Deputy Director Dane Wicker, myself, Ken Kozuma and Sen. Dela Cruz; Bottom left (L-R): Connecting with Fran Bromley-Norwood, ACTE Technology Education Division Vice President; Bottom middle (L-R): Natural Resources Teacher Jackie Freitas showing farm bots at Leilehua HS; Bottom right: Students explaining the process in caring for farm animals.*

## Grand Opening of Wahiawā Value-Added Product Development Center

The Wahiawā Value-Added Product Development Center was spearheaded by Leeward Community College and the State of Hawai'i. We toured the new 33,000 square foot manufacturing facility after visiting Leilehua High School. This center, part of the Food and Product Innovation Network, aims to transform Hawai'i's agricultural industry and boost entrepreneurial efforts across our state.

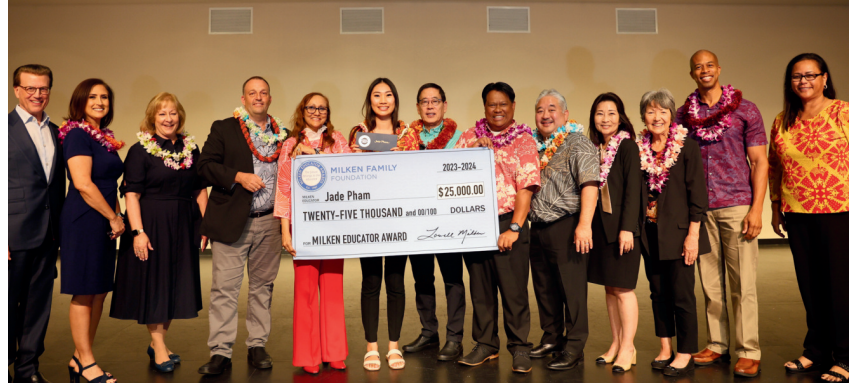
Educational programs at the facility will offer dynamic opportunities in technical education, ensuring that our students can pursue rewarding careers right here in Hawai'i. Our students will benefit from advanced training in food science design and entrepreneurship, gaining practical experience from business advisors, coaches, and entrepreneurs. They will learn essential skills such as sourcing ingredients, navigating regulatory compliance, and developing marketing strategies for specialty foods. Mahalo nui to Senator Dela Cruz for his tireless support in this initiative.



*Left (L-R): Sens. Richards, Shimabukuro, Dela Cruz, UH Community College System Associate Vice President for Administrative Affairs Michael Unebasami, myself, Sens. Fevella, Hashimoto, and Leeward Community College Chancellor Dr. Carlos Peñaloza; Middle (L-R): Hawai'i State Teacher of the Year Jackie Freitas and I; Right (L-R): myself with Poni Askew of Hawaiian Vinegar Company.*

# Jade Pham Wins Milken Educator Award

Congratulations to Prince David Kawanakoa Middle School's Jade Pham, the school's TA Vice Principal and Student Services Coordinator. She was awarded the 2023-24 Milken Educator Award and a \$25,000 prize. Witnessing her moment of recognition filled me with awe and pride, as it reflected the dedication and passion educators like her bring to our students. Jade's acknowledgment not only celebrated her individual achievements but also served as a poignant reminder of the pivotal role educators play in molding the minds of our keiki. Established by Lowell Milken in 1987, the Milken Educator Awards recognize the exceptional contributions of promising early-to-mid career professionals in education, honoring their remarkable achievements and potential for future impact. Congratulations Jade!



Left (L-R): Milken Educator Awards Founder Lowell Milken, Rep. Woodson, recipient Jade Pham, myself, and Lt. Governor Luke; Right (L-R): Lowell Milken, Kaimuki-McKinley-Roosevelt Complex Area Superintendent Linell Dilwith, Hawai'i Department of Education Deputy Superintendent Heidi Armstrong, Governor Josh Green, Princess Kaiulani Elementary School TA Principal Dr. Bebi Davis, recipient Jade Pham, Hawai'i State Board of Education Chair Warren Haruki, Michael Sana, Superintendent Hayashi, Lt. Governor Luke, myself, Rep. Woodson, and Kawanakoa Middle School Principal Ronnie Victor.

## *In Memoriam: A Tribute to Impactful Community Leaders*



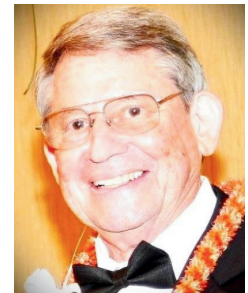
**Emmeline Tomimbang Burns**  
*Hawai'i media pioneer and broadcast veteran, graduate of Farrington High School*

We bid a fond aloha to Emmeline Tomimbang Burns, affectionately known as "Emme," who passed away on February 19, 2024 at the age of 73. Like myself, she was a fellow graduate of Farrington High School, where she was an energetic and beloved member of the pep squad. Emme was a well-known figure in Hawai'i's media landscape and a community leader who championed the Filipino community. She had an illustrious career in broadcasting and entertainment for almost 50 years, during which she hosted her own radio show, reported for KITV and KHON, and created her own production company, EMME Inc.



**Patsy Dung**  
*Inaugural head coach of UH women's basketball, my former teacher at Farrington High School*

We bid a heartfelt farewell to Patsy Dung, 87, who passed away on March 4, 2024 surrounded by family and friends. She was not only my teacher and coach, but a mentor and trailblazer. Patsy was a Physical Education teacher at Farrington High School for 34 years and also the first head coach of the University of Hawai'i women's basketball program in 1974. Her dedication to equal opportunity for women extended to her founding the Kalihi Jets, which provided opportunities for young women to excel in organized team sports even before Title IX. Her influence reverberates through the success of the Rainbow Wahine Basketball program and the countless lives she touched along the way, including my own.



**Dr. Sidney "Sid" M. Rosen**  
*Founder and President Emeritus Adult Friends for Youth*

We honor the memory of Dr. Sidney "Sid" M. Rosen, 87, a true champion of social justice and community service, who passed away on February 21, 2024. In his 27 years of service at the University of Hawai'i School of Social Work, Dr. Rosen dedicated his life to uplifting others through education and social work. He founded the nonprofit, Adult Friends for Youth (AFY), which has made an immeasurable impact on marginalized youth facing gang violence and poverty. I have been an advocate for AFY and their transformative programs because it has empowered countless individuals to break the cycle of violence, graduate from high school, and pursue brighter futures.