Aloha Friends,

Happy New Year! I hope you can join me for refreshments at my office (State Capitol, Room 201) at Noon for the Opening Day of the State Legislature on Wednesday, January 16th.  Please contact me at 586-6830 or [sengabbard@capitol.hawaii.gov](https://webmail.capitol.hawaii.gov/owa/redir.aspx?C=9402d2bdc2e74f94a6e250037a1ceb5c&URL=mailto%3asengabbard%40capitol.hawaii.gov)  if I can help you or your family in any way.  Here are some things happening in our community:

**"Listen Story" Meeting**

My next meeting will be on Saturday, January 12th at the Ewa Zippy's (91-1717 Fort Weaver Road) at 9am.

**Final Farewell to U.S. Senator Dan Inouye**

On December 22nd, I joined other government leaders and members of the public at the State Capitol Rotunda for the Lying-In-State ceremony to pay our final respects to U.S. Senator Daniel K. Inouye, an American hero who inspired many across the nation with his integrity and compassion. Senator Inouye also received the rare honor (only the 32nd person in U.S. history) of lying in state at the U.S. Capitol Rotunda on December 20th. Senator Inouye passed away on December 17th due to respiratory complications at the age of 88. He was the most senior member of the U.S. Senate and the President Pro-Tempore -- third in line to the presidency. He was first elected to the U.S. Senate in 1962 and was serving his ninth consecutive term when he died. Our community is reeling from the loss of our beloved Senator and our prayers and thoughts are with his family during this difficult time.

**UH West O‘ahu Holds First Graduation at New Campus**

I attended the fall 2012 graduation at UH West O‘ahu on December 8th. This was the first graduation held at the new Kapolei campus. In other related UHWO news, the UH Board of Regents approved the sale of 39-acres of land next to the UHWO campus to the Roman Catholic Church for $32 million on November 28th. The sale of land will allow for the development of a church and private school and will also include infrastructure development in the area. UHWO plans to use the proceeds from the land sale to construct a $6 million administration building. This is great news for educational opportunities in our community.

**Makakilo Resident Achieves Eagle Scout Honor**

I honored 13-year-old Lefolasalifa “Lifa” Alapati Taputu of Makakilo with a certificate from the State Senate at his Eagle Court of Honor ceremony at the LDS Chapel in Kapolei on November 28th. Lifa was recognized for achieving the rank of Eagle Scout and for also being a candidate for the Boy Scouts of America Heroism Medal with Crossed Palms for rescuing his brother Lafotasilaumati. Grandson of Samuelu Taputu and Sa Taputu of Tula/Masausi and BBC Valovalo Aoelua and Lusila Aoelua of Afono/Aua and the oldest child of Faamati and Barbara Taputu, Lifa has been raised well to be a loving and contributing member of his community. If Lefolasalifa’s first 13 years are anything like the next 13 years, he will undoubtedly be an amazing teenager and young adult who will accomplish great things.