

Prevailing Winds

Special Edition Mid-Session Legislative Report

District 23 - Manoa, Punahou, University, Moili'ili

Spring 2014

Message From Representative Isaac Choy

It's half time at the Capitol. Being the Chair of the House Higher Education committee, one would think all the bills referred to me would be about the University of Hawaii, Community Colleges, Athletics, and budgets for all. Surprisingly, the subjects of the bills assigned to my committee ranged from agriculture/invasive species, soil fertility, community gardens, training of primary care physicians to oil spill prevention. At this point, many are still alive and moving through the legislature. If things work out, some of my bills may eventually become law.

In the past, I would look at a problem and defer to the expertise of the responsible department or agency and give them whatever support I could along with a motherly hug or swift kick in the rear. I would leave it to the department, under their own system of operations and management, to deal with the concerns. I assumed that reasonable people, given some advice, could solve their own problems.

Well, unfortunately my tactic has not succeeded. Most departments regard the legislative session with fear and loathing, knowing they will have to compose those mandatory reports to the legislature. I'm sure the prevalent thought is, *"survive the legislative season and go back to what we were doing!"*

During the interim, very little was done on repairs and maintenance at the University of Hawaii. This leads me to conclude that if repairs and maintenance were important to them, they would have been finished already.

So I had to devise another method to get their



The House Higher Education (HED) and Senate Higher Education (HRE) Committees chaired by Representative Isaac Choy and Senator Brian Taniguchi held a Joint Informational Briefing on December 20, 2013 to discuss the 2014-2015 UH System Supplemental Budget approved by the UH Board of Regents.

attention. I studied the possible causes of this backlog of repairs and maintenance and the reasons for not getting the job done. In plain language I decided to *"micromanage."* Now in most parlances, this is a bad thing, but in government and politics, who knows?

This session, I have introduced measures that will give the legislature more fiscal control over the University; after all it is your money. I can proudly report that the University has opposed every one of my suggestions, some very vehemently.

The University reminds me of my daughter who is graduating from the University of Washington this year. She proudly announced that she will have graduated in less than four years, and by doing so, she is saving me money. She says she is a woman now and she needs her independence. In fact, she doesn't want to live at home because it might be uncomfortable for her, since she has been living on her own for four years. My wife agrees with her as usual. My daughter then asked me to find her a house (not apartment) to live in. I asked her how will she will pay for all of this? She says to me the same way she has been living independently for four years, obviously not realizing money does not grow on trees. Puzzled, I reply, *"I have been paying for your rent, food, clothes, utilities, insurance, car, travel, entertainment, books and tuition."* Perplexed at my lack of comprehension, she looks at me and says, *"I am an independent woman now."* Maybe I am just getting too old to understand the modern world.

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CONTACT INFORMATION

Hawaii State Capitol
415 S. Beretania Street, Room 404
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
Tel: (808)586-8475
Email: repchoy@capitol.hawaii.gov

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Mid-Session Highlights

Listed below are some of the measures that are making its journey through the 2014 Legislative Session.

Agriculture

HB1716: Invasive Species Council; Appropriation.

Protects Hawaii's environment, agriculture, economy, the health and way of life of Hawaii's people by appropriating \$5,000,000 for Hawaii Invasive Species Council projects, including invasive species prevention, control, outreach, research and planning.

[Transmitted to the Senate.](#) (SB2343 Senate Companion—Transmitted to the House.)

HB1988 HD2: Hawaii Farm to School Program; Coordinator.

Establishes and funds the Hawaii Farm to School Program, headed by a Farm to School Coordinator to improve access to nutritious food and help develop an agricultural work force by increasing the purchase of Hawaii-grown products by public agencies, including public schools. [Transmitted to the Senate.](#)



Rep. Choy with HCAP Head Start Parents and Staff at the Capitol

Relations in identifying high-growth industries and workforce needs and developing appropriate training programs. [Transmitted to the Senate.](#)

Investing in our Children

HB 2276 HD1: Early Childhood Education Program.

Provides much-needed childhood education for the children of Hawaii by establishing within the early learning system an Early Childhood Education Program, administered by the Executive Office on Early Learning, upon the ratification by the voters of Hawaii of a constitutional amendment authorizing the use of public funds to provide early childhood education through private providers. The Early Childhood Education Program will provide high-quality early childhood education in both of Hawaii's official languages, including through private providers, to three-and four-year old children, with priority extended to children in the year prior to kindergarten eligibility and underserved or at-risk children.

[Transmitted to the Senate.](#) (SB2826 SD1 Senate Companion—Transmitted to the House.)

SB 2424 SD2: Public Schools; Air Conditioning; Appropriation.

Requires the department of education and department of accounting and general services, in consultation with the Hawaii State Energy Office of the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism and the Hawaii Natural Energy Institute of the University of Hawaii, to develop a cooling master strategy and comprehensive study for the public schools and to report findings to the 2015 regular session of the legislature. Authorizes general obligation bonds and appropriates funds for efficient air-conditioned classroom demonstration projects. [Transmitted to the House.](#)

Taking Care of Our Elderly

HB 1713: Elderly; Health Care and Social Services.

Provides for the long-term health care needs of Hawaii's rapidly-growing elderly population by appropriating funds to support collaborative health care and social service agency programs that facilitate aging in place, outside of a care facility setting, such as the Kupuna Care Program, Aging and Disability Resource Center, and the Department of Health's Healthy Aging Partnership Program. Requires and provides funding for the Department of Health's Executive Office on Aging to conduct a public education and awareness campaign on long-term care options and planning.

[Transmitted to the Senate.](#)



Rep. Choy serves as moderator at the Affordable Care Act Seminar held in September 2013.

Consumers, Business and Labor

HB2581 HD3: State Innovation Waiver Under Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

Establishes and funds the State Innovation Waiver Task Force to create a more effective alternative to the federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act that qualifies for federal funding under that Act, and provides affordable health care to individuals, taking into account Hawaii's unique market factors, history as a health-care provider, Prepaid Health Care Act, and existing Med-QUEST Medicaid Waiver Program. [Transmitted to the Senate.](#)

HB2580 HD1: Minimum Wage. Furthers Hawaii's economic recovery and helps to lift the State's working poor out of poverty by updating Hawaii's minimum wage by:

- Gradually increasing the minimum hourly wage to \$10 per hour through specified increases between January 1, 2015 and January 1, 2017.

- Gradually increasing the tip credit allowed to employers through specified annual increases between January 1, 2015 and January 1, 2017, and for each taxable year, authorizing the tip credit only for employees with combined wages and tips that equal at least 250 percent of the poverty level as determined annually for that purpose by the Director of Labor and Industrial Relations. [Transmitted to the Senate.](#) (SB2609 Senate Companion—Transmitted to the House.)

HB2217 HD2: Workforce Development Working Groups.

Promotes the creation of the highly-skilled labor workforce necessary to attract investment in innovative, high-growth, and high-wage industries by authorizing and funding working groups of industry leaders to assist the Department of Labor and Industrial

Our Community

HB1660 HD1: Obstruction of Public Passage; Sidewalks.

Preserves sidewalk access by expanding the offense of obstruction to include blocking a paved public sidewalk without leaving one meter of space for passage, which would allow a passage of a wheelchair, and, if participating in a gathering that obstructs a public highway or passage, failing to obey a reasonable request or order by a law enforcement officer to cease any activity that causes the obstruction.

[Transmitted to the Senate.](#)

HB1498: Public Order; Public Urination and Defecation.

Promotes public health and safety by prohibiting any person from urinating or defecating on any publically accessible paved road or sidewalk, including walkways and driveways leading to buildings. Contains an exception for verified medical conditions. [Transmitted to the Senate.](#)

HB2409: Disorderly Conduct; Bus Stops.

Makes it a disorderly conduct offense to lie down at a bus stop shelter or structure in a manner that interferes with use of or access to the bus stop. Establishes a fine of \$50 for a violation.

[Transmitted to the Senate.](#)

HB1728 HD1: Disputed Roads; “Roads in Limbo”;
Road Maintenance. Removes a disincentive to maintain roads in safe conditions by specifying that a government agency does not assume ownership or jurisdiction over a disputed road solely through maintenance or repair activities. Authorizes the State to resolve questions of jurisdiction by turning ownership of a disputed road to a county.

[Transmitted to the Senate.](#)

(SB2761 Senate Companion—[Transmitted to the House.](#))

HB2521 HD1: Civil Defense; Appropriation; Hazardous Tree and Branch Removal; Unstable Rock and Soil Conditions; Clogged Streams.

Appropriates funds to remove dangerous trees or branches that pose a danger to other properties, remove or stabilize unstable rock and soil conditions, and clean streams and waterways to prevent flooding or other disasters.

[Transmitted to the Senate.](#)

HB1868: Emergency Shelters; School Buildings.

Augments the States’ disaster preparedness by authorizing the issuance of general obligation bonds for Fiscal Year 2014-2015 to fund the retrofitting of public school facilities so that they may be used as emergency shelters. [Transmitted to the Senate.](#)

See **REPORTS AND LISTS** to view **House Bills** that have **CROSSED OVER** to the **Senate** & **Senate Bills** that have **CROSSED OVER** to the **House.**

District-Elected Officials



Senator
Brian Taniguchi
 Senate District 11



Councilmember
Ann Kobayashi
 Council District 5



Representative
Isaac Choy
 House District 23

One of the newest ways that government is working for you is the use of smart phone technology, like text message alerts and smart phone apps, to share important information.

NIXLE is a text and email notification system for Oahu residents and visitors. It sends alerts from the City’s Department of Emergency Management, the Board of Water Supply and the Honolulu Police Department regarding emergency weather information, water main breaks and urgent traffic bulletins.

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Recent Updates

Aloha!
 If you are a first-time user, you may visit the [General Information and FAQs page](#) for additional help navigating the website.

2014 Session Opening Day Remarks
 Senate Yearbook 1959-2014 (30mb pdf)
 House Yearbook 1959-2014 (15mb pdf)
 2014 Legislative Timetable
 2013-2014 Senate Directory

Submit Testimony | Hearing Notification | Measure Tracking

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Current Hearings (view full screen)

Committee	Measure	Date/Time	Notice
JCL	SB27 SD1 RELATIONSHIP TO MEDIATION ACT.	3/24/2014	See It
JCL	RELATIONSHIP TO MEDIATION ACT.	10:15 AM	

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We are at the halfway point in this session. I have included in this issue some measures that reflect some of the concerns and issues brought to my attention through emails, letters, and town meetings. The final disposition of these bills have not yet been determined. If you have questions about any bills moving through the legislature, please feel free to contact me at 586-8475 or email: repchoy@capitol.hawaii.gov.

During the summer, in my End-of-Session Newsletter, I will highlight a wrap-up of accomplishments of the 2014 Legislative Session, updates on community issues and concerns brought up at past town meetings and more.

Aloha,




Manoa Community Disaster Plan Presentation



Manoa DPT Members: Fred Fortis, Raleigh Ferdun, Hector Venegas, Ellen Watson, Jim Harwood and Helen Nakano gave a presentation to the National Disaster Preparedness Training Center Advanced Recovery Workshop, part of the Pacific Region Ohana Consortium at the Hawaii Convention Center. Manoa will be the first urban community to have completed a disaster preparedness plan for their community. This plan will be unveiled to the Manoa Community in the coming months.



Interested in Forming or Joining a Manoa Neighborhood Security Watch

CONTACT:
**Manoa Neighborhood Security Watch
Recruitment Team**

Norman Wong email: norm516@hawaiiantel.net
Raleigh Ferdun email: rferdun@yahoo.com



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<http://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/memberpage.aspx?member=choy&year=2014>



**Manoa NSW Meeting
February 24, 2014**



L-R: Jenny Quezon, Legislative Aide (Session)
Pam Seeney, Committee Clerk (Session)
Right: Carole Hagihara, Legislative Office Manager