

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

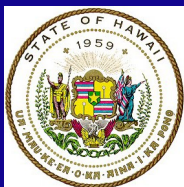
Chair: Committee on Education

Vice Chair: Committee on Higher Education

Member: Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection and Health

Hawaii State Capitol
Room 228

Phone 586-7100



Aloha friends and neighbors,

This week, we are about one third of the way through our 60 working-day legislative session. By our internal deadline calendar, bills that have been referred to more than one committee must now have moved on to their next committees if they are still to be considered this session. By the first full week of March, we will be sending Senate bills over to the House, and vice versa.

An updated list of bills I introduced that are still moving through the hearings process is posted on my Senate member website. Check online at <http://capitol.hawaii.gov>, click on Senate, and then click on Senators.

This year, the Legislative session is a "Budget Session." Our priority is coming up with a spending plan for the two-year budget period that begins on July 1. In 2018, we will have an opportunity to revise the budget according to new needs based on revised revenue projections.

Budget experts are saying we should proceed with caution, expecting that while the state's economy will continue to grow, the rate of growth will be slower than we have been enjoying. The Governor has already had to revise his spending plan - sent to the Legislature in mid-December - reducing his proposed expenditures by more than \$200 million based on tax revenue projections. The Governor had indicated in his initial budget that public education is his priority. Despite that, the revised budget shows the largest proposed reductions in spending are from the education budget.

Those cuts include \$18 million in funds that would go directly to schools based on enrollment under the Weighted Student Formula. The Governor had proposed \$10 million to expand the Early College Program to all Hawaii high schools, but he has reduced this request by \$3 million. While this direction is disappointing, it is, of course, the responsibility of our budget committees to determine the final budget. I will continue to fight for full funding for education programs.

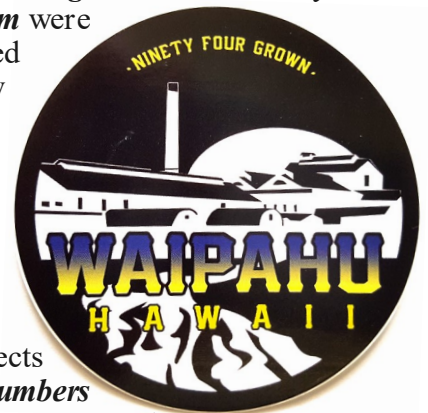
The Hawaii Council on Revenues that calculates projected revenues, will meet again on March 3. We're hoping for better news this time around so that we have more flexibility in setting budget priorities.

Me ke Aloha Pumehana,



From the Waipahu High Academy of Hospitality and Tourism, from left, Zaira Cruz, Karah Tagle, Rosalie Ver, Matthew Calulot and Academy Advisor Todd Nakayama.

Students from the Waipahu High School Academy of Hospitality and Tourism were among those who displayed their work at Tourism Day at the Capitol. They are especially proud of their "Ninety Four Grown" sticker design, production and sales campaign that has been a school pride booster and raised funds for sustainable living projects on campus. (Hint: street numbers in Waipahu mostly begin with "94-".)



Standing up for our teachers . . .



A sea of red shirts at the State Capitol, on February 13.

I was invited to speak to the thousands of teachers who turned out to rally support for Hawaii schools and our keiki. At left, HSTA representatives stopped by my office earlier in the session to discuss their priorities – left to right, Shirley Mori, Amanda Seymore, Amber Riel and Juli Patten.



As chair of the Senate’s Committee on Education, I am especially concerned about increased funding for our public schools. We continue to explore new sources of revenue to do that, including a much-discussed constitutional amendment that would allow the state to establish a surcharge on investment properties with funds to be dedicated to education. Hawaii is the only state in the country that does not allocate property taxes to public education, and since we have only one statewide “school district,” it makes sense to at least talk about setting up a statewide funding mechanism. Should this proposal gain final approval by the legislature, the issue would ultimately be placed on the ballot for voters to decide. Full support for schools requires a commitment from all of us to make this investment in Hawaii’s future.

Follow the progress of Senate Bills 683 and 686 at <http://capitol.hawaii.gov>.

Milken Foundation honors two Hawaii educators



At left, Momilani Elementary 3rd grade teacher Masaru Uchino. Above, from left, Lowell Milken of the Milken Family Foundation, First Lady Dawn Ige, and to my left, Masaru, DOE Superintendent Kathryn Matayoshi, Governor David Ige, and Momilani Principal Doreen Higa. Above right, Jefferson Elementary fourth-grade teacher Kelly Sutcliffe.

The most heartwarming moments at these surprise announcement assemblies are when the students in the honorees’ classrooms share their excitement with their teachers. The Milken Educator awards include \$25,000 that the teachers may use as they please. Many of the 75 Hawaii Milken teachers selected since 1990 have put at least a portion of their awards back into school projects. **Mahalo to the Milken Family Foundation ~ and congratulations to the 2017 honorees!**

Notes from the Capitol



The Friends of the Library of Hawaii selected **Carleen Corpuz** and **Vicky Bowie** for their top honors this year and brought them to the Senate for appropriate recognition. Carleen (at left above among Senators) received the Friends' Excellence in Service award for 2017. She's Librarian at Mountain View Elementary Public and School Library on Hawaii Island. Vicky is Branch Manager at Pearl City Public Library, and was named Librarian of the Year. *Congratulations and mahalo!*



Under a State Department study-abroad program, **Kancho Atanasov** (above) is spending his junior year at **Mililani High School**. It was a real pleasure to have him "shadow" me at the Capitol for a day. "Kiko" is from Bulgaria, and he's taken full advantage of many outdoor opportunities while not on campus. He says he would like to be in the "legal profession," hopefully attending a top tier university in the U.S. Both Kiko and his fellow MHS juniors definitely benefit from his time in Mililani.



Traffic congestion and transportation are the top concerns among Oahu residents again this year. Honolulu Mayor Kirk Caldwell stopped by my Capitol office to discuss his proposals to pay for completing the under-construction rail system. I have always supported rail as an alternative mode of transportation; the difficult decisions are the details of adequate funding formulas. Those decisions will be made this session as priorities are sorted out over the next ten weeks.

Waipahu High Principal on temporary assignment

Schools Superintendent Kathryn Matayoshi has announced that **Waipahu High School Principal Keith Hayashi** has accepted the offer to serve as deputy superintendent through the remainder of her term. Principal Hayashi will transition into the deputy position following the departure of Stephen Schatz. His official start date will be March 1, 2017.

Hayashi has served as principal at Waipahu High School since 2009. Current WHS assistant principal, Meryl Matsumura, will serve as acting principal until Hayashi's scheduled return on July 1, 2017.

We wish him well in this new assignment!



We are so pleased to note that a contract has been awarded to Elite Pacific, Inc., to "cool the classrooms" at three schools –



including **Kaleiopu'u Elementary in Village Park**.

Principal **Pat Anbe** says campus portables will be air conditioned and solar panels and batteries will be installed to generate power for the cooling equipment. Contractors and school administrators will be working on a schedule for the work to minimize any disturbances during the construction.



The Department of Education is reminding parents that they have about three weeks to participate in the annual **School Quality Survey** before the **March 17 deadline** for returning forms or responding online.

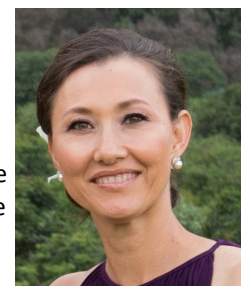
The survey asks about how schools are doing with respect to school culture, satisfaction, safety and engagement. The feedback gathered is used to support school planning and improvement efforts.

Here's your chance to speak up about how you think our public schools are serving our keiki. **Questions? Call 733-4008.**

When I attended the meetings of the Mililani and Waipahu Neighborhood Boards last month, there was some comment about my staff. People in our communities with whom I have worked for many, many years noted with some concern that there was someone missing from the 2017 staff photo in my newsletter – my longtime Office Manager, **Park Kaleiwahea**.

Not to worry. Park still works at the Capitol, but at my urging she accepted the Senate's appointment to be **Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms** beginning this year. It's a promotion, and while we do miss her in our office, we are happy for Park in her new responsibilities.

Meanwhile, our new permanent and session staff are always ready to help. Call any time!



Recognizing selfless service to our communities



Congratulations

At left, Hawaii Living Treasure Roy Sakuma and his wife, Kathy.

At right, Mel and Lynn Tanioka, Hawaii Business Hall of Fame.



It was an honor to join hundreds of others as **Ukulele Master Roy Sakuma** was one of five Hawaii residents to be designated a **2017 Living Treasure** by Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii. Roy and his wife Kathy have been tireless in their efforts to instruct and inspire ukulele players of all ages to love music and share it with others all around the world. Through their non-profit Ukulele Festival Hawaii, the Sakuma `ohana has awarded scholarships to Hawaii high school seniors, and made it possible to distribute musical instruments to youngsters and adults here and overseas. Roy has been recognized by the U.S. Small Business Administration, was designated a Distinguished Peacemaker in 2014, received the FBI Director's Community Leadership Award in 2015, and has been honored by his fellow professional musician colleagues with numerous Na Hoku Hanohano Awards.

Just the day before the Living Treasures event, our well-known Waipahu neighbors – **Mel and Lynn Tanioka** – were inducted into the **Junior Achievement Hawaii Business Hall of Fame**. Tanioka's is known island-wide as a successful, outstanding seafood and catering business. But beyond their landmark stores in Waipahu and Waipio, the Tanioka's Charity Foundation sponsors fundraising events including their yearly golf tournament and charity dinners to support numerous organizations, among them the Kapiolani Medical Center for Women and Children, American Cancer Society, Mililani Missionary Church, New Hope Church, Hawaii Law Enforcement Agency, March of Dimes, Boy Scouts of America, Junior Golf and Boxing, River of Life and many others.

Congratulations to these outstanding leaders who deserve our gratitude for service to the community!

Did you know . . . ?

The State Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs Insurance Division has updated its online information tables so that you can **compare annual insurance rates** for companies offering homeowner and condo insurance, renters insurance, motor vehicle insurance and health insurance. **Check online at 808ne.was/dccains for 2017 rates.**

Need help paying for preschool?

Preschool Open Doors

Accepting Applications January 23-March 31, 2017

Applications accepted for children born August 1st 2012 through July 31st 2013. Preschool Open Doors (POD) program provides monthly preschool tuition subsidies to qualified families. Parents may choose any DHS-licensed preschool. This application period is for program Participation between July 1, 2017-June 30, 2018.

For information and applications please call
POD Oahu POD Toll-Free
 (808) 791-2130 1-800-746-5620

Download an application at
www.patchhawaii.org

Applications must be received at the Oahu office by March 31, 2017 to be considered. Return completed applications to:



PATCH-POD
 560 N. Nimitz Hwy,
 Suite # 218
 Honolulu, Hawaii 96817

FAX: 808-694-3066
PODAdmin@patch-hi.org



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Applications now available for John S. Martinez Scholarships

The National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators (NHCSL) awards scholarships each year to high school seniors of Hispanic heritage who live in a district represented by a Senator of Hispanic heritage. The scholarships are named in memory of the late Connecticut state lawmaker, John S. Martinez, who served a term as NHCSL Chair, and who was a true champion for "closing the achievement gap" through education.

I have been active in the Caucus for many years. Hawaii has been fortunate to see two students whose families live in my district receive these \$3,000 scholarships – Isis Osborne from Mililani High School's Class of 2014, and Sydney Millerd, Waipahu High Class of 2016.

We are especially proud of this since the Caucus only awards eleven of these scholarships nationwide each year. I urge qualified students to apply. Download the application online at: <http://www.nhcsl.org/> **Good luck!**

Deadline to apply March 24, 2017