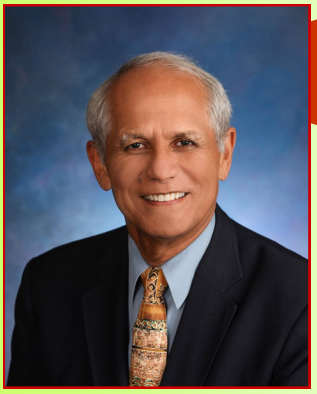

Legislative Update from...

Senator Mike Gabbard

March Aqua Marine 2014

Aloha friends,

Hope you and your ohana are well. It's that time of year. For all you folks procrastinating on doing your taxes… a non-profit, Free File Alliance, is partnering with the IRS to offer free e-file tax preparation services. Taxpayers who earned $58,000 or less in adjusted gross income in 2013 are eligible and can visit www.IRS.gov/freefile to prepare and file their federal tax return at no cost. Please let me know if I can ever help you or your family in any way. I can be reached at 586-6830 or sengabbard@capitol.hawaii.gov. Here are a few things I'd like to share with you.

Mike

COMMITTEE CHAIR

*** Energy and Environment**

MEMBER

*** Judiciary and Labor**

*** Transportation and International Affairs**

*** Education**

District 20

Kapolei, Makakilo, and portions of Ewa, Kalaeloa, and Waipahu

Listen-Story Meeting

My next "Listen Story" meeting will be held at Kapolei Starbucks on Farrington Highway, next to the Chevron gas station at 9am on Saturday, March 29th. If you can't make it, send me an email, and I'll send you a summary of the meeting.

Senator Mike Gabbard and Senator Russell Ruderman, Chair and Vice Chair of the Energy and Environment Committee, appeared on ThinkTech Hawai`i's Hawai`i: The State of Clean Energy on Feb 19th. Pictured (L to R) are co-host Jay Fidell, Sen. Ruderman, Sen. Gabbard, and co-host Dr. Sharon Moriwaki.

Draft Environmental Assessment Completed for Kapolei II Elementary

Good news! The draft environmental assessment (EA) for Kapolei II Elementary School has been completed. This brings us another step closer to seeing this long-awaited school become a reality in the Fall 2015. The preliminary findings of the EA is that the construction of the school will have no significant negative impact on our environment. The school will be located at the intersection of Ft. Barrette Rd. and Kunehi Street, across from Kapolei High, next to the Mehana subdivision. It will feature a Twenty-First Century Learning Environment with an expected enrollment of 750 students. There will be 100,000 sq. ft. of indoor space and 122,000 sq. ft. of outdoor physical education space. The school is planned for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification and will promote sustainability by minimizing energy consumption, incorporating renewable energy sources, providing daylighting, and reducing water usage. The total construction cost will be $38.3 million. The deadline to make comments on the online EA is March 10th. Comments can also be sent to: Joane E. Hiramatsu, Belt Collins Hawai'i LLC, 2153 North King Street Suite 200, Honolulu 96819.

415 S. Beretania St., Room 201, Honolulu, HI 96813 ~ Phone: 808-586-6830 ~ Fax: 808-586-6679 ~ sengabbard@capitol.hawaii.gov.

Visit to David Wong's Natural Farm Inspiring

I visited David Wong's 200-acre natural farm and piggery in Wai'anae Valley on February 18th with my wife Carol and daughter, Congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard. Seventy-five acres of this farm will soon host a 15 MW solar array to be built by NextEra. When completed by 2016, it will be one of the largest solar farms in the state. What makes David's farm so special is that he has incorporated Master Han-Kyu Cho's Korean Natural Farming methods, which don't require the use of chemical pesticides or fertilizers, and uses 40% less water than conventional farming. Mr. Wong lets Mother Nature do the work for him by culturing the naturally occurring indigenous micro-organisms in the ground to revitalize his soil. Some of the crops he's currently growing are dry-land taro, ginger, moringa, and bananas. It's very exciting to see this innovative agricultural system taking root in our islands. And I'm also stoked that he's helping us meet both our renewable energy and food security goals by combining the farm with the solar project. This is a truly a win-win and what sustainability is really all about!

Industrial Hemp Could be Great Agricultural Crop

I introduced SB 2175 this session to legalize the production of industrial hemp. (Just so you know, hemp doesn't contain significant THC, so it can't get people high by smoking it.) Hemp is an incredible agricultural crop that's used in food, soap, car materials, insulation, and construction materials. The problem is that right now the U.S. is importing all these products, when we could easily grow it here. Ten states around the country have passed similar legislation (California, Colorado, Kentucky, Maine, Montana, North Dakota, Oregon, Vermont, Washington and West Virginia). My bill was amended by the Agriculture and Public Safety, Intergovernmental, and Military Affairs committees to be a two-year hemp research project at UH. The U.S. House recently approved language in the Farm Bill to allow hemp research at universities. States can also apply for waivers from the federal government to allow for hemp production. I recommend the documentary, *Bringing it Home*, if you're interested in learning about the history of hemp in our country. Fascinating!

Tim Blank Leading the Way in Growing Healthy Food

I had the opportunity to honor Tim Blank with an honorary certificate from the State Senate in Honolulu on February 10th. Tim grew up in western North Dakota surrounded by open space, farms, and lots of green. When he was in high school, he went on a family vacation to Disney World and Epcot in Florida that planted the seeds that would grow into his life's work. Later, he was chosen as a horticultural intern at The Walt Disney Company. He dug deeply into learning all that he could about hydroponic food production. When his shift was over, Tim volunteered his time in other areas to become educated in plant pathology, biotechnology, and entomology. He was hired after his internship to conduct advanced plant research for NASA and the Department of Energy. Tim later became the Chief Horticulturalist and Greenhouse Manager of The Land Pavilion at Epcot. While there, he implemented innovative advances in technology and growing concepts that have strengthened The Land's world class status. In 2005, Tim was ready to share his passion for developing new ways to grow things with the outside world. He helped found Future Growing LLC, a world leader in vertical aeroponic food farms, LEED buildings, rooftops, urban farms, and commercial greenhouses. Future Growing provides vertical aeroponic technology to grow healthy local food anywhere in the world. Future Growing is focused on three commercial products, the aeroponic Tower Garden, the rooftop Tower Garden, and the urban Tower Garden farms. Future Growing even developed an impressive aeroponic food farm inside a terminal at Chicago O'Hare International Airport.

Taking Action on Navy Red Hill Fuel Leak

You might have heard the news that the Navy recently reported a 27,000 gallon jet fuel leak at its underground facility at Red Hill, which houses 20 giant tanks, each the size of a 20-story building, capable of holding 12.5 million gallons of fuel. This facility is a critical part of our defense system. The leak is especially alarming because of the facility's closeness to freshwater wells used for our drinking water supply. On March 7th I'll be co-chairing an informational briefing at the State Capitol at 1pm in Rm. 329 to get a report from the Navy on the status of the facility and what they are doing to prevent future leaks. We'll also have presentations from the Department of Health and the Honolulu Board of Water Supply on the safety of our drinking water. One of the things that we'll be discussing is the need for a "leak detection" system at Red Hill.

Innovative Ways to Cool Our Classroom

I'll be co-chairing an informational briefing with Education Chair, Senator Jill Tokuda, and our House counterparts to get an update on the launch of its five-year sustainability energy plan, *Ka Hei*. One of the things we'll be discussing is innovative ways to air condition our schools. The information briefing will take place at 2pm on March 10th in Rm. 309 at the State Capitol. To give you some background, only 12 of our 255 public schools have central air conditioning. It's estimated that it would cost close to $1 billion to get the other schools air conditioned. The current state budget bill, HB 1700, has an appropriation of $25 million to put toward AC for our schools. This funding would most likely go toward the schools on the Department of Education's priority list. The top 3 schools on the current list are in Ewa: Ewa Beach Elementary School, Ilima Intermediate School, and Campbell High School. Our informational briefing will look at other ways to possibly install the AC at a cheaper cost. We'll have presentations by the Department of Education, Chevron, Hawai‘i Natural Energy Institute, and the Department of Budget, Economic Development, and Tourism. One concept that has been floated is to use off-grid solar PV to power the AC.

Honoring Samoan Oratory Scholar ‘Aumua Mata‘itusi Simanu

I was able to surprise ‘Aumua Mata‘itusi Simanu with a certificate from the State Senate at her 93rd birthday party at the UH Manoa campus on February 24th. ‘Aumua has lovingly dedicated herself to education for the last 75 years. She began her long career as a teacher and an administrator in Western Samoa where she served in the Department of Education from 1938 to 1982. While most people would be thinking only of retirement at age 64, ‘Aumua was just beginning her second career as a teacher of Samoan language at the University of Hawai‘i at Manoa. Over her 29-year career at UH, ‘Aumua developed and taught advanced courses for Samoan students. Her specialty is Samoan Oratory and Samoan History. ‘Aumua is credited with developing the first courses in the world at the university level in these fields. Glowing reviews by her students over the years attest to the quality and effectiveness of her teaching. Over the past two and a half decades, ‘Aumua has introduced more than 500 Samoan heritage students to the world of Samoan oratory. While most of her pupils are traditional college students, many others are prominent Samoan professionals who live and work in Hawai‘i. ‘Aumua's landmark publication on the study and teaching of Samoan oratory, *O Si Manu a Ali‘i*, was published by UH in 2002. It is currently being used at colleges throughout the nation, in Samoa, and in New Zealand. Her second study on Samoan oral traditions and history, *Faia Fa‘atumua*, was published by UH's National Foreign Resource Center in 2011. ‘Aumua's third book, *Ta‘aloga a Tamaiti* (Traditional Children‘s Games) is due to be published in 2014. As a measure of her life-long achievements, the Indigenous University of Samoa, Amosā o le Sā Vavau, conferred its highest degree to ‘Aumua in 2004. In 2008, she was the recipient of the Hawaiian Association of Language Teacher‘s Excellence in Teaching Award. ‘Aumua continues to teach and to represent the University of Hawai‘i at national and international conferences and forums on the Samoan language. I commend ‘Aumua Mata‘itusi Simanu for sharing Samoan heritage and language with alofa and *tofa mamao* while teaching the beauty of Samoan culture.

Energy Excelerator Doing Big Things for Hawai‘i

As the Energy and Environment Committee Chair, I've come to realize that it’s going to take entrepreneurs and innovators in the vein of the Steve Jobs and Mark Zuckerbergs of the world to help us meet our state's clean energy goals. And that’s why I’m excited to see what the Energy Excelerator, our clean tech incubator, is doing. I honored their team with a floor presentation at the State Senate on February 4th. It’s huge that they received a $30 million grant from the Navy’s Office of Naval Research under the Asia Pacific Technology Education Program. It kind of makes sense that the Navy is stepping up big in this area because last year the Department of Defense spent $20 billion on oil and is the world's largest consumer of energy. That dwarfs even our huge annual oil bill of $4 to $6 billion. The Energy Excelerator’s latest awardees are 15 companies who focus on everything from smart grid and energy storage, to energy efficiency, transportation, and bioenergy. And any one of these companies could be the one that revolutionizes clean energy for Hawai‘i and the world. Of the 32 companies the program has funded thus far, $55.9 million has been raised in follow-on funding, nearly $20 million in revenue has been generated, and over 400 jobs have been created. The program is highly selective--accepting less than 7% of startups who apply, and helps companies succeed in Hawai‘i and the Asia Pacific with funding of up to $1 million. In June 2014, they will be opening an innovation center in Honolulu.

Senator Gabbard and his colleagues in the State Senate honored the Energy Excelerator team with a floor presentation on February 4th. The Energy Excelerator is a start-up program of the Pacific International Center for High Technology Research (PICHTR), dedicated to helping solve energy challenges, starting here in Hawai‘i. Pictured (L to R) are Linda Ome (Project Assistant), Jaime Uota (Intern), Janel Pang (PICHTR Chief Financial), Dawn Lippert (Senior Manager), Senator Gabbard, Warren Doi (Project Manager) Kanoe Pu'uohau (Operations Director), Brad Punu (Strategic Partnerships Director), Lauren Tonokawa (Communications Director).

Senator Gabbard met with students from Waipahu Intermediate School’s SkillsUSA program in his State Capitol office on Feb 20th.

Senator Gabbard (aka Tulsi’s dad) congratulated Boston Red Sox baseball player, Shane Victorino, and his parents, Maui County Councilmember Michael Victorino (aka Shane’s dad) and Joycelyn Victorino, at the State Capitol after Shane was honored by the State Senate with a floor presentation on January 28th.

Senator Gabbard and his colleagues honored Stanford Yuen at the State Capitol on Feb 6th. Stanford was commended for his forty years of service to the Navy. Pictured (L to R) are Senator Gabbard, Lynette Yuen, Mr. Yuen and Senator Will Espero.