Prevailing Winds

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State Representative

District 24 - Manoa, University, Moili'ili

The fourth session of my legislative career has begun. It definitely has a very different feel from the past sessions. Optimism is in the air. Even the lobbying is different.

Groups are asking for appropriations, new programs and expansion of existing programs. In the past my answer was an automatic *"no."* Actually there was no way to say *"yes"* and now, it is a cautious *"no."* I believe that soon we will be able to say *"yes."* Maybe it is a good time to think about priorities instead of survival.

My first priority is to attempt to fix government infrastructure. During the recession, all government repairs, maintenance and upgrades of backroom operations were put on hold to the point where they are broken or so inefficient that it costs more in time and labor. The governor made a great leap forward in establishing a Chief Information Officer position to accomplish this needed function.

Second, I would like to look at programs that were forced to operate at less than-optimum-staffing levels, especially within the departments that are running at 50% to see how, or if, these programs can be brought up to speed. We need to find out how this impacted the people. Public employee compensation and benefits which were cut should also be evaluated for restoration.

Third, I would evaluate the initiatives that were enacted (like taxes) to get us out of the shortfall and see if these need to be reversed or continued.

After all of these basic infrastructural elements are completed or at least begun, we must continue with trying to solve our problems in education, the environment, business diversity, human services, energy and all of the other important topics that need to be addressed. The citizens of Hawaii will expect us to address all of these items at the same time. Government will be much more efficient once the infrastructure is solidified.

On another note, this summer I had the privilege of working with a very dedicated group of lawyers and CPA's to make our laws conform as much as possible to the Internal Revenue Code.

Rewriting the Estate Tax Chapter of our tax code, we save on the cost of administering this tax and also bring the exemption amount up to five million dollars. We also cleaned up the tax for non-resident decedents and the generation skipping provisions. I wish I could say it is a "page-turner", but I know it isn't.

One of my constituents is concerned with retail establishments not having enough crowd control when having sales or special events. You may have seen the TV coverage of the unruly crowds of shoppers on "Black Friday" that actually caused harm to other shoppers. At his request, I introduced a bill to establish safety guidelines for retail merchants. This is a problem that must be addressed, hopefully by the business community, before someone in Hawaii is seriously injured.

Next month's *Prevailing Winds* will begin to feature other legislation that is moving through the House.

Mahalo
and Aloha,

ART @ THE CAPITOL

First Friday March, 2, 2012 from 5:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m.

Please join us at the **Hawaii State Capitol** on **Friday March 2, 2012**, from **5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.**, for the 4th Annual Art at the Capitol. This is an opportunity for the public to view more than 460 works of art that are part of the State's Art in Public Places Programs.

This year's event will feature a debut of a documentary on Ruthadell Anderson, artist of the Senate and House tapestries, and Keiko Sato, who speaks of her brother Tadashi Sato, artist of the Aquarius mosaic. Guests will also be able to enjoy live music, tour the capitol, and mingle with artists and lawmakers.

http://www.facebook.com/artatthecapitolhawaii   http://www.youtube.com/artatthecapitolhi   #HICapitolArt

Above:
Rep. Choy at his desk in the Chamber of the House.

Below:
Legislative Office Manager Carole Hagihara (right)
Legislative Aides 2012 session:
Pam Seeney, Daphne Henion

Manoa Legislative Town Meeting

**Senator Brian Taniguchi, District 10
Representative Isaac Choy, District 24
Councilmember Ann Kobayashi, District 5**

Saturday February 25, 2012
Noelani Elementary School **Library**
2655 Woodlawn Drive
11:00 am - 1:00 pm

Meet your Legislators and Councilmember
Updates on 2012 State & City legislation.
Discuss your concerns and community issues.

REP CHOY'S COMMITTEES: VICE-CHAIR— Economic Revitalization & Business
MEMBER OF: Finance, Agriculture, Tourism, International Affairs

View My Newsletters, Bill Status & Documents, Legislative Information, House/Senate, Photos, Links:
http://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/memberpage.aspx?member=choy

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