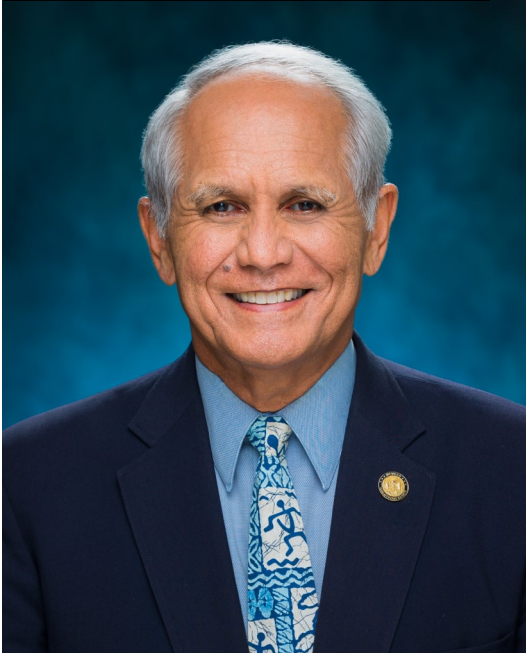




The Senate  
STATE CAPITOL  
HONOLULU, HAWAII

# Senator Mike Gabbard

June 2020 Vol. 14 Issue 6



*Aloha e Friends,*

Father's Day is June 21, so don't forget your dear old dad! Congrats to all the graduates of Campbell High, Kapolei High, Waipahu High, Island Pacific Academy, and American Renaissance Academy of Senate District 20. Even though COVID-19 threw things off a bit for your senior year, you definitely deserve praise for stepping up to face this huge challenge. Also, a shout-out to the Youth Challenge Academy grads! I wish you much success in your future endeavors.

As always, please contact me at 808-586-6830 or [sengabbard@capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:sengabbard@capitol.hawaii.gov) if I can help you or your family in any way. You can also follow me on [Twitter @senmikegabbard](https://twitter.com/senmikegabbard), [Instagram @sengabbard](https://www.instagram.com/sengabbard), or Facebook at [facebook.com/senmikegabbard](https://facebook.com/senmikegabbard)

*Mike*

COMMITTEE  
CHAIR

AGRICULTURE &  
ENVIRONMENT

MEMBER

- ◆ Judiciary
- ◆ Labor, Culture & the Arts

DISTRICT 20

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

## Current COVID-19 Situation

The positive is that our COVID-19 infection numbers have been very low during the last few weeks. Some days we have zero reported cases. Governor Ige still has the stay-at-home order in place until June 30, but the economy is slowly but surely opening up. Restaurants are set to allow dining on June 5. However, the negative has been that our economic situation is very dire. We've gone from the lowest unemployment rate of under 3% to the 3rd highest in the nation at 22.3%. Tourism has been a major facet of our economy and monthly airline arrivals have plummeted from 30,000 a day to now roughly 1,000 a day. This is greatly impacting our general excise tax and transient accommodations tax revenues that keep our state government going. It take \$677 million a month to run our state government. So we are looking at various ways to get our economy cranking again without sacrificing the health of our residents.

## State Budget Update

The Legislature came back into session from May 11 – 21 to address some of the emergency issues related to COVID-19. The state received \$1.25 billion from the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act). The state received \$863 million of that funding and \$387 million went directly to the City and County. Through the passage of SB 75 during this abbreviated session, we directed \$175 million to Hawai'i, Kaua'i, and Maui counties to address their COVID-19 needs, \$40 million to the Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency, and put \$637 million into our Rainy Day fund for future spending. We passed our supplemental operating budget (HB 2200) for the expenses of the different state agencies and our supplemental capital budget (HB 2725) that funds the construction of our roads, schools, and other state facilities. We also moved forward HB 117 that defers recommended salary increases for the legislative, executive, and judicial branches from January 1, 2021 to July 1, 2021.



# DISTRICT 20 NEWS

## Construction Budget for Senate District 20

Senate District 20 did very well with the passage of the state's capital budget in HB 2725. There's a total of \$186,450,000 in additional projects for our community. Mahalo to Senator Keith-Agaran and Rep. Yamashita, as well as Senator Dela Cruz and Rep. Luke for their hard work on the construction budget. Getting these projects going will help stimulate our economy and also provide services for my constituents. Here's a rundown:

- ◆ VA Long-Term Care Facility in Kapolei (construction) - \$30.1 million
- ◆ East Kapolei High School (plans, design, and construction for new school) - \$3 million
- ◆ East Kapolei Middle School (design and construction for Phase III) - \$46 million (total for both fiscal years)
- ◆ Kapolei High School (ADA improvements) - \$400,000
- ◆ Kapolei High School (classroom renovations) - \$6 million
- ◆ Farrington Highway Widening (Kapolei Golf Course to Fort Weaver Road) - \$100 million
- ◆ Kapolei Parkway Safety Wall Improvements (intersection of Kapolei Parkway and Kama`aha Street) - \$50,000

## Boards and Commission Appointments

One of the Senate's responsibilities is to evaluate and confirm or reject the Governor's nominees to his Cabinet and state Boards and Commissions. We also have the role of confirming judges. During the short session, we, as Senate Committee Chairs, considered 260 of these nominees from the Governor. As Chair of the Agriculture and Environment Committee, we had twelve of these nominees. On May 11, we held a hearing to consider the nominees and on May 21 we took a final vote in the Senate to confirm them. We confirmed Morris Atta, as Deputy Director of the Department

of Agriculture, Kathy Ho, as Director of the Office of Environmental Quality Control, one member of the Board of Agriculture, five members of Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation, two members of the Endangered Species Recovery Committee, and one member of the Advisory Committee on Pesticides. I commend all of them for their public service!

## Kapolei Skatepark Expansion



I haven't been on a skateboard since 1965, when I had an almost tragic wipeout. I can't wait to visit the Kapolei skatepark. I got word on May 22 that the City is moving forward with a project to expand the Kapolei Skatepark, which will add new obstacles and double the size of the facility. Some of the new features will include various rails, walls, stairs, and banks. The project will also add LED security lighting. The project has started and will be completed by the end of the year. While construction is on-going, the skatepark will be closed. This is a \$900,000 project, which will be handled by the Ralph S. Inouye Company, Ltd.

## Listen-Story Meeting

We're coming back into session on June 15 for a couple of weeks. Please stay tuned, because I plan to have an in-person or virtual Listen-Story meeting to update you soon after that session concludes. I'll keep you posted!

# LEGISLATIVE NEWS

## Hemp Top Priority Going into June Session Reconvene

We've been notified by the Senate President, Ron Kouchi, and House Speaker, Scott Saiki, that we'll reconvene for another round of sessions starting June 15. During that time, committee chairs will be able to choose a few bills for consideration that don't have an impact on the state's finances.

My top priority will be industrial hemp as a way to stimulate our economy and help get farmers back on their feet. Hemp history in Hawai'i goes back to 1999, when Gov. Cayetano declared Dec. 14 as Hawai'i Hemp Day. Then government fell asleep for 15 years. I got the ball rolling again in 2014 when a bill I introduced passed into law setting up a UH study.

I've been focused on allowing our farmers to grow and process industrial hemp and make some of the more than 25,000 products from this miracle plant. What I've been saying is that hemp has the potential to be a part of our economic recovery as a cottage industry.

The idea of using our Hawai'i branding with the guy playing ukulele under the coconut tree and hula girl dancing on the label and producing Hawai'i CBD, Hawai'i hemp shampoo, Hawai'i hemp granola. All sorts of products! Right now, we do have a pilot hemp program under our state Department of Agriculture (HDOA) that allows farmers to grow up to 10 acres. But what we want to do is to set up a commercial program within HDOA through the passage of HB 1819 and set up a regulatory framework for the sale of CBD products under the Department of Health with SB 2050.

To give you an idea of what we're looking at: Beau Whitney released a study in April 2020 estimating Hawaii's hemp industry will quickly grow to generating \$33 million per year and employing hundreds of community members if we can pass HB 1819 and SB 2050. We need to take this opportunity to help our farmers and our economy! Hemp, hemp, hooray!



(Pictured L-R: Steve Rose, "Chief Hempster"- Maui Hemp Institute for Research & Innovation; Sen. Gabbard, and Vincent Mina, President & founding member - Hawaii Farmers Union United)

### Public Library System Launches Library Take Out

On May 26, our state public library launched a Library Take Out service at 47 of the 51 libraries around the state, including Kapolei, to allow people to schedule an appointment time to pick up their hold items. Here's how it works:

1. Patrons go to [HSPLS Library Catalog](#) and place a hold on any item(s) they want to borrow, or they may call their favorite library branch to place a hold with our staff.
2. After receiving a notice that their item(s) are ready for pick up, patrons can schedule a Library Take Out time at [picktime.com/hspls](http://picktime.com/hspls).





## Waipahu Intermediate Future Farmers of America Program Recognized

I was stoked to see the Future Farmers of America Program at Waipahu Intermediate, located in my district, recognized on the [National Future Farmers of America website](#) in May. The national FFA stated that the Waipahu Intermediate School FFA Chapter is regarded as a model FFA program in Hawai'i. It's one of only two middle school FFA chapters in the state and the only middle school chapter on O'ahu. My colleagues and I honored them this past January on the Senate Floor. Here's an excerpt from the national FFA's article:

*Members maximize lawn space on the school grounds, build their own raised garden beds and grow their own vegetables as part of their supervised agricultural experience (SAE) projects. "One-third of our FFA experience is an SAE, and I require all my students to do an agriscience project," says Ken Kozuma, the agriculture teacher and FFA advisor at Waipahu Intermediate School, which serves eighth-graders. "At their age, I think that's the best SAE for them to do; they research an experiment. They are growing things from ground zero. A lot of times, in the beginning, I have to encourage them to just do it, just try something. Then they learn through trial and error."*

Kozuma partners with Jeffrey Garvey, the agriculture teacher and FFA advisor at Waipahu High School just up the road, to create an agricultural education ecosystem that captures students' attention at a young age, then excites them to continue to participate through high school. "In the

last two years, our intermediate school classes were just introductory – the basics of agriculture," Kozuma says. "But after attending a National Association of Agricultural Educators conference last year, I decided to focus this year more directly on agriscience and experiments." The



Local heroes, Cheydon Agos and Kayla Nguyen with Waipahu Intermediate Future Farmers of America, and their teacher Mr. Ken Kozuma, were featured in a story posted on the National Future Farmers of America website on May 15, 2020. Photo credit <https://www.ffa.org/>

courses are similar to a core agriculture class offered at the high school and provide a nice, broad base for students who decide to continue ag education after eighth grade.



On Jan. 30, 2020, Sen. Gabbard recognized Waipahu School Future Farmers of America (FFA) (L-R: Ken Kozuma, WIS Ag teacher and FFA Coordinator; Sean Valencia Monte; Mariah Quibol; Vheena Sistoza; Darren Estal; Jhanella Gerardo; Mariah Ramo and Jeff Garvey, WHS Natural Resources teacher.)