

Senator Michelle Kidani

Senatorial District 17 – Mililani Town, Mililani Mauka, Waipio Acres, Waipio Gentry
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Aloha, and Happy New Year!

As we begin 2012, I hope that you and your families are in good health and eager for opportunities that may come your way in the months ahead.

By the Asian lunar calendar, this is the Year of the Dragon. Traditionally, those born under this sign are hard working, unafraid of challenges, and ready to make decisions, with the input of others. As the Legislative session begins, we lawmakers could all benefit from these characteristic behaviors.

While the state is still facing some serious challenges, there appears to be some optimism that our economy is beginning at least a slow recovery. As stewards of the state budget, we are very much aware of the implications of every decision made at the Capitol. I can assure you that I take my responsibility as your Senator very seriously, that my decisions are made after listening to all sides of the issues, and that your participation in the process is very important to the success of my work.

I'll be at your Neighborhood Board and other community meetings, and always look forward to joining you in the many special events that celebrate our successes and strengthen our shared traditions. I welcome your calls and emails with comments and suggestions; my staff and I are ready to help with Dragon-like determination.

Me ke Aloha Pumehana,



Congratulations to Miss Hawaii Lauren Cheape!

Miss Hawaii 2011 and proud Mililani High School grad, Lauren Cheape, competed in the Miss America Pageant in Las Vegas this month. She took first-place honors in the third round talent competition preliminaries with her very impressive jump rope routine to the theme music of "Hawaii 5-0." Lauren's platform program – CARE: Collegiate Athletes Reaching Everyone—which directs student athletes into community projects for young people was a finalist in the pageant "Quality of Life" category.

While Miss Wisconsin won the crown this year, Lauren's value as an ambassador of Aloha has been noticeable, including her part in raising funds for Kapiolani Hospital's Children's Miracle Network. Lauren has returned to O'ahu where she will continue her appearances and community service program through mid-year. Thank you Lauren for representing us proudly!



In the 17th Senatorial District . . .

The months between legislative sessions provide numerous opportunities to be away from my Capitol office and out in our communities. Here are some of the events I participated in since my last report:

November:

22nd - Mililani Waena 2nd grade presentation

30th - MTA seniors club

December:

2nd - Honolulu Theatre for Youth with Mililani Waena 4th graders

3rd - Participated in Mililani Christmas Parade

4th - Toys for Tots parade/ Japanese Women's Society Foundation Friendship Tea at Kuakini Hospital / emceed MHS Winter Concert

6th, 15th, 22nd - Salvation Army Bell Ringing Mililani Town Center

8th - Verizon Wireless facility tour; HSTA talk story with teachers

10th - Waipio Gentry Christmas Parade/ Attended "Amazing Love" Christmas play, First Assembly of God



With 2nd graders at Mililani Waena

14th - Mililani Middle School—Legislators Back to School

presentation to 8th graders; Mililani Seniors club

16th - Youth Challenge Graduation

18th - UH at West Oahu commencement; Ms. Hawaii Fundraiser

24th - Christmas Eve Service with family at New Hope Farrington High School

29th - Visited Mililani Mauka, Kipapa, Mililani Ike and Kanoelani Elementary



Saying aloha to Sandy Ahu - retiring Principal at Kanoelani Elementary in Waipio Gentry.

Federal Stimulus Oversight Review Completed

For the past year, I was pleased to be the Senate's designated representative on the **Federal Economic Stimulus Program Oversight Commission**. The Commission was established by the legislature in 2009 to ensure transparency and accountability for funds allocated to Hawaii by the Federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA).

The Commission's draft final report has been published and is available online at:

<http://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/specialcommittee.aspx?comm=espo> .



Since 2009, a total of 188 ARRA awards were made to State agencies in Hawaii for a total of approximately \$2.2 billion, of which \$1.9 billion had been expended as of September 30, 2011. Additional ARRA funds have been expended in Hawaii by federal agencies and smaller amounts to the counties and some private entities.

The Legislative Session Begins . . .

The 2012 Legislative session began this month, and will continue for 60 working days through the first week of May. But even between our formal working sessions, our work continued. The Ways and Means Committee, on which I serve as Vice Chair, has been reviewing executive budgets and programs – many jointly with the House of Representatives Finance Committee – since mid-November. Committee members have also been conducting site visits across the state to review construction work funded in prior sessions. My schedule included late-December stops at Mililani Mauka, Kipapa, Mililani Ike and Kanoelani Elementary Schools where a number of improvement projects are underway to create positive learning environments for our youngsters.

A two-year state budget was approved last year, and the 2012 session will provide an opportunity to review progress, and, as necessary, revise the budget with added funds or possible reductions in spending. Governor Abercrombie outlined his proposed supplemental spending plan in mid-December, but revisions are likely as the State Council on Revenues has warned that the slowly improving economy may not provide enough funds to cover all of our needs.



Mililani Welcomes Pakistani Exchange Student

I was pleased to host Ms. Sadaf Akhtar for a day at the Capitol earlier this month, and to introduce her to some of the Hawaii legislative process. Sadaf is spending the year at Mililani High School under the sponsorship of the American Council on International Education Youth Exchange and Study program.

While in Hawaii, Sadaf is the guest of Mr. and Mrs. Timothy Schiller and family of Mililani. We are so grateful to this caring family for opening their doors to her and for sharing in this international exchange opportunity.



FREE TAX HELP AND CLAIM VALUABLE TAX CREDITS!

Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) is a tax benefit for people who worked full or part-time. Calculate your potential credit with the EITC qualification chart below.

If you are:	and you earn LESS than	then you may qualify for a credit or refund of UP TO:
Married couple w/ 3 or more qualifying children	\$49,078	\$5,751
Unmarried w/ 3 or more qualifying children	\$43,998	\$5,751
Married couple w/ 2 qualifying children	\$46,044	\$5,112
Unmarried w/ 2 qualifying children	\$40,964	\$5,112
Married couple w/ 1 child	\$41,132	\$3,094
Unmarried w/ 1 child	\$36,052	\$3,094
Married w/ no children	\$18,740	\$464
Unmarried w/ no children	\$13,660	\$464

For more information about the Hawaii State Capitol tax site or other free tax preparation sites across the state:

Visit www.hawaiitaxhelp.org
 Email info@hawaiitaxhelp.org
 Call 2-1-1 (AUW's Toll Free Helpline)

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Thanks to trained and IRS-certified volunteers, you can have your federal and state taxes prepared and filed for free at a special clinic:

Hawaii State Capitol

415 South Beretania St., Room 329

Saturday, February 4th – 9am-2pm

APPOINTMENT & WALK-INS (last return accepted at 1:00)

CALL (808) 381-0881 (for this site only)

Earn it. Claim it. Save it.

Family and Individual
Self-Sufficiency Program

HACBED

Hawaii's Alliance for Community-Based
Economic Development

Thank you to the following legislators who are sponsoring this important community event:

Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland	Representative Della Au Belatti
Senator Brickwood Galuteria	Representative Karl Rhoads
Senator Michelle Kidani	Representative Sylvia Luke
Senator Mike Gabbard	Representative Scott Saiki
Speaker Calvin Say	Representative Scott Nishimoto

JOB OPPORTUNITY

The Hawai'i State Judiciary is seeking court interpreters in all languages

Do you speak English and another language?

Willing to work flexible hours?

You can earn \$25 to \$55 per hour with a 2-hour base minimum!

Are you:

- ✓ Bilingual
- ✓ 18 years or older?
- ✓ Eligible to work in U.S.?



Do you:

- ✓ Want additional income?
- ✓ Want to help people?

Applicants must meet these minimum requirements:

1. SUBMIT Court Interpreter Certification Program Application (available online)
2. ATTEND a two-day Basic Orientation Workshop
Registration fee: \$85 includes 2-day training and interpreter resource binder.

O'ahu: February 18-19, 2012 (Sat./Sun.)
 Kona: February 22-23, 2012 (Wed./Thu.)
 Maui: February 28-29, 2012 (Tue./Wed.)
 Kaua'i: March 8-9, 2012 (Thu./Fri.)
 Hilo: March 15-16, 2012 (Thu./Fri.)

- Additional requirements: Applicants must pass Written English and Ethics Exams and clear a criminal background check to be placed on court interpreter registry.

THIS IS A ONCE A YEAR OPPORTUNITY!

FOR MORE INFORMATION & APPLICATION, CONTACT:

Hawai'i State Judiciary, Office on Equality and Access to the Courts

(808) 539-4860 ♦ oeac@courts.hawaii.gov ♦ www.courts.state.hi.us/courtinterpreting

Senator Michelle Kidani 2012 Senate Assignments

Vice Chair, Committee on Ways & Means - with Senate leadership responsibility for overseeing all state funded construction projects

Vice Chair, Committee on Education

Vice Chair, Committee on Public Safety, Government Operations & Military Affairs

Member, Committee on Hawaiian Affairs

Assistant Majority Leader

Please contact me . . .

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