

# SENATE DISTRICT 18 COMMUNITY REPORT

MAY 2022 – *Serving Mililani Town, Waipio Gentry, Waikele, Village Park & Royal Kunia*

Aloha Friends and Neighbors,

As this legislative session comes to a close, I wanted to take a moment to mahalo my constituents for allowing me to represent them in the Senate. As Senate Vice-President and Chair of the Education Committee, I am honored to continue representing District 18 to make positive changes for our community and our state. I am working on a more comprehensive breakdown of the bills that have passed this year as well as a budget breakdown to show the strides the Legislature has made during the 2022 legislative session. You can expect this End of Session newsletter, including highlights from our district's graduation ceremonies, to be mailed out later in June. Here are a few highlights and updates that I'd like to provide in the meantime:

**Teacher Recruitment and Retention** – I'm very pleased that we were able to move forward with a comprehensive package to address our long-standing teacher workforce issues. The past couple of years have been especially difficult for our teaching ohana and I believe that the actions taken this year by the Legislature, will help keep our veteran teachers in the classroom and encourage more to get into the field. This includes SB2819, which I introduced to eliminate the statutory restrictions on how many teacher classifications were allowed, the \$130 million in funding to rebalance teacher pay scales, and an additional \$600,000 for our Grow Our Own program.

**Cost of Living in Hawai'i** – The Legislature also made great strides in addressing cost of living increases in our State. In addition to the hundreds of millions in the budget for affordable housing, the Legislature also passed a number of bills to address the rising cost of living.

- Increase to the minimum wage (HB2510), bringing the minimum wage to \$18/hr on January 1, 2026.
- Make the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) permanent and refundable ensuring that more working families have access to this credit.
- Providing additional tax relief with SB514, providing \$300 per household member for individuals making less than \$100,000 a year, and \$100 for those making more than \$100,000. A big mahalo to Ways and Means Chair, Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, and House Finance Chair, Representative Sylvia Luke, for working to make this a reality for our families.

Additional details on other important bills that have been passed as well as further details on our State's budget will be provided in June. In the meantime, if you have any questions on bills, budget items, or any other matter, please do not hesitate to reach out to our office.



## SENATE VICE PRESIDENT

Chair:  
Committee on Education

Vice Chair:  
Committee on  
Higher Education

Member:  
Committee on  
Ways and Means

Member:  
Special Committee on  
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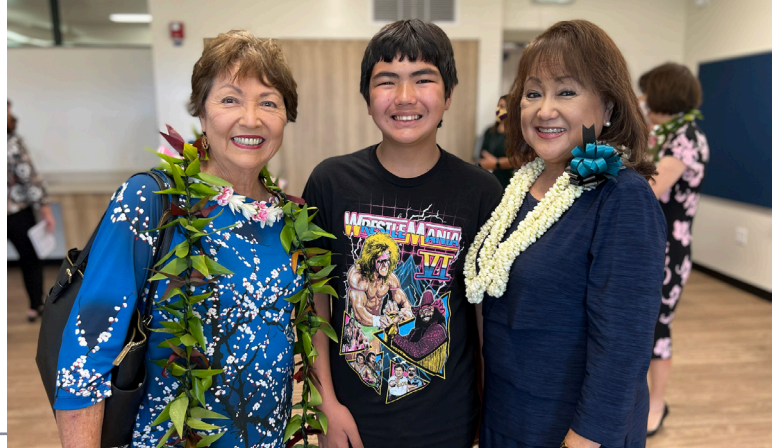
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## MILILANI MIDDLE SCHOOL BUILDING DEDICATION

Congratulations to Principal Elynne Chung, faculty, staff and students of Mililani Middle School on the exciting completion of their new classroom building! I was fortunate enough to attend the dedication ceremony with Senator Dela Cruz to present a Senate certificate in honor of their campus evolution. Though Mililani Middle School was the first multi-track school in the state, it will transition to a single-track curriculum next school year with the addition of the new building. The 15-classroom building will host Media, Technology, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math), Family Consumer Science, English Language Learners and Career Exploration classes for grade 7 and 8 students. Though the Blazers are a young school, they are the largest middle school in the state of Hawai'i, and this transition will now align with the established DOE school calendar, gaining an additional eleven more days of school. As the grandparent of a proud Blazer, I am all the more proud to see their continued growth and success. Congratulations!



## CONGRATULATIONS MILILANI CLASS OF 2022!

My deepest aloha and congratulations to all of our hardworking graduates of the class of 2022! It was heartwarming to celebrate in person with our graduates at the Stan Sheriff Center last week as we cheered on our seniors on this momentous occasion. After navigating the challenges of the last few years, it was especially inspiring to see friends, family and community members gather to celebrate. The success of these students is a testament to their incredible resilience and dedication, as well as the collective support of their families, teachers and staff.

Congratulations to the Mililani Class of 2022! Your hard work, tenacity and brilliance are invaluable qualities which will serve you well in your future pursuits. Best wishes in all of our future endeavors--we are all behind you!

