

Senator Michelle Kidani

(D) Senate District 18 – Serving Mililani Town, Waipio Gentry, Waikele, Village Park, Royal Kunia



Aloha friends and neighbors,

Our new legislative session has begun, with opening ceremonies last week at the State Capitol, and much to look forward to. Beginning in December, the respective Senate and House budget committees conducted a lengthy series of hearings with state agencies about their expenditure proposals for the two years beginning July 1. More than 2,000 bills will be introduced by the end of this week; we will soon begin to schedule hearings on many of those legislative proposals that we believe are worth considering for serious discussion.

There are several ways you can follow our work and track specific issues that may be of interest to you. The Legislature's online site has a great search function where you can find bills and resolutions, review hearing notices, and even submit testimony on bills by email directly to committees. The site has won awards for being comprehensive and easy to use; check it out <http://www.capitol.hawaii.gov>.

Many hearings are covered on `Olelo's community access channels through Capitol TV. You can watch on TV, on your computer or mobile device. For scheduled hearings, log on to <http://www.capitoltv.org>.

And if you need assistance in learning about the legislative process and how you can have a say in our deliberations, the Legislature's Public Access Room (PAR) - in room 401 on the fourth floor of the Capitol - has a great staff and many resources to help you get acquainted with issues as they are debated. Use these resources online at <http://lrbhawaii.org/par/>, call them at 587-0478, or stop by to chat with the helpful and knowledgeable staff. *Citizen participation in our process is always welcomed and encouraged.*

In just a few weeks we will be celebrating the arrival of the **Year of the Ram** - or as some call it, the Year of the Sheep or Goat - in the Chinese lunar calendar. In reading about the Year of the Ram, I was struck by the optimistic tone for the year before us. Traditions speak of "favorable changes" and a period of well being in the upcoming year, with a "newly gained faith in stable economic growth." All of this should be assured, the ancients say, with "diligence applied to hard work to ensure prosperity." Sounds like a great way to move forward in 2015. Kung Hee Fat Choy!

Me ke Aloha Pumehana,



2015 ~ Year of the Ram



Honoring our Champions

Several hundred family members and friends joined Mililani varsity football team players and coaches at the banquet officially celebrating their State Championship. Individual players won distinction during the season, and fourteen Trojans were selected for the All-State Team by media and coaches statewide.

Special Recognition went to **Head Coach Rod York** - selected again as **Coach of the Year**. *From left, City Councilman Ron Menor, Coach York, and to my left, Representative Ryan Yamane and Senator Donovan Dela Cruz.*

Opening Day at the State Capitol – Wednesday, January 21, 2015



Literally hundreds of people stopped by my State Capitol office last week as the Legislature began its sixty working day session—a great opportunity to renew acquaintances with old friends and welcome new ones. **Governor David Ige, first lady Dawn Ige and their son Matthew** were among the visitors.



With humility and gratitude I begin my seventh term as your elected Senator from District 18. My total commitment to our communities remains steadfast. I pledge to do what is best for the people of Hawaii.



Others included longtime Mililani resident and former State Senator **Randy Iwase** who has been nominated by the Governor to be new Chair of the Public Utilities Commission.



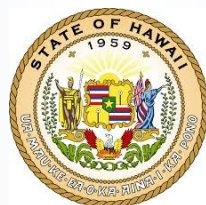
Principals from Waipahu and Mililani joined us on opening day – including (at left) **Keith Hayashi** (Waipahu High School), **Elyne Chung** (Mililani Middle), **Sheldon Oshio** (Waialeale Elementary) and **Heather Wilhelm** (Mililani Uka Elementary). In the back row, **Dr. John Brummel**, former Mililani High Principal, now with Central District responsibilities. Principal Hayashi (*center of the photo above right*) also brought the Waipahu Complex Team – *from left, Hanh Nguyen*, Principal at August Ahrens Elementary, **Randell Dunn**, Waipahu Intermediate, **Kent Matsumura**, Honowai Elementary, **Pat Anbe**, Kaleiopu'u Elementary, along with Principal Oshio (*far right*) and (*in front*) **Christy Nishimura**,



My office staff is always ready to assist. *From left*, Legislative Aides **Trevor Nagamine** and **Jim Manke**, and to my left, **Geraldine Kaneshiro** and **Joan Manke**, along with Office Manager and Education Committee Clerk **Park Kaleiwahea**.



State of the State Address
January 26, 2015



The Governor acknowledges excellence in leadership at Waipahu High School



During his address to the Legislature this week, Governor David Ige had high praise for Keith Hayashi of Waipahu High School. The Governor said: *“Waipahu High School is a wonderful example of a high performance school with strong leadership from the principal who seeks to empower students, teachers and the community; high expectations for students; and hard-working teachers and staff committed to innovative and creative academies to help students learn.”* Waipahu Legislators (above right) certainly agree with the Governor!

KEEP HAWAII'S HEROES

SAVE OUR BASES, OUR COMMUNITIES DEPEND ON IT

FORT SHAFTER ★ SCHOFIELD BARRACKS

*More than 30,000 signatures
on the petition to the Pentagon ~*

*Listening Sessions scheduled
to gather input in
Honolulu and Wahiawa*

Together with the Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii Military Affairs Council, State lawmakers are urging residents in their districts to become involved in a petition drive aimed at the U.S. Department of Defense. The Pentagon has said it envisions a reduction in uniformed Army personnel and civilians at Oahu bases, including Schofield Barracks, of nearly 20,000 people – with the attendant loss of as many as 30,000 family members. That amounts to about 5 percent of Oahu's population.

We know how important our Army families are to our Central Oahu communities and the entire state, and a reduction as discussed would be devastating. More than 30,000 people have already signed a petition urging the Pentagon to reconsider its proposed cuts; if you haven't already done so, you can make your voice heard by signing the petition you can find online at KeepHawaiiHeroes.org.

Large crowds were on hand to hear an in-person presentation from the Army at a Listening Session at Hale Koa Hotel last night, with another session scheduled for tonight at Leilehua High School. The sessions were to be videotaped and scheduled for rebroadcast on `Olelo Community Television at a date to be announced.

Free tax season assistance available

Once again this year I am pleased to be a legislative sponsor for the **free tax assistance** program organized by the Hawaii Alliance for Community-based Economic Development. Eligible taxpayers can have their federal and state tax returns prepared at no charge by IRS-certified volunteers. To determine if you are eligible, call 426-3858.

Following a January 31 kick-off event at the State Capitol – tax help by appointment only – assistance will be available mid-February through mid-March at the Mililani Branch of the **Hickam Federal Credit Union** on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. Call 423-1391 for an appointment.

From early February through dates in March, free tax return preparation will also be available on Tuesdays, Thursdays and some Saturdays at **Leeward Community College**. Inquire at info@hawaiiitaxhelp.org.

Tax assistance is also offered for low- to moderate-income seniors (over 60 years of age) by **AARP Hawaii**. Exact locations in our area are to be announced later this month. Check online at www.taxaidehi.org or call 545-6016.



*New
at the
Capitol
and in
Congress*



Since the last issue of my newsletter in late November, leadership in the Governor's office has changed and a new member of Congress has officially taken office.

At left, former Senator **David Ige** takes the oath of office as Hawaii's new Governor with our first lady, Dawn Ige, at his side. Hawaii Chief Justice Mark Recktenwald administered the oath in accordance with the State Constitution – at noon on the first Monday in December.

At right, newly-elected Congressman **Mark Takai** was in Hawaii this month for a ceremonial swearing-in for family and friends (after officially taking the oath of office in Washington, D.C., on January 6) at the Federal Courthouse. Congressman Takai's First Congressional District includes nearly all of the communities in Hawaii Senate District 18 that I represent.

In our Communities



Here's the wind-up . . .

It was a privilege and an honor to be selected to throw out the first pitch that officially opened the 2015 Central Oahu Youth Baseball League at Mililani District Park earlier this month.

Several hundred youngsters were in uniform - including the Pirates (*at left*) – along with volunteer coaches and players families who will enjoy their teams' seasons over the next few months.



Celebrate Character Counts!

Saturday, February 7, 10 am - 1 pm at Mililani Town Center – Character Counts Day! All five elementary schools in Mililani plus Mililani Middle School and Mililani High School have signed on to integrate the **Character Counts!** program into their activities and curriculum.

The program is built on the six pillars – Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring and Citizenship – that are so important to a fulfilling life experience. *Come and celebrate this family day with free entertainment, games & prizes and school information booths!*

Congratulations Mililani Teachers!

We send our sincere congratulations to the three public school teachers in our Mililani schools who have received National Board Certification this year from the **National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS)**. Board certification is considered the highest mark of accomplishment in the profession. It includes a rigorous, performance-based, peer-review process similar to Board certification in fields such as medicine. Our newly certified teachers are **Lance Fujioka, Mililani Uka Elementary, Andrea Kubo-Nakasone, Mililani Waena Elementary, and Kaiewa Muranaka, Mililani High School. Congratulations for your hard work!**

Focus on our Schools



At the lava's leading edge . . .

Earlier this month, I traveled to Hawaii Island with Rep. Richard Onishi to get a first hand update on the way the Department of Education has responded to the approaching lava flow from Kilauea that threatened the town of Pahoa, including **Pahoa and Keonepoko Elementary Schools**.

With me at the Pahoa Transfer Station are (*from left*) **Darryl Oliveira**, Hawaii County Civil Defense Director, and Area Superintendent of Education for Ka'u, Kea'au and Pahoa **Keoni Farias**.

While the students have been displaced from their home campuses, the DOE has used the experience as a "teachable moment," integrating volcano science and cultural perspectives into their instruction.

A visit to the **University Lab School** last week gave us the opportunity to review facilities needs as well as learn about the innovative ULS approach to instruction.

With me *at right*, fronting the iconic Castle Memorial Hall are my colleague **Senator Ron Kouchi, Principal Keoni Jeremiah, Denise Yoshimura-Yamamoto, a lab school parent and board member, Research Coordinator Miki Tomita, and Business Manager Shareef Wang**. We are fortunate to include Denise and Shareef as members of our Mililani community.



In late November, educators from Oahu schools were invited to share and learn contexts in which we can more substantially empower our schools to initiate programs that are meaningful to individual campuses. Principals **Fred Murphy** from Mililani High School (with me in the photo *above right*) and Keith Hayashi of Waipahu High School were both at the all-day session at Moanalua High. Leadership from the top is essential to success, and both Mililani and Waipahu High Schools are prime examples of that combination to the benefit of their students.