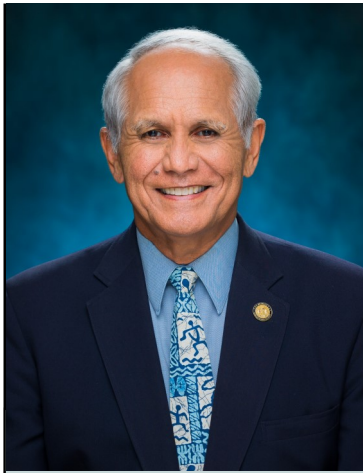


The Senate

STATE CAPITOL

HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

Senator Mike Gabbard *Legislative update...*



Aloha e Friends,

The 2017-2018 school year for public school students begins on August 7th. UH students will start the Fall 2017 semester on August 21st. Please be prepared for rush hour traffic to increase this month. As always, please feel free to contact me at 586-6830 or email sengabbard@capitol.hawaii.gov if I can help you or your family in any way. You can also follow me on Twitter @senmikegabbard, Instagram @sengabbard, or Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/senmikegabbard>.

GOVERNOR'S VETOES

On July 11th, Governor Ige vetoed 13 bills the Legislature passed during the 2017 session. The Senate and House decided not to come into Special Session that day to override his vetoes. One of the bills vetoed was SB 1240, which would have phased out the commercial aquarium fish trade. You can check out information about all the bills the Governor vetoed at governor.hawaii.gov/.

Special Session on Rail

The Senate and House announced on July 7th that we'll convene for a Special Session from August 28th to September 1st to take up the funding of the rail transit project. As background, during the 2017 legislative session which ended May 4th, we debated passage of SB 1183. This legislation was intended to assist the Honolulu Rapid Transit Authority (HART) with additional funding for the completion of the rail transit project. In the end, the House and Senate couldn't reach agreement and SB 1183 didn't pass. Currently, HART needs approximately \$3 billion to make up its existing budget shortfall. As it stands right now, HART is receiving revenue from a half-percent surcharge on the general excise tax from O'ahu residents up until 2027. In the lead-up to the Special Session, I sent the following email on July 13th to some of my colleagues involved in crafting rail funding legislation expressing my thoughts on the current situation:

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August 2017
Vol. 11 Issue 8

COMMITTEE CHAIR

- ◆ Agriculture & Environment

VICE CHAIR

- ◆ Water and Land

MEMBER

- ◆ Judiciary & Labor

DISTRICT 20

Kapolei, Makakilo and portions of Ewa, Kalaeloa and Waipahu

NEXT "LISTEN STORY"

My next "Listen Story" meeting will be Aug. 19th at 9am at the Kapolei High School Teachers' Lounge, next to the cafeteria.

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KAPOLEI HO'OLIMALIMA PILOT PROJECT

On July 15th, Rep. Ty Cullen and I presented the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL) and Mark Development, Inc. with Honorary Certificates from the State Legislature to celebrate the culmination of the Ho 'olimalima rent-with-option-to-purchase pilot program in the Malu'ohai subdivision of Kapolei. We welcomed 69 families who took advantage of this golden opportunity and are now proud homeowners.

In 2001, Mark Development, Inc. in partnership with DHHL, created the first Low Income Housing Tax Credit affordable rental project on Hawaiian Home Lands. DHHL partnered with Mark Development, Inc. to develop and manage the pilot project using Federal Low Income Housing Tax Credits.

The tax credits earned over the life of the 15-year project raised over \$6.7 million in equity, which was passed onto the renters. The homes are not only affordable; they are highly desirable with solar water heating for lower electricity bills, front and back yard landscaping with irrigation, and a tech shield radiant barrier to cool the homes.

The three and four bedroom residences were available for reasonable monthly rents and tenants were offered the opportunity to purchase their homes after fifteen years. This is a great affordable housing program that I hope can be replicated many times over in the years ahead.

EARLY COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM

I presented Honorary Certificates from the State Legislature to the Academy of Creative Media UH West O'ahu (ACM UHWO), Wai'anae High School Searider Productions (WHS SP), and Waipahu High School on July 7th to commemorate the start of an exciting new partnership, the *Early College High School Program (ECHS)*.

The ECHS program was designed to foster college and career readiness, as well as, afford students educational opportunities that will not only make them viable in a competitive job market, but will also cultivate in them the skills necessary to succeed as individuals.

ECHS started with a partnership between Waipahu High School and UHWO in 2012. Since then, it has become one of UHWO's primary means of providing baccalaureate level educational opportunities to secondary school partners who serve low-income youth, first-generation college goers, and students who come from ethnic backgrounds largely underrepresented in higher education.

As of the fall of 2016, ECHS has served 686 students by offering over 44 general education college courses at Nānākuli High and Intermediate School, Wai'anae High School, and Waipahu High School. Students boast a success rate of 91%, and the program has saved families from these economically depressed areas over \$483,600 (the equivalent of 1612 credits) in tuition costs alone.

In the most recent survey of students, over 98% reported an increase in their confidence about succeeding in college after taking a single ECHS course. The benefits of the program carry over to post-secondary education, as a recent evaluation of UHWO institutional data found that students who were enrolled in the ECHS program reported significantly higher GPAs and retention rates in comparison to peers who have not enrolled in the ECHS program. This higher education jumpstart is invaluable in encouraging all our students to overcome their challenges and persevere to realize their dreams.



Sen. Gabbard, on behalf of the State Legislature, honored Academy of Creative Media UH West O'ahu, Wai'anae High School Searider Productions, and Waipahu High School on July 7th to commemorate the start of the Early College High School Program (ECHS).

(Pictured L-R: Chris Lee, ACM System Dir.; Keith Hayashi, Interim Supt. Hawai'i DOE; Sen. Breen Harimoto; Sen. Clarence Nishihara; Sen. Mike Gabbard; Maenette K. P. Ah Nee-Benham, UHWO Chancellor; Sharla Hanaoka, UHWO Assoc. Dir. of ACM; Sen. Jill Tokuda; Candy Suiso, Ex. Dir. Searider Productions; and Rep. Ty Cullen.)

HUI O HO'OHONUA (HOH808) BLESSING OF KAPAPAPUHI POINT PARK



I surprised the Board members of Hui Hui O Ho'ohonua (HOH808), a 501c3 non-profit, community-development networking organization, with an Honorary Certificate from the State Senate at Leeward Community College on June 30th in recognition of the blessing for Kapapapuhi Point Park in West Loch in Ewa Beach.

HOH808 is restoring land surrounding Pu'uloa in the Pearl Harbor and neighboring Ewa Moku to once again provide food. This area historically was 'āina momona (abundant land) and HOH808 has visions of plentiful lo'i and fishponds, as well as land-based, sustainable community gardens.

HOH808 also addresses existing hazards to human health caused by pollution over the last 100 years. HOH808 serves as a centralized hub that initiates, administrates, operates, and maintains a community network connecting all levels of the community to accomplish sustainable community-development initiatives (SCDI).

These SCDI's include, but are not limited to, modernizing alternate transportation corridors, completing restoration of contaminated eco-systems, and the re-utilization of storm water runoff.

Their hard work, determination, and aloha has resulted in the significant event of the blessing of Kapapapuhi Point Park, formerly known as West Loch Shoreline Park. The blessing initiates the healing process caused by years of sacred site desecration.

HOH808's work at Kapapapuhi includes restoration of the park's entire shoreline area, its wahi pana (sacred sites), and the three Apokeo fishponds. These sites will be used to educate the community of the cultural importance of the fishponds and the wahi pana, as well as the impact that their restoration will have on future generations.

Other significant HOH808 accomplishments have been a community Pu'uloa bike path clean-up event, collaboration with community efforts to restore Loko Pa'aiau Fishpond, and conducting a meta-study of existing research and planning initiatives for the Pu'uloa region.

Mahalo to Executive Director Anthony Chance and the HOH808 team for being guardians of Pu'uloa. Their attitude of taking on the impossible and persevering with faith, honor, and integrity should be an inspiration for all in achieving good for the community, ecosystem, and culture.



Senator Gabbard was given a tour of Kapapapuhi Point Park on July 18, by Tony Chance, Executive Director of Hui Hui O Ho'ohonua (HOH808), a 501c3 non-profit, community-development networking organization restoring land surrounding Pu'uloa in the Pearl Harbor, Hawaii and neighboring Ewa Moku.

EAGLE SCOUT COURT OF HONOR



Sen. Gabbard honored Eagle Scouts Luke Magaoay (L) and Jimmy Covington (R) on July 5. (Photo credit: James Covington.)

I had the privilege of speaking at the Eagle Scout Court of Honor ceremony for Jimmy Covington and Luke Magaoay at the Makakilo LDS Stake Center on July 5th.

I presented both of these fine young men an Honorary Certificate from the State Senate for achieving the esteemed title of Eagle Scout. Only about 5% of those who join a Boy Scout troop attain the prestigious Eagle Scout rank. The list of requirements is long and involves great determination to complete.

Jimmy Covington was born on April 23, 1999 and has been a part of the Kapolei and Makakilo communities for his entire life. He successfully graduated from Kapolei High School in 2017. Jimmy attributes his family and two years in Marine Corps JROTC in developing the qualities of leadership and discipline which assisted him to complete the requirements to become an Eagle Scout. Jimmy always tries to do the "right thing even when no one is looking" which he noticed has positively influenced his friends.

Luke Magaoay is a recent graduate of Kapolei High School. He was on the volleyball team all four years while at KHS and finished up as the team captain. Luke also successfully completed four years of seminary with LDS. Luke continues to be actively involved in his church and serves in the office of an Elder. Luke's Eagle Scout project was the beautification of Camp Palehua. Luke planned, organized, and delegated the work he wanted to see completed will be attending BYU-Idaho starting in the fall 2017.

Jimmy and Luke truly live the Scout Law by doing their duty to God and country, and keeping themselves physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight. I wish them all success!

Special Session on Rail, continued....

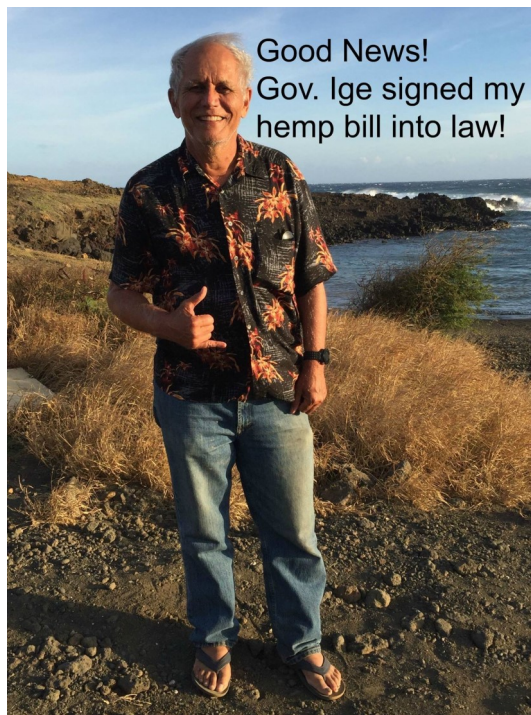
"...I was thinking with the Special Session coming up, I wanted to run something by you.

As the senator for the Kapolei area, my district will benefit greatly from the rail project and accompanying TOD. This is why I've supported the rail project for many years. However, my support has been tested by the ballooning costs that now are reported to be at \$10 billion.

That's why I was very disappointed to learn of HART's recent decision to cancel the \$250,000 Special Audit of past rail cost-overruns. I couldn't believe the following comment from HART Board member Ember Shinn: "It's not my intent to muck around in the past and try to figure out what we did wrong in the past. It's more trying to get forward."

I know you're in the process of working out language for a bill with the House. I'm requesting that you consider a full-scale management and fiscal audit going back to the passage of the GET surcharge for rail in 2007 to the present be included in any legislation that we pass.

The audit could be conducted by an independent third-party or the State Auditor, but not by the City or HART. I'm not suggesting that the funding be delayed until the audit is completed, but just that we can see once and for all what has transpired with taxpayer dollars on this project. I hope that you'll consider my suggestion."



**Good News!
Gov. Ige signed my
hemp bill into law!**

Gov. Ige signed Sen. Gabbard's bill (SB 773) into law as Act 199 on July 11, 2017.