



SENATOR MICHELLE KIDANI



2015 LEGISLATIVE REPORT

Serving Senate District 18 ~ Mililani Town, Waipio Gentry, Waikele, Royal Kunia, and Village Park

Aloha friends and neighbors,

The end of the Legislative session coincides with the wrap-up of the school year, and it has been a pleasure to hear of the successes of our students in schools at all levels in the Mililani and Waipahu area communities in my district.

Our students have excelled at science fairs, robotics competitions, History Day events and scholastic arts exhibitions. Their principals and teachers have been recognized for their hard work and commitment. And both Mililani and Waipahu High Schools have had some notable successes in OIA and state tournament athletics through the year.

Congratulations are in order for the graduating seniors at **Mililani High School**. As the school year drew to a close, Mililani was named top public high school in Hawaii by *US News & World Report* – acknowledging student success and the school’s pursuit of excellence.

Graduates at **Waipahu High School** are also on their way to further educational or employment opportunities. Waipahu was among the ‘most improved’ schools for the increase in the numbers of graduates enrolling in college over the last two years. Thanks to school leadership and dedicated teachers, those numbers are sure to improve even more in the years ahead.

Let me also acknowledge two other outstanding educators who received special recognition this year. **Mililani Uka Elementary** teacher and counselor **Jana Fukuda** was named Hawaii’s Milken Educator for 2015 in a surprise announcement at a school assembly in February. The Milken award is considered the “Oscar of teaching.” And **Kanoelani Elementary** Principal **Stacy Kunihsa** was named one of two runners-up for the Masayuki Tokioka Award for Excellence in School Leadership. Congratulations to both!

This session I accepted the Chairmanship of the Committee on Education, one of the most broadly-based committees in the Senate. It has responsibility for early education programs, K-12 public schools, including charter schools, continuing education, and Hawaii’s Public Library System. In a relatively tight budget year, we did manage to pass key legislation that supports the State’s commitment to early learning programs.

Our signature bills are highlighted elsewhere in this newsletter. One of them will affect numerous families at Mililani Middle School and three other west Oahu schools, phasing out the multi-track

school calendar.

Following is a summary of projects in Senate District 18 that have been funded in the two-year budget, in separate appropriations bills, or through grants-in-aid to non-profit organizations as approved at the conclusion of the session:

Improving our schools

◇ \$350,000 for upgrades to the **Waipahu High School Culinary Academy**

◇ \$1.45 million for a new covered walkway at **Kaleiopuu Elementary** in Village Park

◇ \$1.5 million for plans and design work for 15 new classrooms at **Mililani Middle School**

◇ \$500,000 for a school-wide upgrade to the electrical system at **Mililani Uka Elementary**

Roads and Highways

◇ \$17.25 million for land acquisition and construction for the rehabilitation or replacement of **Kipapa Gulch (Roosevelt) Bridge UH West Oahu**

◇ \$24 million for the Allied Health and Administration building

Grants-in-Aid

◇ \$50,000 for technology center upgrades at the **Filipino Community Center** in Waipahu

◇ \$140,000 for renovations at the **Hawaii Okinawa Center** in Waipio Gentry

This was my seventh legislative session, and my first chairing a committee. Interests of our residents are always top-of-mind as we consider legislation. While the legislative work session is pau for this year, my staff and I are always available through my office at the State Capitol to serve your needs. I attend numerous community meetings through the year – including monthly meetings of the Waipahu and Mililani Neighborhood Boards – where I report the latest from the Capitol. During the interim there are also many national conferences offered and which I am expected to attend as Chair of the Senate Education Committee. I appreciate your support, and urge you to be involved in our decision making through the year.

Me ke Aloha Pumehana,

2015 Legislative Session in Review:

State Lawmakers pass measures that align with legislative priorities

EDUCATION

State Budget - HB 500: Appropriates nearly \$12.9 billion in state spending for the fiscal year that begins July 1, and budgets \$13.3 billion in the following year. The budget for capital improvements totaled \$2.39 billion over the two years, counting projects funded by general obligation bonds and all other means of financing.

A few of the capital improvement projects financed under HB500 include a total of \$165.8 million in FY2016 and \$70 million in FY17 to the Department of Education for building conditioning, equity, and program support; \$4.15 million in each year for public housing improvements and renovations; and a total of \$30 million in each year for the State Department of Transportation to perform major pavement improvements statewide.

Additionally, the Legislature provided more than \$27 million in grants-in-aid for nonprofit organizations statewide

Turtle Bay - SB 284: Allows the state to enter into an agreement with the owners of Turtle Bay that would protect 665 acres of undeveloped land on the North Shore of Oahu, which includes the purchase in fee of 65 acres around Kawela Bay.

Tobacco Sales - SB 284: Increases the minimum age required to purchase any tobacco product or electronic smoking device from 18 to 21. Defines "tobacco products" to include electronic smoking devices.

Community-Based Renewable Energy Projects - SB 1050: Establishes a community-based renewable energy program, which would allow electric utility customers to participate in renewable energy projects that produce electricity, which they can sell back to electric utility companies.

Kupuna Care - SB 964: Provides an additional \$3 million to fund the Kupuna Care program in FY2016, which is in addition to the base budget of \$4.8 million.

CONSUMER PROTECTION

Food/Excise Tax Credit - SB 555: Increases the food/excise tax credit. And repeals the credit for individual taxpayers with adjusted gross incomes of \$30,000 or above and for heads of households, married couples filing jointly, and married couple filing separately, with adjusted gross incomes of \$50,000 or above. Repeals residency requirement.

Rail Tax - HB 134: Allows the City and County of Honolulu to extend the half-percent excise tax surcharge for five additional years, until 2027, to provide more funding to cover projected cost overruns for the city's \$6 billion rail transit system. Allows the neighbor island counties to impose a similar surcharge.

Public Records - HB 287: Amends the state public records law to withhold from public scrutiny any records whose disclosure could result in a substantial and demonstrable risk of physical harm to an individual.

Consumer Protection - SB 464: Requires persons charging a consumer's credit or debit card or account for an automatic renewal or continuous service offer to first obtain the consumer's affirmative consent. Requires disclosure in a form that may be retained by a consumer of terms, conditions, and cancellation procedures for automatic renewal and continuous service offer contracts. Requires free trial offers to disclose the means for cancelling a contract prior to the expiration of the free trial period.

Preschool Open Doors Program - SB 64: Appropriates \$6 million to continue funding additional positions for the Preschool Open Doors Program and for subsidies of the program.

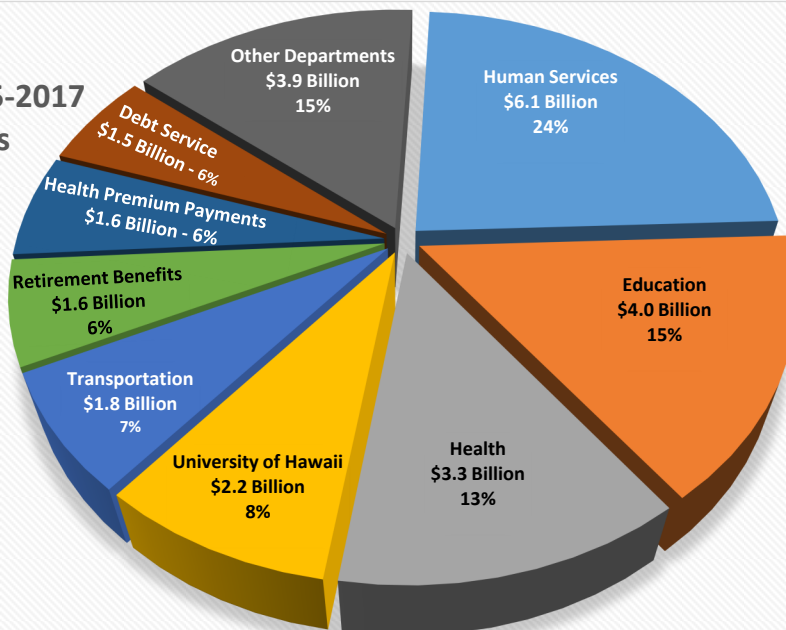
Student Hours - SB 822 (Act 21): Clarifies the implementation schedule and calculation method for the minimum number of days and student hours required for public schools. Applies the requirement for a 180 day, 1,080 hour school year to all school years beginning with the 2016-2017 school year.

Prekindergarten Program - HB 820: Establishes an Executive Office of Early Learning Prekindergarten Program, to make available preschool programs for families who do not qualify for existing programs (e.g., Head Start, Open Doors) but cannot afford private preschool.

Certified Teacher Bonuses - HB 11: Clarifies that a national board-certified teacher who teaches in a school in a focus, priority, or superintendent's zone (as designated by DOE) or a hard-to-fill school may receive a \$5,000/year bonus (in addition to a \$5,000/year bonus for being national board-certified). Deletes outdated references to No Child Left Behind. Makes applicability retroactive to calendar year 2014.

Multitrack - SB 1345: Requires the Department of Education to develop a transition plan to end multitrack schedules in public schools and to provide a report to the Legislature regarding the plan and any proposed necessary legislation. Requires the DOE to give priority to overpopulated schools in making its annual capitol improvement budget request to the Director of Finance.

**Fiscal Biennium 2015-2017
By Departments
\$26 Billion**



Debt service, retirement benefits, and health premium payments are budgeted under the Department of Budget and Finance.

Dual Credit Programs - SB 374: Renames the “running start program” to the “dual credit program” and broadens participation to include ninth and tenth graders from among public and home-schooled students for courses offered on University of Hawaii campuses. Replaces a standardized test with an assessment and repeals tuition and fees requirement.

Veterans High School Diplomas - SB 181: Allows the Department of Education to continue to award high school diplomas to qualified veterans who did not receive a high school diploma as a result of compulsory induction into active duty in the U.S. Armed Services, or to any person whose high school education was interrupted due to wartime practices such as internment during World War II.

HEALTH

Medical Marijuana - HB 321: Establishes a regulated system of medical marijuana dispensaries for certified medical marijuana patients, with applications by potential dispensary operators accepted by the state starting in January 2016. Allows dispensaries to begin operation as early as July 2016.

Autism Coverage- SB 791: Requires insurance companies to provide coverage for autism diagnosis and

treatment until a child turns 14 years of age. Establishes a maximum benefit of \$25,000 per year for applied behavioral analysis for services for children 13 and younger.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Sex Trafficking - SB 265: Establishes the offense of sex trafficking by replacing the term “promoting prostitution in the first degree” with the term “sex trafficking,” a class A felony. Includes the offense of sex trafficking in various laws intended to protect or provide remedies to victims of sex trafficking, or prosecute or sentence individuals convicted of sex trafficking.

Powdered Alcohol - SB 550: Bans the possession or sale of powdered alcohol products and making the consumption, possession or sale of powdered alcohol products a misdemeanor offense punishable by up to six months in jail. Allows possession of powdered alcohol products for research purposes.

UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

Affirmative Consent - SB 387: Establishes an affirmative consent task force to review and to make recommendations on the University of Hawaii’s executive policy on domestic

violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.

AGRICULTURE

Livestock Biosecurity - SB 1060: Allows for agricultural loans to be administered for livestock biosecurity projects to assist the livestock industry by establishing a low-interest biosecurity loan program within the Department of Agriculture for purchase of equipment, construction, improvements, and other costs related to biosecurity projects.

ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT

Ethanol Repeal - SB 717: Repeals the requirement that gasoline for motor vehicles be mixed with ethanol, effective December 31.

Renewable Energy - HB 623: Increases the State’s renewable portfolio standards to 30 percent of net electricity sales by the end of 2020, to 70 percent by the end of 2040 and to 100 percent by the end of 2045. Requires the Public Utilities Commission to include the volatility in its renewable portfolio standards study and report to the Legislature.

To view the full texts of bills visit the Legislature’s Web site at <http://www.capitol.hawaii.gov>

Celebrating Champions! Players and coaches from the State Champion Mililani boys and girls soccer teams were honored at the Capitol. The soccer teams followed the varsity football team with state titles. MHS softball and tennis teams won OIA Championships to strengthen the winning tradition at Mililani.



Above, Student Council members visiting the Capitol get a lesson on Government. At left, a Keiki from the Ka Pa'alana Family Education Program is one of thousands of island keiki we're trying to help with universal preschool opportunities



All smiles - members of Waipahu High School at Blaisdell Center, May 29. Great job to the class of 2015 Marauders!



Outstanding Leadership! Students and teachers at Kanoelani Elementary School in Waipio congratulated their Principal, Stacy Kunihiisa, for having been named one of two runners-up for the Tokioka Award for Excellence in School Leadership. In previous years the Tokioka Foundation has honored Waipahu High School Principal Keith Hayashi and Mililani resident Ed Oshiro, Principal at Ewa Makai Middle School, with their top award. We're proud to know them all as our neighbors!



Teacher excellence! Education Week brought the best from our schools to the Capitol, including Jana Fukada, Mililani Uka teacher and counselor at left. She was named Milken Educator for 2015 by the foundation that sees bright futures for the teachers it honors.



Waikele Elementary Head Start

I always look forward to taking my collection of Dr. Seuss books (and my striped hat!) to reading events. These youngsters and some parents in a Head Start class above were my audience this day. At far left, Lynn Cabato of Mililani, Head Start Director for Oahu, has devoted nearly 40 years to this important program that is this year celebrating its 50th anniversary.



Futures begin now . . .

The Trojans of Mililani in Gold & Brown at Aloha Stadium, May 24. Congratulations to Mililani High School class of 2015!

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