

Legislative Update from...

Senator Mike Gabbard

JULY

2013

Aloha Friends,

Happy 4th of July to you and your ohana. You may have seen the article I wrote in my June newsletter about the possibility that USPS could close the Kapolei Postal Station. I've been doing my best to get the word out and encourage folks to let USPS know how they feel. I recently got notice that due to an administrative error USPS has decided to postpone the comment deadline from July 4th to August 25th. So please keep sending in written comments to Janice Shimizu, 3600 Aolele Street Honolulu, HI 96820-9998. Please contact me at 586-6830 or sengabbard@capitol.hawaii.gov if I can help you or your family in any way.



Mike



COMMITTEE CHAIR

* Energy and Environment

MEMBER

* Judiciary and Labor

* Transportation and International Affairs

* Education

District 20

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

"Listen-Story" Meeting

My next "Listen Story" meeting will be held at the Pray Eat Love Café (533 Manawai Street #304) at 9am on Saturday, July 20th. It's on the Waianae side directly across from Kapolei High.



Vegan Cooking on Display at Kapolei Public Library

I was asked to help get the word out about an upcoming event at the Kapolei Public Library. As a 45 year vegetarian, this one looks particularly interesting to me. On July 27th at 1pm, Ori Ann Li will be demonstrating recipes from her new cookbook, *Ori Ann Li's Vegan Paradise*. Ori specializes in world vegan cuisine and received her culinary training in Europe and North America. She has a Facebook following of over 31,000 fans. For more information, please call the library at 693-7058 and check out Ori's website at www.oriannli.com.



PV Planned for All Schools in the State

I was asked by Ariel DeJesus, the Chair of the Ewa Neighborhood Board, to get an update on the Department of Education's (DOE) plans for solar PV at our schools to reduce the cost of electricity. We did some research and found out they have installed PV at Aiea, Pearl Ridge, Wai'anae, Kahuku, Kaimuki, Radford, & Moanulua high schools and Ahuimanu Intermediate School. The DOE is planning to install PV and/or small wind systems at the rest of the schools around the state, including those in Ewa, Kapolei, and Waipahu, as part of their Energy Efficiency and Sustainability Master Plan within the next 5 to 7 years. Kudos to the DOE for doing the right thing for taxpayer pocketbooks and our environment!

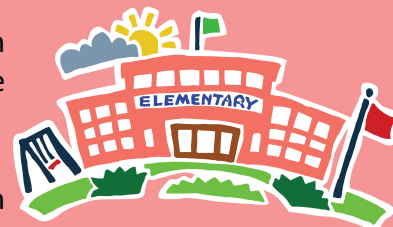


Congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard, Congressman Doug Collins (Georgia), and State Senator Mike Gabbard were recognized during a ceremony before the rugby match between the USA Tomahawks and Toa Samoa at Aloha Stadium on June 1st.

New Schools Coming for District 20

I was very pleased to learn that Governor Abercrombie released \$134.7 million in funding for schools across the state on June 20th. Included in this amount were these three key projects for Senate District 20:

- \$40 million – Construction of Kapolei II Elementary
- \$4.65 million – Design and construction of locker rooms at Kapolei High School
- \$375,000 – Design and Construction of a portable classroom at Makakilo Elementary School.



The release of the funding for Kapolei II Elementary is especially important given the rapid growth of our community. Kapolei II Elementary will be located at the corner of Kapolei Parkway and Ft. Barrette across the street from Kapolei High School. The school is expected to accommodate up to 750 students and is planned to be completed by the fall of 2015. This past session we appropriated funding for two other new schools in the district.

- \$5 million for the planning and design of East Kapolei High (will most like be located at the corner of Farrington Highway and Kualaka'i Parkway on what is now DLNR land)
- \$3 million for the planning and design of East Kapolei Middle (will most likely be located behind the Kroc Center off Kualaka'i Parkway)



Senator Gabbard visited Oceanit's "Technology petting zoo" on June 6. Dr. Pat Sullivan, Oceanit founder, talked story about "Intelisockets" and other energy saving innovations.

Host a Foreign Exchange Student

The International Hospitality Center (IHC) is looking for families to host foreign exchange students during July and August. This is a great way to have rewarding cross-cultural experience without even having to leave your home. You might want to consider any of the following options:

- 2 night weekend homestay for U.S. Department of State grantee university students from Brazil, Russia, Turkey, China, and Japan - July 26-28.
- 2 week homestay for students involved in English language program (ages 13-16) from Okinawa – July 25 – August 6.
- 4 week homestay for students involved in English language program (ages 15-17) from France and Japan – July 21 – August 17.
- To learn more, contact IHC at 521-3554 or ihc@priority.net.

Riding in Truck Beds a Danger to Public Safety

I was in the news recently after the terrible accident involving young people riding in a pickup near Makua on the Wai'anae Coast. I co-introduced SB 692 with Senator Will Espero this past session which would prohibit riding in a pickup truck bed except in life-threatening emergencies and during authorized parades. The bill would apply only to O'ahu. SB 692 didn't get a committee hearing, but is alive for next session. Just so you know, state law already bans children 12 and younger from riding in a truck bed, but allows older people in the back if the cab is full and the sides and tailgate are secured. We're also considering steps short of an outright ban, such as allowing people to ride in secured seats specifically designed for truck beds, or raising the cutoff age to 18 from 12.

UH West O'ahu to Launch Senior Citizen Program

At my May 4th Listen Story meeting, one of my constituents brought up the need for UH West Oahu to allow seniors to audit classes (sit in and listen to a course of interest without actually taking the class and paying the fees). We contacted the UH West Oahu Chancellor's office to see if this would be a possibility. I was very happy to get an email on June 18th from Dr. Eun Ahn, Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs at UHWO, notifying me that they will be establishing procedures to start a senior citizen program at UHWO beginning as early as the spring of 2014. So for all you seniors in the West O'ahu area, please give this some thought as another opportunity for "lifelong" learning in your community.

Tesoro Refinery Sold to Par Petroleum

As the Senate's Energy and Environment Committee Chair, I've been very concerned about the impacts that the closure of the Tesoro refinery would have on our energy supplies and economy. This past session we passed Act 78 which set up a Refinery Task Force to take a serious look at the ramifications of the refinery's closure. Fortunately, the situation has turned out better than planned because it was announced on June 17th that Tesoro had sold their 94,000 barrel per day refinery and 31 gas stations to Par Petroleum for \$350 million. This will save 200 local jobs and definitely be beneficial in keeping our energy supplies more stable.

Tour of Former Honouliuli Internment Camp

I took a tour of the former site of the Honouliuli Internment Camp site in Kunia with Senator Espero, other lawmakers, and representatives from the Japanese Cultural Center on June 20th. The Camp site is located on Monsanto lands across Kunia Road from the Royal Kunia community. During World War II the Honouliuli Internment Camp was one of thirteen internment sites in Hawai'i. It opened on March 1, 1943 and was located on 160 acres of land. The camp was built to hold up to 3,000 people, but never reached more than 320. Most of the internees were males of Japanese ancestry, but there were also a few Germans, Italians and prisoners of war. They lived in wooden barracks and tents, which were surrounded by barbed wire fences and patrolled by armed guards. Two of the most prominent Japanese Americans interned at the camp were former territorial Rep. Thomas Sakakihara and former territorial Sen. Sanji Abe. Since October 2009, the National Park Service (NPS) has been working on a special resource study focused on evaluating whether the Camp should be added to our national parks. The study is supposed to be released in the fall of 2013 with the NPS' recommendations. At that point, the plan would be for NPS to acquire the more than 100 acres of Monsanto land. Monsanto has stated they are willing to donate the lands for this purpose. Congress would then need to take legislative action to implement the NPS recommendations to establish the park.



Senator Gabbard taped a video message at American Renaissance Academy (ARA) on June 11th in support of encouraging our schools to increase their investment in the performing arts. Pictured (L to R) are Chris Lowe (ARA Music Director), Senator Gabbard, and Romeo Collado (videographer).



Senator Gabbard served on a panel of energy experts during a session of the Association of Pacific Island Legislatures at the State Capitol on June 25th.

Action on Makakilo Drive Extension Needed

More good news! Mayor Caldwell has released \$3 million in design funds to get the Makakilo Drive Extension going. The extension will create a second access to Makakilo by connecting the end of Makakilo Drive in upper Makakilo to the Kualaka'i Parkway H-1 interchange. However, the even bigger step is to secure construction funds. This project can qualify for federal funding, but in order to do that it needs to be included in the O'ahu Metropolitan Planning Organization's (OMPO) Transportation Improvement Plan. OMPO is a planning organization made up of area elected leaders and transportation officials. Both Rep. Har and Councilwoman Kym Pine are on the OMPO Policy Committee and are key decision makers in this process. I'd encourage you to submit testimony in support of the Makakilo Drive Extension for their meeting on July 9th at 10am at the City Council Committee Room (Honolulu Hale). The email address is OahuMPO@OahuMPO.org.



State Road Project Update

We got the following update from the state Department of Transportation for major traffic improvements planned for West Oahu.

- Ft. Barrette Widening – 90% completed with design, construction in 2016
- Kualaka'i Parkway Extension (Kapolei Parkway to Roosevelt Ave) – will be completed by 2015
- Leeward Bikeway Phase 1 (West Loch area, 4.2 miles) - project has been delayed indefinitely due to ongoing National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106 consultation as well as utility issues.
- PM Contra Flow (from Radford Drive to H1/H2 split) - preliminary construction for the deck widening and cross over work is in progress. They are targeting substantial completion of the project by late summer 2014.
- Kapolei Interchange Phase II – construction in 2014, includes a concrete H-1 Freeway overpass at Wakea, a westbound off-ramp from H-1 Freeway to Wakea Street, and a westbound on-ramp to Farrington Highway.



Jogger Safety Tips

One of my constituents who attended my June Listen Story meeting expressed her concern about how on several occasions she had almost hit joggers while driving because they were not wearing reflective clothing. She asked that I put some jogger safety tips in my newsletter. Here are some tips to keep you safe when you jog. I found these on a website run by Hyattsville, MD Police Department.

- Have a planned route. Let someone know when you leave, the route you will take, and the time you plan to return.
- Carry your identification and cell phone when you run.
- Stay alert and pay attention to your surroundings. Don't wear earphones with the volume turned up to the point you can't hear the approaching danger.
- Wear a traffic vest or have something with reflective material on it. You may choose to write your name, telephone number and blood type on the garment or in your shoes.
- Don't wear jewelry or carry money when you run. If you carry money, just carry a few dollars.
- Run with a friend or two. You may want to run with your dog, if he/she is big enough to keep up.
- Never run in or near unpopulated areas. Stay away from abandoned buildings or property. Stay away from secluded paths when running alone.
- Trust your feelings and intuitions when it comes to various situations you may encounter. Do not simply dismiss them.
- Run against traffic so you can see approaching vehicles. Do not run on or next to train tracks, fast moving highway traffic, or construction sites where there is debris on the ground.
- Watch for obstacles and problems where you run such as unleashed dogs, uneven sidewalks, and low branches.