

Senator Michelle Kidani

(D) Senate District 17— Serving Mililani Mauka, Mililani Town, Waipio Acres and Waipio Gentry



Aloha, friends and neighbors:

Our Legislative session officially ended twelve weeks ago, but legislative business continues. The Senate Ways and Means Committee has already held one informational briefing this summer jointly with the Committee of Tourism, and we anticipate more as we keep an eye on Hawaii's economy. Our State Department of Business and Economic Development is reporting record numbers of visitors - and visitor spending - in the last couple of months. The Budget Director reported last week that the State ended the fiscal year on June 30 with a positive balance of \$306 million. The State Council on Revenues, whose economic forecasts are critical to our budget deliberations, will meet again next week. But the latest Hawaii unemployment figures - released last Friday - show that the number of workers still unemployed or under-employed remains unacceptably high at 6.4 percent, with an estimated 41,500 people who

want jobs and still can't find work. We're expecting that the many new jobs created with the passage of our \$400 million repair and maintenance construction program will begin to show positive growth in the next few months. Look around Waipahu and surrounding communities and you will note the many projects already in progress at our schools.

Of more immediate concern to our residents, of course, is the uncertainty and anxieties that have come with the announced cuts to school bus service that came way too late for families to plan around their schedules, and with serious worries about the safety of our students. See below for more on my plea to the Board and Department of Education to revise their proposal to address parents' concerns.

With classes set to begin next week at public schools in our district, my hope is that we can successfully work around the announced transportation challenges to eliminate or minimize any barriers to a safe and positive learning environment for our youngsters.

Me ke aloha,

Taking the school bus cuts to the Department and Board of Education

By now, students at all four Oahu schools on multi-track schedules - including Mililani Middle School - are back in their classrooms. Legislators know that we must do something to rein in the out-of-control transportation increases for school bus service—the costs have tripled over 8 years from \$23.9M to \$75.8M. However, cuts to school bus services were announced at a time that left families just a few days to plan for changes, and, in some situations, placed students at risk in making their way to school.

I immediately contacted Schools Superintendent Kathryn Matayoshi requesting that existing bus services be extended for all multi-track schools through the end of July to give families more time to come up with transportation alternatives. I took my appeal to the Board of Education meeting the very next day, and the Board agreed to delay the announced cuts until the end of the month.

My concern for Waikele Elementary students was also noted when I begged the BOE to not cut service for 98 students catching the bus fronting the Jack Hall Housing area as they would have to cross a busy freeway entrance and exit during their one mile trek to school.

I have asked to meet with City bus officials and am gathering other data from private tour companies which is being passed on to the DOE in hopes of finding better solutions. I will continue to monitor the Department of Education's progress and plans to deal with these challenges. With the school year already underway at multi-track schools and classes set to begin next week at most other schools, my hope is that we can find satisfactory solutions to the immediate problems this school year while working on the longer term plan to contain transportation costs in the years ahead.



At the Board of Education, July 3, 2012

Legislative and Community Calendar

Here are some of the legislative business and community events on my calendar since the last Waipahu Neighborhood Board meeting:

- ◆ June 28-29 - Special Session of the Senate for judicial appointment confirmations
- ◆ July 3 – Board of Education meeting regarding school bus service cutbacks
- ◆ July 10 – Joint meeting of the Senate Ways and Means and Tourism Committees – informational briefing on airport taxi and shuttle services and transportation infrastructure
- ◆ July 12 – Hawaii Council of Community Associations Legislative Update
- ◆ July 20 – Native Hawaiian Roll Commission kickoff at Washington Place
- ◆ July 20 – Roy Sakuma’s Ukulele Foundation Annual Fundraiser
- ◆ July 23 – Meeting with New Hope Leeward Pastor Mike Lwin to discuss future plans for a new facility on a 203 acre parcel off of Kunia Road adjacent to the golf course

Native Hawaiian leaders joined former Governor John Waihe`e at Washington Place last week to inaugurate the campaign of the **Native Hawaiian Roll Commission** to create a registry of Native Hawaiians who will be eligible to participate in the development of a governing entity. I proudly enrolled with my fellow lawmakers (at right) Senators Clayton Hee and Gil Kahele, Rep. Faye Hanohano, and Senators Suzanne Chun Oakland and Pohai Ryan. Below right, Senators Ryan, Hee and Chun Oakland joined me with Commission Chair Waihe`e. For more information—including an opportunity to enroll online—Visit the Web at <http://www.kanaiolowalu.org>.

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<< It's time to move!!

UH West Oahu work crews this week began the heavy-lifting job of moving into the brand new Kapolei campus. Dedication is set for August 18, with classes starting August 20.



Last Friday, I was pleased to present a Senate certificate to ukulele virtuoso **Roy Sakuma** and his wife **Kathy** to recognize extraordinary contributions to our State through a passion for teaching music and ukulele technique.

World famous soul singer **James Ingram** (with Roy and me in the photo at right) was a special guest at the annual Sakuma Ukulele Foundation fundraising banquet.

Last weekend's 42nd Annual Waikiki Ukulele Festival again drew thousands to the Kapiolani Park Bandstand.



**It's your right . . .
. . . and your responsibility!!**

**Primary election day is
Saturday, August 11.
Polls are open from
7 a.m. - 6 p.m. Please
vote.**



Questions? <http://hawaii.gov/elections>

State releases funds for Waipahu and Central Oahu highway work

Last Friday, the state released funds for several highway improvement projects that will have an impact on our communities. They include:

- **\$3,650,000** - Construction funds for increased drainage capacity along **Farrington Highway in the vicinity of Orange Street**
- **\$300,000 state funds** and \$1,200,000 federal funds - Design for a new **Ulehawa Stream Bridge on Farrington Highway** that meets current standards
- **\$600,000 state funds** and \$2,400,000 federal funds - Design of a freeway management system for **Interstate H-1, H-2** and Moanalua Freeways
- **\$449,500 state funds** and \$4,045,500 federal funds - To replace and/or upgrade a number of destination signs along **H-1 and H-2**