

Senator Michelle Kidani

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Aloha, friends and neighbors:

As you can imagine, I receive literally hundreds of calls and emails every week during the legislative session. One of the most common issues brought to my attention has to do with the deteriorating condition of our streets and highways, and the related issue of when highway lighting will be restored to the H-2 freeway.

Some of these roadways are under the jurisdiction of the city, and some are state highways. But it does not matter who is responsible for maintenance - we just want repairs done to ensure that we can travel safely wherever we want to go.



Last month, I provided our neighborhood boards a copy of the city's schedule for **resurfacing the streets and roads within Mililani and Mililani Mauka** over the next 12 to 18 months.

Earlier this month, I was informed by the State Department of Transportation that progress is being made on two major projects:

--Paul's Electrical Contracting began work on April 16 to restore highway lighting along H-2 from Waiawa Interchange to Leilehua Interchange. Transportation officials say that even if there are unforeseen delays, the project should be completed on or about June 1.

--Also, as a result of a \$14 million dollar appropriation in the 2011 session of the legislature, the project to resurface Kamehameha Highway from Waikalani Drive to Ka Uka Boulevard is currently in the design phase, and will be out to bid early next year.

Looking ahead, I included an appropriation of \$25 million dollars in a transportation bill I co-introduced this session to **reconstruct and expand the Kipapa Gulch Bridge from two to four lanes** - a major public works project that will vastly improve traffic flow to and from Mililani.

Funds have now been released for projects at Waipahu Elementary School, Leeward Community College and five Mililani schools. Please see the special insert in this newsletter for details on these and proposed projects in next year's budget.

Me ke aloha,

Honoring Hawaii's Fallen Heroes

For a seventh year, the State Legislature memorialized military service members who were residents of Hawaii, or who were stationed at bases here who died in Iraq or Afghanistan. I hosted the family of the late Navy Chief Petty Officer Kraig Vickers of Maui, including his widow, Nani, holding the medal in this photo and her three children.

Two dozen service members were remembered at this year's ceremony. Colleagues or family members of 18 of the fallen servicemen were present to receive the medal that was first presented in 2006. All of these families know that the freedom we treasure is not free.



Mahalo For Serving the Public

Citizen participation in government is a sign of a healthy democracy, and we are grateful that these residents of Mililani and Waipahu have stepped forward to serve on State boards and commissions. I was pleased to vote for confirmation of their appointments during our sessions in April.

Ben Villaflor – State Boxing Commission

Roy Amemiya – Tax Review Commission

Randy Iwase – Tax Review Commission

Nathan Chang – Hawaii Health Authority

Marion Poirier – Hawaii Health Authority

Leonard Licina - Statewide Health Coordinating Council Board

Darrin Sato – Commission on Fatherhood

Darryl Salvador – Medical Education Council

Sandra Simms – State Council on Mental Health

Dominic Inocelda – Language Access Advisory Council

Glenn Nakamura – Disability & Communication Access



We did not have to go far to congratulate Mililani resident **Ben Villaflor** on his appointment to the State Boxing Commission. Ben is the Senate Sergeant-at-Arms, directing the support staff responsible for maintaining order in the Senate Chamber. He's also extremely well-qualified to serve on the Commission as many Hawaii residents know that he is a former World Boxing Association Junior Lightweight Champion. His long and very successful career as a boxer was a major factor in a surge in popularity of boxing, and he

brings great enthusiasm and total dedication to his work at the Senate on behalf of the public. *At right, that's Ben in action in the ring early in his career.*



Enhancing Teacher Education at LCC



Joining me at the ceremony, from left: Leeward CC Chancellor Manuel Cabral; Michael Unebasami, UH Community Colleges Associate Vice President for Administrative Affairs; and Rep. Mark Takai.

from the Mililani-Waipio Gentry-Waipahu area. The AAT program now includes about 450 students who have declared for this major.

Not only will students in this program benefit, but beginning this summer, construction will put a substantial number of workers on contractor and sub-contractor payrolls for most of the next two years. And that's good for all of us.

Congratulations and *mahalo* to everyone who worked so hard to bring this project to this point. I look forward to being back on this site in a couple of years when the building welcomes its first students.

One of the most satisfying things about being the Senator who works on the State construction budget is seeing the results of our work that translates numbers on a spreadsheet to shovels in the ground. I was honored to join campus and community leaders as we broke ground this month for the first new building on the Leeward Community College Campus in the last 35 years. The Education Building and Innovation Center – depicted here in an artist's view from the parking lot side – will allow expansion and enhancement of the Associate of Arts in Teaching (AAT) program.

The Senate was pleased to have included in last year's construction budget an appropriation of \$19 million dollars to get this long-awaited project underway. Enrollment at LCC is at an all time high – about 8,000 students in the fall semester – about a quarter of which come



What A Difference A Year Makes!



The “plain old” **Mililani High School Athletic Field** has been transformed into a much more attractive venue for Trojan sports competition. An appropriation of \$2.5 million was released last year for much needed improvements – well-deserved to reflect more appropriately on the stadium’s namesake, former MHS athletic director “Big John” Kauinana. I got a tour of the facilities during a recent visit to the high school – that’s me with current athletic director Glenn Nitta at mid-field on the fifty yard line. Go Trojans!

UH West Oahu – Open for Business August 20!



The State’s investment in higher education is coming to fruition on the plains *makai* of the H-1 freeway, where the new, permanent campus for **UH West Oahu** is nearing completion. UHWO will be a second 4-year campus for the University of Hawaii system on Oahu, and is expected to provide more educational opportunities for area residents, and traffic relief on the freeway for Leeward coast students who may opt for the new campus rather than commute to Manoa. The new campus is aiming for energy self-sufficiency with the installation of a \$2.5 million dollar photovoltaic system.

Conference Committees Meeting

During the last several days of the Legislative session, Senators and Representatives meet face-to-face to work out final details of bills we have passed. As Vice Chair of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means, I preside with Committee Chair Senator David Ige over discussion of the budget bills.

Those hearings attract large crowds of interested observers and often go into the late evening hours. Our work on the budget bill must be completed no

later than this **Friday, April 27**, so that the

final votes can be taken and the 60-day session adjourns on schedule on **Thursday May 3**.



At the Capitol...

Honoring Senator Akaka

Hawaii's distinguished U.S. Senator, Daniel K. Akaka, and his wife Millie were guests of the State Senate this month.

The Senator, who is leaving Washington, D.C., after 36 years on Capitol Hill, was recognized for having been awarded the Harry S Truman Award for public service to the country – the highest such award given to an individual by the National Guard Association of the United States. It recognizes “sustained contributions of exceptional and far-reaching magnitude to the defense and security of the United States in a manner worthy of recognition at the national level.” Senator Akaka is a member of the Senate Armed Forces Committee.



Gracing the Senate Chamber

Senator Mike Gabbard, Miss Hawaii 2011 Lauren Cheape of Mililani, Senator Kidani, and 2011 Mrs. Hawaii US Christie Oclaray, both Mililani High alums.

The Senate welcomed these vibrant and energetic current title holders as they prepare to crown their successors in a few weeks. **Miss Hawaii Lauren Cheape** continues her active support of the Children's Miracle Network Hospitals – including Kapiolani Medical Center for Women and Children.

Mrs. Hawaii US Christie Oclaray is a human resources professional and lectures on professional development at Leeward CC. She has also joined with

the current Mrs. United States and two other fellow pageant title holders to promote a gluten-free healthy lifestyle. ***Congratulations to both for representing our State with distinction over the last several months!***



Before...

DUNKED! For A Good Cause

My colleagues and I committed to raising funds to help fill the shelves at the Hawaii Foodbank this session.

During a lunch hour last week, we set up a dunking booth and sold tickets to anyone brave enough to ‘Sink a Senator.’

All together, 14 Senators volunteered to surrender their dignity for a few minutes, all for a good cause. The event was organized by Senator Clayton Hee; it raised about \$600 to help feed Hawaii's families in need.



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