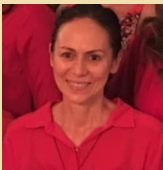


My Session Staff

For the 2021 legislative session, my Office Manager/Committee Clerk is **Rock Riggs**, who enters his 15th year with me at the Senate. He oversees the overall operations of my office and helps me run the AEN Committee. **Meg Turner**, who enters her 7th year with me at the Senate is my Community Liaison and will be the principal contact for all issues and constituent concerns related to Senate District 20.



Anya Anthony, who worked for 8 years as the Office Manager for my daughter, former Congresswoman **Tulsi Gabbard**, is my part-time scheduler.



Former King David Kalakaua Middle School math teacher, **Brandon Kim** serves as a legislative aide and assistant Committee Clerk. **Raniele Reyes**, a Kapolei resident and junior studying political science and Philippine Language at UH Manoa, is a legislative intern in my office.

Aloha e Friends,

I hope you and your 'ohana are safe and well. Our 2021 Legislative Session kicked off January 20 and it's already radically different from any I've ever experienced in my 15 years at the Capitol. The Capitol is completely closed to the public—and all hearings and meetings are being conducted remotely. Session is also ending about a week early (April 29). Those who continue to do business at the Capitol must wear masks and follow strict social distancing measures.

The [Agriculture and Environment Committee \(AEN\)](#), which I chair, will hold hearings M-W-F from 1pm to 2:30pm. In the past, we've had flexibility in terms of hearing end times, but this year it's a hard 2:30pm stop. Because all committee hearings are via Zoom, we need to keep to a set schedule. In order to submit either written or oral testimony, you'll need to sign-up via the [Legislature's website](#) at least 24 hours in advance. For the first time ever, I'll be setting a two-minute timer on oral testimony. This makes me apprehensive, because I've always let people testify at my committee hearings without a time limit. So, if you plan to testify orally, it will be even more important to summarize what you want to say, so that you can communicate your main points within the time limit, and then let the next person speak.

As you know, our state budget situation is dire. The Governor announced last month that our state government is facing a \$1.4 billion budget shortfall for each of the next 4 years. So, we as Committee Chairs got the message loud and clear from leadership that there's no money. This means bills that don't have a fiscal impact on the state's coffers will have a better chance of passing.

As always, please contact me at (808) 586-6830 or sengabbard@capitol.hawaii.gov if I can help you or your family in any way. You can also follow me on Instagram [@GabbardAloha](#), [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#).

Best wishes in the New Year,
Me ke aloha pumehana,

COMMITTEE CHAIR

AGRICULTURE & ENVIRONMENT

MEMBER

- ◆ Judiciary Committee
- ◆ Government Operations Committee

DISTRICT 20

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

“VIRTUAL Listen Story”

Saturday, February 6th from 9 -10 AM

You're invited to join my first Listen Story community meeting of 2021 when I'll be hosting a virtual meeting Saturday, February 6 from 9-10am, via Zoom.

If you want to attend email me at sengabbard@capitol.hawaii.gov and I'll send you the Zoom link.

Please include any questions or concerns you'd like addressed during the meeting and I'll do my best to help you.



LEGISLATION

Community Survey

As session gets rolling, I want to get your thoughts on the following three questions. If you're interested in



participating in this anonymous survey, simply click the [survey link here](#).

1. Do you plan to get the COVID-19 vaccine when it becomes widely available?
2. Do you support or oppose the legalization of recreational cannabis?
3. Do you support or oppose the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands plans to construct a casino in Kapolei near the Ka Makana Ali'i Mall?

Environmental Legislative Caucus Bill Package

As co-chair of the Environmental Legislative Caucus, I joined with Rep. Nicole Lowen, to introduce our first ELC bill package. The Environmental Legislative Caucus was created in December 2019 to bring like-minded legislators together on important environmental issues facing Hawaii. I authored four of the bills we're introducing and Senator Chris Lee, Transportation Committee Chair, was the author of the Clean Ground Transportation Goals bill.

[Clean Ground Transportation Goals \(SB 500\)](#) – this bill would establish clean ground transportation goals for the State, with the ultimate goal of all light-duty state-owned motor vehicles running on clean energy by December 31, 2035, and all light-duty motor vehicles in the State running on clean energy by December 31, 2045.

[Energy Efficiency in State Facilities \(SB 501\)](#) – this bill would mandate that all State facilities with an area of ten thousand square feet or more (not including Aloha

Stadium) implement all cost-effective energy efficiency measures by January 1, 2024.

[Green Amendment \(SB 502\)](#) – this bill would amend our state constitution to guarantee all individuals the right to have a clean and healthy environment. This would be the question on the ballot for the Green Amendment in 2022 if the bill passes: "Shall the Constitution of the State of Hawaii be amended to provide that each person has a right to a clean and healthy environment, including pure water, clean air, healthy ecosystems, and a stable climate, and to the preservation of the natural, cultural, scenic and healthful qualities of the environment?"

[Sea Level Rise Disclosure \(SB 503\)](#) - the bill would require that information about sea level rise threats be



disclosed to potential home buyers. It makes sense for potential home buyers to know what's expected in the coming years as we face increasing climate change threats.

[Shark Protection \(SB 504\)](#) - this bill would ban someone from knowingly capturing or entangling any shark, whether alive or dead, or kill any shark within state waters. The penalty for violation would be a misdemeanor with the following fines: \$500 for a first violation; \$2,000 for a second offense; and \$10,000 for a third or subsequent offense. The International Union for Conservation of Nature's Red List of Threatened Species, using data thru 2019, reported that up to 57% of extant species of sharks are considered threatened and have been assessed as vulnerable, endangered or critically endangered.



Invasive Species Informational Briefing



All facets of our life have been affected by COVID-19, notwithstanding our efforts to eradicate invasive species from our island paradise. While we face a critical budget situation, we can't afford to let our guard down as it relates to invasive species. We don't want pests to get out of control and invasives like little fire ants, coffee berry borer, coffee leaf rust, rapid ohia' death and even new ones wreaking havoc on our environment and quality of life.

On January 25, I co-chaired a virtual joint informational briefing to give legislators and the community an update on the state's efforts to address the threats invasive species pose and to learn more about what challenges we might expect amid the COVID-19 pandemic. The Department of Land and Natural Resources, Department of Agriculture, and the UH College of Tropical Agriculture & Human Resources all made presentations. The committees involved were the Senate Agriculture & Environment and Water & Land committees and the House Energy & Environmental Protection, Agriculture and Water & Land committees.



Catalytic Converter Theft

Have you ever been a victim of a catalytic converter theft? I've heard from constituents and news reports that thieves steal catalytic converters from people's cars and try to resell them as scrap metal. In response, last

session I introduced SB 2742 to add catalytic to the same section of law that encompasses the theft of copper, beer kegs, and urns, making the theft of catalytic converters a class C felony. The bill passed the Senate but stalled in the House Judiciary Committee due to the COVID shut down. This session, I've reintroduced the legislation as [SB 374](#). Hopefully, second time's the charm in getting this needed legislation signed into law. You can track the bill by clicking on the linked bill number.

AlohaSafe Alert APP



Here's a way we're told will reduce COVID infections and deaths. The AlohaSafe Alert app was developed to reduce the spread of COVID-19 by notifying users if they have been potentially exposed to the virus. This voluntary application is free and can be downloaded from

Apple and Google Play stores. Once downloaded, the app uses Bluetooth technology to anonymously communicate with other phones that have the application. The devices will ping one another, measuring the strength of the Bluetooth signal, distance of each device, and the duration of the contact.

We're told the more people who use the app, the safer and healthier our community will be. If an individual is diagnosed with COVID-19, they'll receive a text message from the Department of Health with a verification code to input into the app. This code will anonymously notify other devices about their possible COVID-19 exposure. The notification will not disclose any personally identifying information such as where, how, or when they were exposed. To trigger a notification alert, devices must have been within 6 feet of each other for at least 15 minutes in the past 14 days. If someone receives a notification from AlohaSafe Alert that they may have been exposed to COVID-19, they are recommended to self-quarantine, and get tested.

COVID-19 NEWS

According to the AlohaSafe website:

- ◆ Combined with other measures, if 15% of our community uses AlohaSafe Alert, we can reduce infections by 8% and deaths by 6%.
- ◆ 80% of all smartphone users (i.e. 56% of the overall population) would be enough to suppress the pandemic on its own without any other form of intervention.

The app was developed in partnership with the state Department of Health (DOH), aio Digital, Hawai'i Executive Collaborative and Every1ne Hawai'i, For more information on the Aloha Safe Travels app, go to <https://www.wearealohasafe.org>

COVID-19 Vaccines for Seniors Over 75



Starting on Monday, Jan. 25, Queen's Health Systems has vaccines for seniors 75 and older at the Neil Blaisdell Concert Hall by appointment. To schedule an appointment, call 808-691-2222 Monday-Friday 7:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m. You can also register online at <http://covid.queens.org/vaccination>.

LOCATION: Neal Blaisdell Concert Hall

DAYS: Starting Monday, Jan. 25 Sundays-Mondays, Wednesdays-Saturdays, Closed on Tuesdays

TIMES: 8:00 a.m.-6:30 p.m.

PARKING: Neal Blaisdell Center parking structure (enter from King Street). Free parking compliments of Elite parking.

INSTRUCTIONS:

- ◆ Bring a government-issued ID and your insurance card.
- ◆ Avoid wearing long-sleeved clothing.
- ◆ All patients will be expected to return 28 days later for a second dose.
- ◆ The process includes a 15–30-minute observation period to ensure there are no severe adverse reactions.
- ◆ Attend no earlier than 10 min. before your vaccination appointment
Everyone entering the vaccination clinic must wear a mask and adhere to social distancing requirements.
- ◆ If you aren't feeling well, please stay home.

COVID-19 Hotlines

Here are some helpful numbers to answer COVID-19 related questions that may come up for you and your family.

- ◆ Travel Related Questions: For travel related questions, call 1-800-GoHawaii (1-800-464-2924)
- ◆ 2-1-1 Statewide Hotline: For information and referrals to food banks, health services and other resources, dial 2-1-1 or text (877) 275-6569. Hawai'i residents can reach out 7:00am to 10:00pm, 7 days a week.
- ◆ Hawai'i Cares Hotline: For crisis support, mental health resources, and isolation & quarantine assistance, call 1-800-753-6879 or text "ALOHA" TO 741741.

City & County of Honolulu:

Honolulu COVID-19 webpage: oneoahu.org

To report violators: 808-723-3900
or HPDcovidenforce@honolulu.gov