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**Opening Day Remarks for the 2015 Legislative Session
by the House Minority Leader**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and welcome to our many distinguished guests.

I'd like to start by personally thanking my family and the people of Mililani for the opportunity to serve you in the House of Representatives. I would not be here today without your sacrifices and support.

On behalf of myself and my colleagues, I also want to thank every single person in our State for casting your vote in the last election. This is your House, and I thank you for taking ownership of it.

Finally, I'd like to thank our staff for all of your hard work, particularly, those staffers who serve in the House Minority Research Office. Less than three years ago, I was sitting in that very office writing the minority leader's speech and resenting the many long, sleepless nights that we staffers needed to spend in this building. No one understands better how much work you do, and I am so very thankful to have every one of you on our team.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I speak to you as the leader of the minority party. It is tradition to use these remarks to look ahead, and to share the minority caucus' thoughts on how this institution will help make a better life for the people of our state.

First and foremost, I will start by stating that we, the minority party, are committed to creating a government that meets the needs of everyday people.

We have got a lot of ideas, Mr. Speaker, and you're going to hear about them in speeches, you're going to see them in committee, and you're going to read them in bills that are

signed and delivered to your office. My only request, Mr. Speaker, is that you continue to listen to the minority and the people that we have been elected to represent.

Mr. Speaker, many of the minority's priorities are consistent with both yours and the Governor's. Instead of creating new programs, we see a need for this body to focus on strengthening our existing programs, addressing our state's hospitals and health care needs, tackling our high cost of living, and increasing transparency and openness in government.

But, Mr. Speaker, this is only half of the picture.

Mr. Speaker, I'm the first minority leader in this body that is a member of the millennial generation. We were the generation most hit by the Great Recession, and we are the generation leaving in droves for better opportunities on the mainland. Now, with a potential army reduction on the horizon, it is critical that this body start addressing our state's economy.

Jobs are what matter to people, Mr. Speaker. Jobs are what matter to my generation and they are what matter to our parents. Our constituents want to know that we're doing something real to make their lives better.

Here at the Legislature, we spend a lot of time talking about creating jobs and diversifying the economy, but in truth, this Legislature has done very little about it.

People in Hawaii don't always believe in us, Mr. Speaker. This past election, only about 35 percent of those eligible to vote actually voted. Whether they didn't believe that their participation would gain them new job opportunities, or they didn't believe that it would make their bills any easier to pay, simply put, they just didn't believe that their vote would make a difference.

The minority party in this legislature is committed to changing that.

Mr. Speaker, we don't have a coalition anymore, but I would ask my colleagues across the aisle to remember that the minority party isn't here as a token adversary or as a reminder of the strength and power of your establishment.

The minority party is here to provide diversity of thought and a voice that isn't represented by the status quo.

If you allow that diversity, if you encourage it, if you value it, then this body will make stronger legislation that can make people's lives better in real, tangible ways. Only then will we have a true democracy and a reason for the people of our state and the people of my generation to have faith in their government and a reason to believe that their voice, even if it's in the minority, can make a difference.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.