

Senator Michelle Kidani

Twenty-eighth Hawaii State Legislature

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



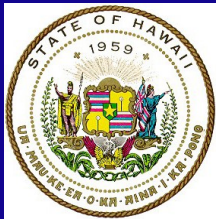
Chair, Committee on Education

Vice Chair, Committee on
Commerce, Consumer Protection,
and Health

Committee Member
Higher Education and the Arts

Transportation and Energy

Hawaii State Capitol
Room 228



IUCN
World
Conservation
Congress
Hawai'i 2016

Aloha Friends and Neighbors,

During the several months following our legislative session, I have spent a great deal of time on education issues. As Chair of the Senate Committee on Education, I have been invited to mainland conferences for valuable perspectives on the kinds of things my fellow education chairs deal with in their respective states. A common element this year is the new federal education law that aims to place more authority - and accountability - in the hands of the states rather than at the federal level.

Coming up with state blueprints for implementing the new law tops the list of most agendas, and that is very true of Governor Ige's team of community and education leaders who are discussing how best to empower our schools in Hawaii. We have met for all-day sessions on many, many Saturdays and a dozen or so town hall meetings have taken the dialog to the public on all islands.

Our interest here, of course, is close to home. Mililani High, Mililani Middle and the five elementary schools that serve our community's families are part of the larger Department of Education's Leilehua-Mililani-Waialua complex. We are fortunate to benefit from the inspired leadership of Complex Area Superintendent Dr. John Brummel - a former principal at Mililani High School. Our team includes Mililani High School government and history teacher Amy Perruso and Brennan Lee, Mililani Class of 2016, who was the Student Representative on the Board of Education last school year.

We point with pride to the fact that Mililani High has been ranked as the number one public high school in the islands by *U.S. News & World Report* for five of the last seven years. Strong, innovative campus leadership and involved families account for much of the school's success, and those characteristics are key elements in assuring student achievement at the highest level.

The Department of Education anticipates that a draft plan will be ready in a few weeks for presentation to the Board of Education in December. The State's final plan for federal funding by the U.S. Department of Education is due in March, 2017, and the law requires full implementation beginning in the 2017-18 school year. I am especially interested in developing legislative support for our approach to empowering our schools at the local level and will focus on this during our next legislative session that begins in January. I urge you to take some time to learn more about our team's discussions of these critical issues. Check online for our meeting notes and the valuable resource materials that we have been reviewing: <http://governor.hawaii.gov/essa-team/>.



I am pleased to note that students from Mililani High School were able to attend Student Day sessions at this month's **International Union for the Conservation of Nature World Conservation Congress** at the Hawaii Convention Center.

More than 9,000 participants from nearly 200 nations came to Hawaii for the largest international environmental conference ever held in the U.S. This was a wonderful opportunity for Mililani students to observe and learn about real threats to the future health of planet Earth - especially our oceans.

A few days after the ten-day Congress adjourned, I addressed my fellow Senators at a Special Session of the Legislature, reminding them that we should all be guided by the widely-heralded theme of the sailing canoe Hokule'a to **Malama Honua** - "to take care of and protect everything that makes up our world: land, oceans, living beings, our cultures and our communities." We are, worldwide, all in this together.

Me Ke Aloha Pumehana,



The Senate met in special session last week to consider judicial nominations. We voted to approve the appointments of Hilo attorney **Dakota Frenz** (at left) for a Family Court seat on Hawaii Island, and former Kauai Prosecutor **Michael Soong** (at right with family and Senators) to the Circuit Court on the Garden Isle. The Senate met in the Capitol Auditorium; the Office of Elections is preparing the Senate Chamber for election night ballot counting.



2016 MHS Homecoming King Akoni Pasoquen-Castillo and Queen Destiny-Brooke Tamayo



On a glorious, blue-sky Saturday morning I had the good fortune to participate in two activities that are so typical of our vibrant community life in Mililani. *At left above*, it was a privilege to congratulate the **2016 Mililani High School Homecoming Queen and King** along with Mililani **Representatives Beth Fukumoto Chang and Lauren Matsumoto**, and special guest **Honolulu Mayor Kirk Caldwell**.

The MHS Homecoming Parade concluded and we proceeded to 16 Acre Park for ceremonies (*above right*) to mark the 40th anniversary of **Mililani Region 119 AYSO** competition. I cannot say enough about the corps of committed volunteers who coach, referee and otherwise organize this league that involves more than 3,000 youngsters from 1,500 Central Oahu families. Their dedication has a tremendously positive impact on the lives of so many girls and boys. **Mahalo!**

Monday, October 10 – deadline for registering to vote in the General Election

- Register online at secure website <https://olvr.hawaii.gov>

Tuesday, October 25 – Early walk-in voting locations open – 8 am-4 pm

- Kapolei Hale and Honolulu Hale Courtyards

Effective this year, qualified Hawaii residents who are not yet registered to vote may go in-person to any early walk-in voting location to register.

Tuesday, November 1 – deadline to request a mail ballot

- Call 453-VOTE (453-8683) for information or check online at elections.hawaii.gov.

Tuesday, November 8 – General Election Day - Polls open 7 am-6 pm

Important Deadlines



Vanpool Ridesharing is back. Try it ~ you'll like it!



I'm a big fan of the vanpool; ridesharing can save drivers and passengers money, and it definitely takes cars off the road. I was one of the original vanpool drivers when a previous program was active in the 1990s. But after 9-11, federal spending priorities shifted dramatically, and the program was discontinued when funding was no longer available.

In the 2015 legislative session, I pushed for a renewed vanpool project and secured funding in the amount of \$500,000 with the help of Senators Tokuda and Dela Cruz. We allocated another \$500,000 again this year for a total commitment of \$1 million in state support.

Enterprise Rideshare will run the program for the City & County of Honolulu on a 30-month trial. I tried out one of the latest model minivans with Mayor Caldwell when the program was announced last month (*photo at left*). Enterprise hopes that as many as 150 vans eventually will carry more than a thousand commuters between their homes and schools or workplaces on a regular basis. Vehicle insurance, gas, maintenance and repairs are included, primary drivers may use their vehicles for personal use, and Rideshare is offering \$250 per-vehicle each month that passengers can split up as an incentive.



More information is available at 543-1526 or by email: RideshareHawaii@erac.com.