

# Senator Michelle Kidani

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



Aloha friends and neighbors,

It has been two months since our last newsletter, and a very busy time indeed with preparations for the 2014 Legislative session, interspersed with the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays. These reports give me an opportunity to recognize highlights in the life of our communities, to thank our residents for stepping forward in service to our neighborhoods, and to provide information that I think will be useful as we proceed through our work at the Capitol - with *your* participation.

The Legislative session officially began last week, and elsewhere in this newsletter you will find notes about some of the bills I have introduced, as well as thoughts about how we will continue to stabilize Hawaii's economy even as we enjoy an improved bottom line. Recent media reports about a large state budget surplus must be tempered by the reality that we have many unmet future obligations for which we must provide. Doing that now will mean an even more solid footing for the years ahead.

Let me also note that later this month we will welcome the Year of the Horse in the Asian Zodiac calendar. According to tradition, those born under this sign are leaders - strong, energetic, intelligent and outgoing - all very positive characteristics. The year 2014 will, again according to the zodiac, be a year of compassion and optimism - a year in which we should be attentive to the needs of those who cannot fight for themselves, and always optimistic that good fortune will soon be on the way.

That's a good attitude with which to approach our legislative priorities over the next few months as we work to make government more responsive to the needs of the people, in better economic times than we have experienced in some time. Again this year, I will be at our Neighborhood Board and other community meetings and always look forward to joining you in the many special events that celebrate our successes and strengthen our shared traditions.

Me ke Aloha pumehana,



2014—Year of the Horse

## Mililani Middle School Selected to Participate in Lt. Governor's After-School Initiative



That's a check for \$45,000! Lt. Governor Shan Tsutsui congratulates Mililani Middle School Principal Elynne Chung.

Earlier this month I joined Lt. Governor Shan Tsutsui, officials from the State Department of Education and other community leaders to congratulate **Mililani Middle School** on their successful after-school program - and to celebrate the school's successful application for some additional state support that will allow the program to expand.

MMS was one of five schools statewide selected from among 23 schools that applied for funds from R.E.A.C.H. - the Lt. Governor's **Resources for Enrichment. Athletics, Culture and Health** initiative. The funds will be used to supplement programs in the existing MMS after-school program - H.I.P. - the High Interest Program. HIP now provides extra-curricular activities that include music, technology, modern art and athletic opportunities.

The program also receives support from the MMS school community council, Parent Teacher Student Organization, the 65th Engineering Battalion at Schofield Barracks - a true school/community partnership.

MMS HIP now serves more than 600 students after school hours, and the additional REACH support will allow it to enroll over 120 more students. ***Congratulations!***

## Legislative Priorities Articulated

**Governor Abercrombie** - expand early childhood education; tax relief and support for seniors; increase the minimum wage; collaborative efforts to address climate change, homelessness, and invasive species . . . Justify public trust by only acting in the public interest.

**Senate President Kim** - top-to-bottom support for education, renewable energy, housing the homeless . . . Stand on the shoulders of those who preceded us.

**House Speaker Souki** - protect the environment, reform the tax system . . . Look beyond your own well being, and beyond today's needs.



Governor Abercrombie ~ State of the State Address, Tuesday, January 21

## Here are a few of the bills I have introduced for consideration by the Senate this session

You may learn further details by logging on to the Legislature's Web site: <http://capitol.hawaii.gov> and entering the bill number in the appropriate space.

- ♦ **SB 2446** – To name the new high school to be built in Kihei, Maui, **Patsy Takemoto Mink High School** (This is the first Senate bill in at least a decade that has been signed at introduction by all members of the Senate.)
- ♦ **SB 2610** – Requiring that at least one **automated external defibrillator (AED)** be installed at every public school campus in the state
- ♦ **SB 2616** – Allowing police to “boot” vehicles when the driver is cited for lack of proof of insurance
- ♦ **SB 2325** – **Prohibiting passengers from riding in the back of a pickup truck on freeways** and otherwise restricting passengers in pickup truck beds on other roadways
- ♦ **SB 2324** – **Establishing an electric vehicle user fee**, to provide funds for state and county roadway maintenance that are otherwise collected through fuel taxes
- ♦ **2326** – **Barring the UH Board of Regents from meeting behind closed doors** when discussing the performance of the UH system President or a campus Chancellor

**The deadline for introducing bills is later this week, and I expect other measures will be filed in the next few days.** Legislators introduce bills under many circumstances – at the request of constituents or other interested parties, for the purpose of stimulating discussion on an issue, or to establish or amend laws that meet a public need. By exploring the Legislature's Web site (above) it is possible to find all bills that I have introduced or co-sponsored and to track their progress through the session.

## ***JWSF welcomes the Year of the Horse!***

During the year, I serve as a current Board member of the JWSF - **Japanese Women's Society Foundation** - and proudly participate in the Foundation's programs beginning with the annual **Shinnen Enkai** celebration to welcome the new year in the Asian tradition.

The Foundation will celebrate six decades of service to the community in 2014, with current focus on providing resources and personal time at **Hale Pulama Mau, the geriatric care facility at Kuakini Medical Center**. It's part of the JWSF mission to address health and issues pertaining to aging, with an emphasis on women.

This year's Shinnen Enkai event featured a presentation about mixing cultures in Hawaii by George and Willa Tanabe, retired professors - in religion and art, respectively - from the University of Hawaii at Manoa.



We were also fortunate to hear from a trio of KZOO radio Karaoke Grand Champions - including Waipahu's own **Tevita Apina**, Grand Champion in 2011. Tevita is pictured at left, along with 2012 Grand Champion **Amy Katsumoto** (center) and the current (2013) Grand Champion, **Carolyn Shimamura**.

***Congratulations to JWSF on a continuing commitment to our community and best wishes for a successful celebration of our 60th anniversary!***



Dr. George Tanabe



### My Aloha to 249 new graduates of UH West Oahu

I was deeply honored to be invited to deliver the keynote address at the December 2013 commencement ceremonies at UH West Oahu’s Kapolei Campus.

These occasions mark a milestone in the lives of these individual grads. But each of these events is also a true milestone for this new campus as enrollment now surpasses 2,400 students and the numbers of those who have earned their degrees and certificates increase - by about 26 percent over last year’s numbers.

I maintain my firm support for this campus as a true focal point and source of great pride for our Central and West Oahu students.



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We were all inspired by the story of student speaker Natalie Eichner (*above right*) who told us about her life-changing dirtbike accident from which she emerged with a broken neck and back - but alive. Natalie’s goal had been to become a motocross professional, but the accident led her to re-focus on higher education. Now she has a BA in English to help her pursue new goals.

Natalie pointed out that fewer than 7 percent of people in the world have had the privilege of earning a college degree. UH West Oahu has significantly increased higher education opportunities for high school graduates in our neighboring communities.

**Hawaii hosts national conference of the Board of Hispanic Caucus Chairs** ~ My colleague, Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, and I were pleased to co-chair the 8th Annual National Conference of the Board of Hispanic Caucus Chairs (BHCC) in early December. The conference was a four day summit bringing together legislative leaders from across the country. The event was the largest annual conference to date for the organization.

Conference meetings included a mix of policy sessions covering a wide array of areas: health care, fiscal policy and state budgets, public education reforms, land development, natural resources, energy and other issues.



Hawaii benefits from conferences such as this where we can share best practices and hear the perspectives of state legislators who face the same challenges we do here in the islands.



# Opening Day ~ Twenty-seventh Hawaii



Beginning my sixth session as your State Senator ~ I am humbled by your support and the opportunity to serve residents of the 18th District.

In an opening day event to commemorate the 55th anniversary year of Hawaii becoming the 50th State, all former members of the State Legislature were invited to return to the Capitol to be recognized for their service. More than 30 former members of the Senate (pictured above, seated in the Senate chamber) were honored. The Senate and House printed commemorative booklets that are expected to be available to the public in a few weeks. *See information on the next page about how to access the directories online.*



During the formal program on opening day, I was honored to escort two former members of the Senate to the front of the Chamber to be recognized. At left, with Senate President Donna Kim, Randy Iwase, Senator from Mililani from 1991-2000, and (at right) Ron Menor, who represented our community almost continuously in the House and the Senate from 1983-2008. Ron currently serves as an elected member of the Honolulu City Council in District 9 that includes many of the same communities I serve in Senate District 18.

*In her opening day remarks, Senate President Donna Mercado Kim spoke of the many milestone accomplishments of former members of the Legislature . . .*

*Even more remarkable than their legislative accomplishments was their collaboration, despite differences in upbringing, personalities, values, district and constituent priorities, and internal political alliances and policies. They managed to put aside those differences, to compromise and collaborate, so the work of the Legislature could proceed, the people could be served, and Hawaii could be a special place.*

*This is not to say that our work is done. It never is. But I can say that the inspiration these men and women have given us, through their leadership and aloha for the islands and our people, have guided and shaped the most special place on earth: our home, our Hawaii.*

# State Legislature, 2014 Regular Session



Several hundred people visit the Capitol on opening day, including the large group (*pictured at left*) that gathered in the rotunda for poi pounding as part of a documentary about *Haloa* being prepared by a video crew. Kamehameha Schools senior Kiana Pascual (*below center*) visited my office to present a gift of freshly-pounded poi.

Other visitors on opening day included OHA Trustee Hulu Lindsey (*below left*) and several members from the ILWU Local 142 (*below right*).

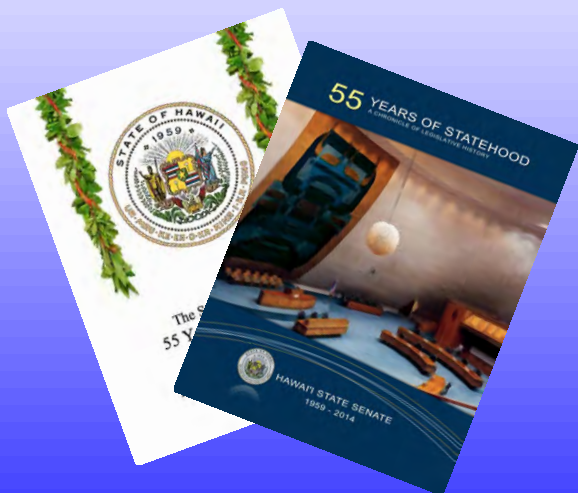


## *PARTicipate in the process ~~*

*The Legislature maintains a year-round all-purpose resource center on the fourth floor of the Capitol for use by the public and special interest organizations to track bills and issues, prepare and submit testimony, and use numerous other valuable tools to participate in the Legislative process.*

*The Public Access Room (PAR) is in room 401, and is open weekdays 8 a.m. - 7 p.m. during the session. Phone 587-0478.*

<<< **Ready to serve . . .** My Capitol office staff and I are prepared to answer your questions and help with state and district issues. I am pleased to work with (*from left*) Trevor Nagamine, Geraldine Kaneshiro, Jim Manke, Joan Manke, Ways and Means Committee staffer Will Kane and Office Manager Park Kaleiwahea.



## **Commemorative booklets available online**

As part of the opening day program both the Senate and the House invited all former members of the Legislature who served during Hawaii's 55 years as a state to return to the Capitol and be recognized for their service.

Each chamber published a **commemorative booklet** as a gift to former members and for internal distribution, but numerous requests from the public and others for these important historic records have prompted the Legislature to consider re-printing for further availability.

Meanwhile, both booklets are available in pdf format online at the Legislature's Web site:

**<http://capitol.hawaii.gov>**

Look in the "Recent Updates" box for the appropriate link.

**DOT Updates Kamehameha Highway Resurfacing and Construction Plan**

- Funds were appropriated to widen Kamehameha Highway between Lanikuhana Avenue and Ka Uka Boulevard. The Draft Environmental Assessment for this project is expected to be published in May 2014. *A public meeting for information and discussion is tentatively targeted for late February or early March. Watch for the announcements about date, time and location.*
- The construction cost for Kamehameha Highway Resurfacing from Waihau Street to Ka Uka Boulevard is estimated at about \$22 million. Funds have been authorized, with *bids to be opened next month (February) and construction to start this summer.*

***Here's a round-up of items from our community and elsewhere since our last report before Thanksgiving . . .***

Congratulations and mahalo to the scouting ohana - **Boy Scout Troop 32 and Cub Scout Pack 167** - for their hard work to collect 120 bags of food to help families in the Waipahu area fill their tables at Thanksgiving. The scouts are proudly sponsored by **Gentry Waipio Community Association**. >>>>>>



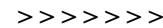
Soon after Super Typhoon Haiyan devastated the Philippines, a late afternoon gathering at the State Capitol memorialized those many thousands who lost their lives and at the same time celebrated our close ties to that country. Many of us floated memorial lanterns in the Capitol pool. Later, while staffing a phone bank for Philippine relief at the Hawaiian Village benefit concert, I exchanged greetings with a Mililani neighbor, Broadway star and jazz vocalist **Loretta Ables Sayre** (above right).



People in the Philippines will need help for recovery for many, many months ahead. Contact the Filcom Center in Waipahu to see how you can help: 680-0451



What better way to enjoy the annual **Mililani Christmas Parade** than with wide-eyed grandson **Akoni** at my side. Kids are the stars of the show at this time of year ~ I was happy to accompany him.



Pet parents in the Mililani area will have an easier time picking up after their dogs and keeping the community clean thanks to a donation of 20 "Ooops Stations" from **PetSmart**. The stations dispense plastic baggies for you-know-what. The donation was to the **Mililani Town Association**, whose Board VP **Bob Barrett** (above right) received the gift from PetSmart's **Kevin Rokosz**. I serve on the MTA Board as well, and we accept with gratitude.



***Area High School Seniors compete for DYW Scholarships***

Last Year, **Mililani's Chelsea Robinson of Hanalani Schools** was declared winner of the Distinguished Young Woman Scholarship program. This year, four of the eleven finalists for the honor claimed addresses in **Mililani and Waipahu**, and we are so proud of their school and community accomplishments. **Congratulations to Waipahu resident Nicole Fernandez, Waipahu High School seniors Charlyn Manuyag and Dolly Ann Ricapor, and Mililani High's Andrea Thane for making it to the finals.** I was on hand when the winners of scholarships were announced – **congratulations Andrea for receiving a \$750 award for your excellent interview.** This year's title went to **Makana Williams of Punahou**, representing Hawaii in the nationals.

# We our schools . . . And their teachers!



**Hale Kula Elementary School** - located on the Schofield Army Base in Central Oahu - is the only school in the state to successfully compete for a \$10,000 grant from Code.org, the national nonprofit organization behind "The Hour of Code," a global event designed to boost public awareness about the industry of computer programming and coding. I was invited to join state officials, including Governor Abercrombie, for the check presentation - and then to join for a hands-on coding experience.

Thanks to really helpful coaching from **Hale Kula fifth grader Ethan Poirier**, I made it to level 14. (I think part of that success is because I also get off-hours help from my grandson!) That's Ethan in the photo at lower left, with my table partner **Bob Davis, Principal at Kaala School** in Wahiawa.



Hale Kula is also home to Mililani resident **Teresa Cramer** (at right), designated Teacher of the Year for the Central District. I presented her with a Senate certificate to recognize her decade of accomplishments as a teacher of special needs students at Hale Kula. **Congratulations, Teresa, and to our fellow Mililani neighbor, Hale Kula Principal Jan Iwase!**



**Hale Kula's Teresa Cramer, Central District Teacher of the Year!**

## More "honored teachers"

**Hawaii State Federal Credit Union (HSFCU)** has presented education enhancement grants to two teachers in Senate District 18 public schools, and we are so proud to have them working on behalf of our students.

- ♦ **Paul Stanley from Mililani Middle School** will use his grant to purchase digital storytelling equipment to be used for the integration of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM)-based instruction.

- ♦ **Denalee Choy of Noelani Elementary School** requested funds to purchase two iPod touch devices for her students. Denalee noted that the use of technology is essential for students' growth, and that having small portable devices will lead to new creative and interactive experiences for her students. They'll be shared amongst 78 fourth grade students.

HSFCU began making grants in its **Investing in Education** program in 2009, and this year awarded nearly \$20,000 to 35 public schools for 43 projects—for a total of \$117,000 in grants over the last five years.

**Mahalo for the credit union's support ~ and congratulations to our recipient teachers!**



The photo above says it all ~ **the joy of winning the 2013 OIA Championship**, the highlight of a season in which the Mililani High School Trojans defeated all their public school opponents, taking the team - and the entire Mililani community - into the State Championship Tournament.

I joined the celebration at the team banquet this week, and look forward to many more seasons of success as MHS establishes itself as a "true contender" for football supremacy in the years ahead. **Congratulations!**

**Mahalo to Matt Capps/MHS for the photo!**

## Fall sports successes at MHS

For leading the Trojans to a Victorious season in 2013, **Head Football Coach Rod York** was named **Coach of the Year** by media and fellow coaches.

**Mililani's girls volleyball** team won the OIA Red Division title.

**The Trojan boys and girls tennis** teams both took OIA titles.

Mililani swept both the **boys and girls divisions in track and field**.

Both the **boys and girls MHS soccer** teams won their respective OIA titles.



PUKIAWE



ULUHE



OHIA



KANAWAO



I was joined by Senate staff and family for an unforgettable day of exploration from the top of Oahu to the island’s westernmost tip.



Our field trip took us to Mount Kaala in the morning, ending with a few hours at Kaena point, with the excitement of spotting a nearly invisible Hawaiian monk seal nestled among the rocks along the shoreline. We kept our distance, of course.

***Biodiversity thrives in Hawaii’s protected watershed and shoreline reserves***

At the invitation of the **Department of Land and Natural Resources**, I was privileged to tour and learn first-hand about the state’s **Natural Area Reserve (NAR)** program that protects our mauka forests that are the source of fresh water for island residents and agriculture. **DLNR’s Emma Yuen** guided us through mist and more atop 4000-foot high Mt. Kaala in the Waianae mountains where we saw an incredible variety of plants (some pictured above) and animal life that thrive in this protected area. In the afternoon, we descended the mountain and proceeded to the shoreline reserve area at Kaena Point for a totally different experience, with guidance from **DLNR’s Marigold Zoll**.

*Both of these areas (and others) are open to the public under carefully proscribed rules. If you would like to find out more, please contact the DLNR Division of Forestry and Wildlife, Room 325, 1151 Punchbowl Street (Kalanimoku Building, across Punchbowl Street from the State Capitol), telephone 586-0166. You’ll discover the beauty of places you may never have known about on Oahu, and you may even have the opportunity to volunteer in available DLNR conservation and preservation projects.*

**Women In Government selects Senator Kidani for leadership role**

Senator Kidani has again been designated a State Director for the national organization Women In Government (WIG). She has served with WIG in this capacity since 2009, helping to coordinate programs that identify and address issues common to Legislatures in all 50 states.

“I firmly believe it is important for us to be able to learn approaches to critical policy issues from our colleagues in the other 49 jurisdictions,” Senator Kidani said. “WIG conferences allow us to share best practices and experiences to advance the most effective public policies.”

**Senator Michelle Kidani ~ 2014 Senate Assignments**

**Vice Chair, Committee on Ways and Means ~ with Senate Leadership responsibility for overseeing all State funded construction projects**

**Vice Chair, Committee on Education**

**Member, Committee on Higher Education,  
Committee on Human Services, Committee on Hawaiian Affairs**

**Assistant Majority Leader**

**Please contact me . . .**

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