

Prevailing Winds



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State Representative

District 24 - Manoa, University, Moili'ili

Prevailing Winds has been an interesting exercise in communications for me. I have written an article every month since the first day I was elected, so that makes about thirty-six or so editions! My first article was published in January of 2009. The objective of *Prevailing Winds* is to write a satire of life in politics. Ironically, this newsletter has turned into a two-way discussion. The comments I receive from my readers range from utter disgust about my views to total agreement. Every so often a reader gives me a compliment, probably in a moment of weakness. This month's article is on "Ethics."

Ethical standards are essential to promoting confidence in government. The difficulty in addressing any ethical dilemma is that there is no hard line based on the current laws. Currently the law lends itself to inconsistent interpretations and promotes unilateral decisions by certain individuals. This results in diminishing the value of the ethics code. If these practices continue, individuals will be wrongly accused, inconsistent and arbitrary rulings will prevail, the law will be misapplied, and, foremost, confidence in government will disappear.

The moral beliefs of a segment of society should not dominate the actions of another without having some sort of consensus by a majority. Ethical principles can be voiced loudly, but ethics rules should be precise. Conflicts in ethical principles should be identified and addressed by regulations. For example, a legislator is a part-time position, which results in perceived conflicts of interest which cannot be easily resolved.

The question of when a legislator is a legislator or when they are not working in the capacity as legislators is another problem. I am an accountant by profession and have been treated by clients to many events

over my thirty-year career. Now to say that I cannot accept a gift, simultaneously ruling that I am a part-time legislator is confusing. What makes it even worse is that it seems that there is an assumption that legislators and government employees cannot determine for themselves what is right and wrong and should seek guidance from the Ethics Commission. What happens if the guidance provided is not consistent because it is made on a case-by-case basis?

Currently the definition of gifts includes money, meals, gifts, tickets to events, etc., which are given to influence an employee's or legislator's actions. The connection between the gift and its ability or intent to influence the behavior of a legislator or state employee often is not clear. And, that is why we need clear rules so that a legislator or state employee can have a reliable guide. I personally feel that a cost of \$200.00 per year is a good guideline for gifts. This amount will cover most instances. Any gifts, such as travel, is required to be approved by the ethics commission. The ethics commission should write clear guidelines to approve gifts over \$200.00.

When I lecture on ethics I always tell the audience, you are not going to become ethical listening to me for 4 hours. Doing the right thing is a personal choice. Think about this: honest men cannot be legislated. Unfortunately, what is right is debatable. If we all follow the golden rule "to do unto others as we would want others to do unto us," could make ethics pretty simple. *Ha ha silly me!*

Aloha,

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Email: repchoy@capitol.hawaii.gov



Manoa Legislative Town Meeting



**TEAM
MANOA**

Join
Your District-Area Elected Officials

Senator Brian Taniguchi
Senate District 10



Councilmember
Ann Kobayashi
Council District 5

Representative Isaac Choy
House District 24

PURPOSE

DISCUSS Community Issues
and
BRING YOUR IDEAS
for Legislation for the
2012 Legislative Session.

DATE:

Thursday, December 15, 2011

TIME:

6:15 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

LOCATION:

Manoa Elementary School Cafeteria
(3155 Manoa Road)



"8th Annual Community Clean-up"

Aloha 'Aina Earth Day

Recycling Community Clean-up & Fundraiser for:

KAIMUKI HIGH SCHOOL
KAPAHULU CENTER
MOILILI COMMUNITY CENTER

DATE: Saturday, October 15, 2011
TIME: 8:00 a.m.—2:00 p.m.
LOCATION: Kaimuki High School Parking Lot
(2705 Kaimuki Avenue)

- Bring your recyclable waste
- Help the environment
- Turn trash into cash for the school/community



CURBSIDE PICKUP AVAILABLE

House District 24—Contact the office of Representative Isaac Choy at 586-8475.

FLYER ATTACHED
of accepted items

SPONSORS: Congresswoman Colleen Hanabusa, Governor Neil Abercrombie, Senator Brian Taniguchi, Representative Isaac Choy, Representative Calvin Say, Representative Scott Nishimoto, Representative Scott Saiki, Mayor Peter Carlisle, Councilmember Ann Kobayashi and our environmental partners.



ANNUAL

MANOA CHRISTMAS PARADE

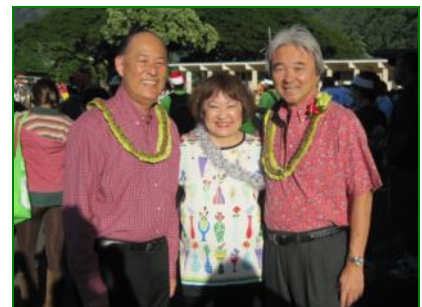


DATE: SAT., DEC. 10, 2011

TIME: 5:00 PM



PARADE **STARTS** AT NOELANI ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL AND **ENDS** AT MANOA GYM ROAD



Sponsored by the East Manoa Lions & Manoa Jaycees

2010 Manoa Christmas Parade

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