

June 2012



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SENATOR WILL ESPERO



Hawai'i State Capitol Room 231

Phone: 586-6360

Email: senespero@capitol.hawaii.gov

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2012 SESSION WRAP UP

State Senate Helps Governor Create a "New Day in Hawaii"

Jobs, Education, Information Technology Infrastructure, and Shoring up the Safety Net

May 3, was the final day of the 2012 Legislative Session. Lawmakers passed many bills in support of its priorities. In this second year of the legislative biennium, the Senate's priorities aligned with Governor Abercrombie's "A New Day in Hawaii." The Senate Majority — the Democrats — remain committed to improving the quality of life for the people of Hawaii. Here are highlights of the Senate Majority's accomplishments.

Job Creation and a Healthier Economy >

Hawaii's economic recovery is steady, but many people are still unemployed or under-employed, especially in the trade and construction industries. The Senate made a healthier economy and job creation their top priority. Its *Invest in Hawaii Act* of 2012 includes more than \$414 million for repair and maintenance and capital improvement projects.

Beginning in July 2013, the budget funds more than 4000 shovel-ready jobs in the construction industry, from carpenters to consultants. This will put money in workers' pockets and give companies confidence to begin hiring again. The businesses that supply services and goods will also benefit. These projects will extend the useful life of state facilities, conserve energy, and bring buildings up to current health, safety, and code requirements.

The Department of Education was appropriated \$296 million. Of that, \$116 million is allocated for renovating classrooms and improvements for school buildings. Electrical upgrades to support rapidly evolving technology was allotted \$10 million. Another \$30 million was budgeted for health and safety and special education needs, and comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Other highlights of the *Invest in Hawaii Act* are in the sidebar.

Highlights of the Invest in Hawaii Act

\$26 million to Dept. of Agriculture and Dept. of Land & Natural Resources to maintain irrigation systems, rivers, reservoirs, and dams statewide; includes \$1.1 million to upgrade, repair, and reinforce Hanalei River system

-\$80 million for capital renewal & deferred maintenance projects at the UH Manoa & Hilo

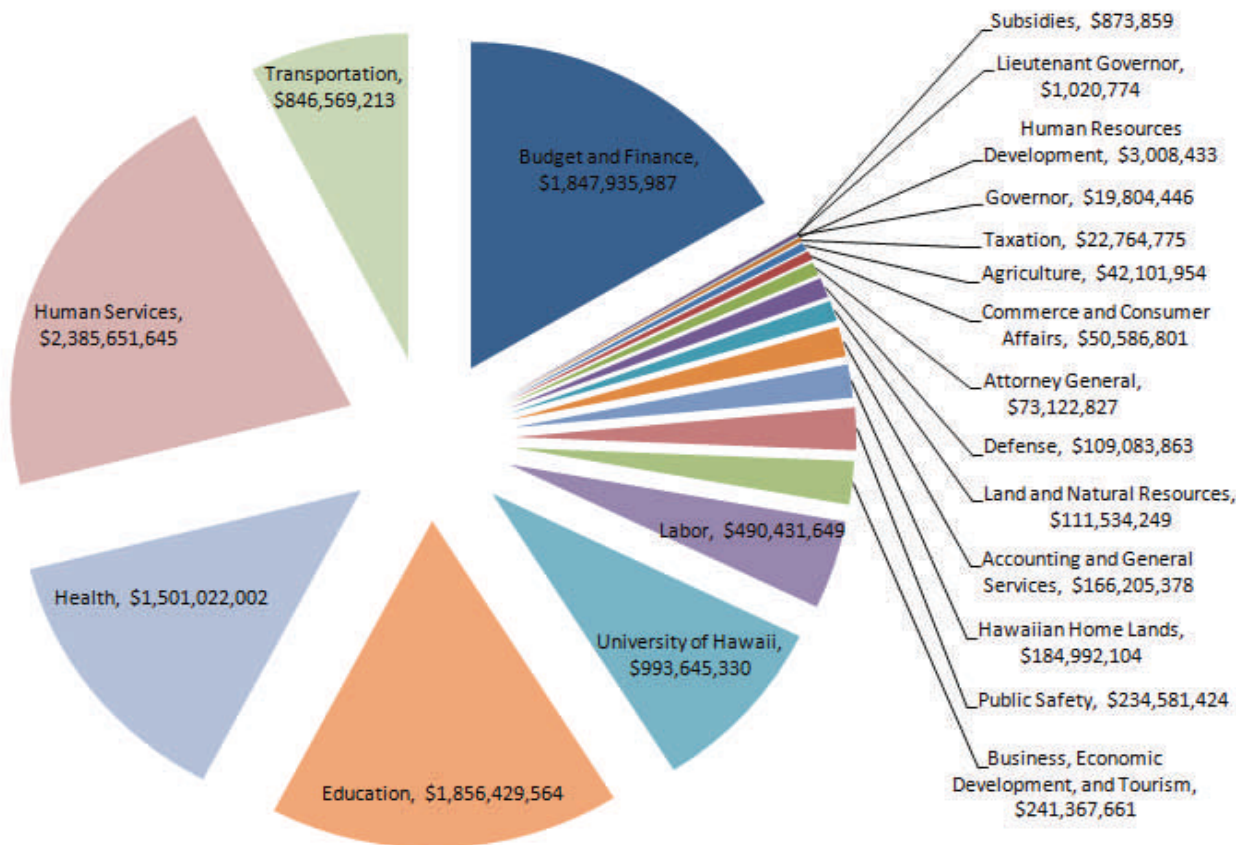
-\$27.5 million for capital renewal & maintenance projects for the UH community colleges, plus \$10 million to construct new Culinary Institute of the Pacific at Kapiolani Community College

\$20 million to non-profit organizations to continue community programs and services

-\$60 million to the Hawaii Public Housing Authority to help shelter low-income families

-\$35 million for repair & maintenance projects of community hospitals statewide (Hawaii Health Systems Corporation)

2012 SUPPLEMENTAL STATE BUDGET:



The Legislature passed an \$11.2 billion budget in **HB 2012**. More than a billion dollars in budget cuts marked each of the last three years. In the 2012-2013 budget the Senate reinforced the safety net, restored core services that were decimated due to austerity, and invested in key areas to stimulate the economy for a more prosperous future for Hawaii.

Transportation

Kualakai Parkway will be extended to Roosevelt Avenue, \$15 million.

A consolidated rental car facility will be built for Honolulu International Airport, \$493 million. Energy savings retrofits will be made at airports statewide, \$150,000. Kalaeloa Airport will get \$9 million of improvements: control tower, aprons, runways, lease lots, taxiways, rescue fire fighting building, utility corridor, aviation fuel systems, and T-hanger.

Military

The Kalaeloa Army National Guard facility got \$709,000 for renovations (utilities, access road, parking area, security fencing, and others). The 29th Brigade will receive \$483,000 for a new combat team readiness center. Renovations at Army Guard facilities were funded with \$516,500. Various upgrades and improvements will be made at veterans cemeteries around the state, \$3,544,000.

Job Creation

President Obama eased access for international travelers through his executive order. The expanded visa programs are expected to result in an estimated 154,000 jobs in Hawaii. **SB 490** takes advantage of the order to strategically invest in our top industry. The bill develops and implements initiatives to greatly increase travel to our islands. China, in particular, is a rising market with tremendous potential growth for Hawaii's tourism.

Space tourism is another emerging market that could become a billion dollar industry globally. In 2007, I sponsored a bill that created the Office of Aerospace Development. Director Jim Crisafulli has devoted himself to the task. This year I introduced **SB 112/Act 101** to fund \$250,000 for Hawaii's application for a spaceport license from the Federal Aviation Administration. Few licenses are granted, so having

one gives Hawaii a one-up as the industry takes shape. Space tourism could significantly increase state revenues, provide new high-paid jobs, and rejuvenate development on the Big Island and Oahu.

HB 2873 is another space bill, about PISCES, the Pacific International Space Center for Exploration Systems, at which researchers from all over the globe collaborate on aerospace issues. The Legislature gave \$1.8 million for constructing a PISCES facility.

Community Improvements

An electrical distribution system between Roosevelt Road and Tripoli Road, the ***Kalaeloa East Energy Corridor*** was funded, \$3.5 million.

Kunia Agricultural Park will undergo utility, road, grading, drainage, and other improvements with possible subdivision, \$1 million.

Education

Key areas of investment were modifications in the weighted student formula for school funding, student meals, student bus services and adult community schools.

The Senate strengthened Hawaii's charter schools to improve student outcomes. **SB 2115** sets forth clear lines of authority, clarifying the relationships, responsibilities, and accountability in the charter school system. **SB 2116** funds implementing these changes.

Early life experiences shape the potential for later success in school. High quality early learning programs that are affordable and accessible for all children are critically important to give our keiki the boost up they need. **SB 2545** establishes the Early Learning Advisory Board and executive office on early learning to replace the Early Learning Council. Children must be 5 years old by July 31 to enter kindergarten. Junior kindergarten is repealed.

HB 2626 establishes the **Safe Routes to School** program to increase traffic safety, enabling children to walk and bicycle to school. It also authorizes fine surcharges to fund program.

Saber Hall - New James Campbell High School classroom building

Two years ago, I told you about the \$6.5 million contract to build a new, air-conditioned 8-classroom building at JCHS. It will host its first students this coming fall.



Natural Disaster Mitigation

The Legislature appropriated \$100,000 for **flood mitigation** in Honouliuli, in Ewa. The Legislature also appropriated \$10 million to mitigate the **arrival of debris from Japan's** March 11, 2011 tsunami.

Energy

Diversifying renewable energy sources and lowering consumption are key to reducing dependence on fossil fuel. Geothermal energy is a naturally available source of energy that can be tapped into affordably. **SB 3003/Act 097** allows exploration and development of geothermal resources in all state land use districts and all conservation district zones. **SB 2001** requires consultation with and input from the Native Hawaiian community and general public in developing geothermal projects on public lands.

Food Security

We have agricultural land to grow our own food, but we still import most of it. Ranchers told legislators that the rising cost of feed is a serious factor in the situation. **SB 2695/Act 122** establishes a livestock feed feasibility pilot project to address the rising cost of feed. Helping farmers and ranchers is critical to our ability to maintain food supplies in the event of natural disasters or transportation disruptions.

Social Safety Net

While our job market regains strength, many still are looking for work and dealing with reduced wages and benefits. Most at risk in financial distress are our keiki. We addressed domestic violence shelters, MedQuest, child welfare, and other human services shortfalls. **HB 2012/Act 106** funds state programs. **HB 304** awards grants to non-profits for community services.

Health Care

Wahiawa General Hospital (WGH) and Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center (WCCHC) filled in the gap in emergency care coverage after Hawaii Medical Center closed and left the leeward coast without a nearby emergency room. **HB 304** gave \$1.75 million to WGH to modernize and expand its emergency department and resurface its parking lot. WCCHC will get \$2 million to upgrade and expand its emergency services building. **HB 1953** funds \$1 million for on-call emergency and ambulance services for Nanakuli 24 hours a day and up to 16 hours a day for Ewa. **SB 2939** authorized a bond up to \$80 million for St. Francis Healthcare System to construct, improve, and buy equipment for its facility.

Upgrading State Technology

Residents and businesses in Hawaii can be more efficiently served through the increased productivity that comes from modernizing the government's information technology infrastructure. **HB 2012/Act 106** will fund invest in software upgrades, system integration, database and records modernization.

Community Safety

I introduced **SB 2261** to help make our communities safer. The Weed & Seed program pairs the police and community agencies to weed out criminal elements and seed it with prevention, intervention, treatment, and neighborhood revitalization projects and programs. It was funded \$336,000 statewide.

Communications

Upgrading broadband in our state will keep us on par with other nations that have or are now investing in it. **SB 2236** supports Governor Abercrombie's broadband initiative. Clearcom or a partnership led by it, will plan, design, construct, and operate broadband infrastructure throughout the state.

Public Safety

SB 2776**Justice Reinvestment Initiative**

In the last 20 years, prison spending nationwide has risen faster than any other area in state budgets. Prisoners return to high stake communities which tend to be areas where tax-funded programs are focused. Recidivism rates remain high.

To rein in corrections spending and make it more effective in turning criminals into productive citizens, the Justice Reinvestment Project was born. It is highly data-driven, with state-specific information.

The Justice Reinvestment Project is supported by the U.S. Department of Justice, the Pew Center, and other private foundations. The first phase of its strategy was to analyze data and develop policy options. The second phase is to assist states in adopting new policies and putting reinvestment strategies in place. The third will be to measure the performance of these reforms.

I introduced **SB 2776** to establish JRI in Hawaii. These are some of its strategies. Requires a pre-trial risk assessment to be conducted within three working days of commitment to a community correctional center. Requires the use of validated risk assessments. Limits incarceration length for first-time parole violators. Increases the percentage deducted from inmates' earnings for restitution payments. Increases the membership of the Hawaii Paroling Authority.

HB 1788, Computer Fraud

Creates the crime of third degree computer fraud, clarifies crimes, and increases penalties.

HB 2295, Cyberbullying

Makes it a crime to use a computer to pursue, surveil, contact, harass, annoy, or alarm another person.

SB 2247 / Act 94**Kelsey's Law**

This year I introduced a victim assistance to help victims. Kelsey Smith was an 18-year-old kidnapped outside a store. The police asked Verizon to locate her cell phone but it did not. It is believed that if Verizon had identified where her cell phone was when she was kidnapped, she may be alive today. This law requires cell phone companies, during emergency situations, to assist law enforcement in determining the location of a person's cell phone.

HB 2848 / Act 117**Offender Rehabilitation**

Many national and state studies show native Hawaiians to be at particularly high risk for substance abuse.

HB 2848 aims to reduce regression for criminal offenders by including native Hawaiian cultural practices and other innovations into their programs. It also creates a work release pilot program on the Big Island to allow selected prisoners to work on projects for the community.

SB 2228 / Act 119**Pseudoephedrine**

To try to decrease methamphetamine production, **SB 2228** creates an electronic tracking system for pseudoephedrine sales and limits the amount that may be sold without a prescription (3.6 grams per day or 9 grams per 30 days) Retail pharmacies can check a computerized database before dispensing the medicine, improving its ability to safely sell products containing pseudoephedrine to consumers. The Department of Public Safety Narcotics Enforcement Division will implement the electronic tracking system.

HB 2515**Probation**

Allows probation for certain drug offenses / offenders.

Hawaiian Affairs

SB 2783 / Act 15**Public Trust Lands**

The State and the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) reached agreement on disputed claims about OHA's portion of income and proceeds from public trust lands from 1978 to 2012. Both parties arrived at the figure of about \$200 million to settle all claims. The State will turn over Kaka'ako Makai lands to satisfy that \$200 million.

SB 2783 conveys Kaka'ako Makai to OHA to finalize the settlement.

HB 2806**Aha Moku Advisory Committee**

Native Hawaiians understood and respected the land, sea, and sky, using these responsibly to preserve natural resources. Using these indigenous resource management practices will help Hawaii conserve and care for our islands.

HB 2806 establishes the Aha Moku Advisory committee within the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) to protect Hawaii's environment, promote sustainability, and preserve the Hawaiian culture. The committee may advise the DLNR chairperson on issues related to land and natural resources management through the aha moku system.

SR 53**Grover Cleveland**

President Grover Cleveland was known for the courage to do what was right. He recognized the independence and sovereignty of the Kingdom of Hawaii. He withdrew the annexation treaty from Congress and defended Queen Liliuokalani's monarchy. **SCR 109** recognizes President Cleveland's efforts on behalf of the Hawaiian kingdom by requesting a state or county property be named after him and a state work of art be created in his honor.

Transportation

HB 2030**Emergency Vehicles**

HB 2030 requires drivers to move over when passing a stationary emergency vehicle on a highway, and to slow down to a safe speed when an emergency road situation exists. It also requires prosecution for death or bodily injury.

HB 2684**Zipper Lane**

The Legislature gave \$200,000 to the Department of Transportation to study the feasibility of extending the zipper lane past the Kunia on-ramp.

Consumer Protection

HB 2502**Mortgage Servicers**

HB 2502 continues the Legislature's commitment to help homeowners get through Hawaii's economic recovery. This bill helps the State meet national standards for mortgage servicers and helps the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs monitor them. **HB 2502** requires proper licensure of companies that modify loans, and that all mortgage servicers register with the Nationwide Mortgage Licensing System.

Technology

SB 2110 / Act 090**Digital Archives**

On July 1 the Henry Giugni Moving Image Archive of Hawai'i ('Ulu'ulu) will become the official state archive for moving images, thanks to a bill I introduced. It will be housed in the new UH West Oahu campus.

Energy, Land, Water, & Sky

SB 2678**Honouliuli**

I believe it is important to learn the lessons of World War II to avoid its mistakes, so I introduced **SB 2678**. It requires the DLNR to establish a park site project advisory group for the eventual creation and funding of an educational resource center at Honouliuli. One of Hawaii's WWII internment camps was located there. The bill appropriated \$100,000 for the group's activities.

SB 2402**Starlight Reserve**

To preserve the beauty of our night sky, I introduced **SB 2402**. Beginning July 1, 2014, all new and replacement state outdoor light fixtures will be required to be fully shielded to preserve the darkness of the night sky, with some exemptions.

SB 2785**Interisland Electric Transmission Cable System**

Establishes a regulatory structure for the interisland electric transmission cable and construction of the on-island transmission infrastructure.

HB 2595**Dam and Reservoir Owners**

Dams and reservoirs provide many public benefits as potential resources for the agriculture industry, storage for drinking water, food control, and others. As these facilities age, it is important to maintain safety. **HB 2595** authorizes the State to issue special purpose revenue bonds to assist dam and reservoir owners to take actions to ensure their facilities meet current safety standards.

Health

HB 608 / Act 1**Organ Transplants**

Organ transplants save lives, and 407 Hawaii residents are on national waiting lists for this surgery.

HB 608 funds grants to Queen's Medical Center for kidney and liver transplants, subject to dollar-for-dollar private matching funds. The National Kidney Foundation of Hawaii also received matching grants for its chronic kidney disease management program.

Human Services

SB 2804 / Act 105**Homelessness Council**

Homelessness is a complex issue. Locally, many government agencies, nonprofit organizations, and other private sector organizations have worked diligently and successfully to assist homeless persons. Even with this, however, Hawaii has seen an increase in the number of homeless individuals and families.

Governor Abercrombie established an ad hoc body, the Hawaii Interagency Council on Homelessness, in 2011.

SB 2804 allows it to continue its work in identifying critical strategic goals and initiatives to lessen homelessness and help reintegrate the homeless into the community through permanent housing. The bill also requires the Department of Human Services to conduct a feasibility study on creating safe havens.

*NOW IT'S UP TO
THE GOVERNOR*

Bills passed by the Legislature don't automatically become law. The Governor then decides whether to approve them. He can show his support of a bill by signing it into law. He can allow it to become law without his signature by not vetoing it. If the Governor does not think a bill should become law, he has until June 25 to notify the Legislature that he intends to veto it. The Legislature then decides whether to let the veto stand or override it. If 2/3 of both the House and the Senate believe the bill should become law, they must vote to override the veto by July 10.



< James Campbell ROTC showed their drill skills at the Capitol.

National Champion JCHS Saber squad did a cheer for the Senate. >



< Ewa 5th graders visited the Capitol.

Ewa Makai students testified on their Green Schools resolution. >



< Keoneula 5th graders visited the Capitol.

Lankily Baptist student Chandler Bade earned his Eagle Scout badge. >



Senator Will Espero

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415 S. Beretania St.
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CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT FOR EWA SCHOOLS

UH West Oahu - \$5,645,000.

Campus work plus construction of a new Academy of Creative Media facility and allied health building.

Ewa Elementary - \$9,600,000.

Eight classroom building.

Ewa Beach Elementary - \$1,480,000.

Upgrades and improvements.

NEW UH WEST OAHU CAMPUS TO OPEN ON AUGUST 20, 2012!