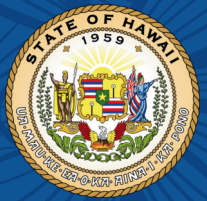


COMMUNITY REPORT

SENATE DISTRICT 18 | OCTOBER 2024

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



Aloha Friends and Neighbors,

I had the profound honor of presenting a Hawai'i State Senate certificate to Retired Major General Kenneth S. Hara, a proud member of our community and one of my constituents, at his retirement ceremony this month. The ceremony was held at the 29th Infantry Brigade Combat Team Readiness Center in Kalaeloa. It was a moving tribute to a leader who dedicated 40 years of exemplary service to the State of Hawai'i and our nation.

As the Adjutant General, Major General Hara led the Hawai'i National Guard and served as Director of the Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency, ensuring that our State was prepared for any crisis. His leadership was crucial during natural disasters such as Hurricane Iniki in 1992, the Kilauea volcanic eruption in 2018, and the Maui wildfires in 2023. Notably, Major General Hara also led the state as Hawai'i's COVID-19 incident commander from March 2020 to March 2022, orchestrating comprehensive strategies to safeguard our communities during an unprecedented time. Major General Hara's ability to foster collaboration among the Hawai'i National Guard, State agencies, and local communities has significantly enhanced the safety and resilience of our state.

In addition to disaster response efforts, Major General Hara held critical leadership positions overseas, commanding troops in Iraq, Kuwait, and Afghanistan. This exemplary service has been recognized with several prestigious awards, including the Legion of Merit and the Bronze Star Medal, which honor bravery and leadership both in combat and in state responsibilities. Major General Hara's efforts have strengthened Hawai'i's emergency response infrastructure, ensuring that future generations will benefit from a stronger and more resilient state.

It is my privilege to represent the Senate in recognizing Major General Hara's extraordinary contributions that have left an indelible mark on our State's emergency preparedness and national defense. Major General Hara's dedication to public service, strategic acumen, and bravery truly embodies the values we hold dear in Hawai'i. His retirement is well-deserved, and his legacy will continue to inspire future generations of leaders. **Mahalo, Major General Hara, for your unwavering service and commitment to our State and nation!**



*Above left: Major General Kenneth Hara, myself, and Governor Josh Green.
Above right: Major General Hara, myself, and his wife Myoung Park.*



Michelle
KIDANI

Senate Vice President

Chair
Committee on Education

Vice Chair
Committee on Higher Education

Member
Committee on Ways and Means

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Empowering Hawai'i's Future through Computer Science Education

Recognizing the essential role technology plays in shaping our future workforce, I have been committed to bringing computer science to the forefront of our public schools since 2017. As we navigate a rapidly evolving world, it is more important than ever to ensure our keiki, from kindergarten through grade 12, are prepared for the challenges and opportunities ahead.

In collaboration with the Hawai'i State Department of Education and local industry professionals, I successfully passed legislation to advance computer science in our schools. Act 51, Session Laws of Hawaii (SLH) 2018 allocated \$500K to develop and implement a statewide computer science curriculum plan, ensuring that every public high school offers at least one computer science course each year.

Building on this progress, Act 158, SLH 2021 mandates that all public and charter elementary and middle schools also provide computer science courses. These achievements were made possible through collective efforts from government, industry, and philanthropic partners such as Kamehameha Schools and the Harold Castle Foundation. Thanks to these partnerships, teachers across the state are receiving the training and resources needed to bring computer science into classrooms.

These initiatives have also extended to underserved communities, with programs now reaching inmates through the Department of Public Safety. Coding training offers valuable skills for rehabilitation and future career opportunities, showing how investing in education can transform lives across our islands.

By making computer science education a priority, we are creating pathways to high-demand careers and building a future where our keiki can thrive here in Hawai'i.



Above, myself with a Wheeler Middle School student showcasing his computer science program in AgTech.



Above, myself with Sen. Kim and Gov. David Ige celebrating the newly signed Act 51 in 2018.

Contributing to the Hawai'i State Capitol's Collaborative Art Project

I had the pleasure of joining my colleagues at Capitol Modern, formerly the Hawai'i State Art Museum, to help create a mural alongside renowned Native Hawaiian artist and illustrator Solomon Enos. This mural will soon be transformed into a glass installation, replacing the Capitol's reflecting pools while preserving the symbolism of the ocean surrounding our islands. Solomon's vision is rooted in community collaboration, and the public is encouraged to add their own touch to the canvas. It was truly inspiring to contribute my brushstrokes to this piece that will soon grace our Capitol.

During my visit, I also explored the exhibit "KE AO LAMA, Enlightened World," which highlights both traditional and contemporary expressions of Pacific Island nations. I encourage you to visit Capitol Modern, leave your mark on the mural, and experience these incredible exhibits firsthand. The museum is open Monday through Saturday, from 10 AM to 4 PM, and admission is free. It is a fantastic opportunity to connect with our local culture and contribute to a piece of lasting art at the State Capitol.



Above, left (L-R): Sen. San Buenaventura, myself, Sen. Gabbard, and Hawaii State Foundation Culture of the Arts Artist-in-Residence Solomon Enos. Middle: Admiring ki'i, a statue that serves as a symbolic representation of Hawaiian deities, in the Sculpture Lobby. Right: Exploring beautiful grounds of the Capitol Modern.

Leeward Community College Celebrates 50 Years of Leeward Theatre



Above, myself presenting LCC Chancellor Peñaloza with a Senate certificate honoring Leeward Theatre's 50th anniversary.

We commemorated the 50th anniversary of Leeward Theatre at Leeward Community College (LCC), honoring its incredible legacy as a hub for arts and culture in Central O'ahu. Since 1974, the theatre has played a vital role bringing people together through inspiring performances and nurturing local talent. It was my pleasure to present a Senate certificate in recognition of this milestone and to celebrate with those who have made it possible.

Under the leadership of Chancellor Carlos Peñaloza and Theatre Manager Elisa Olson, Leeward Theatre continues to inspire audiences, spark cultural dialogue, and provide a platform for artistic expression. As it embarks on its next 50 years, I extend my heartfelt congratulations to LCC and Leeward Theatre for their commitment to making the arts accessible and impactful.

I invite you and your 'ohana to check out the exciting upcoming season titled "Holomua i ke ao hou," meaning to move onward to a new future. This special season showcases dynamic local talent and features outstanding alumni who have shaped its legacy. I encourage everyone to experience the captivating performances and be inspired by the profound impact of the arts.

Congratulations, Leeward Theatre, on this golden anniversary!



Above (L-R), congratulating Theatre Manager Elisa Olson and Chancellor Peñaloza on stage.

Upcoming Performances

Lisa Matsumoto's Once Upon One Time.....Nov. 1-3, 2024

Kala'e + Kalena + Kalikimaka.....Dec. 13, 2024

For more information on upcoming performances, visit www.leeward.hawaii.edu/theatre.

SAVE
THE
DATE

Senate Site Visit to the Women's Community Correctional Center

Several members of the Senate had the opportunity to visit the Women's Community Correctional Center (WCCC) in Kailua, where we were introduced to the new Housing, Intake/Visitation, and Administration buildings. This \$63 million expansion is essential in addressing overcrowding and creating a rehabilitative environment for women in our correctional system. As the only correctional facility for women in Hawai'i, WCCC plays a pivotal role in helping incarcerated women access education, vocational training, and mental health support, key priorities in the legislature's broader efforts toward criminal justice reform.

I believe that providing these women with the tools they need to rebuild their lives benefits not only the individuals but our communities as a whole. The newly renovated Ho'okipa Cottage, which focuses on reentry preparation, reflects our collective responsibility to support their transition back into society. The message from an art structure titled "Forgiveness" outside the WCCC resonated deeply with me, and I wanted to share it in this newsletter. It serves as a powerful reminder of the core values of rehabilitation and transformation that guide this facility:

"A universal figure representative of a tūtū with outstretched arm draped in colorful lei as an offering to her island in an expression of aloha, compassion, gratitude, and acceptance.

The benevolent gesture of Forgiveness is symbolic of the traditional Hawaiian customs of aloha and ho'okipa, the Native Hawaiian values of hospitality and giving. Native Hawaiians have always believed in selflessly extending themselves to others, whether they had close ties with them or not. Housing this sentiment at the Women's Community Correctional Center is fitting as a place where women can individually grow and contribute to the greater community. The more one cares for the world, the greater the world will sustain and provide.

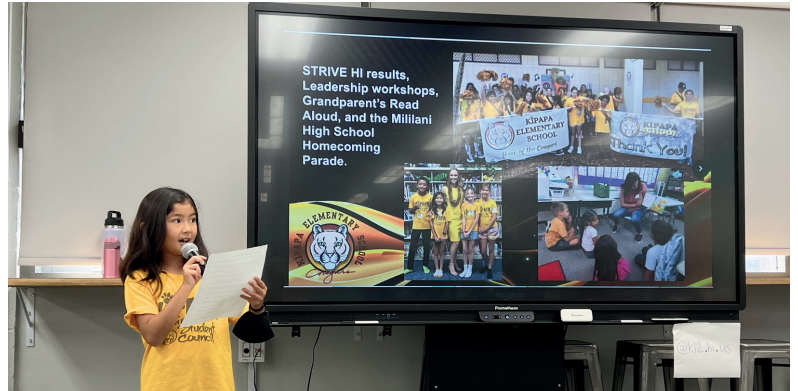
May this artwork provide a positive space for the women, workers, and visitors. A place one can sit and reflect, seek guidance, see themselves in her, or someone they love."



Myself with artwork on display at WCCC.

Kipapa Elementary School's Community Partner Breakfast


I spent a fantastic morning at Kipapa Elementary School for its Community Partner Breakfast. As Chair of the Senate Committee on Education, I was thrilled to see teachers, school administrators, parents, and several nonprofit organizations come together to improve the learning experiences of our keiki in the classroom and beyond. The commitment of our school leaders and local partners to education throughout our state truly has a positive impact in our schools and communities.

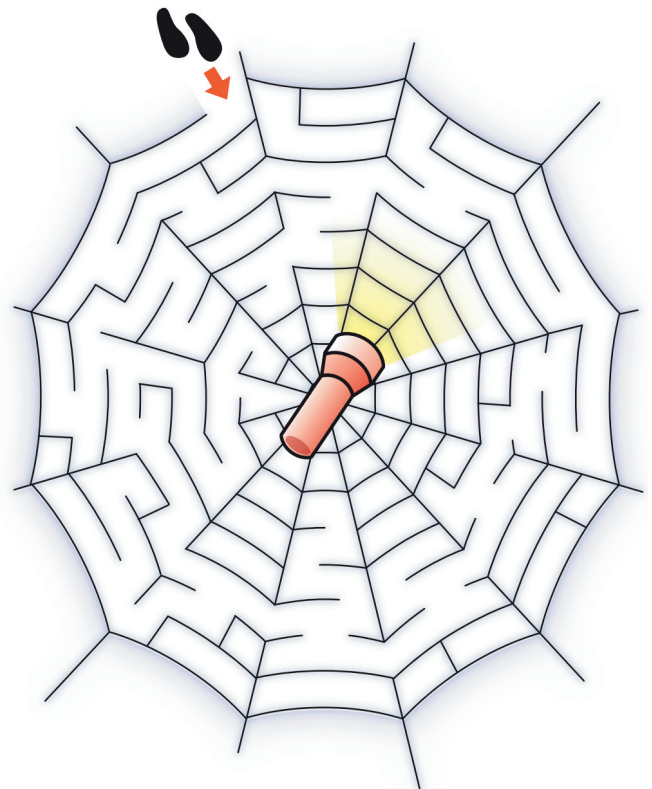


Above left, Vice Principal Rudy Domingo (left) and Principal Jhameel Duarte (right) presented me with a certificate of appreciation. Above right, Kipapa Elementary's student council member presented updates on school events -- well done!

HALLOWEEN SAFETY TIPS CAUGHT IN THE WEB

Reach the flashlight!

- 
- H**old a flashlight while trick-or-treating to help you see and others see you.
 - A**lways stand back a step from the curb until it is time to cross.
 - L**ook left, right and left again and check for turning cars before and while crossing the street. Cross only at crosswalks.
 - L**ower electronic devices and keep heads up and walk, don't run, across the street.
 - O**nly walk on sidewalks whenever possible, or on the far left side of the road facing traffic to stay safe.
 - W**ear a highly visible or reflective costume or put reflective stickers on clothing, trick-or-treat bags or toys.
 - E**specially be sure to pay attention when walking past driveways to make sure cars aren't pulling in or out.
 - E**ye contact with drivers to ensure they see you before crossing in front of them is important.
 - N**ever cross when you see the countdown signal with the red stop hand. Cross only when you see the "walking man" signal.



Halloween safety tips and activity courtesy of the Hawai'i State Department of Transportation and the City and County of Honolulu's Department of Transportation Services. Mahalo Director Ed Sniffen and Director Roger Morton!