



BERTRAND KOBAYASHI STATE REPRESENTATIVE

DISTRICT 19 - DIAMOND HEAD,
KAHALA, KAIMUKI, KAPAHULU



March 2015



Aloha Friends and Neighbors,

Thank you for the honor and privilege to serve as your State Representative in the Hawaii State Legislature. I am grateful for the faith and confidence you have placed in me for the next 2 years.

I am once again serving as Vice-Chair of the House Human Services Committee. I am also a member of the Health, Housing, and Finance Committees.

As we pass the mid-point of the session, the legislature has vetted more than 2894 bills that were introduced, and the two chambers reduced that number to 300+ each. I have been focusing my time on important issues such as protecting our environment, supporting our elderly, funding education, and building our economy.

Thank you again for the privilege of serving as your representative in the Hawaii State House.

With Warmest Aloha,

Bert Kobayashi

Honolulu Rail Transit Funding

I voted 'no' on HB 134 dealing with extending the half-percent excise [sales] tax.

My reasons were many, including:

1. 65% of the replies to my district-wide March 2015 postcard said rail should get less or no funds. Opinions are as follows on rail funding:

- | | |
|-----------------|-----|
| a. More Funds - | 9% |
| b. Same Funds - | 21% |
| c. Less Funds - | 56% |
| d. No Funds - | 9% |
| e. No Opinion - | 6% |

2. Rail is a City and County (C&C) problem, and the C&C should be doing more to solve its own problem, not relying entirely on the State to bail out the C&C. E.g., the City Council has not taken a position about an excise tax extension, no position on how much and how long an extension. The Mayor and the Council have not discussed, much less approved, any financial contribution to solving its own problem.

As of March 9, 2015, there have been two important votes on rail tax extension:

1. The House Finance Committee passed HB134 with an 8-7 vote. I voted against the bill.

This bill reduces Oahu's half-percent excise tax surcharge to one-fourth percent in 2017, but doesn't specify how long it would be in effect. The bill also seeks to change the state's 10 percent administrative charge, but doesn't specify an amount.

2. The Senate Ways and Means Committee, by an 8 to 2 vote, passed SB19, SD2, which would extend Oahu's 0.5 percent excise tax surcharge for five years to cover cost overruns for the rail project to reach Ala Moana Center as planned. The surcharge is scheduled to expire in 2022, but under the bill would continue until 2027.

The Constitution requires that the counties should be treated similarly in regard to taxing powers, so both the House and Senate also allow Neighbor Island counties to enact similar surcharges for county projects.

Of great concern is that it would cost \$3.2 billion [repeat, billion] to stop the rail project now. \$3.2 billion includes prior expenditures and signed contracts, returning money to the Federal government.





David Anien and Representative Kobayashi

Kaimuki High School Student Interviews Representative Kobayashi

Kaimuki High School Senior David Anien interviewed Representative Bertrand Kobayashi for 'Ōlelo Community Media. 'Ōlelo <<https://www.facebook.com/olelocommunity>> Community Media's Kaimuki Center (located on the campus of Kaimuki High School) is a welcoming venue for community members, young and old, to openly share their messages, their stories, their ideas to the public by producing video content to air on Oahu's public access television channels (49, 53, 54, and 55). Professional video equipment and facilitated training are available to any aspiring volunteer producer. For more information, interested community members can call (808) 737-8803 or email kaimuki@olelo.org <<mailto:kaimuki@olelo.org>>

Friends of the Library Volunteer of the Year



Shirley Naito, recipient of the Friends of the Library Volunteer of the year award, was presented with a Congratulatory Certificate by Representative Kobayashi at the Main State Library.



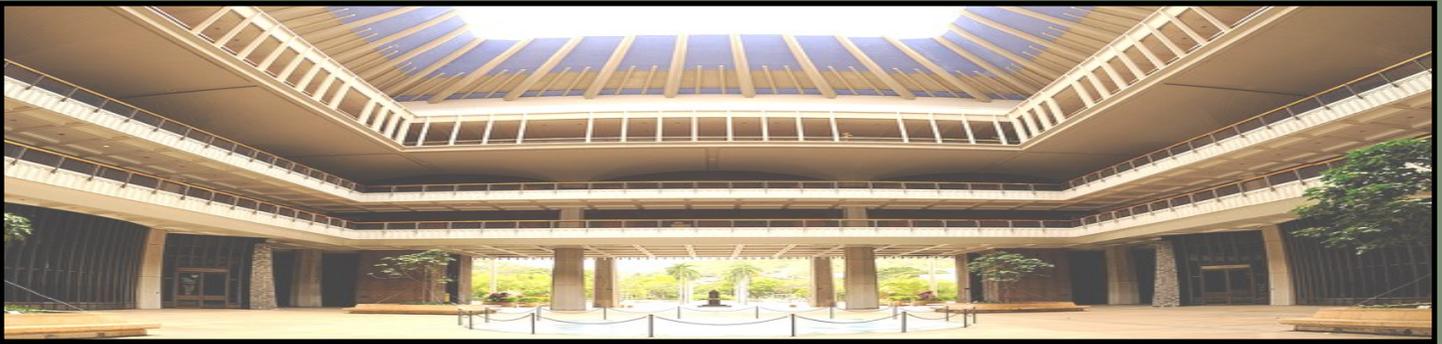
Representative Kobayashi and Shirley Naito

Meet the 2015 Staff of Representative Kobayashi

Please feel free to contact Ed, Liane, Joni, or Lynda at 586-6310 or email at repkobayashi@capitol.hawaii.gov if they can be of assistance to you.



Ed Thompson, Liane Miwa, Joni Ekimura, and Lynda Asato



2015 Mid-Session Legislative Highlights

As the 2015 Legislature reached its midway point, the House passed bills modifying the state's excise tax surcharge for rail, authorizing the creation of medical marijuana dispensaries in Hawaii, requiring health insurers with greater than 20 percent of the state's small group insurance market to offer qualified health plans under the Hawaii Health Connector, and facilitating the creation of a private-public partnership for Maui's public hospitals.

The House also passed on to the Senate another 200 bills including measures addressing the state's infrastructure, local businesses and the economy, and participation and transparency in government. These three areas reflect the focus of the House majority on improving and modernizing government that was identified at the start of the legislative session.

Key measures passed by the House include:

HB134, HD1, which removes the authority of the City and County of Honolulu to collect a tax surcharge beginning on January 1, 2016, but would allow all counties, including the City and County of Honolulu, to adopt a new tax surcharge at a rate of 0.25 per cent, beginning on January 1, 2017, and restricts the tax surcharge adopted by the City and County of Honolulu, if any, to be used for Honolulu's rail project

HB321, HD1, which establishes and provides funding for medical marijuana dispensaries and production centers, mandates at least one dispensary in each county, and allows for the manufacturing of capsules, lozenges, oils and pills containing medical marijuana

HB1075, HD2, which authorizes the Maui hospital system to enter into an agreement with a private entity to transition one or more of its facilities into a new private Hawaii nonprofit corporation

HB940, HD1, which prohibits the use of electronic smoking devices in places where smoking is prohibited

HB825, HD1, which establishes licensing requirements and enforcement provisions for transient vacation rentals to be administered by the state Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs

HB1491, HD2, which requires non-candidate committees making only independent expenditures to report whether their contributors of \$10,000 or more are subject to disclosure reporting requirements and provide information about the contributor's funding sources

Tax Time Guide:
Use Free File for Help with Tax Returns, Extensions and New Health Care
Law IRS YouTube Videos:



WASHINGTON – The Internal Revenue Service today reminded the millions of taxpayers who have yet to file their taxes that Free File remains available.

Available only at [IRS.gov/FreeFile](https://www.irs.gov/FreeFile), the Free File service makes brand-name tax software products and electronic filing available to most taxpayers for free.

This is the second in a series of 10 daily IRS tips called the Tax Time Guide. These tips are designed to help taxpayers navigate common tax issues as the April 15 deadline approaches.

Taxpayers have the option to prepare their return at any time and schedule a tax payment as late as the April 15 deadline. Taxpayers who cannot meet the April tax filing deadline can also use Free File to file a six-month extension.

Through a partnership between the IRS and the Free File Alliance, a consortium of 14 leading tax software companies make their branded products available for free. Since 2003, more than 43 million people have used Free File, saving \$1.3 billion based on a conservative \$30-fee estimate. Anyone who earned \$60,000 or less last year qualifies to choose from among 14 software products. Those who earned more than 60,000 are still eligible for Free File Fillable Forms, the electronic version of IRS paper forms. This more basic Free File option is best for people who are comfortable preparing their own tax return.

More than 70 percent of all taxpayers – 100 million people - are eligible for the software products. Each of the 14 companies has its own special offers, generally based on age, income or state residency. Taxpayers can review each company offer or they can use a “Help Me” tool that will find the software for which they are eligible.

Wondering [How to Use Free File](#)? Free File offers easy-to-use products that ask questions and the taxpayer supplies the answers. The software will find the right forms, find the right tax credits and deductions and even do the math. Some companies also offer free state tax return preparation.

Free File also can help taxpayers with the new [health care](#) requirements. Most people will simply have to check a box to report health care coverage for the entire year. Learn more at [IRS.gov/aca](https://www.irs.gov/aca).

Free File will be available through October 2015 only through [IRS.gov/FreeFile](https://www.irs.gov/FreeFile).



The Honolulu Zoo needs your kokua!

The Mayor's Office of Culture and Arts and the Honolulu Zoo are asking for donations of la'i (ti leaf) to help repair the hale la'i. Once used for cultural and community events at the Honolulu Zoo, the thatched roof of the hale la'i has fallen into a state of disrepair over the years due to nature's elements. The Zoo wishes to bring this structure back to its original state so it can once again be used to benefit the community.

*Hundreds of leaves will be needed to complete this repair,
so please donate as many la'i as possible!*

Green, Yellow, or Brown ti leaves, **with the stems**, may be dropped off in plastic bags at the Honolulu Zoo entrance.