

# SENATOR DONNA MERCADO KIM

PROUDLY SERVING  
DISTRICT 14

KAPALAMA · 'ĀLEWA · KALIHI · KALIHI VALLEY · FT. SHAFTER · MOANALUA GARDENS & VALLEY · RED HILL

## State Budget Bill 300 to Provide Families Tax Relief

[HB 300](#) was passed and transmitted to Governor Green for his approval. In addition the Tax Credit Measure, [HB 954](#) [HD2 SD2 CD1](#) passed and it provides relief for families.

- It increases for five years Hawaii's earned income tax credit, food/excise tax credit and household and dependent care services tax credit.
- Food and excise tax credit will be doubled to \$40,000 for single filers and \$80,000 for married joint filers.
- Working parents with childcare expenses will be increased from \$2,400 to \$10,000 for one child and from \$4,800 to \$20,000 for two or more keiki. The measure expires after five years.



## World Wide Walls

Sen. Kim joined artists and volunteers from "World Wide Walls" to begin their 11th annual art festival in Kalihi in May. Every year World Wide Walls beautifies a new location and this year they painted breathtaking murals at Palama Settlement, Farrington High School, Bishop Museum, Kalihi Kai Elementary, Kalihi Uka Elementary, and Dillingham Plaza.



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June 2023

## Free Public Pre-Kindergarten

Parents and families wishing to enroll their keiki in the State's Public Pre-Kindergarten Program designed to offer free, high quality learning experiences for keiki can apply now for the 2023-2024 school year at either Fern Elementary or Ka'eawai Elementary. There will be a total of eleven new classrooms statewide as part of the State's Ready Keiki initiative. For more information or apply for your keiki, visit [readykeiki.org](https://readykeiki.org)

L-R: DOE Superintendent Keith Hayashi with Sen. Donna Mercado Kim at the Ready Keiki Website Launch & Classroom Rollout Press Conference on May 17.



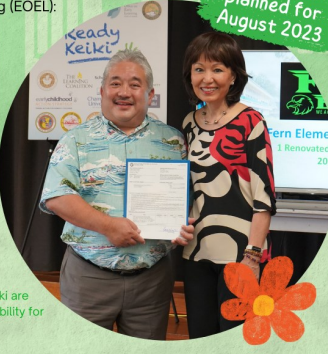
 **New Preschool Classrooms For FERN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL & KA'EAWAI ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

Fern Elementary & Ka'eawai has a new public preschool opening for the 2023-2024 school year. It will be one of the first eleven classrooms launching as part of the state's Ready Keiki initiative.  
**Families and parents wishing to enroll their keiki can apply now!**

**APPLY & LEARN MORE**  
Visit the Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL):  
[www.rebrand.ly/EOELPREK](https://www.rebrand.ly/EOELPREK)  
(808) 784-5350

**GET READY, KEIKI!**

- ✓ **FREE**, public DOE preschool for 3- and 4-year-olds
- ✓ Accepting up to 20 keiki
- ✓ Inclusive of keiki with special needs

 **Preschool planned for August 2023**

**Ready Keiki** [readykeiki.org](https://readykeiki.org)

Ready Keiki is the state's plan to ensure Hawai'i keiki are ready to succeed while also creating economic stability for local families.

## Free Meals For Keiki

Eighty-six public schools across the state will offer free meals to children ages 18 years and younger this summer, regardless of their public-school enrollment status. This includes Dole Middle, Farrington High, Fern Elementary, Ka'eawai Elementary, Kalakaua Middle, Kalihi Elementary, Kalihi Waena Elementary, and Kapalama Elementary. Schools vary when they will start and end their summer food programs and not all schools will be offering breakfast and lunch. For a complete list of every school offering free meals and their hours of operation visit: [808ne.ws/3N5s4kj](https://808ne.ws/3N5s4kj)



## **Need help paying for your monthly energy or water bills?**

The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is designed to help families keep their utilities (gas or electric) on, especially those households that are most vulnerable, such as the elderly, the disabled, and households with young children. And the Low-Income Home Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP) assists households in crisis whose water or wastewater service has been/will be disconnected through the Water Crisis Intervention (WCI). The household must have a notice of disconnection from the utility company. For more information or to download the application visit:

<https://www.hcapweb.org/low-income-home-energy.../>

## Senator Kim's Aloha Spirit Honoree

More than anything, Akviann Yongoran of Dole Middle School wants to be the first member of her family to attend college. She's well on her way to that goal, with a 4.0 grade-point-average and participation in the Polynesian Glee club and STEM activities. She also does very well in her English Language Arts and digital art courses.



Akviann enjoys singing, dancing, and learning. She says, "My favorite thing to do when I'm bored is to sing a lot of songs. For dancing, I do a lot of cultural Chuukese dances, and I do it a lot with my family. Education, however, is my main interest. I always strive high to do my best and am always interested in learning new things."

## The State of Hawaii has set aside funds for Community Improvement Projects in Kalihi

- Dole Middle School: \$4 million for a covered, open-air learning area and cafeteria upgrades
- Dole Middle School: \$4 million to renovate a locker room into a multipurpose learning center
- Kalihi Elementary School: \$1 million over two years to repair the covered playcourt
- Kalihi Uka Elementary School: \$8.2 million for ground stabilization and security fencing



## What Bus Routes will be altered in Kalihi, Salt Lake, and Moanalua when the rail begins on June 30th?

- Route PH8 will provide morning service to the Stadium station and afternoon service to Pearl Harbor and Hickam.
- Route 1L will service Aloha Stadium 7 days a week.
- Route 9, Effective 12/13/22, the weekday schedule has been modified.
- Route 20 will service the Aloha Stadium station to Waikiki. Route 20 will continue to service the airport.
- Route 44 will service Papipi/Ft Weaver to the West Loch station at Farrington/Leoku.
- Route 551 will connect at the Aloha Stadium station and will replace Route 74. Route 551 will service Aiea Hts.
- Route 552 will connect at the Aloha Stadium station and will replace Route 74. Route 552 will service Halawa Hts.

For a complete list of all bus route changes visit:

<http://thebus.org/Route/Routes.asp>



## Now is the time to receive your own solar panels!

The Legislature is helping households obtain solar panels again this year through a program called Green Energy Market Securitization (GEMS). GEMS serves households that lack sufficient income or credit quality to qualify for commercial loans financing rooftop solar systems. Pending on the Governor's approval, the state will set aside another \$100 million this year for residents to receive a fixed 5.5% interest rate and 20-year term loan for their own private solar system. The program should be available starting July 1, but residents can already start to apply at: <https://gems.hawaii.gov/about-us/>



## ARE YOU 2 WEEKS READY?

### BUILD KITS

Have Go Bags ready for work, each family member, pets, & a vehicle safety kit too.



### PLAN TO BE ON YOUR OWN FOR AT LEAST 2 WEEKS

Water (1 gal. per person/day)  
Food (Non-perishable)  
First Aid Kit  
Medical Equipment  
Medications  
NOAA Alert Radio  
Extra Batteries

Flashlight  
Can Opener  
Tools  
Warm Clothes  
Sturdy Shoes  
Personal Hygiene Items  
Toilet Paper

Pet Supplies  
Fire Extinguisher  
Glasses/Eye Care  
Cash  
Identification  
Important Documents  
Comfort/Entertainment