

# Senator Michelle Kidani

Twenty-ninth Hawaii State Legislature

*(D) Senate District 18 – Serving Mililani Town, Waipio Gentry, Waikele, Village Park, Royal Kunia*



**Senate Vice President**

*Chair:* Committee on Education

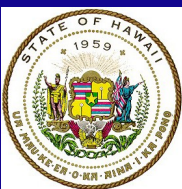
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Aloha, friends and neighbors,

Just two months from now, the Legislature will be in session again to resume our oversight of state departments and programs and the budgets we approve for them. I look forward to my continuing responsibilities as Vice President of the Senate, and Chair of the Senate's Committee on Education. In this tenth session as your elected Senator, I will also serve as a member of the budget oversight committee - the Committee on Ways and Means - as we look at funding priorities and wise use of state revenues.

As a part of that process, the Committee has toured state facilities in our neighbor island counties; you'll see some photos in this newsletter from our visits and meetings. As I noted last month, while we all have responsibilities for programs on all islands, we also focus on needs within our own districts.

This Thanksgiving season is an appropriate time to express my gratitude for all of your support over the past several years, and to reaffirm my pledge to make sure our state government is responsive to your needs so that we can continue to build strong communities. ***Mahalo, and Happy Thanksgiving!***



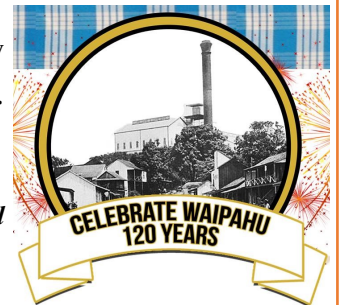
We all celebrated Waipahu's spectacular varsity football season this year. By all accounts, the finale for the state D-II championship versus Konawaena was one for the ages, with the Wildcats prevailing in a contest that saw more than 100 points scored. Though the Marauders didn't reach their ultimate goal, we can proudly congratulate players and families, and the coaching staff that has built a solid program for success in the years ahead.

Me ke Aloha Pumehana,

*Michelle*

## ***Celebrate Waipahu!***

For several weeks, the Waipahu Community Association (WCA) has sponsored events to mark the 120th anniversary of Waipahu as a historic sugar plantation town. The grand finale is set for this weekend, with the ***Taste of Waipahu fair and food fest at August Ahrens Elementary School on Saturday, November 18, from 3:30 until 10 pm.*** It's an event dear to my heart as I organized the very first *Taste of Waipahu* many years ago when I was WCA manager! ***We all celebrate Waipahu as a vibrant, multi-cultural community that is a strong link to Oahu's plantation roots and home to hundreds of families who proudly call Waipahu home.***



From left, NCAC Vice President Connie Majka, Jean Miyahira, Gail Izumigawa, and NCAC Executive Director Jay Steele.

## ***National recognition for Waipahu High***

The National Career Academy Coalition (NCAC) recognized **Gail Izumigawa**, Director of Waipahu High School's highly successful Career Academies as its **2017 Exemplary Educator** at this year's annual conference in Nashville, Tennessee. And *former* Waipahu teacher, **Jean Miyahira**, received the Coalition's Sisyphus Award at the same gathering.

Waipahu Principal **Keith Hayashi** says: "Gail and Jean have been instrumental in helping all of us raise the level of our career academies, and Jean has worked continuously to support the career academy movement at several Hawaii high schools as well as the national level."

***Mahalo, Gail and Jean, for your outstanding work on behalf of our students!***





## Recognizing teacher excellence

That's Ewa Makai Middle School's **Vanessa Ching** front and center in the photo at left. Vanessa is this year's Leeward District and **State of Hawaii Teacher of the Year**, nominated by her colleagues and DOE administrators. "Vanessa is coordinator of Ewa Makai's Student Activities and Green Initiatives, teaching students to reduce their carbon footprints," said DOE Superintendent Christina Kishimoto.

She adds, "Ewa Makai is the only school statewide to win the National Green Ribbon School certification, and Vanessa's students take their environmental lessons home to share with their families."

*Mahalo to everyone recognized this year and to Hawaii's thousands of public schools teachers who work so hard for our students and communities!*

*Congratulations*

Front row from left, Governor Ige, Amanda Fretto, Kauai District; Vanessa Ching; Cristin Pirolo, Charter Schools; DOE Superintendent Kishimoto; back row, Francine Hughes, Maui District; Gregg Iha, Central District; Erika Kaneo, Hawaii District; Del Onaga, Windward District. Not present: Naomi Salaveria, Honolulu District.



A moving ceremony at the Hawaii State Capitol last week marked the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the passing of **Queen Lili'uokalani**. *Aloha Lili'u* was planned by my colleagues, **Senators Brickwood Galuteria and Kai Kahele**, as both a memorial and celebration.

"A century after her passing, she is still beloved by her people, many of whom have benefitted from her legacy," said **Senator Kahele**. "We hope through this observance, we can all be reminded of and emulate her spirit and character of grace compassion, courage, and strength."



"More than just marking a milestone in history, this event provides an historical admonition for us today to act with intentions that benefit the greater good and encourage the best in all of us," **Senator Galuteria** said. "This begins a year of discussion and reflection about how the Queen's legacy continues to impact our lives today and how as a State we can continue to improve the lives of Hawaii's people."

Earlier this year, my grandkids, Kahiau, Akoni and Kamalani paid a visit to and learned about the Queen's memorial statue at the Capitol.



## Ways & Means Committee visits Hawaii Island

Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means continued their tour of neighbor island state-supported facilities this month. **(1)** At **Kea`au High School** we saw the remarkable work done by students to refurbish a space shuttle cockpit and flight simulator in cooperation with the Civil Air Patrol. It's a replica of the Challenger spacecraft on which Hawaii Island's Ellison Onizuka was a crew member. That flight ended in a tragic explosion shortly after launch. Kea`au students seek funding for a permanent home for the cockpit as a science education tool. **(2)** Sharing a lighter moment with students at lunch break at **Waiakeawaena Elementary** in Hilo where the farm-to-table school food service initiatives are underway. **(3)** Visiting **Hilo Medical Center**, looking for funding for a cardiac catheter lab to treat stroke and heart attack patients rather than medevac them to Maui or Oahu. **(4)** Natural Energy Laboratory of Hawaii facilities at **HOST - the Ocean Science and Technology Park** - where groundbreaking research is conducted on several renewable ocean energy projects.



A plaque at "Kahele Point" stands as a memorial to our late colleague, **Senator Gil Kahele of Hilo**, near one of his favorite fishing spots.