

Prevailing Winds

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When my daughter attended Noelani Elementary School, a teacher introduced her to a self-assessment technique which basically entailed grading oneself. I used this evaluation method for years at my firm. It gives the evaluatee an opportunity to reflect on what was accomplished and the evaluator an opinion from another perspective. I will use this system to evaluate our past legislative session.

This session required hard decisions that had to be made. But upon reflection, every legislative session will require hard decision making, so this criterion shouldn't be an excuse for poor accomplishments. Based on that thought:



I would give the Legislature a grade of **"A."** I know a lot of you may disagree, but I feel that we identified the problems and did not retreat into a state of denial. Had we done that, we would have deserved an **"F."** Knowing the mission before us, we struck out to solve the problem and identify the solutions available to us. From a planning standpoint, I would give ourselves a **"B";** we could have gotten an **"A"** if we had better communications and collaboration with the Senate. The marching orders were well stated from House leadership, no broad-based tax increases (GET.) In past sessions, we raised the income tax, transient accommodations tax, tobacco tax, and fuel taxes. We took as much as we could from special funds and cut over a billion dollars from expenditures. Remember furlough Fridays, shortened school days, coqui frogs, and rats in Chinatown...so what can we do now? We took a hard look at special interests; these are the businesses that got tax preferences from us before and made this as the bases of our financial plan. For this I would give the House an **"A+."**

So what are tax preferences? Simple, a preference is when one person gets a privilege that another doesn't

have. In other words, one person is getting a tax break that others do not. We have dozens of these tax exemptions in our tax code. Anyway, now is a good time for these people to give up their tax benefit and pay their fair share like everyone else. So the battle began, it was amazing to listen to testimony from people defending their tax breaks. These are some comments we heard: *everyone was going to go out of business, jobs would be lost, and basically the sky would fall.* No one said thank you for giving us these tax breaks for all of these years, I know the state is in trouble, it is time that I pay taxes like everyone else.

Well, getting back to our session, we achieved a temporary suspension of a few tax preferences. For this I believe we deserve an **"A."**

On the other side of the equation, we made cuts to programs. I would like to give us high marks for this. Some people believe that we didn't cut enough, in fact some people would want to believe that we can cut government down to zero. Actually we can, but I wonder if these people would want to live or could survive in that kind of society. I visited undeveloped areas of the world where you cannot even drink the water, walk out of the hotel grounds without an escort, where medical care is nonexistent, or where you could get killed just as easily by a car or an insect! Hey, even these places have some form of government!

This session was an unusual session that we had three different budgets to consider. The first was the budget from the prior administration, second was the budget from the current administration and the third was the one we adopted which was drafted by the legislature. The bottom line is the budget we adopted calls for less spending than the others. Some may rejoice in this fact, but let's not be in denial. This budget will not reflect the kind of society that we strive to live in.

Aloha Isaac W Choy

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What Passed?



What Failed?

For a List and Description of Bills Passed by the Legislature:

<http://lrbhawaii.info/reports/legrpts/lrb/2011/>

For the Latest Legislative Updates, go to the Capitol Website:

www.capitol.hawaii.gov



Click on "Bill Status and Reports"

Under 2011 Regular Session Bills Introduced, Passed & Vetoes, You Will Find All the Information You Need:

- ◆ Measures Passed Legislature
- ◆ Bills that Became Law Without the Governor's Signature
- ◆ Resolutions Adopted
- ◆ List of Acts
- ◆ Notice of Veto
- ◆ List of Vetoes Measures

Governor's Sign or Veto Deadlines

For more information on how these dates are arrived at, see Article III, Section 16 of the Hawaii State Constitution

IF BILL IS ENROLLED TO GOVERNOR:

- ▶ Before the last 10 days of session (on or before April 18):
 - Governor has **10 days** to sign or veto, otherwise it becomes law without signature.
- ▶ In the last 10 days of session (April 19th or later):
 - Governor must submit Notice of Intent to veto by **June 27th**;
 - Bill becomes law without signature if neither signed nor vetoed by **July 12th**.



The **MANOA NEIGHBORHOOD SECURITY WATCH PROGRAM** is a collection of individual neighborhood security watches organized all over Manoa Valley to help improve residential security. The **NSW** program is sponsored by the Honolulu Police Department (HPD) and relies on citizen participation and involvement to help bring awareness and to protect their neighborhoods.

If you are interested in joining or forming a Manoa NSW, contact Carole from the office of Rep. Isaac Choy for more information at 586-8475.

BENEFITS OF A NEIGHBORHOOD SECURITY WATCH?



- ★ **Instill** a greater sense of security, well-being and reduce the fear of crime in your community as well as greater "sense of community" and put the "neighbor" back in "neighborhood."
- ★ **Reduce** the risk of being a victim.
- ★ **Be prepared** to respond to suspicious activity.
- ★ **Access** to criminal activity information.
- ★ **Network** with other Manoa NSWs.
- ★ **Know** your neighbors.
- ★ **Reduce** the fear of crime and make your neighborhood more livable.

View My Newsletters, Bill Status & Documents, Legislative Information, House/Senate, Photos, Links:
<http://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/session2011/members/house/memberpage.aspx?member=choy>

To receive an electronic copy of *Prevailing Winds*, Email: c.hagihara@capitol.hawaii.gov