

# Senator Michelle Kidani

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



Aloha friends and neighbors, Governor Ige has released funds for projects I included in the budget in a previous legislative session to move forward with projects at Mililani schools:

- ◆ **Mililani Uka Elementary School's** technology capability will benefit from a \$1 million appropriation for system upgrades;

- ◆ The parking lot at **Mililani Mauka Elementary** will be resurfaced, thanks to a \$200,000 appropriation that is now available; and

- ◆ A contract has now been awarded to StarCom Builders of Honolulu in the amount of \$115,000 to carry out re-roofing work at **Mililani Waena Elementary** - solid jobs for Hawaii workers!

- ◆ In addition, several projects at all Waipahu and Mililani schools are included in more than \$50 million for school repairs and maintenance. Also, \$200,000 is now available to begin design work for repairs and improvements to portions of the **Hamakua Ditch Irrigation System** that brings water from Windward Oahu to central Oahu farms.

**Recycling**

My office has received calls about the closure of the **Reynolds Recycling Center** at Town Center of Mililani. Reynolds says that their lease was to be terminated at the end of April and that they are seeking an alternate site where they can continue to serve our community. On average about 3,000 people use the recycling center each month, and if no suitable location nearby is found, the only certified recycling center is the RRR facility at the Park & Ride in Mililani Mauka. As readers may know, the Town Center was sold to a new mainland owner in December. I've written to Town Center management to suggest they consider a lease extension for Reynolds while the search for a new location continues.

Me ke Aloha Pumehana,



***Congratulations to graduates in the Class of 2015! Our best wishes go with you as you take the next steps toward fulfilling your dreams.***

Graduation season offers families and friends an opportunity to bid a fond Aloha and best wishes to students who have worked hard both in and out of the classroom. **Mililani High School** recognizes student success at graduation for 560 seniors on Sunday, May 24, at Aloha Stadium. A total of 28 seniors have qualified to be class valedictorians through academic and service project success, and the school expects to set a new record for scholarships and grants to graduates – more than last year's \$14.7 million.

**Waipahu High School** also salutes 560 graduates in ceremonies at the Neal Blaisdell Center on Friday, May 29. The school reports that about 15 grads are expected to be designated as valedictorians. To date more than \$7 million in awards will help Waipahu students with post-high school study.



**Kanoelani Principal Stacie Kunihisa honored . . .**

Later this month, the Island Insurance Foundation will announce its selection for the prestigious Masayuki Tokioka Award for Excellence in School Leadership. Among the 13 nominees is **Kanoelani Elementary Principal Stacie Kunihisa**. The award is named for the company's

founder to recognize his belief that school leadership is the key ingredient in successful campus communities.

**Waipio Ambulance Station Update:**

In about six months, construction will begin on the EMS ambulance station along Kamehameha Highway in Waipio. My fight for funding and extending the time period for the funds to be spent, along with the city's review of designs and final plans have taken several years from when the Legislature first budgeted for this project. Obtaining permits and soliciting bids are both underway, with an anticipated award of a construction contract expected next month. The emergency medical services that the new station can provide are vital to our rapidly-growing West Oahu neighborhoods, and I'm pleased that the project is finally moving forward.

## Notes from the Capitol



By proclamation of the Governor, April is observed as **Child Abuse Prevention Month**.

Anyone driving past the Capitol on Beretania Street in early April couldn't miss the thousands of brightly fluttering pinwheels planted on the mauka lawn by Child Abuse Prevention Hawaii. The **Pinwheels for Prevention** program is designed to remind people about the 4,000 reports of child abuse recorded by the Department of Human Services each year.



State Department of Education Deputy Superintendent **Ronn Nozoe** is heading to Washington, D.C., where he will be Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy and Programs - Office of Elementary and Secondary Education at the U.S. Department of Education. The position is a presidential appointment. During his five years as Deputy, the state has seen major improvements in student achievement, behavior, absenteeism, graduation and college-going rates.



One of the responsibilities of the Senate Committee Education that I chair is conducting hearings for some of the Governor's nominees for boards and commissions. **Above left**, our committee approved the nominations of (from left) **Gerald Teramae**, appointed to the Hawaii Teacher Standards Board, along with **Hubert Minn** and **Lance Mizumoto** for positions on the Board of Education. We were joined by **Hawaii's First Lady, Dawn Ige**, a longtime educator in Hawaii's public school system who maintains her special interest in issues important to schools and school governance.



Joining me and Senator **Donovan Dela Cruz**, from left, Deputy Adjutant General **Col. John Hara** and his wife **Myoung**, and State Adjutant General Brig. General **Arthur "Joe" Logan** and his wife **Gaylene**.

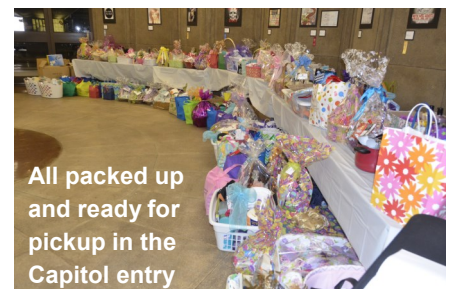
**Governor's appointments:** With the change in executive leadership following last year's election, Governor Ige has sent literally hundreds of nominees to the Senate for approval. We were pleased to note that the new Adjutant General – head of the National Guard and State Civil Defense – and his Deputy are both residents of our neighborhoods in Mililani.



We honored UH Emerita Professor **Dr. Belinda Aquino** at the State Capitol this month. Dr. Aquino was the founder of the **UH Center for Philippine Studies**, this year celebrating its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

### ***An Easter tradition continues***

For a few years now, Legislative offices have coordinated a drive to collect and assemble useful household items for use by residents of the **Institute for Human Services** – the shelter that provides sleep space and services to individuals and families without permanent housing. The goods are collected and done up in Easter baskets for delivery around the Easter holiday.



All packed up and ready for pickup in the Capitol entry



## Legislative Session Nearing Conclusion

The Legislature is just two weeks from our scheduled May 7 adjournment. Our work on most major bills has been completed, and beginning this week we are meeting in conference committee sessions to resolve any differences between the Senate and House versions of various bills.

As Chair of the Senate Committee on Education my focus, of course, has been on bills that affect our schools. My number one priority has been legislation to establish pre-kindergarten opportunities for “gap group” families who do not qualify for subsidized programs such as Head Start or Open Doors but who cannot afford private preschool.

I am also still hoping that funding will be included in the final budget for the Preschool Open Doors program to keep POD alive. No funds were included in the administration’s budget as it was sent to us.

Other bills would provide additional monetary incentives for national board-certified teachers, and phase out the multi-track schedule currently in effect at four Oahu schools – including Mililani Middle School – that have not proved to be effective.

**Yet to be finalized is the important state construction budget. Lawmakers have been asked to identify top priorities for major construction projects in their respective districts, with the budget committees ready to balance the overall state spending plan with those projects that need the most attention. Also, several nonprofit agencies have submitted applications for State grants-in-aid this year. As in past sessions, recipients will be listed in the final budget document that will be made public next week Friday, May 1.**

*Track the progress of these bills online at [www.capitol.hawaii.gov](http://www.capitol.hawaii.gov) by entering the bill number in the appropriate search box:*

- ◆ **HB820:** Prekindergarten bill, my #1 priority for this year. Intended to establish voluntary pre-K program for “gap group” families who do not qualify for other subsidized programs (e.g. Head Start, Open Doors) but cannot afford private preschool.
- ◆ **SB64:** Preschool Open Doors funding bill, contains appropriations to keep the program alive.
- ◆ **HB11:** Incentive program for national board-certified teachers.
- ◆ **SBI345:** The multi-track school bill would require DOE to phase out the use of multi-track schedules
- ◆ **SB822:** Student hours bill would re-define “instructional hours” to give teachers more flexibility in time devoted to classroom preparation. This bill was signed into law by Governor Ige this week.

***News you need to know . . .*** Public school breakfast and lunch prices will increase next school year for the first time since 2011 due to inflation and labor costs. The new prices approved by the Hawaii State Board of Education are in accordance with a 2009 state law requiring the Hawaii State Department of Education to charge at least half the cost of preparing the meals.

Student lunch and breakfast prices will increase by 25 cents and 10 cents, respectively, next school year. Reduced-price meals served to economically disadvantaged students will remain unchanged at 30 cents for breakfast and 40 cents for lunch. Students who qualify for free meals also will not be impacted.

The last meal price increase took effect in March 2011. The DOE has taken steps to reduce the cost of school meals, including the use of a centralized vendor to leverage larger purchasing power for better prices. The DOE serves more than 100,000 meals daily during the school year.

## In Our Communities



~ Kaleiopuu ~



~ Mililani Ike ~



~ Kanoelani ~



## ROBO CHAMPS

~ Waikele ~

The 8th Annual Hawaii Robofest Regional event was held earlier this month at Leeward Community College—with 179 participants from 16 different schools vying for gaming and project awards. We all had a great time, and I was thrilled to meet and congratulate so many youngsters pictured here from schools in Senate District 18. Kudos to all of the students, teachers and hundreds of volunteers who worked to make this all-day event a huge success. Special thanks to sponsors and community partners for their generous support.



### ***STEM Night for Mililani Middle School***

Friday nights are typically time for families to head to the movies, sports events, or even a food truck. But for hundreds of people last month, it was STEM night for **Mililani Middle School**. Students and their families converged on the campus for hands-on experiences with booths dedicated to STEM - science, technology, engineering and math. The event also brought together members of the business community. Hawaiian Electric showed how much muscle power is needed to light up an incandescent bulb compared to a compact fluorescent bulb. Oahu Makerspace brought out a 3D printer to demonstrate some of the latest technology becoming more available to the public.

### ***Kipapa Gulch Bridge update***

In the 2013 legislative session I included funds in the budget for a highways project that will eventually expand Kamehameha Highway across the Kipapa Gulch (Roosevelt) Bridge from two lanes to four lanes. This major transportation initiative recognizes that the highway remains a critical and heavily-used thoroughfare for vehicles travelling between lower Mililani and H-1/Waikele. The total project is expected to cost about \$200 million with a completion target in 2020.



A resident of my district contacted me recently to make sure some consideration is given to including bike lanes across the bridge. Currently, there is NO pedestrian or bike access in or out of Mililani. The Department of Transportation informs me that the design work being done now is in the environmental phase, but that there is indeed a plan for extra space along traffic lanes from Lanikuhana Avenue in Mililani to Ka Uka Boulevard in Waipio. The extra lane width – as much as six feet, or in some portions just 4 feet, depending on the final plan – would not be designated or striped as bike lanes. The space would instead allow use by bikers and be designated as “shared use” lanes.

We will all be glad when the various Kamehameha Highway improvement projects are done. I’ll be sure to pass along updates when the DOT sends me progress reports.