



Rep. Sharon E. Har
State Capitol, Rm. 438
Honolulu, HI 96813

Capitol Spotlight

Representative Sharon E. Har

2013 Legislative Session

Aloha Friends,

I hope you and your families are well and enjoying your summer. It was a long legislative session and I would like to take this time to summarize measures and issues that the Legislature took up in 2013. While the attached newsletter might seem overwhelming, I hope you take the time to review it.

Considering that liberal Democrats were willing to compromise their agenda with Republican values, I remained hopeful that a truly bipartisan agenda would prevail. Time has taught us that the ‘tax and spend’ mentality of old does not work. In fact, it was the newly elected House Speaker Joe Souki (D – Wailuku, Kahului) who said, “It’s time to look at rolling back the personal tax burden for people with lower incomes and the middle class, at least incrementally, over the next few years.” Sadly, the only tax relief discussed focused on a tax cut for the wealthiest 2% of the population which did not benefit the residents of West Oahu.

Even though leadership in the House of Representatives changed, I continued to work with House leadership as a majority whip to advocate the values and viewpoints of West Oahu residents to make our home and state a better place to live. In addition to ‘common sense’, there were many other goals that I worked tirelessly to champion. For example, the University of Hawaii - West Oahu (UHWO) continues to be a priority of the Legislature, resulting in an additional \$3-million in funding for new faculty and staff for the campus to meet its projected enrollment. Additionally, plans for new middle and high schools in East Kapolei are on track to relieve overcrowding at West Oahu schools.

Thank you for the honor and privilege of serving as your representative this past legislative session. While this session has concluded, I will continue to work on your behalf during the interim and the next session to ensure that my colleagues are aware of our problems and that government adheres to the values embodied in ‘common sense’ that we all must practice daily. Please do not hesitate to contact me at my office using the contact information at the top of this page should you have any questions, comments or concerns.

Mahalo nui loa,

Rep. Sharon E. Har

2013 Community Survey

The survey results are in! Mahalo to all of you who took the time to submit your survey responses. This past January, I asked West Oahu residents what they thought about the Governor’s New Day Plan. Specifically:

The Governor is pushing forward with his “New Day” initiatives which include early childhood education (preschool), programs for the elderly, watershed protection, digital curriculum in public schools, and upgrading government Information Technology Infrastructure to make government more efficient for taxpayers. Would you be willing to pay an increase in taxes or fees for these initiatives?

Yes: 54% No: 41% Unsure: 5%



(above) Rep. Har read to Ms. Karnuth’s (shown) and Mr. Tokumi’s 4th Grade classes for April’s Read-Aloud event at Kapolei Elementary. (below) Rep. Har speaking at the Kapolei Backyard Jam on February 24th, sponsored by the Coalition for a Drug-Free Hawaii. Rep. Har is a co-sponsor of the Kapolei Coalition for a Drug-Free Hawaii.



Your Help is Needed to Keep the Kapolei Post Office Open!

The United States Postal Service (USPS) has slated the Kapolei Post Office for closure because of fiscal constraints. Back in 2010, I started a grassroots campaign against the closure by working with USPS and our residents. Closure of the Haumea St. location was averted after a substantial amount of public comment was received opposing the closure of the Kapolei Post Office. I wrote about the previous closure attempt in an op-ed for the Star-Advertiser -- reposted here: <http://hawaiihouseblog.blogspot.com/2011/09/maintaining-kapolei-post-office-crucial.html>

If the Kapolei Post Office were to be closed, USPS plans to use its location in Kalaeloa to provide services to Kapolei and Makakilo. The hours of operation at the Kalaeloa Post Office would be increased accordingly under this plan.

Once again, your comments are needed if we wish to keep the Kapolei Post Office open. The deadline for comment submission is July 4th, at the address listed below:

Janice Shimizu
3600 Aolele Street
Honolulu, HI 96820-9998

House Judiciary Committee focuses on Improving Public Safety

As the new vice-chair of the House Judiciary Committee, several measures passed across my desk that received very little media attention. Being moved to the Judiciary Committee has given me the opportunity to focus on public safety and crime prevention. While these issues seem minor, I want you to be apprised of these new safety laws so that you will not be caught off-guard:

Mandatory rear seat belts: SB 4 was enacted as Act 73, requiring all front seat and back seat occupants to buckle up. Adults and children must use their seat belts and child restraints at all times. Dept. of Health studies have found that unrestrained back seat passengers were more than three times as likely to have injuries that were fatal or required hospitalization compared to restrained back seat passengers. Additionally, medical charges for unrestrained rear seat passengers were triple those of restrained passengers.

Electronic device ban while driving: HB 980, was signed into law as Act 74, creating a statewide standard banning the usage of electronic devices while driving. While county laws address distracted driving, Act 74 creates consistent requirements across all counties for the use of mobile electronic devices while driving and simplifies enforcement. In 2007, the Dept. of Transportation observed that 32% of all accidents were attributed to inattention to driving.

Out-of-State Gun Registration: SB 69 requires in-state registration of guns brought in from out-of-state. This measure creates a consistent standard for gun registration, regardless of where the firearm was purchased. The Hawaii Rifle Association as well as the county police departments were in favor of this common sense measure.



(top-left) Rep. Har speaking to 5th graders from Mauka Lani Elementary in Mrs. Kahue, Mr. Rankie, Mr. Sessions and Mrs. Souza's classes about the legislative process. (top-center) In March, Rep. Har organized a rally against the legalization of marijuana at the Capitol. The event was attended by law enforcement, students, members of the construction industry and individuals from the faith-based community. (top-right) Each year, Rep. Har and her husband assist the "We the People" team at Island Pacific Academy in preparation for their annual competition. (bottom-left) SkillsUSA students from Kapolei Middle School learn about the Legislature from Rep. Har during their February 2013 visit.

2013 Measures Passed

I begin every legislative session by introducing legislation to create, modify or repeal existing laws. While the journey is long and sometimes arduous in order for a bill to become law, the end result hopefully makes Hawaii a better and safer place to live, work and play. Below you will find bills that I sponsored that were passed this session by the Legislature:

Broadband Permitting and Construction (HB635): Streamlines infrastructure improvements to expedite the installation and expansion of broadband infrastructure.

Professional and Vocational Licensing (HB1202): Clarifies that a professional or vocational licensee who inadvertently fails to maintain licensing requirements but who subsequently corrects the failure so that there was no lapse in licensure shall not be guilty of unlicensed activity. Applies the same provision to contractors for lapses of no more than sixty days.

Urban Gardening in Affordable Housing (HB560): Creates a program for the Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation (HHFDC) and the Hawaii Community Development Authority (HCDA) to create incentives for affordable housing to incorporate urban gardens to encourage self-sufficiency and sustainability.

Nisei Veterans Legacy Center (HB1396): Appropriates funds for the planning and design of the Nisei Veterans Legacy Center (contingent upon matching private funds) to serve surviving Nisei veterans and to memorialize the service and sacrifice of all Nisei veterans like the 442nd Regimental Combat Team.

Homelessness Awareness Month (HB530, Act 50): Designates the month of November as homelessness awareness month.

Early Childhood Education Fizzles Out at the Legislature

This year, Governor Abercrombie made preschool education one of his legislative priorities. The governor introduced legislation that would make preschool education available to all of Hawaii's children. If 85% of all brain development occurs before the age of five, then ensuring that children under the age of five have access to a preschool education is a very smart investment in a child's future.

I was pleased to offer my support of the governor's early education initiatives, particularly since our district has one of the highest demographics of children. At the beginning of session, I sent a survey to the entire district asking whether residents supported universal preschool education and if they were willing to pay for it. Based on the replies I received, over 50% of respondents viewed preschool as a priority. Additionally, those in support were also willing to pay more in taxes to make early childhood education a reality.

Of the initial \$60-million that the governor requested for universal preschool, I was disappointed when the Legislature chose to fund only one-tenth (\$6-million) of the funds that were required, opting instead to give tax breaks to the film industry. The money appropriated supplements an existing program within the Dept. of Health called "Preschool Open Doors", which will provide access to school readiness services that address a child's physical, cognitive, linguistic, social and emotional development.

2013-15 Budget Recap

The state budget allocates general funds for the operation of government agencies and services over the next two fiscal years. \$6-billion was budgeted for FY14 and \$6.1-billion for FY15. The state budget is particularly important because it establishes what government plans to do with your hard-earned taxpayer dollars. My priority, therefore, as your State Representative, is to fight against government waste and to ensure that the money government does use is spent wisely.

You will find that many critical areas of state government scaled back due to the Great Recession are being restored. For example, funds were restored for agencies that guard against invasive species and protect the environment. The budget also restores concessions made by public employees to keep the state government solvent during the Great Recession. With the worst of times over, 'furlough Fridays' should be a thing of the past – and government should be fully open again to serve the public.

I am proud the Legislature appropriated \$50-million in general funds for FY2013-14 to accelerate the recapitalization of the Emergency and Budget Reserve Fund (a.k.a. 'Rainy Day Fund') and hurricane relief funds. Managing our financial liabilities will help stabilize finances in the future.

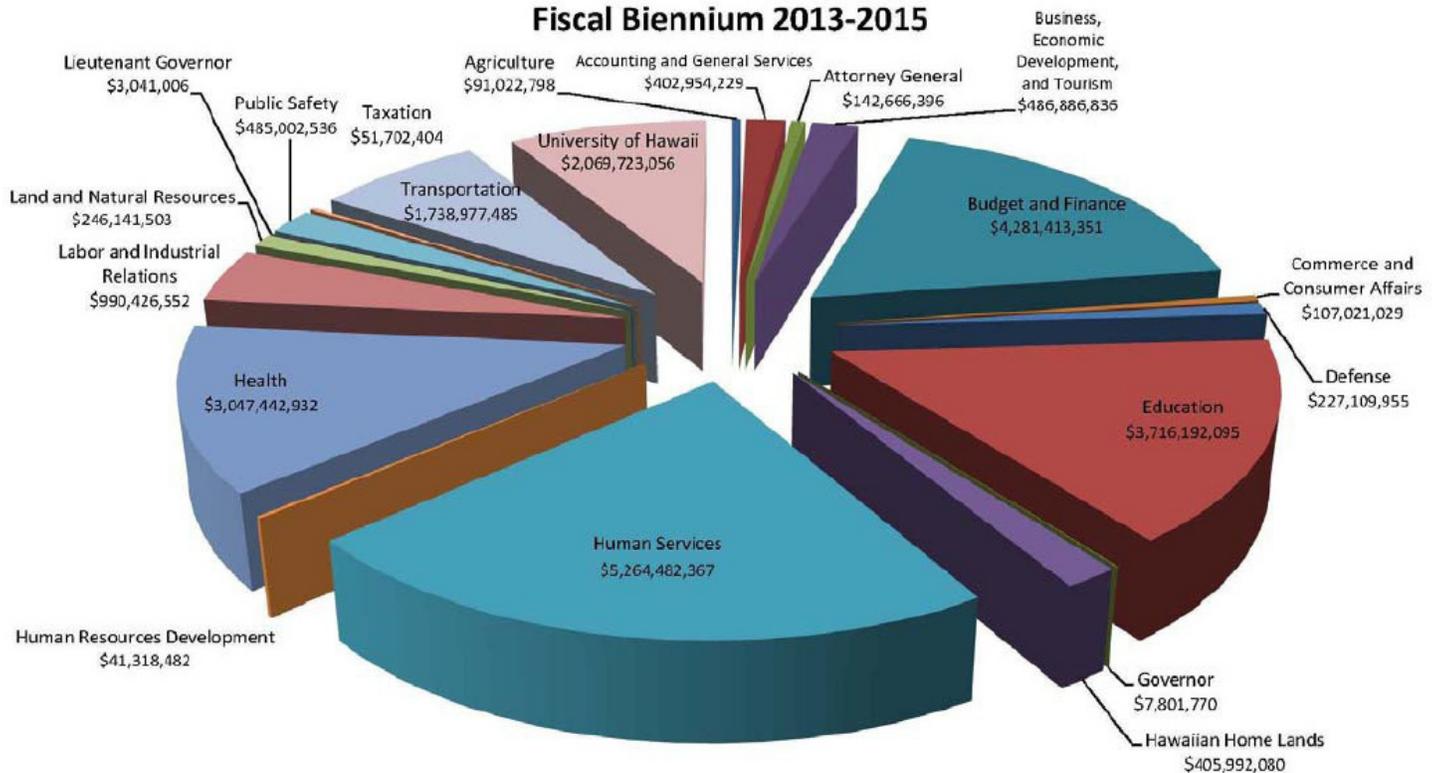


(top, L-R) Kevin Sabet, Rep. Har, former Congressman Patrick Kennedy and Alan Shinn (Coalition for a Drug-Free Hawaii) at an informational briefing to educate government officials and legislators about the health and safety risks of broad marijuana legalization.



(bottom) Rep. Har provides mid-session Legislative highlights to community residents.

Fiscal Biennium 2013-2015



No Relief for Local Small Businesses Under Bipartisan House Leadership

In what was supposed to be a banner year for House Republicans, measures passed this legislative session managed to further erode the quality of our business climate, particularly for our local small businesses. While businesses are required to contribute their fair share, they are also our economic engine that provide jobs and offer needed services. When operating a business becomes more expensive, the increased costs are passed on to consumers. Ultimately, it makes it more expensive to live in Hawaii.

The effects of these attitudes are far reaching – a recent article carried by the Associated Press noted that 8 million Americans were forced into 'involuntary' part-time employment. These are workers whose positions were changed from full-time to part-time because the cost of doing business became too expensive. While the tax burden is placed on small business, taxpayers end up shouldering the cost of government.

In March, I supported the suspension of an increase in the unemployment insurance that small businesses pay to the state, particularly as the economy was recovering and unemployment rates were decreasing. The Republican-backed House leadership, however, did not share my concern for the survivability of our small businesses. House Majority Leader Scott Saiki (D - McCully, Kakaako, Downtown) was quoted in the Honolulu Star-Advertiser saying, "At this point, the House position is that we will not adjust the unemployment insurance rate." With attitudes like this, we will be buying our manapua from Walmart rather than Chun Wah Kam or Golden Coin.

Government must be accountable for the survivability of island small businesses. Our small businesses are owned and operated by local people who are working hard as entrepreneurs. They are not 'Corporate America'. When the cost of business is increased, this cost is just passed on to us, and we cannot afford a more expensive Hawaii.

West Oahu to benefit from \$118-million on CIPs

The table to the right details infrastructure funds, also known as Capital Improvement Projects (CIPs), that will positively impact residents of Kapolei-Makakilo and improve our quality of life. The table does not reflect other items in the budget such as: (a) an allocation of an additional \$3-million per year for UH-West Oahu for operating expenses, and (b) repair and maintenance to area schools allocated in lump sum.

Also included in the list are Grants-in-Aid (GIA) to assist the projects of non-profit groups to better serve Kapolei and Makakilo. GIAs granted by the Legislature are vetted by an application process overseen by members of the House and Senate to ensure a transparent process.

While I take spending seriously, it is important that tax dollars that you pay go toward making West Oahu a better place to live, work and play. Government needs to be held accountable for our overcrowded schools and our congested roads.



(right) As a second-generation Korean-American, Rep. Har participated in a panel to commemorate the 110th anniversary of Korean immigration to the United States.



(left) Rep. Har is joined on opening day by Pastors Guy Kapeliela (Hope Chapel Second City) and Allen Cardines (Hope Chapel Nanakuli). (right) Uncle Shad Kane, Melissa Lyman and Rep. Har commemorate the blessing of the Kalaeloa Heritage and Legacy Center which is the product of an effort between the Navy, the Hawaii Community and Development Authority (HCDA) and the Kapolei Hawaiian Civic Club to preserve Hawaiian culture in West Oahu.

Consider Going Paperless

Did you know that I mail out five other newsletters in addition to this one over the course of the legislative session? Due to budgetary constraints permit me to only mail monthly updates to a fraction of Kapolei and Makakilo.

If you have not chosen to go paperless, consider that going paperless: (a) saves money on postage and printing costs, (b) is great for the environment, and (c) keeps you up-to-date with all of my monthly newsletters. Lastly, I like to keep everyone up-to-date on news and events (like road closures) in the community that are helpful to know.

To sign-up, please email me at rephar@capitol.hawaii.gov.



(left) Rep. Har provides an end-of-session update to the Kapolei Rotary Club at their monthly breakfast in May. (right) Students from Kapolei High Schools Best Buddies program visited the Capitol to talk about education issues. Best Buddies encourages friendship between individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities with their high school peers.

Capital Improvement Project	\$
Kunia Agricultural Park	\$2,500,000
<i>Design and construction for the Kunia Agricultural Park</i>	
National Guard, Army Aviation Support Facility, Kalaeloa	\$31,219,000
<i>Plans, design, construction and equipment of a new army aviation support facility at Kalaeloa, meeting national guard standards and LEED Silver criteria.</i>	
East Kapolei High School	\$5,000,000
<i>Design, construction and equipment for a new high school; ground and site improvements; equipment and appurtenances.</i>	
East Kapolei Middle School	\$3,000,000
<i>Plans, design, construction and equipment for a new middle school; ground and site improvements; equipment and appurtenances.</i>	
Makakilo Elementary School	\$700,000
<i>Design and construction for campus-wide electrical upgrades; ground and site improvements; equipment and appurtenances.</i>	
Mauka Lani Elementary School	\$700,000
<i>Design and construction for campus-wide electrical upgrades; ground and site improvements; equipment and appurtenances.</i>	
Seagull Schools Childcare Center	\$1,200,000
<i>GIA: Construction for a childcare center located at Kapolei Elementary School.</i>	
Kapolei Community Development Corporation	\$1,150,000
<i>GIA: Construction of the KCDC Heritage Center multi-purpose facility.</i>	
Dept. of Land and Natural Resources - Watershed Initiative	\$14,500,000
<i>Design and construction for the Dept. of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR), Division of Forestry and Wildlife watershed initiative funding support for watershed protection, management and administration.</i>	
Kalaeloa-Barbers Point Harbor Improvements	\$3,400,000
<i>Plans and design for a new fuel pier facility in addition to plans and design to modify the turning basin, entrance channel, and other physical features to improve navigational safety and operational efficiencies.</i>	
H-1, Westbound Afternoon (PM) Contraflow	\$15,000,000
<i>Construction for a PM contraflow lane on Interstate Route H-1 from the vicinity of Radford Dr. to Waikele.</i>	
H-1, Kunia Interchange Improvements	\$780,000
<i>Plans for improvements to the Kunia Interchange and approaches.</i>	
Kualakai Pkwy. Extension	\$15,000,000
<i>Construction for a 1/2-mile extension to Kapolei Pkwy. and Roosevelt Ave.</i>	
Kunia Road, Lane Addition	\$3,000,000
<i>Plans, design and construction to extend third lane over Farrington Hwy to the H-1 Fwy southbound to the vicinity of Laulanui St.</i>	
Oahu Bikeways	\$2,832,000
<i>Land acquisition for a multi-use path from the vicinity of Waipio Point Access Rd. to Lualualei Naval Rd. Necessary for federal funds.</i>	
University of Hawaii - West Oahu Improvements	\$15,300,000
<i>Design and construction of Road B on the campus of UHWO to connect to Kualakai Pkwy; project to include necessary intersection improvements. Design and construction for the Allied Health Building, including ground and site improvements; equipment and appurtenances, and all project related costs.</i>	
University of Hawaii - Academy of Creative Media	\$2,086,000
<i>Additional funds to expand the Academy of Creative Media to better serve island students.</i>	
'Ulu'ulu: Henry Ku'ualoha Giugni Moving Image Archive	\$400,000
<i>Operating funds for the 'Ulu'ulu: Henry Ku'ualoha Giugni Moving Image Archive of Hawaii to preserve film and videotape related to Hawaiian history and culture, located at UHWO.</i>	
Challenger Center Hawaii	\$249,000
<i>Operating funds for the Challenger Center Hawaii and Pacific International Space Center for Exploration Systems at Barbers Point Elementary.</i>	
Nisei Veterans Legacy Center	\$150,000
<i>Planning and design of the Nisei Veterans Legacy Center at UH-West Oahu</i>	