



South Maui Community News

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Greetings from Representative Fontaine

Representative
George Fontaine
House District 11:
Kthei, Wailea, Makena

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Aloha and Happy New Year!

The 2012 legislative session began on Wednesday, January 18th. Although the traditional festive mood of this year's session opening was gone, the desire to improve the economy and create job growth was evident in Speaker Calvin Say's opening address to not raise taxes or fees or other "revenue enhancements."

This session will continue to be challenging as we look for ways to help small business to invest and create jobs in Hawaii. As lawmakers we are also faced with an unfunded liability for health care benefits to retired state workers; the estimate was \$9.8 billion in July 2009.

I am committed to support legislation that promotes job creation, improves the economy, strengthens education and improves the quality of our lives in Hawaii.

In this issue, you will find many interesting stories about: my staff at the state Capitol, and update on the Hale Kau Kau meal program, the state of Hawaii budget, and new tools to stay informed and be involved in the legislative process.

If you would like to receive this newsletter in an electronic format please go to the following link:

<http://www.repfontaine.com/>

As always, I am here to serve you. If you have any questions, comments or concerns please don't hesitate to contact me.

Mahalo,



Rep. George Fontaine

Welcome Back the Staff

This coming session we will have the same staff members as during the 2011 legislative session. Carrie Kealoha is the office manager and she will be joined once again by legislative aides Kehau Cortez-Camero and Jeffrey Lyons.

Office manager Carrie Kealoha is an eleven-year seasoned veteran staff member, in the state House. Last session she was office manager for Rep. Fontaine. Prior to working for Fontaine she Kealoha worked for Minority Leader Lynn Finnegan (HD-32) as office manager for six years.

Kehau Cortez-Camero worked as a legislative aide for Rep. Fontaine last year. Prior to that, she was a



Left to right—Carrie Kealoha, Kehau Cortez-Camero and Jeffrey Lyons

legislative aide for Minority Leader Lynn Finnegan for two years. Kehau is a graduate of University of Hawaii at Hilo and the University of Hawaii at Manoa and speaks Hawaiian.

Jeffrey Lyons worked as a legislative aide for Rep. Fontaine last year. He was also an intern for Rep. Gene Ward (HD-17) during the 2008 legislative session. Lyons was a university professor for 10 years, teaching at: Hawaii Pacific University, Honolulu Community College, and Argyosy University Honolulu. He is a graduate of University of Hawaii

at Manoa and Regent University.

Please feel free to contact one of us when you have a question or concern.

Hale Kau Kau update and New Homeless Shelter in Kihei

Hale Kau Kau (house of food) is a meal program in South Maui that provides hundreds of free hot meals to those in need, but also provides meals to seniors and homebound individuals who are unable to feed or care for themselves. Hale Kau Kau is located at St. Theresa Church, operating 365 days a year. The program has been in operation since 1991. Given the current state of the economy, the number of those served has risen drastically.

Because Hale Kau Kau delivers its meals in near proximity to a residential area, a number of homeowners are impacted by individuals who are attracted to the meal program. There have been complaints from homeowners about vagrants, drinking, trespassing, and drug use.

Many neighbors support the concept of feeding those in need, but they do not feel that the location of Hale Kau Kau at St. Theresa church is appropriate. They would

like to see the meal program move to a more ideal location. As a result, several residents and homeowners contacted my office seeking to find a resolution to this issue.

December Meeting with Homeowners

On December 29th, 2011 I convened a meeting with the board members of Hale Kau Kau, St. Theresa Church, Hale Kau Kau volunteers and neighbors who reside in the vicinity of St. Theresa Church. Also at the meeting were: Maui Council member Don Couch, representatives from Department of Housing and Human Concerns and the Maui Police Department.

For the last 10 years I have been advocating for a homeless shelter in South Maui to deal with the growing problem of homelessness. The concept has been supported in the past but has stalled because of the lack of available land, and the need to identify an agency to design and operate a facility. The proposal is to open a homeless shelter which would

also provide a new location for Hale Kau Kau.

Land for a Homeless Shelter

As a result of the December 29th meeting, we learned that the County of Maui may be willing to provide land near the new police station under construction. St. Theresa church officials also stated that they are willing to run the new homeless shelter.

The Maui police department has stepped up enforcement in the area and Hale Kau Kau is doing a better job of monitoring the area which is providing some relief.

Next Community Meeting

The Hale Kau Kau working group agreed to meet on a quarterly basis to continue the discussion. Our next meeting will be scheduled in mid-March. The meeting is open to the public, so if you have concerns about homelessness please join us. Contact our office toll free at: 800-984-2400 x68525.

State of Hawaii Budget—Increases past \$11 Billion

On December 19, 2011, Governor Neil Abercrombie presented his budget to the public stating that no new taxes would be needed in 2012. Abercrombie's budget, which was based on an expected 14.5% increase in state revenues, added \$120 million in general fund spending to the budget passed last year by lawmakers. The proposed increase would bring the total state budget to \$11.1 billion for 2013.

Deficit Budget in 2013 and 2014

The deficit does not kick in until the 2013 fiscal year when the state will be short \$19 million. In 2014, the problem grows exponentially with the state in a \$164 million deficit. Governor Abercrombie's Budget Director Kalbert Young suggested that the deficits in the upcoming years could require the state to consider tax increases, but for the 2012 session, tax increases will not be needed.

Balanced Budget Requirement

The State of Hawaii constitution specifies that the governor is responsible for submitting a balanced budget to the legislature.

On January 18, the Legislature will open the 2012 session without a complete balanced budget proposal from the governor and face pressure to fund Abercrombie's \$120 million in spending increases knowing that the increases will put the state into a deficit the following year. The action would equate to a family spending extra money this year knowing that next year and the year after they won't be able to pay all their bills.

I along with other members of the minority will be looking for ways to ensure that the state of Hawaii remains fiscally responsible and does not overspend. If you have any comments or suggestions to help balance the budget, please contact my office.

Finance Information Briefing

At a joint informational finance briefing with state House and Senate members, Carl Bon-

ham, Executive Director of the Economic Research Organization at the University of Hawaii stated that "job growth increased just over 1 percent in 2011."

Eugene Tian, director of the State Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism commented to the Associated Press that "The economy is still on the recovery path. It's just not at expansion yet."

Council on Revenues Lowers Forecast

In early January, the Council on Revenues, a group of economists and business people that forecast the state's revenues, lowered the expected 14.5% increase to 11.5%. The adjustment threw Abercrombie's once-balanced budget into an expected \$312 million deficit by 2016.

However, Governor Abercrombie's Budget Director Kalbert Young insists that they will not need cut spending or add any new taxes this fiscal year. The forecast, is that fiscal year 2012 will end with a \$77 million surplus.



Watch the
"Fontaine
Factor"

Akaku 53
Wednesdays
8:00pm

Olelo 54
Sundays at
3:00pm

New Legislative Web Site

The Hawaii State Legislature web site has been completely redesigned and updated. The new site should give quicker and easier access to bills as they move through the legislative process. It should also be easier for the public to submit testimony—which can be done electronically. The new Hawaii State Legislature web site can be found at the following web address: <http://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/>

The new web site includes easy to use buttons for submitting testimony, hearing notifications, measure tracking and more. You can also sign up for RSS feeds to automatically receive notifications of: member page updates, committee pages and more information.

Citizen's Guide

If you want to learn more about how the legislative process works, click on the Citizen's Guide to Participation in the Legislative Process. You can learn about how a bill becomes law, the differences between bills and

resolutions, how to find a committee that a bill is assigned to, how to submit testimony, how to download the legislative calendar and more.

Tracking Legislation and Submitting Testimony

One of the most useful functions of the new web site is more streamlined ability to track legislation and submit testimonies to committees.

To find a bill that you want to track, all you need to do is click on the Measure Tracking button, and then submit key words to search for bills that you would like to track. Testimony can be submitted to a committee by clicking the Submit Testimony button. Your testimony can then be submitted online and your thoughts and ideas can be heard. You don't need to get on the airplane and come to the state Capitol on Oahu!

Hopefully, the new Hawaii State Legislature web site

will make it easier for citizens to participate in the process.

Follow the link below for more information:
<http://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/docs/HiLegSiteGuide.pdf>



Public Access Room

The Public Access Room (PAR) is part of the Legislative Reference Bureau at the state Capitol. The PAR is a non-partisan agency of the Hawaii State Legislature.

The PAR is unique in that it was created 22 years ago to assist the public's access to the legislative process. The PAR began with volunteers from the community and in 1996 it was made a part of the Legislative Reference Bureau with full-time staff.

The PAR is located in Room 401 of the state Capitol and provides a variety of services:

- Computers for submitting testimony to legislative committees
- Workspace for individuals and small groups
- Internet access for research related issues
- Legislative documents and reference materials

- Photocopying services for testimony
- Television to view public meetings in the Capitol

The PAR also holds community workshops for the public on all islands—to educate the public about involvement in the legislative process. If you would like the PAR to hold a workshop in your community, contact them at:

984-2400 x 7-0478 (Toll-free from Maui)
587-0478 (Island of Oahu)

Public Access Room Hours During Session (Jan-Apr):
8:00am—7:00pm; Monday—Friday

For more information about the Public Access Room, go to: <http://hawaii.gov/lrb/par/>



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Photos from Opening Day (Jan 18)



Rep. Fontaine featured food produced on the Island of Maui. Maui hot dogs, chips, and yummy manju.



Maui Kitch'n Cook'd Potato Chips were very popular!



A 6th grade student from Kawaihonaokana'auao charter school interviewed Rep. Fontaine.



Rep. Fontaine introduces his family members to the members of the Statehouse.



Maui Council-members Don Couch and Gladys Baisa.



Rep. Fontaine and members of Catholic Charities.