

COMMUNITY REPORT

SENATE DISTRICT 18 | END OF SESSION NEWSLETTER

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Michelle
KIDANI

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Aloha Friends and Neighbors,

As the 2025 legislative session came to a close, I was happy to join many community events across our district, from Mililani to Waipahu and Pearl City. These gatherings were a reminder of the outstanding accomplishments of our students. Their achievements are a reflection of the hard work and dedication of our teachers, school staff, and administrators within the Hawai'i State Department of Education. They also speak to the support of parents, guardians, and caregivers who uplift and guide our keiki every day. I continue to be inspired by the passion, innovation, and commitment of our educators.

This legislative session, we made significant strides in strengthening our public education system to support our keiki. Among the most impactful changes was the passage of key legislation, which I authored, that appropriates critical funding to expand access to free school meals and provide support for families classified as ALICE – Asset-Limited, Income-Constrained, Employed.

Inside this newsletter, you will find a detailed summary of the legislative achievements from this session, an overview of state budget allocations, and updates on Capitol Improvement Projects which will directly benefit our district.

During the interim, I remain committed to working to enhance the educational experiences of our keiki and to support the dedicated professionals who help them succeed. Our team is already hard at work crafting new legislation aimed at strengthening our schools, uplifting our district, and building a brighter future for our entire state.

As the school year comes to a close, I extend my warmest aloha and congratulations to the graduates of my district! Their commencement ceremonies were inspiring celebrations of hard work and achievements. I also had the pleasure of attending graduations of Kanoelani, Kalei'opu'u, Mililani Waena, and Mililani Uka Elementary Schools. From our youngest learners to our high school graduates, it is truly uplifting to witness the growth, enthusiasm, and boundless potential of students across our community as they pursue their academic goals. Congratulations to the Class of 2025!



Mahalo,
Michelle



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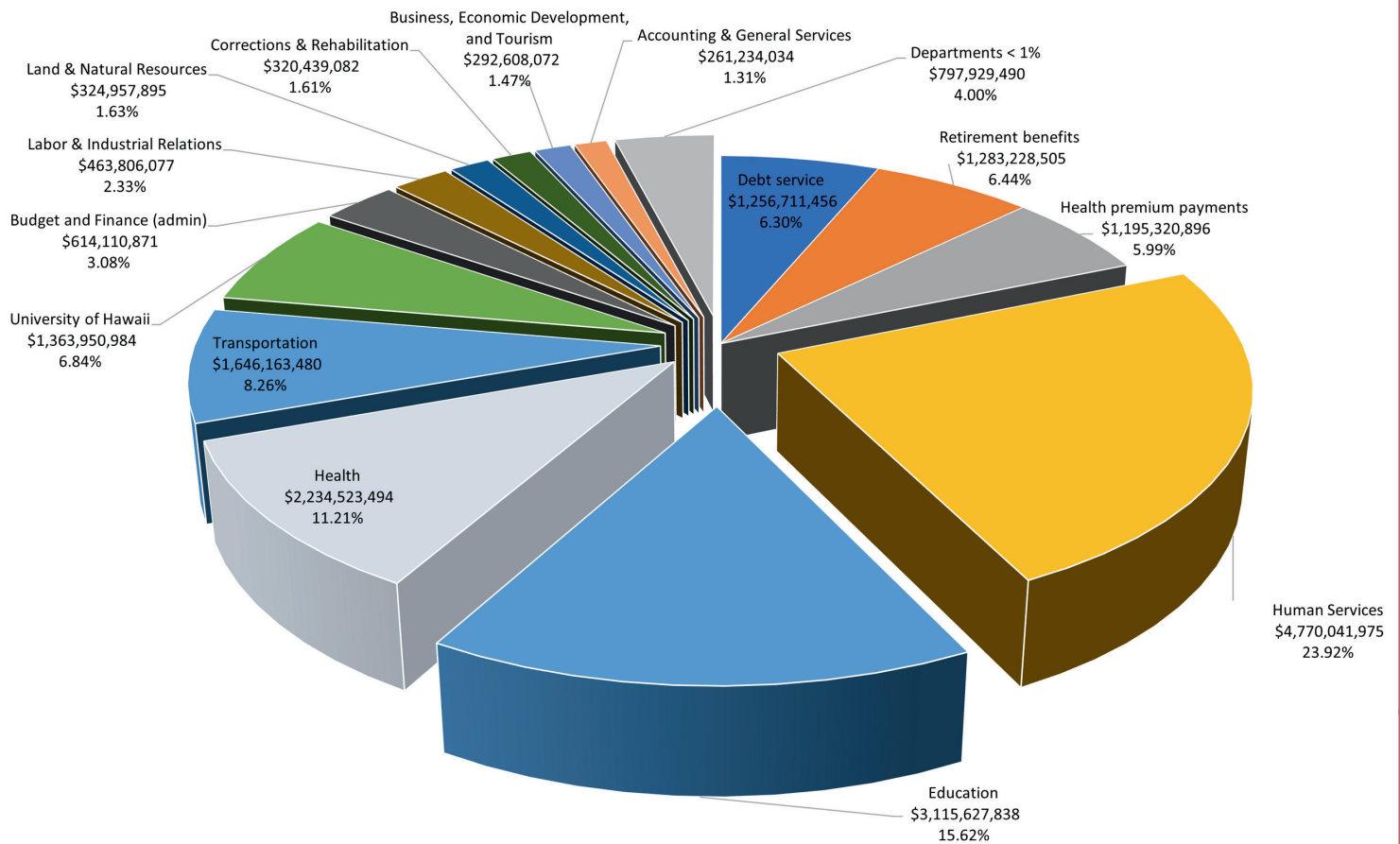


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2025 LEGISLATIVE SESSION IN REVIEW

The Legislature's total budget for fiscal year 2025-2026 for all means of financing is
\$19,940,654,149



Department	FY26 \$	%
Debt service	\$ 1,280,199,461	12.08%
Retirement benefits	\$ 1,285,044,848	12.13%
Health premium payments	\$ 1,253,138,546	11.83%
Education	\$ 2,639,333,109	24.91%
Human Services	\$ 1,440,996,746	13.60%
Health	\$ 930,274,303	8.78%
University of Hawaii	\$ 655,472,330	6.19%
Corrections & Rehabilitation	\$ 305,056,004	2.88%
Accounting & General Services	\$ 183,137,729	1.73%
Land & Natural Resources	\$ 127,106,903	1.20%
Departments < 1%	\$ 493,877,412	4.66%
Departments < 1%		
Business, Economic Development, and Tourism	\$ 96,932,301	0.92%
Law Enforcement	\$ 60,193,319	0.57%
Attorney General	\$ 55,275,505	0.52%
Agriculture	\$ 42,824,495	0.40%
Budget and Finance (admin)	\$ 41,759,589	0.39%
Taxation	\$ 39,685,987	0.37%
Defense	\$ 37,586,014	0.35%
Labor & Industrial Relations	\$ 33,110,524	0.31%
Human Resources Development	\$ 31,173,907	0.29%
Hawaiian Home Lands	\$ 28,032,234	0.26%
Transportation	\$ 20,350,000	0.19%
Office of the Governor	\$ 4,701,872	0.04%
Office of the Lieutenant Governor	\$ 2,251,665	0.02%
Total	10,593,637,391	100.00%

Charted to the left is department budget breakdowns for all categories during the 2025-2026 fiscal year.

NOTABLE BILLS OF 2025

SB = Senate Bill; HB = House Bill; CD = Conference Draft

SB1300 SD1 HD1 CD1: RELATING TO SCHOOL MEALS

- Beginning in the School Year 25-26, appropriates \$565,00 for students who currently qualify for reduced-price lunches will receive them at no cost.
- Additionally, beginning in the School Year 26-27, appropriates \$2.8M to further expand and include students from families earning up to 300% of the federal poverty level.
- This will ensure more students can focus on learning without the barrier of hunger or financial hardships. This marks a meaningful investment in student well-being and educational equity across the state.

HB300 HD1 SD1 CD1: RELATING TO THE STATE BUDGET

Includes significant funding to advance key priorities within the Department of Education. These targeted investments will support innovative learning, promote gender equity in athletics, and strengthen connections between schools and local communities.

- **Ho‘ākea Program – \$8,000,000**

Appropriates funds in FY26 and FY27 to support the continuation and expansion of the Ho‘ākea Program, a unique partnership with the Polynesian Voyaging Society that engages students in hands-on learning grounded in Native Hawaiian culture.

- **Mathematics and Financial Literacy - \$927,248**

Appropriates funds and 6 positions to expand curriculum initiatives and for instructional support for classroom teachers.

- **Public Pre-Kindergarten Learning - \$13,264,299**

Appropriates funds and positions in FY26 and FY27 for 108 teachers and teacher assistants and other expenses. This money will ensure all children eligible for preschool have access to high-quality early learning opportunities. This is an initiative led by Lieutenant Governor, Sylvia Luke.

- **Girls Flag Football – \$726,100 reoccurring funds**

This is a meaningful step forward which advances gender equity in school athletics and expands opportunities for student engagement and development by officially recognizing girls flag football as a DOE sport.

SB532 SD2 HD2 CD1: RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

- Authorize staff and agents of the DOE schools trained by a certified health care professional to administer or assist in the administration of medication to students.
- Clarifies eligible licensed health care practitioners who can prescribe medication administered to students on DOE campuses. Prioritizing timely access to medication protects student health and well-being and will help ensure students can remain focused in the classroom.

HB133 HD2 SD1 CD1: RELATING TO SURFING

- Appropriates \$685,870 in FY26 & FY27 to the DOE for the establishment of surfing as an interscholastic sport.

SCR134/SR113: URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO PROVIDE A DETAILED REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE ON THE TRUE COST OF PRODUCING SCHOOL MEALS TO ENSURE TRANSPARENCY AND AVOID UNNECESSARY PRICE INCREASES

- Requests the DOE to report to the Legislature prior to the Regular Session of 2026 on the cost breakdown of meals provided, preparation and operational costs, and logistical costs. A comprehensive report can ensure the State has the information necessary to improve decision-making, maintain fiscal responsibility, and prevent unnecessary costs from being passed on to students.

FUNDING RELEASED FOR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS:

Mililani Uka Elementary: \$1.5 million for telecommunications improvements. This funding will support the design, construction, and renovation of essential telecom infrastructure, so the school remains equipped with modern technology.

Honowai Elementary School: \$1.95M to finance the design and construction of Americans with Disabilities Act improvements. This includes repairs to elevators, ensure safe pathways, and address safety concerns for special needs or impaired students and staff with health and mobility issues.

Kanoelani Elementary School: \$150,000 in CIP funding for lighting improvements for Kanoelani. The funding for 10 new light poles is a critical investment in the safety and well-being of our students and faculty as they host and participate in various events on campus.

Mililani High School: \$6M from the FY24 appropriation for this project was unexpended to complete the Playcourt project.

Education Week

Education Week at the State Capitol is one of the highlights of my session. As Chair of the Senate Education Committee, I am proud to co-sponsor a week dedicated to celebrating our educators, students, and school staff. We honored exceptional teachers, principals, counselors, and students who exemplify excellence in education.

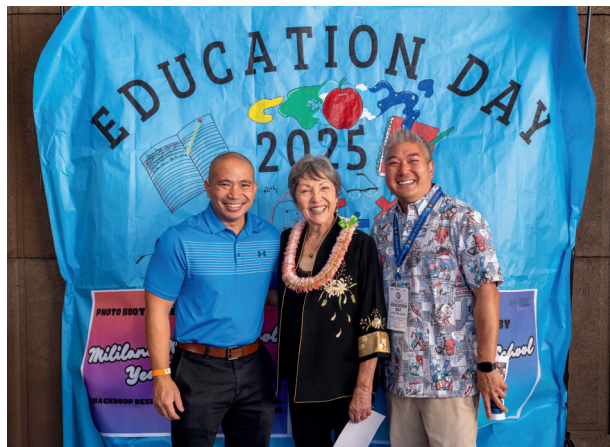
The week featured public events such as the Friends of the Library Book Fair, and a student showcase featuring public and charter schools throughout the state. These events spotlighted the great work happening in our schools and fostered many important conversations about how to further support education in Hawai'i.



[Awardees L-R]: Bryan Silver, 2025 State Teacher of the Year, and Milken Educator Awardees: Jade Pham, Rory Inouye, Kimberly Kim, and Kristy Inamasu.



Learning from Kanoelani Elementary student



[L-R]: Mililani Middle School Principal Shannon Tamashiro, and Vice Principal Jeffrey Horstman, HASSA Assistant Principal of the Year.

Hawai'i Women Lawyers Power Panel

On May 5th, I was honored to join the Hawai'i Women Lawyers "Power Panel" with Lieutenant Governor Sylvia Luke, Attorney General Anne Lopez, and House Vice-Speaker Linda Ichiyama. Discussion centered on the International Women's Day theme #AccelerateAction, we shared our experiences and strategies as women leaders in government.

We also engaged with high school and law students, HWL members, and the YWCA community through a Q&A session.

I reminded attendees that women belong in every space, including male-dominated industries: "You have every right to be there, just as they do!"



With Lieutenant Governor Sylvia Luke



Meeting students after the panel

DOE Career and Technical Student Conference

On February 18th I attended the DOE Career and Technical Student Organization Conference at the Hawai'i Convention Center, where students showcased their skills and passion for career and technical education. It was inspiring to see future leaders engage in hands-on learning, leadership development, and career exploration in fields like healthcare, engineering, and business, highlighting the vital role CTE plays in preparing students for the workforce.



DOE Specialist Daniel Addis discussing the various careers



Superintendent Hayashi and myself

It's official: SB1300, relating to school meals, is signed into law!

On May 27th, I was honored to join in celebrating the signing of several important bills that support our keiki, kūpuna, and strengthen education system in Hawai'i. One of these bills, Senate Bill 1300, expands access to free school meals for students from ALICE (Asset-Limited, Income-Constrained, Employed) families. In addition, students currently receiving reduced-price lunches will qualify for free meals, beginning in the 2025-2026 school year.

As a mother and grandmother, I have seen firsthand how hunger affects a child's ability to focus and learn. I still remember visiting classrooms in my district where teachers kept granola bars or crackers in their desks, just in case a student came to school without breakfast.

This bill is about more than food — it's about dignity, equity, and ensuring every child has a fair chance to succeed. Well-nourished students learn better, and I am proud to have authored this bill. My deepest thanks to Governor Josh Green for signing it into law, to First Lady Jaime Green, and to all the advocates and staff who helped bring it to life!



[L-R] First Lady Jaime Green, Governor Josh Green, myself and Superintendent Hayashi



[L-R]: Governor Josh Green and myself



[L-R]: With First Lady Jaime Green and Superintendent Keith Hayashi



Delivering SB1300 remarks at Washington Place

Last Day of Session: Sine Die



Members from the Senate and House joining hands to celebrate the last day of the 2025 legislative session

On Friday May 2nd, the Senate and House members got together to celebrate the last day of the 2025 Legislative Session. It has been an honor to serve my community and work alongside my dedicated colleagues to pass legislation that will make a real difference in the state of Hawai'i.

Sine die marks the end of another legislative session, but our work continues as we focus on implementing these changes for the betterment of our state and communities.



[L-R]: Senators Elefante, Richards, Senate President Kouichi, Senators Inouye, Aquino, Myself, Lieutenant Governor Luke, Senators Lee, San Buenaventura, and Hashimoto

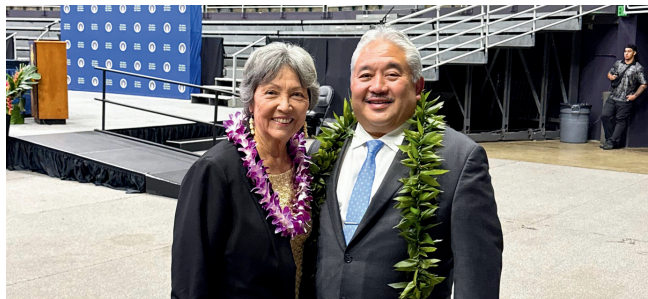


[L-R]: Senators Keohokalole, myself, Inouye, and San Buenaventura

Ho‘omaika‘i 2025 High School Graduates!

Waipahu High School

I had the great pleasure of attending the Waipahu High School's graduation ceremony, a powerful celebration of achievements and pride. Seeing the joy and pride on the faces of the 659 graduates and their families was a moving reminder of the hard work and perseverance behind each student's success. Congratulations to the Waipahu High School Class of 2025!



Superintendent Hayashi and myself



[L-R] Rep. Cory Chun, myself, Principal Sheets, and Lieutenant Governor Luke



Mililani High School

Congratulations to the 653 amazing graduates of Mililani High School this year! It was truly exciting to attend and celebrate all of your incredible accomplishments. Wishing you all success and aloha in your future endeavors.



Pearl City High School

Congratulations to the 350 graduating seniors of Pearl City High School! Your hard work and perseverance have paid off, and your achievements are truly commendable. Best wishes as you honor your success and embark on a bright future!

Photo courtesy of Councilmember Val Okimoto



Photo courtesy of Senator Henry Aquino

2025 Graduation Awards

As each school year comes to a close, I look forward to one of my favorite traditions—celebrating the outstanding students of District 18. Chosen by their teachers and school staff, these students are recognized for their hard work, leadership, and achievements. I am honored to present each of them with a Senate certificate in recognition of their excellence. This year, I had the privilege of recognizing exceptional students from Kalei'opu'u, Kanoelani, Mililani Waena, Mililani Uka, and Honowai Elementary Schools. Mahalo nui loa to the principals, teachers, and school staff who helped make each celebration a meaningful and memorable occasion. Although I was unable to attend every graduation ceremony across our district, I want to extend my warmest congratulations to all of this year's graduates. Your hard work, perseverance, and achievements are truly commendable. I celebrate this important milestone with you and your 'ohana, and I wish you all the best as you embark on the next chapter of your journey. Ho'omaika'i!



[L-R] At Kanoelani Elementary School with Principal Blomberg, students Rhian Ramos, and Kasen Kashima



[L-R] At Mililani Uka Elementary School with students Ysabella Caballero and Alyssa Rapada



[L-R] At Kalei'opu'u Elementary School with students Zachary Martinez and Ysabel Gerola



[L-R] At Mililani Waena Elementary School with students Tanner Nakamoto and Kailee Nitta

SENATOR MICHELLE N. KIDANI

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Congratulations to the Class of 2025!



Senate Vice President Michelle N. Kidani • District 18