

Aloha e Friends,

Father's Day is June 21, so let's be sure to remember our dear old dads! I'll miss having some of my kids with me this year as 3 out of 5 are traveling.

Immediately following the last day of session May 5, (aka "Sine die"), school graduations took place across my district. AlohaCongrats again to all the graduates of Campbell High School, Kapolei High School, Waipahu High School, Island Pacific Academy, and American Renaissance Academy of Senate District 20. Also, to the Youth Challenge Academy grads! I wish you all much success in your future endeavors.

Please don't hesitate to contact me at (808) 586-6830 or sengabbard@capitol.hawaii.gov if I can help you or your family in any way. I also invite you to follow me on social media: [Instagram](#) @GabbardAloha, [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#). *Mike*

COMMITTEE CHAIR

AGRICULTURE & ENVIRONMENT

MEMBER

- ◆ Judiciary
- ◆ Government Operations

DISTRICT 20

Kapolei, Makakilo and portions of Ewa, Kalaheo, and Waipahu

Special Session for Judicial Appointments

With the end of the 2022 Regular Legislative Session, I'm now able to dedicate myself more fully to District 20 community issues, in addition to visiting farms, attending/speaking at conferences, and gathering ideas for new legislation. Interim is also a time when the Senate is often called back into "mini-sessions" to take care of things we need to do as a legislative body. One of those responsibilities is to review the Governor's Judicial Nominees. The state Senate will convene a special session on June 20-21 to review the judicial appointments of Jill M. Hasegawa and Joanna E. Sokolow to the District Family Court of the Third Circuit, Hawai'i Island, and Gregory H. Meyers to the District Court of the Fifth Circuit, Kaua'i. I've been meeting and speaking with them over the past week and all seem highly qualified.

Listen-Story Meeting: Rail Update

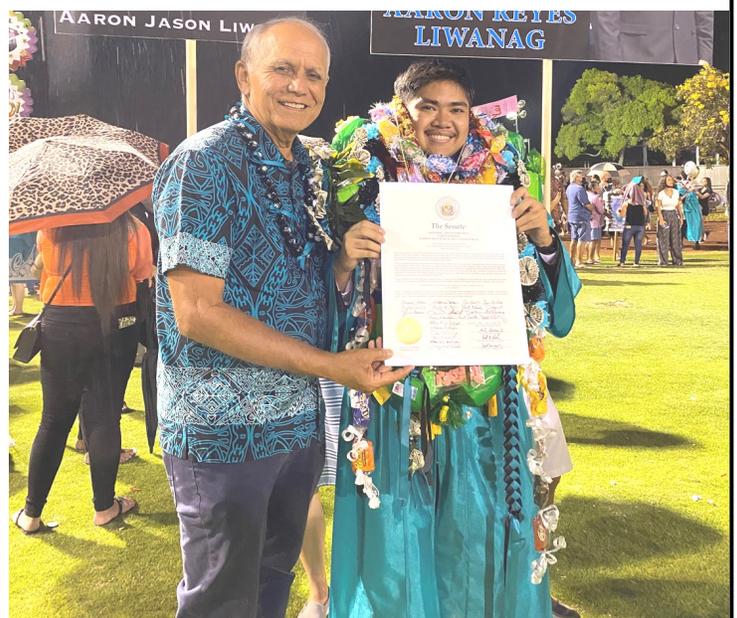
Please join my Virtual Listen Story Community Meeting on **July 9, 9-10 a.m.** when we'll be getting an update on the rail from HART. Send me an email and I'll send you the link.

Kapolei Middle School 2022 Graduation

I attended the Kapolei Middle School graduation ceremony on May 18. This was their first in-person event in over two years. My office prepared certificates for 189 "Po'okela Award" winners—students who achieved a GPA of 3.60 or higher for each of the three quarters of the current school year. A special AlohaCongrats to these students whose future will undoubtedly be bright!

Kapolei High School 2022 Valedictorians

On May 20, I attended the Kapolei High School commencement ceremony and presented Honorary Certificates to the KHS Valedictorians, as I do each year, on behalf of the 31st Legislature of the State of Hawai'i. Following the graduation ceremony, I presented 6 of the 35 certificates, including one to Aaron Liwanag, who also gave the Commencement Speech. Then it started raining like crazy! The remaining grads received theirs in the mail with a personal letter from me, congratulating them on their success.



Sen. Gabbard attended the KHS graduation on May 20 and presented certificates to the 2022 Valedictorians, including Aaron Liwanag, who also gave the Commencement Speech.

NCSL AG TASK FORCE: MA'O FARMS

NCSL Ag Task Force Presentation: MA'O Farms



Sen. Gabbard attended and spoke at the NCSL Ag Task Force in Savannah, GA, on June 3, about MA'O Organic Farms.

On June 3, I was invited to speak at the [National Committee of State Legislators Ag Task Force](#) meeting in Savannah, GA. The theme I chose to speak on was how to encourage youth to enter the field of agriculture and how to grow more farmers. I enthusiastically shared our unique program here on the West side known as MA'O Organic Farms.

According to the HDOA (Hawai'i Dept. of Agriculture), the average age of farmers is 60.1 years. Hawai'i also imports 85-90% of our food, at a cost of \$3B annually – this is a recipe for disaster. People sometimes think there's not enough land for agriculture... the reality is, we have over 800,000 acres of ag land, just waiting for farmers! So, our challenge has been: how do we attract people, especially young folks into farming? And how do we get rid of the negative stigma attached to farming?

In 2001, in Wai'anae Gary and Kukui Maunakea-Forth, a small 5-acre organic farm, and wondered *how can we connect young people with the land in some meaningful way?* On their little farm, Gary and Kukui started up a 2-year Youth Leadership Training program where young people ages 18-25, were invited to become involved in an internship where they work three days a week, from dawn until noon and go to college two days a week. They called it MA'O Organic Farms. MA'O is an acronym for mala (garden) 'ai (food) 'opio (youth) or youth food garden. It was founded on the belief that when we reconnect and restore the

relationship between the land and the people, we're able to return abundance and prosperity to youth, to their families and to the community. And it's working!

On the farm, these young adults learn all aspects of farming: planting, harvesting, distribution, and marketing. The interns get paid a monthly stipend. The starting base pay for each intern working about 16 hours per week is \$525/month. By the 2nd year, the stipend goes up to \$675 per month, with a max of \$725. In addition, they get their college tuition paid for! MA'O farms has grown from an initial 5-acre plot leased in 2001, to 24 acres in 2011, to 281-acres in 2019, to 381-acres currently.

At 24-acres, they grew about 80 tons of produce per year, and now produce more than 125 tons. In addition to CSAs (Community Supported Agriculture), MA'O distributes their produce to Farmers' Markets, Grocery & Natural Food Stores, Hotels, Restaurants & Eateries across the island of O'ahu, including Down to Earth Organic & Natural, Foodland, and Whole Foods Market. Annual sales were \$1.08 million in 2021, with \$1.35 million projected in 2022. Since they started, 130 students have graduated with Associate degrees and 43 with Bachelor's. Roughly 45 students are currently in the program, with 8 full-time staff on the administrative and education side and 14 full-time on the farm side. The word's getting out! I've been on several site visits, most recently the end of May and it was wonderful to see how much they've grown since I was last there. I encourage you to visit [MA'O Farms' website](#) to learn more.



Sen. Gabbard visited MA'O Organic Farms on May 18, 2022. (Pictured with Wei Fang, MA'O Strategic Advisor & Project Mgr.)

DISTRICT 20 UPDATES



Kalaeloa Master Plan – Public comment period ends June 30

The original Kalaeloa Master Plan was adopted on March 1, 2006. Currently, Hawai'i Community Development Authority (HCDA) is working to develop a Master Plan Update. They're committed to integrating community needs and interests into the redevelopment process and seeking community involvement during this comment period, which ends June 30. For those of you in the Kalaeloa area, please take a moment to view the following presentation and provide your feedback. Here's the presentation: June 6, 2022 [Kalaeloa Community Meeting Presentation](#), and here's the draft plan: [2022 DRAFT Kalaeloa Master Plan](#). I encourage you to submit your comments to the project email at: kalaeloa@tortigallas.com.

CIP (Capital Improvement Project) Funds

CIP (Capital Improvement Project) refers to construction-related projects or major deferred repair and maintenance needs, such as re-roofing a building, acquiring land, the design and construction of a new facility, etc. I was pleased to receive letters from the Governor announcing the release of funding for 1) **Fort Barrette Road Improvements:** \$1,300,000 to finance additional construction for improvements from the vicinity of Kama'aha Avenue to the vicinity of Farrington Highway on O'ahu; 2) **Hawai'i State Veterans Home:** \$1,226,812 construction funds for a new 120-bed nursing home and long-term care facility on O'ahu; and 3) **Hawaiian Home Lands Lot Development:** \$22,757,167 for construction of infrastructure for single-family residential

lots for Ka'uluokaha'i, Increment II-C in Kapolei.

Crumbl Blessing/Grand Opening

On May 19, Crumbl Cookies in Kapolei Commons, opened its doors to the public. They invited me to be part of the celebration and blessing where I, along with Rep. Stacelynn Eli and Sen. Kurt Fevella, welcomed them to the neighborhood with an Honorary Certificate on behalf of the House and Senate. In just five years, Crumbl has grown from a humble cookie shop to a booming franchise with over 360 locations in more than 40 states. Crumbl Kapolei has provided more than 50 jobs and will surely become a beloved part of the 'ono-treat-loving Westside.



Sen. Gabbard attended the Crumbl Blessing/Grand Opening on May 19, and presented an Honorary Certificate from the 31st Hawai'i State Legislature. (Pictured L-R: Sen. Kurt Fevella, Rep. Stacelynn Eli, Sen. Gabbard.)



Sen. Gabbard attended the Kapolei Middle School 2022 Graduation on May 18. (Pictured L-R: Christine Kerr, KMS Activities Coordinator; Sen. Gabbard; Rep. Sharon Har; and Principal Richard Fajardo.)

KALAELOA CONSTRUCTION UPDATE



■ Closed

The Image Group courtesy of Goodfellow Bros

Hunt contractors are working overtime and 7 days a week to complete construction at the Franklin D. Roosevelt Ave. and Kamokila Blvd. intersection. Hunt's construction team is working with Costco Kapolei management to increase traffic flow in the area, and has installed additional signage to minimize driver confusion. Curbs, gutters, and sidewalks are being put in along the 1,300-foot stretch of Kamokila Blvd. Access to Costco Kapolei, Kapolei Judiciary Complex, and Barbers Point Elementary School remains open. The FDR Ave. and Kamokila Blvd. intersection is currently scheduled to reopen in late July.

FDR Ave: Changes from 2-to 4-lanes along the entire length of the project with two lanes in each direction. This new segment will have sidewalks on both sides of the road, which will increase walkability in the area.

Kamokila Blvd: Kamokila's 4-lane roadway extends into the Kalaeloa project. The Kamokila extension will also have two travel lanes going in both directions with bike lanes continuing on both sides of the roadway.



The Image Group courtesy of Goodfellow Bros.

Construction on the Daniel Kahikina Akaka Department of Veterans Affairs Community-Based Outpatient Clinic is progressing as planned. The concrete foundation and underground utilities have been installed, and structural columns to support the clinic are being put into place. Once Hunt Companies completes construction, the \$120 million VA facility will provide specialized health care for 87,000 Hawai'i veterans. The 89,000-square-foot facility will offer primary care, mental health, audiology, physical and occupational therapy, dental and prosthetic services. The clinic is scheduled to open late 2023.

Hunt Companies contractors lay foundation of the Daniel Kahikina Akaka Department of Veterans Affairs Community-Based Outpatient Clinic (6.14.22)