

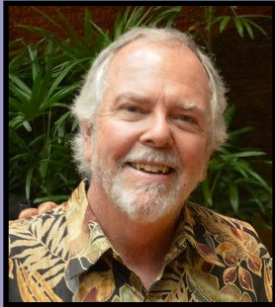


Rep. Richard Creagan
 Hawaii State Capitol
 415 S. Beretania St.
 Room 317
 Honolulu, HI 96813

Summer 2014

RICHARD CREAGAN, M.D.

State of Hawaii, House of Representatives
 District 5 - North Kona, South Kona, West Ka'u



Aloha District 5 friends,

I hope this message finds you well and that you and your families are enjoying the start of a fun, memorable, and inspiring summer season! (Kids: As a former teacher I must remind you - don't forget your summer reading!)

The regular session for 2014 has come to a close and I cannot express how thankful I am to have had this opportunity to work with the countless number of great people I've met over the past few months. My first session was definitely a continual learning experience filled with challenges around every corner. Looking back, I am truly pleased, honored, and humbled by the legislative feats my colleagues and I were able to accomplish this year. While this issue of my newsletter will be devoted to recounting many details of what was done, some major strides forward I would like to note are:

- ◆ *Increasing the minimum wage to \$10.10 by 2018*
- ◆ *Supporting the educational development of our keiki by providing publicly funded kindergarten for all 5-yr olds*
- ◆ *Allocating long-awaited funding for the Kona Judiciary Complex, and for an essential permanent home for the University of Hawaii at Hilo - College of Pharmacy*
- ◆ *Providing funds to fight invasive species, including specific funds to fight the Coffee Berry Borer Beetle and the Macadamia Felted Coccid*
- ◆ *Passing several measures that support the care, education and quality of life for our Kupuna*

It has been a great year so far and I look forward to continuing our work, research, and collaboration over the interim and in preparation for next session. Thank you for all of your valuable comments and suggestions. I apologize if I was unable to acknowledge or respond to each of those individually, but rest assured they were read and noted.

I welcome you to contact me by either email at repcreagan@capitol.hawaii.gov or by phone (toll-free) at 974-4000 ext. 69605.

Mahalo, take care, and all the best!



Rep. Creagan joins the other freshmen Representatives in the House Chambers.



The Legislature, led by the Women's Legislative Caucus, donated more than 100 Easter baskets full of essential household items to the Institute for Human Services last month. Rep. Creagan is here joined by House staff member Nan Kalupahana, who graciously volunteered to serve as the Easter Bunny throughout the donation drive.

Rep. Creagan joined Rep. Gene Ward (far left) in welcoming officials from the Peace Corps who were visiting Hawaii for the first time. Both Representatives are former Peace Corps Volunteers; Rep. Creagan served in the Marshall Islands in the 1960's.



LEGISLATION

crafting sound policy

Highlighted below are some of the major statutes approved by the State Legislature during the 2014 session. These measures have been enrolled to Governor Abercrombie for his approval or veto. The Governor has until **June 23rd** to submit his notice of intent to veto legislation, and until **July 8th** to veto them. Also included below are updates on bills that did not pass this session. I feel it is important to continue the discussion on these bills as many may resurrect themselves, perhaps in new form, next session. **I welcome your feedback on any of the bills that did not pass, as your comments help me to understand what bills should or should not be re-introduced next session.**

Agriculture

Coffee Berry Borer - Pesticide Subsidy Program (HB1514)

Appropriates \$500,000 to assist coffee growers in mitigating the coffee berry borer. This money offsets the cost of purchasing pesticides containing *Beauvaria bassiana*, a fungus that is a natural means of beetle eradication. As a coffee grower, I know how vital this bill is to the coffee industry.

Invasive Species Council (HB1716)

Appropriates \$5,000,000 for Hawaii Invasive Species Council (HISC) projects, including invasive species prevention, control, outreach, research and planning.

Macadamia Felted Coccid - Prevention and Treatment Research (HB1931)

Appropriates \$360,000 to the Dept. of Agriculture, in cooperation with UH-Manoa CTAHR, for the research & development of methods of prevention and treatment for the *Eriococcus ironsidei*, commonly known as the macadamia felted coccid. Although existing treatments are available for this insect, such methods have historically proven more effective in younger trees. This research will thus look for new ways to address macadamia felted coccid infestations in mature trees.

Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO); Labeling

FUN FACT

Labeling is the American spelling, while *labelling* is the English spelling. Your spell-checker will accept both as correct.

One much watched issue that did not pass was related to the labeling of food produced from genetically modified foods, plants, or organisms commonly lumped under the term GMOs or GE (genetically engineered) foods.

A number of bills were introduced this session that, if approved, would have required the labeling of foods containing genetically modified content. A hotly debated issue, these bills were eventually deferred (killed). Much of the discussion centered around the conflict between the "Right to Know" and the "Precautionary Principle," which has been endorsed by many nations, including the entire European Union, against the possible increased cost of labeled food. Some argued that even if labeling was



Top: Inspecting damage from the macadamia felted coccid on trees in Ka'u. Bottom left: Adult Coffee Berry Borer on a green coffee bean. Bottom right: Funds allocated to HISC will fight many invasive species such as the Little Fire Ant. Rep. recently worked with the Dept. of Agriculture and The Nature Conservancy in order to address a Little Fire Ant outbreak at the County Park in Na'alehu.

warranted it should be done on a national (and not a state-by-state) basis. A recent 2013 poll by the New York Times found that 93% of respondents favored the labels. **I would like to hear from you, my constituents, on this issue as it will definitely be revisited next session.**

In my personal opinion, Hawaii should be a leader - not a follower - on this issue. Vermont and two other New England states have now passed state-based labeling laws and many others are considering such requirements despite powerful opposition from the supporters of GMOs. While I believe that eventually national labeling will be done, and that such policy on the Federal level makes the most economic sense, I also believe that in the interim our State should honor the will of its constituents who support labeling. I also support the right of our individual counties to regulate this type of organism as is also done in all European countries.

LEGISLATION

crafting sound policy

Education

Mandatory Kindergarten (SB2768)

Legislates kindergarten for children who will be at least five years of age on or before July 31 of the school year, starting with the 2014-2015 school year.

Classes for Kupuna (HR185*)

Of great importance to me was that the House approved my resolution requesting the University of Hawaii system to consider providing free access to senior citizens who want to audit courses at all UH campuses. Currently this option is provided only at UH-Manoa.

Environment

Environmental Courts (SB632)

Establishes environmental court law, and requires environmental courts to be created as divisions of the circuit courts and district courts of the State.

Industrial Hemp (SB2175)

Authorizes the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources at the University of Hawaii to establish a 2 year industrial hemp remediation and biofuel crop research program.

Health

Autism - Insurance Coverage Analysis (SB2054)

Requires an actuarial analysis of the projected costs of providing insurance coverage for screening, diagnosis, and treatment of autism spectrum disorders.

Medical Marijuana (HCR48/HR29*)

Requests the convening of a task force to develop recommendations for the establishment of a regulated statewide dispensary system for medical marijuana. As a physician and a member of the House Committee on Health, I look forward to working with the task force to design a system of dispensaries which will better provide our island residents the treatment they need.

I am also interested in the potential expansion of the use of medical marijuana. Over the past 14 years it has become clear from our experience in Hawaii, combined with that of the almost 50% of states that allow medical marijuana, that there are a host of medical conditions that can benefit safely and effectively from such treatment. Given that track record, I support the compassionate expansion of medical conditions for which marijuana can be recommended, and am particularly interested in marijuana's potential to treat Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) as this could benefit thousands of war veterans here in Hawaii.

**Please note that this measure is a resolution and thus does not have the effect of law that a bill does.*

Rep. Creagan and Senator Russell Ruderman of Puna support SB2175 by sporting their hemp-made aloha shirts. The Governor signed SB2175 into law on April 30, 2014 as Act 56.



Telehealth (SB2469)

Access to specialists, and in particular mental health specialists, is a major problem on the Big Island. SB2469 allows consultation with health care providers through telecommunications. It also provides for reimbursement for telehealth services equal to that of face-to-face services. Non-mental health services require the patient to be accompanied by a health care provider on the patient end of the telecommunication for non-behavioral health consultations. Very importantly, given the extreme shortage of mental health professionals, for behavioral health consultations *only* the patient has to be present.

Hawaii Health Systems Corporation (SB3064)

A bill that would have allowed the Hawaii Health Systems Corporation to investigate a public-private partnership with a Hawaii-based health system died during our Conference negotiations. This was in part due to legitimate concerns raised by the Hawaii Government Employees Association that the rights of current workers would not be adequately protected. It is expected that a modified bill will be reintroduced next year, although dialogue on this issue is expected to continue during the interim.

Labor

Minimum Wage (SB2609)

Increases the minimum wage rate to \$7.75 per hour beginning on January 1, 2015, \$8.50 per hour on January 1, 2016, \$9.25 per hour on January 1, 2017, and \$10.10 per hour on January 1, 2018. Increases the tip credit to 50 cents per hour beginning on January 1, 2015, and 75 cents per hour on January 1, 2016; provided that beginning January 1, 2015, the combined amount the employee receives in wages and tips is at least \$7 more than the applicable minimum wage.

HAWAII ISLAND APPROPRIATIONS (FISCAL YEAR 2014-2015)

financing sustainable growth

House District 5 is perhaps the most diverse district in the state, with urban areas and small villages, ocean recreation and agricultural-tourism, hotels and bed and breakfasts, farming, grazing, fishing, and national parks. To create and maintain sustainable jobs for my constituents, without sacrificing a high quality of life or degrading the environment, is my highest priority. In the 2014 session we passed a bill that will raise the minimum wage 40% over the next 4 years. I and my fellow Big Island legislators worked as a team to fund over \$60 million in various construction projects in Kona and Ka'u and over \$400 million in Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) for Hawaii Island as a whole. A number of hardworking non-profit organizations in our District were also awarded funds via Grant-in-Aid (GIA) requests.

Kona International Airport	\$79.3 million	Terminal expansion and other improvements
Kona Judiciary Complex	\$35 million	Design, engineering, and construction for new judiciary complex
UH-Hilo College of Pharmacy	\$33 million	Plans, design, construction, and equipment for new instructional facility
Ka'u Water System	\$2.5 million	Design and construction for water system
Hilo Medical Center	\$2 million	Primary Care Residency Program
Manuka Natural Area Reserve	\$2 million	Plans, design, and construction for an ungulate-proof boundary fence
West Hawaii Veterans Cemetery	\$1.61 million	Plans, design, and construction for non-potable water well
West Hawaii Community Health Center	\$1 million	Construction of a new center at Laiopua in Kona
Hawaiian Ocean View Estates	\$725,000	Plans and design for new water access
UH-West Hawaii	\$600,000	Renovations to nursing and culinary buildings
Ka'u High School	\$550,000	Improvements to athletic facilities
UH-Hilo College of Agricultural, Forestry and Natural Resource Mgt	\$500,000	Plans, design, construction, and equipment for flight training center at Hilo Airport
Konawaena High School	\$250,000	New lighting system for gymnasium
The Food Basket	\$250,000	Infrastructure repairs and deferred maintenance
Kona Historical Society	\$200,000	Hawaii Island Museum Outreach Project
Hawaii Island Humane Society	\$200,000	Plans, design, construction, and equipment for Phase I of animal community center in Kona

Please note that the release of Capital Improvement Project and Grant-in-Aid funds appropriated by the Legislature are subject to the discretion of the Governor and the Department of Budget and Finance. The Governor also has line-item veto power over appropriations.

OUR SCHOOLS

educating for a prosperous future



Left: Rep. Creagan and Rep. Bert Kobayashi honor Milken Educator Award winner Michelle Kay. Middle: Students at Kona Pacific Public Charter School gather on-campus for an assembly. Photo courtesy of Kona Pacific Public Charter School. Right: Rep. Creagan joins Ka'u Learning Academy founding board members Kathryn Tydlacka and Joe Iacuzzo. Photo courtesy of the Ka'u Calendar.

Public Education

As a former teacher, I understand the importance of providing good educational opportunities for all of our keiki. Improving our public schools is one of my top priorities, and I support improving both our educational programs and our facilities, including eventually providing air-conditioning for all new and existing buildings.

In Hawaii we are blessed to have a group of outstanding public school teachers as exemplified by Michelle Kay, a science teacher at Kalakaua Middle School who was awarded this year's prestigious Milken Educator Award (see photo above). I truly respect the positive impact our teachers have upon the growth of our children and look forward to continuing to work together to advance our educational system.

Kona Pacific Public Charter School

Welcoming students since 2008, Kona Pacific Public Charter School sits on 40 acres in Kealahou and serves a diverse student body from North and South Kona. It is the only public Waldorf school in the State of Hawaii, and as such is uniquely positioned to contribute significantly to Hawaii's ongoing efforts to achieve effective school innovation and champion the integration of agriculture into the curriculum of more schools. I strongly supported a Grant-in-Aid for this school but unfortunately it was not budgeted for this year due to a downward Council on Revenues forecast.

Ka'u Learning Academy

The Ka'u Learning Academy was the only Hawaii State Public Charter School to be approved this year. The Academy plans to open for grades four through six for its first year beginning in August 2015, and will operate initially out of the Discovery Harbor clubhouse. I was honored to testify in strong support of the Academy before the Charter School Commission.

The Academy plans to provide services to Ka'u students including a segment of the large population of Marshallese students who live in Hawaiian Ocean View Estates, and anticipates campuses in Naalehu and Ocean View. In addition to a rigorous academic schedule which incorporates both classroom and computer-based learning, the school will also emphasize creating an individual education plan for every student.



Congratulations Class of 2014!

To all of our Graduates,
We wish you the very best as you begin this new chapter of your life! Education is a remarkable tool - it enables you to do wonderful things that can catapult you to great success. Congratulations on your graduation and all the best for the future!

-Rep. Creagan & staff

COMMUNITY NEWS

building our 'ohana together



Left: Rep. Creagan and Bill Armer, President of the Keauhou Canoe Club. Middle: Twelve inch pipe carrying water from Wood Valley to the Olson Trust farms across a deep gully in Ka'u. The bridge had to be specially constructed to bear the weight of the water-filled pipe plus pipeline workers. Right: Rep. Creagan addresses members of the Ka'u Chapter of the Hawaii Farmers Union United. Photo courtesy of the Ka'u Calendar.

Elderly

Our Kupuna are very important to me, especially now that I have joined their ranks. As a member of the legislature's Kupuna Caucus, I was pleased to consider and pass several bills this year which will provide additional funding for Kupuna care and other services to the elderly, and will protect Kupuna from those unscrupulous individuals who prey on them. It is very important to me that the safety net for the seniors in our community is preserved and expanded.

Hawaii Farmers Union United

The family farm is the heart of the Hawaiian agricultural system. That heart has been neglected. I thus support the emerging role of the Hawaii Farmers Union United as a strong voice for the small farms and family farms of Hawaii. The Farmers Union supports the small farmer in competing for land and water, and encourages the diversified use of farms in agritourism, farm-stays, and the farmers' markets emerging all over Hawaii.

Hospitals

As both Josh Green, who is our Senator, and I are physicians we have a strong voice in the legislature on health-related issues. Perhaps the most important issue for our District is a new hospital to replace the aging Kona Community Hospital. While a public-private partnership may be needed for that task, it is extremely important that the rights of the current and future workers be protected. We are also dedicated to preserving the safety net provided by our rural hospitals in Ka'u and Kohala.

Healthcare Access for Patients who are Deaf

Health care providers have an obligation to provide auxiliary aids and services for patients who have disabilities, including qualified sign language interpreters when needed. Unfortunately, it is often very difficult for deaf or hard of hearing patients to gain access to a translator; a huge gap in communication thus creates significant frustration and inexact care for even the most routine of office visits.

In an effort to address this gap the Hawaii Civil Rights Commission, in cooperation with the Disability and Communication Access Board, announced a joint public education effort to inform patients and providers alike of their rights and responsibilities. Educational flyers in support of this effort can be found online at: <http://labor.hawaii.gov/hcrc/>

Ka'u Agricultural Water Systems

I recently participated in a hike which explored the flume systems of the sugarcane era. This hike was one of the special events offered by the Ka'u Coffee Festival, and was a rare opportunity for members of the public to see firsthand the unique type of infrastructure developed years ago to flume cane down from the high fields.

A small farmer myself, I recognize the great importance of water access and its direct impact upon those who wish to be involved in agriculture. Facilitating the supply and demand for water for our farmers in District 5 is thus a priority issue that I plan to continue working on during the legislative interim.

COMMUNITY NEWS

building our 'ohana together

Keauhou Bay Moorings



Current



Proposed

Photo by Brian Powers, Hawaiian Images Photography & Video, and courtesy of the Keauhou Canoe Club.

Keauhou Boat Harbor

In what has become a significant issue of contention, the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) has proposed the addition of 7 new moorings in Keauhou Bay, which would increase the number of total moorings from 9 to 16. This proposal comes after a series of surveys and mappings of existing conditions that the Department has had conducted since 2012.

A great amount of pushback to the Department's proposal has since arisen because many of the Bay's everyday users feel that there is not adequate space in Keauhou to accommodate such an increase in moorings. In addition, members of the public have felt that the level of communication and accommodation on the part of the Department has been insufficient throughout this vetting process.

In particular, the 600-member Keauhou Canoe Club filed suit against DLNR in December 2013, stating that the proposed work in the Bay triggers the need for an environmental assessment (EA). The Department previously stated that they felt an EA was not necessary nor required by law at this time, but in May 2014 officially consented to completing one.

At this time I do not support the expansion of moorings in Keauhou, as I do not believe that the current proposal results in the greatest good for the greatest number of people. However, I do strongly support maintaining and improving the existing moorings.

Traditional Fish Drying Methods

With the knowledge and advocacy of a small family business in South Kona, I introduced a resolution this session which encouraged the Department of Health (DOH) to study the traditional method of sun-drying fish. Due to Federal food regulations, DOH has refused the renewal of certain permits for businesses who use this method, despite the fact that it has been practiced for many years. This resolution, HR186, was approved by the House of Representatives this session.

Sun-dried fish such as dried 'opelu is one of the tasty specialties which expresses the true character of our District and helps to drive our economy. I thus plan to continue working with the DOH to ensure that this revered and significantly relevant traditional practice is not unnecessarily stifled.



CONTACT US

We are here to help! Please feel free to contact Representative Creagan and the House District 5 office at:

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Congratulations!!!!



Photo courtesy of the Ka'u Calendar.

**Ka'u High School Boys' Volleyball
BIIF Division II Champions**



Photo courtesy of Konawaena High School.

**Konawaena High School Girls' Volleyball
HHSAA Division II State Champions**