

# Senator Michelle Kidani

Twenty-eighth Hawaii State Legislature

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



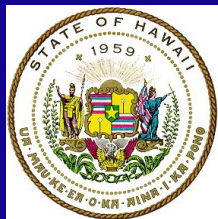
Chair, Committee on Education

Vice Chair, Committee on  
Commerce, Consumer Protection,  
and Health

Committee Member  
Higher Education and the Arts

Transportation and Energy

Hawaii State Capitol  
Room 228



IUCN  
World  
Conservation  
Congress  
Hawai'i 2016

Aloha Friends and Neighbors,

Congratulations to **Sydney Millerd** - proud graduate of the **Waipahu High School Class of 2016** - who has been named a winner of the John S. Martinez scholarship from the National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislatures (NHCSL). The Caucus awards only 11 of these scholarship grants nationally each year, and we are so proud that Sydney has been awarded one of them.

Hawaii's Hispanic scholar has displayed admirable leadership, academic excellence and a passionate commitment to community. Sydney served as 2013-2014 SkillsUSA Hawaii President and attended the 2013 National Convention as a voting delegate. She received the Harvard Book Award in her junior year. As a student in the first cohort of students enrolled in Waipahu's challenging Academy of Engineering she received numerous awards for her STEM projects. Sydney received a bronze Presidential Volunteer Service Award for her community service projects, including feeding the homeless and mentoring her peers. In her senior year, she was named one of seven semifinalists in the 52nd class of Presidential Scholars, and capped the year as the top student among 541 graduates in the Waipahu High School Class of 2016. Sydney is using her \$3,000 award to support her current studies at the University of Hawaii at Manoa.

The NHCSL scholarship program award was created in memory of the late Connecticut State Representative and former NHCSL President John S. Martinez to recognize the values most important to him - leadership, innovation, compassion and public service. It is presented to students of Hispanic ethnicity who reside in the district of a state legislator of Hispanic descent. Sydney and her family reside in Waikele, located in Senate District 18, which I represent. I proudly note my Puerto Rican heritage and serve as an active member of the Hispanic Caucus.

**Great work, Sydney, and best wishes for success at UH!**



I am also pleased to report that several dozens of Sydney's former school mates from Waipahu were able to attend sessions of this month's **International Union for the Conservation of Nature World Conservation Congress** at the Hawaii Convention Center. On Student Day, Waipahu's nationally recognized Academy of Natural Resources was featured. About 120 young men and women from the Marauder Nation were in the audience to witness the proceedings.

More than 9,000 participants from nearly 200 nations came to Hawaii for the largest international environmental conference ever held in the U.S. This was a wonderful opportunity for Waipahu students to observe and learn about real threats to the future health of planet Earth - especially our oceans.

A few days after the ten-day Congress adjourned, I addressed my fellow Senators at a Special Session, reminding them that we should all be guided by the widely-heralded theme of the sailing canoe Hokule'a to **Malama Honua** - "to take care of and protect everything that makes up our world: land, oceans, living beings, our cultures and our communities." We are, worldwide, all in this together.

Me Ke Aloha Pumehana,





Education committees from the Senate and House scheduled a joint information briefing this week to hear about the federally-funded college access program GEAR UP Hawaii (**G**aining **E**arly **A**wareness and **R**eadiness for **U**ndergraduate **P**rograms) in celebration of National GEAR UP Week. There are three GEAR UP programs in Hawaii serving minority students from underserved communities who are frequently the first person in their families to enroll in college. **GEAR UP Waipahu** is a partnership between UH Manoa and Waipahu Intermediate and High School. We were fortunate to hear from Waianae and Waipahu students who were enthusiastic about their introduction to higher education before graduation from high school. In addition to GEAR UP Waipahu participants, hundreds of other WHS students took at least one college credit course last year in the Early College program pioneered by **Principal Keith Hayashi** in 2012.



Mahalo to UH West Oahu Interim Chancellor Doris Ching (second from the left) and staff for hosting our GEAR UP briefing.

**Monday, October 10** – deadline for registering to vote in the General Election

- Register online at secure website <https://olvr.hawaii.gov>

**Tuesday, October 25** – Early walk-in voting locations open – 8 am-4 pm

- Kapolei Hale and Honolulu Hale Courtyards

**Effective this year, qualified Hawaii residents who are not yet registered to vote may go in-person to any early walk-in voting location to register.**

**Tuesday, November 1** – deadline to request a mail ballot

- Call 453-VOTE (453-8683) for information or check online at [elections.hawaii.gov](http://elections.hawaii.gov).

**Tuesday, November 8** – **General Election Day** -Polls open 7 am-6 pm

## Important Deadlines



## Vanpool Ridesharing is back ~ try it; you'll like it!



I'm a big fan of the vanpool; ridesharing can save drivers and passengers money, and it definitely takes cars off the road. I was one of the original vanpool drivers when a previous program was active in the 1990s. But after 9-11, federal spending priorities shifted dramatically, and the program was discontinued when funding was no longer available.

In the 2015 legislative session, I pushed for a renewed vanpool project and secured funding in the amount of \$500,000 with the help of Senators Tokuda and Dela Cruz. We allocated another \$500,000 again this year for a total commitment of \$1 million in state support.

Enterprise Rideshare will run the program for the City & County of Honolulu on a 30-month trial. I tried out one of the latest model minivans with Mayor Caldwell when the program was announced last month (*photo at left*). Enterprise hopes that as many as 150 vans eventually will carry more than a thousand commuters between their homes and schools or workplaces on a regular basis. Vehicle insurance, gas, maintenance and repairs are included, primary drivers may use their vehicles for personal use, and Rideshare is offering \$250 per-vehicle each month that passengers can split up as an incentive.



More information is available at 543-1526 or by email: [RideshareHawaii@erac.com](mailto:RideshareHawaii@erac.com).