

COMMUNITY REPORT

SENATE DISTRICT 18 | APRIL 2026

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



Aloha Friends and Neighbors,

As the legislative session progresses, I would like to share highlights from several meaningful events and engagements over the past month. This has been a productive period at the Capitol, with a number of key measures continuing to move forward through the legislative process.

With adjournment *Sine Die* approaching on May 8, the Legislature is entering its most critical final stretch. In the weeks ahead, the Legislature enters into conference, where conference committees will meet to reconcile differences between Senate and House versions of bills, a pivotal process to determine which measures advance to final passage before the session concludes.

A few of my priority legislation entering into conference to strengthen our public education system and ensure the responsible stewardship of public resources:

- **SB2613** - RELATING TO PUBLIC SCHOOL LAND TRANSFER: Revises tax map key numbers and the conveyance process by which identified properties are conveyed to the Department of Education and clarifies that land dispositions of school buildings, facilities, and grounds made by the DOE shall not require approval from the Board of Land and Natural Resources when these dispositions are for periods exceeding one year.
- **SB2614** - RELATING TO EDUCATION: Authorizes the Department of Education to award a high school diploma to qualified persons who did not receive a high school diploma as a result of compulsory or voluntary induction into the Armed Services of the United States or whose high school education was interrupted due to wartime practices during World War II, the Korean War, or the Vietnam War.
- **SB2615** - RELATING TO SCHOOL CAFETERIA MEAL COSTS: Requires the Department of Education to charge not less than 25% of the cost to prepare a school meal for each school meal.

For updates on hearings and additional information on these and other measures, please visit the Hawai'i State Legislature's website: <https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/>.

Mahalo,

Michelle



Celebrating Tourism Day at the State Capitol!



Michelle
KIDANI

**Senate Vice
President**

Vice Chair
Committee on
Education

Member
Committee on
Ways and Means

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Progress on HB1800 HD1 SD1 - Relating to the State Budget

This month, the Senate Ways and Means Committee, led by Chair Dela Cruz, advanced its draft of the State budget bill, HB1800, reaffirming the Legislature's focus on fiscal responsibility and Hawai'i's core priorities. The Senate proposal maintains the tax relief for working families established under Act 46, SLH 2024, supporting these measures through careful financial planning and a commitment to long-term stability.

Reductions in federal support have increased the State's share of administrative costs for programs such as SNAP and Medicaid. Broader federal policy changes have also contributed to economic uncertainty and lower general fund revenue projections. Despite these challenges, the Senate draft continues to invest in priorities identified in the Senate Majority package, including housing affordability, workforce development and economic diversification, climate resilience, and environmental stewardship.

As Vice-Chair of the Senate Education Committee and a member of the Ways and Means Committee, I am pleased to highlight several education-related investments included in the Senate draft of the State budget:

Education and Higher Education:

- Increase the University of Hawai'i Tuition and Fees Special Fund ceiling by \$319,000 to add 3.00 positions for the Business Administration Program for University of Hawai'i
- Add \$675,000 for the Community School for Adults statewide
- Add 2.00 permanent positions for Hawai'i Early Childhood State Plan
- Add 1.00 permanent Evaluation Specialist II for Early Learning System Coordination
- Add \$400,000 for the Papahana O Kaiona Alternative Learning Program

Department of Education:

- Add 26.00 permanent positions and \$1,065,640 for Regional Kitchen operations
- Increase Teacher Housing Revolving Fund ceiling by \$500,000 for teacher housing cottage repairs
- Increase Education and Design Construction Project Assessment Revolving Fund ceiling by \$7,000,000 for architectural and engineering services to support CIP and deferred maintenance
- Add \$675,000 for the Community School for Adults statewide
- Add 2.00 permanent positions for Hawai'i Early Childhood State Plan
- Add 1.00 permanent Evaluation Specialist II for Early Learning System Coordination

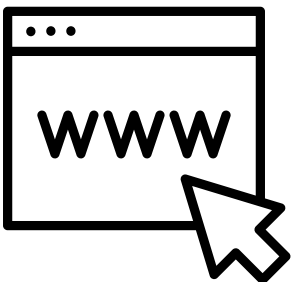
Government Reform and Operations:

- Increase revolving fund ceiling for Department of Education by \$7,000,000 for architectural and engineering services to support CIP and deferred maintenance

Education and Higher Education:

- \$768,418,000 for DOE building improvements, repair and maintenance, new schools and facilities, and upgrading to compliance and code requirements
- \$126,204,000 to improve and modernize University of Hawai'i facilities across the state

I would like to extend my heartfelt mahalo to Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair of the Senate Ways and Means Committee, along with the entire WAM staff and members, for their tireless work and dedication throughout this process. Their attentiveness, collaboration, and deep commitment to serving our communities have been essential in shaping a thoughtful and responsible budget that reflects the values and priorities of our state.



If you would like to learn more about the State budget, you can visit this link:
<https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/session/budget.aspx>

If you would like to watch the WAM hearing on HB1800, you can visit this link:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DO6Km_2t1Mw

Middle Level Student Leadership Summit

Students from 50 middle schools across Hawai'i gathered for this year's Middle Level Student Leadership Summit, an event that continues to grow in both energy and impact. The summit featured student-designed sessions on elevating youth voices, strengthening school and community connections, and building leadership through athletics and campus engagement. This year's theme, "Lead Like Duke," honored the legacy of Duke Kahanamoku and encouraged students to embody the values highlighted in the film *Waterman*. It was inspiring to see so many young leaders embracing his example and demonstrating what leadership looks like in their own schools. What makes this summit especially meaningful is that every workshop was created and led by students themselves, showcasing the creativity, confidence, and commitment of middle level learners statewide. Their enthusiasm and willingness to share ideas show just how powerfully students can shape their communities when given the opportunity.



Me with Students from Dole Middle School. My alma mater!



[L-R]: Assistant Superintendent Sean Tajima, me, and Complex Area Superintendent Richard Fajardo

Women's Legislative Caucus Easter Basket Drive

It was truly uplifting to join my colleagues in the Women's Legislative Caucus at the State Capitol for this year's Easter Basket Drive. This annual effort helps ensure that families throughout Hawai'i have access to essential items that can make daily life a little easier. Experiences like this are a powerful reminder of how meaningful even the smallest acts of care can be. When we show up with purpose and compassion, we help lift the burden for those who need support. I am grateful to work alongside dedicated colleagues and community partners who share this commitment. This year's drive supports several vital organizations, including the Domestic Violence Action Center, the Institute for Human Services, Parents & Children Together, The Salvation Army Hawai'i, and the Mohala Mai Women's Prison Project.



[L-R] Senators Inouye, Kanahele, Moriawaki, me, Richards, Lamosao, Kim and San Buenaventura



With the Easter Chick and Bunny with the baskets collected for donation!

Capitol Improvement Project Funding Released for District 18

I am pleased to share that Governor Josh Green has released \$1,500,000 in Capital Improvement Program funding to begin preliminary engineering and environmental studies for the modernization and expansion of the Interstate Route H-1 Kunia Interchange on O'ahu.

This important step will help identify long-term solutions to ease traffic congestion, improve safety, and better serve the residents and commuters who rely on this corridor every day. The Kunia Interchange is a vital access point for communities such as Mililani, Waipi'o, Waikele, and Royal Kunia, and these planned upgrades are expected to address ongoing traffic challenges while supporting future growth across Central O'ahu.



**SENATE VICE PRESIDENT
MICHELLE N. KIDANI**

ANNOUNCES THE RELEASE OF
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT FUNDS
FOR **SENATE DISTRICT 18:**

\$1,500,000
FOR INTERSTATE ROUTE H-1
KUNIA INTERCHANGE ON O'AHU

to support preliminary engineering
and environmental studies for
the modernization and
expansion of the Interstate
Route H-1 Kunia
Interchange on O'ahu.

*Mahalo Governor Green
for releasing CIP funds!*

HIDOE after-school program registration to open April 22

The Department of Education and After-School Plus (A+) program (K-6) providers statewide are encouraging families to prepare for registration for the upcoming 2026-27 school year. A+ registration for HIDOE families opens Wednesday, April 22, 3 p.m. — both online and in person.

Or register in-person at your child's A+ school site. Registration forms and Parent Handbooks can be downloaded from the HIDOE A+ website listed below, or from your respective A+ provider's website. Printed copies will also be available at school sites.

Registering online is the fastest and most efficient way to register. Register at:

- HIDOE A+ website:
<https://hawaiicommunityengagement.com/after-school-plus/>



In Memoriam: Governor George R. Ariyoshi

I have long admired Governor Ariyoshi, Hawai'i's longest-serving governor and the nation's first Japanese American governor, for his forward-thinking leadership on sustainability and education, priorities he championed well before they were widely embraced. Elected as Hawai'i's third governor in 1974, he made history as the first Asian American governor in the United States. Over three terms in office, he led our state with integrity and vision until 1986.

He often reminded us that Hawai'i's future belongs to our children, urging us to consider whether the choices we make today will truly serve the well-being of generations to come. He will be deeply missed, and his legacy will continue to guide and inspire us. A hui hou!

