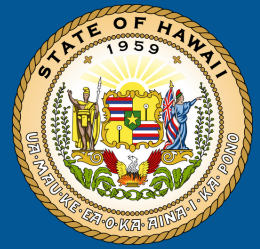


COMMUNITY REPORT

SENATE DISTRICT 18 | JANUARY 2024

Serving Mililani Town, Waipi'o Gentry, Crestview, Waikele, portion of Waipahu, Village Park, Royal Kunia



Michelle
KIDANI

**Senate Vice
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Aloha Friends and Neighbors,

Happy New Year! I hope your holiday season was filled with joy and treasured moments with your loved ones. As we step into 2024, I reflect upon our accomplishments from the previous year and look forward with fresh determination to the current legislative session.

The start of the 2024 legislative session is a pivotal time, especially as we continue to aid in the recovery of the Maui wildfire. Our communities have shown remarkable resilience, strength, and compassion, and it is uplifting to see everyone come together in such a powerful way. My dedication remains steadfast not only in addressing the immediate needs arising from this disaster but also in advancing our state's long-term goals.

As the Chair of the Senate Committee on Education, I am focused on enhancing our education system. This year, our priorities include expanding access to quality early childhood education, ensuring our schools have safe and conducive environments for learning, and attracting and retaining qualified educators. Each of these priorities is a crucial piece of the puzzle in the long-term success of our keiki. By addressing these key areas, we are not only enhancing the quality of education in the short term but also laying a robust foundation for the future generations of Hawai'i. Alongside the collaboration of my colleagues, community partners, and state agencies, we have the opportunity to forge a promising future for all our children.

In this newsletter, I share updates of new facilities for the benefit of our community, including a ribbon-cutting ceremony at Mililani High School's new track and field and the blessing of Waipahu High School's Integrated Academy Learning Center. Additionally, our last page provides tips on navigating the legislative process. Your input, experiences, and involvement are vital as we move throughout the session, and we hope to empower your engagement.

I am prepared to collaborate with my colleagues, stakeholders, and most importantly, you, my neighbors. Thank you for your continuous support and engagement. Here's to a productive legislative session!



Above left, front row L-R: Committee Clerk Lisa Barnett, myself, and Office Manager Danicia Honda; back row L-R: Legislative Aides Kai Burrows, Mary Janell Murro and Michael Mori. Above right, addressing members and guests during Opening Day.

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Opening Day of the 2024 Legislative Session

Opening Day, which took place on January 17, 2024, marked the start of the legislative session, as mandated by Hawai'i's constitution to begin on the third Wednesday of January. This event symbolizes not just a ceremonial beginning but also the re-energizing of our legislative process, where my colleagues and I continue our ongoing efforts to address the critical needs of our state.

During the floor session, it was an honor to introduce Lieutenant Governor Sylvia Luke who joined us in the Senate gallery. Senate President Ronald D. Kouchi spoke about the progress of Lt. Gov. Luke's Ready Keiki initiative, which aims to expand public pre-kindergarten classes. Currently, there are 11 preschool classrooms that have been completed and are fully operational, with another 7 under construction.

After session, it was a pleasure to meet many of you who visited my office to voice your perspectives, deliver informational materials, and engage in discussion. Your insights are crucial to shaping legislation and I encourage you to review the final page of this newsletter for tips on participating in the legislative process. Mahalo nui to all who took the time to visit and share their ideas and well wishes for the 2024 session!



Above row L-R: Lt. Gov. Luke and I chatting in my office; meeting with Hawai'i Clubhouse Coalition's Kimiko Tanaka and Robert Binnie; Hawai'i Community Health Worker Association's Outgoing Chair Claudia Hartz, O'ahu Island Representative David Mamae, and I engaged in discussion.

Bottom rows L-R: Some of the talented students of Waipahu Intermediate interviewing legislators in collaboration with 'Olelo Community Media; interacting with some of the ambitious students of Mililani High School; from the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA), seated is Chair Carmen Hulu Lindsey with Chief Advocate Keopu Reelitz, Moloka'i & Lāna'i Trustee Luana Alapa, and Chief Executive Officer Stacy Kealohalani Ferreira; receiving input from Hawai'i Children's Action Network Deputy Director Courtney Velazquez; celebrating with longtime friend and President of my high school club, "Raeleens," Shirley Lee, former staff Jim and Joan Manke, and Adult Friends for Youth's President Debbie Spencer-Chun and her Director of Operations & Special Programs Lisa Tamashiro.



Adult Friends for Youth: 37th Annual Celebration of Youth

I had the honor of attending the 37th Celebration of Youth hosted by Adult Friends for Youth (AFY) at 'Alohilani Resort, where we recognized individuals who have made significant contributions to our youth and community.

It was my privilege to present Senate certificates to former Representative John Mizuno, receiving the Hawai'i Service to Youth Award; Leina'ala Nakamura, honored with the Above and

Beyond Award; and Odivino Navalta and sisters Luaipou and Henrieta Gafa, named Young Persons of the Year.

Senator Fevella and I also jointly awarded a certificate to T. George Paris, the Lifetime Achievement Award recipient. George Paris has been a strong community advocate, involved in numerous philanthropic endeavors including feeding the homeless, supporting health initiatives during the

pandemic, and contributing to the Make-A-Wish Foundation. He and his late wife also founded the T. George Paris and Violet "Sunday" Paris Foundation and have served as foster parents to over 100 children.

Congratulations to all awardees and thank you for your unwavering commitment to enhancing the lives of our youth. Mahalo!



At top, Senators Dela Cruz and Fevella, AFY President Debbie Spencer-Chun, Lifetime Achievement Awardee T. George Paris, Lt. Gov. Luke, AFY Board Chair Damien Kim and I; meeting up with my favorite titas OHA Chair Lindsey and our own Mililani stars Melveen Leed and Iwalani Tseu; presenting a Senate certificate to Young Person of the Year recipient Odivino Navalta.

Mililani HS Track & Field Ribbon Cutting

Last summer, Mililani High School (MHS) completed the installation of a brand new track and turf field at the John Kauinana Stadium located on campus. Senator Dela Cruz and I were thrilled to join Principal Fred Murphy and his administration in celebrating this renovation with a ribbon cutting ceremony. Principal Murphy also showcased the school's new buses which will be used to transport students to field experiences.

L-R: Senator Dela Cruz and I with Principal Murphy and MHS Administration in front of the newly installed track and turf field; Principal Murphy and I in front of their brand new school buses.



Blessing of Integrated Academy Learning Center at Waipahu High School



I am delighted to share that Waipahu High School has recently commemorated the opening of their Integrated Academy Learning Center with a special blessing ceremony. This Capitol Improvement Project (CIP), which I proudly supported, is outfitted with industry-standard tools and workstations from the natural resources and culinary sectors. It serves as a central platform for our students to discover and hone their skills and passions. The Learning Center represents a major advancement in preparing our students for real-world experiences and opportunities, thereby contributing to the ensuring a skilled future workforce for Hawai'i.



Empowering Your Engagement: Public Access Room

Engaging in the legislative process can be a powerful way to make your voice heard and impact policy-making. However, it can also be a complex and overwhelming process, especially for those new to advocacy or unfamiliar with how laws are made.

To assist in your journey, numerous resources are available to simplify and enhance your engagement. One helpful resource is the Public Access Room (PAR), dedicated to facilitating public involvement in Hawai'i's legislative process. PAR offers a comprehensive understanding of Capitol operations, informative workshops, and a physical space for public use at the State Capitol, Room 401. PAR's services are provided by a non-partisan office without any service fees.

Explore a wealth of information on PAR's website, including a detailed guide to the legislative process, tips for navigating the Legislature's website, and advice for participating in public hearings.

Website of the Hawai'i State Legislature

<https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/>

Need help navigating the Capitol's new website? View the Public Access Room's comprehensive guide at <https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/docs/HiLegSiteGuide2022.pdf>

PAR Contact Information

<https://lrb.hawaii.gov/par>

Phone: (808) 587-0478

Email: par@capitol.hawaii.gov

How To Quickly Find Bills: Subject Search

Learn more about finding and tracking measures to create lists of bills and resolutions you're interested in, view the current status of numerous measures, and create easy-to-read reports.

1. Go to the Legislature's website (capitol.hawaii.gov) and click on the "Reports and Lists" link (or select it from under the "Laws & Research" tab).
2. Click on the "Subject Search" bar — the last one in the light blue column on the left. In the search box that appears, enter the exact word or phrase you'd like to find.

Note this only searches in the current bill draft's Measure Title, Report Title (keywords), and Description and does not search the full content of the bill or past versions. More info on tracking bills: <https://lrb.hawaii.gov/par/engagement-101/tracking-bills-at-the-legislature>

Below, entrance to the Public Access Room at the State Capitol, Room 401.



"Grow Our Own" Teachers Initiative

Applications due March 1 for Master of Education in Teaching (MEdT K-12)



Are you or someone you know committed to teaching in Hawai'i? Discover eligibility for tuition cost stipends through the Grow Our Own (GOO) Teachers Initiative!

GOO, a program I helped establish, is made possible through a partnership between the Hawai'i Department of Education (HIDOE) and the College of Education at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. I continue to support this initiative to address Hawai'i's teacher shortage.

Please note that the deadline to be admitted to the Master's in Education program for eligibility in the GOO program is **March 1**.

To apply, please visit <https://coe.hawaii.edu/go/> for more information.

Waipahu High School Wins HHSAA Division I Championship

It was exciting to join Principals Fred Murphy (Mililani HS) and Zach Sheets (Waipahu HS) at the Hawai'i High School Athletic Association's Division I football championship game. Congratulations to our Waipahu Mauraders for their big win!

Below L-R, celebrating with Principals Fred Murphy and Zach Sheets. #GoMarauders!

