

Bills Support Kūpuna, Caregivers

STATE REP. GREGG TAKAYAMA

Three times a week, senior citizens gather at Pearl City Community Church for an hour of cardiovascular exercise. In addition to building their fitness, participants can share healthy recipes and talk story.



Nearly 2,000 ktpuna take part in physical fitness programs offered by the state-subsidized Healthy Aging initiative.



Also offered is a six-week workshop that gives seniors and caregivers advice for treating chronic health conditions and teaches them athome exercises. More than 3,200 seniors statewide have taken part in these workshops.

Healthy Aging Partnership programs started 20 years ago and have won national recognition for reducing health care costs for Hawai'i's seniors and improving quality of life for participants. House Bill 1771 would appropriate \$600,000 to continue the Healthy Ag- ing initiative and expand it to more communities.

It's one of several measures of special interest to Leeward O'ahu's large elderly popu lation, and is moving toward approval by the Legislature. Here a few others:

- Family Caregiver Tax Credit. Family caregivers are unsung heroes of our commu- nity. They provide unpaid care for loved ones while facing many physical, emotional and financial challenges. On av - erage, caregivers spend 26% of their income equipment, transportation and home mod - ifications. HB 1769 proposes

a \$5,000 annual tax credit.

Family Leave. Paid fam -

ily leave would provide par - ents with paid time off to care for their newborn or se- riously ill family member. SB 2474 would provide up to 16 weeks of family leave funded by worker payroll deductions matched by employers in a state-run insurance fund.

- Fall Prevention. Injuries from falls are among the lead- ing causes of death and per manent disability for the el- derly. HB 1772 would fund a \$100,000 public information campaign on how to reduce injuries and health care costs.

Contact state Rep. Gregg Takayama (Pearl City, Waima- lu and Pacific Palisades) at [808-586-6340](tel:808-586-6340) or [reptakaya-ma@ capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:reptakaya-ma@capitol.hawaii.gov).

Pearl City Community Church members visited the state Capitol Feb. 2 to ask lawmakers to pass a bill to expand Health Aging Partnership programs that provide wellness and exercise classes for senior citizens.

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