



Senator **RUSSELL RUDERMAN**



Kea'au, Pahoa, Kalapana, Kapoho, Kurtistown, Mountain View, Glenwood, Volcano, Pahala

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Message from the Senator

We are now in full Conference Committee mode where the House and the Senate work out the disagreements between the two houses. The public testimony has already been taken in committee hearings, now selected members of either house can agree or disagree to the amendments made to the bill. Basically, this is where the the two houses hammer out what they are willing to do to get legislation forwarded for a final floor vote on April 30th 2013.

The 2013 Legislative Session ends on May 2nd and the all legislation that passed now goes to the Governor for his signature, veto, or wait for it to become law without his signature.

Between May 2nd and January 2014 I will be back in the district to talk and meet with the community about how 2013 Legislation will affect us and what issues to tackle next year. As always, If you have any questions, need assistance, or more information regarding a particular issue, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Aloha,



SARAMAE LANDERS CELEBRATES 107 YEARS OF LIFE WITH GRAND PALACE THEATER PARTY Over 150 attendees help to celebrate an incredible woman

The event at the Palace Theater for Saramae was well attended by approximately 150 people with many seniors in the crowd. Leilehua Yuen organized the program that started with an interpretive story telling piece about Saramae's life adventures. That was followed by a 10-minute promotional video made by the airlines circa 1960 about the 50th Aloha State. In making the case that Honolulu was a modern city and Hawaii offered all the comforts of the mainland, the narrator of the film made the point that "perhaps sometime down the road, Hawaii might be home to a future president of the United States" which of course solicited a round of applause from the viewers.

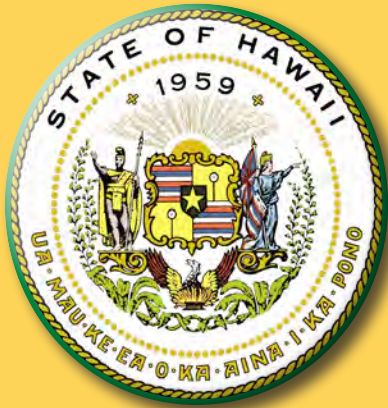
After the video, Saramae was presented with commendations. A letter recognizing Saramae's many accomplishments sent by Governor Neil Abercrombie was read by Leilehua Yuen. This was followed by the

State Senate commendation sponsored by Senator Ruderman and signed by all 25 senators which was read and presented by Senator's community liaison. A State House of Representatives resolution recognizing Saramae's lifetime contributions from Representative Coffman was also read and presented by Leilehua Yuen.

A certificate from Mayor Kenoi designating the day as "Saramae Landers 107th Birthday" was presented by his staff. The program wrapped up with several delightful hula mele performed by Palace theater entertainers. Afterwards, everyone headed to the lobby to partake in the 200 cupcakes and cake especially made for the event by friends of Saramae. Δ



Saramae Landers celebrates with the cutting of the cake and showing off her Senate Certificate of Recognition along with Eileen O'Hara of Sen. Ruderman's staff.



Senator Russell Ruderman
Hawai'i State Senate
2nd District

*"The Natural Choice
for Puna and Ka'u"*

**Member of the
Senate Committees on**

**Education
Energy and Environment
Water and Land
Ways and Means**

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KA'U COMMUNITY PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE DRAFT REPORTS SHED LIGHT ON DISTRICT CONCERNS

Strong sense of commitment expressed by residents

The Ka'u Community Development Plan (CDP) Steering Committee has drafted several reports that offer a glimpse of how the district feels about the future of Ka'u. As stated by the CDP, these are draft materials that are works-in-progress. It is expected that they will be revised as conditions change and new information becomes available.

The residents of the Ka'u district have a strong sense of commitment when it comes to protecting and managing the unique resources of the district. These resources are not only connected throughout the district, but are also the foundation for the survival of the people that call Ka'u home.

The highest priorities of those surveyed (15% of all residents) were placed on protecting the aina with a specific concern where access is concerned. Residents expressed their desire for greater coastline and natural resource protections, expanding agricultural use and more trails and hunting.

While the Ka'u district comprises about 15% of Hawai'i Island's pasture lands, almost 70% of the agriculture zoned acreage is not being used for agricultural purposes. This has brought a sense of urgency within the community to have protections established that would help to keep ag lands in production.

The purpose of the draft report is to direct more discussion as the CDP creation process continues with the steering committee. The goal being to make sure the CDP stays true to its stated purpose - "It must plan for the future in ways that...protect and provide reasonable access to natural and recreational resources, including the mauka forests, the coastline, [and] open spaces."

A majority of the region is within a State Conservation District which is mostly publicly owned land. Major factors of consideration are the traditions of recreational and cultural access and an expansion of trail systems to connect the unique natural landscapes of the shorelines and forests. These areas are recognized as providing one of the richest and critical sources of habitat and natural biodiversity in the world.



"Importantly, the ahupuaa system is as much a social and economic system as it is an ecological framework," the report says. "This reflects Hawaiians' integrated worldview and culture, which doesn't draw stark distinctions between natural and cultural resources. By definition, ahupuaa include a wide range of natural, cultural, and recreational resources across a landscape."

The CDP also encourages partnerships between the various governmental and community interests as they pertain to the many county, state and federal laws, agreements, and for sustainable planning of the Ka'u district. The report makes a clear argument for looking at the district through the perspective of a traditional Hawaiian ahupuaa — mauka-to-makai district — and considering the region as three interconnected areas of upland forest, central farm lands and coastal areas, called wao, kula and kahakai in Hawaiian.

Agriculture is covered in the report with a view on its history and the role it has played calling it the "economic mainstay" of the district. The Ka'u district has approximately 95,000 acres of pasture land that is currently being used for cattle. Other agriculture products making their impact known in the region are coffee, flowers, vegetables, fruit, honey, and macadamia nuts. The greatest challenges to agriculture in the report were listed as inadequate water supplies and environmental challenges such as vog, additionally leases that face uncertainty for long term planning are a growing concern.

The community is encouraged to send in feedback, suggested additions, updates and corrections. Feedback forms are available through a link on the website. Δ

SENS. RUDERMAN AND ESPERO MEET WITH ROGER CHRISTIE AT HONOLULU FDC

Senator Russell Ruderman, joined by Senator Will Espero, met with federal detainee Roger Christie at the Federal Detention Center (FDC) in Honolulu to discuss his incarceration, health, and rights as a United States citizen under the United States Constitution. Mr. Christie has been held now for almost three years without a bail hearing or a trial.

After weeks of requests and assurances, the U.S. Attorney's Office granted permission for Senator Ruderman, representing Christie's district, and Senator Espero, Chair of the Senate Committee on Public Safety, Intergovernmental, and Military Affairs, to visit Mr. Christie at the FDC in Honolulu with restrictions, including that no media shall be present.

In June of 2010, Mr. Christie, along with twelve co-defendants, was charged with manufacture, possession with intent to sell marijuana. The other defendants have been released on bail pending trial. Prior to the detention hearing, Mr. Christie was interviewed by the Office of Pretrial Services and on July 13, 2010, Pretrial Services recommended that Mr. Christie be released on an unsecured bond of \$50,000.

In the almost three years since that recommendation, all efforts to have Mr. Christie released pending trial or have access to a speedy trial have been denied. Visitations have been severely limited by the FDC including those by his wife Share Christie, who

has not been allowed to see her husband for almost a year.

To urge President Obama and the Federal Government to release Mr. Christie pending a hearing, Senator Ruderman authored two measures - Senate Concurrent Resolution 75 and Senate Resolution 42 - both of these measures have been passed by the Senate Committee on Public Safety, Intergovernmental, and Military Affairs.

Mr. Christie explained that he is content with the position he is in because he feels he is doing the right thing and looks forward to proving his innocence in a court of law, saying, "Dignity trumps longevity."

Senator Ruderman said, "I have known Roger for over 25 years. He is one of the most peaceful persons I know. To anyone who knows him, the claim that he is a danger to the community is absurd."

Senator Espero commented. "This visit was very enlightening. I still feel that Mr. Christie should be released pending a trial."

Senator Ruderman and Senator Espero would like to graciously thank FDC Warden David Shinn, Assistant Warden Tom Blumm, Assistant U.S. Attorney Michael Kawahara, and Federal Public Defender Thomas Otake, for their assistance and for the opportunity to meet with Roger Christie. Δ

Education Week Presents Ask Your Senator

This year marks the 10th anniversary of Education week, organized by the Hawai'i State Senate Committee on Education, and Hawai'i State Senators are once again taking the event to the classroom with the "Ask Your Senator" project, to find out what our future leaders want to know about their State.



The concept behind the "Ask Your Senator" project is open dialogue between students from across the State and their lawmakers. A request for questions from students was sent to all public schools in District 2 earlier this month.

As part of his response, Senator Ruderman shared how he felt when he was elected into office, "It was very exciting. I was also very humbled by the support of my district and I'm very proud to represent the people of Puna..."

This project provides an opportunity for students to lead the discussion, through student-driven and student-oriented questions. Δ

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GQVKJzJogE50>

KEA'AU HIGH CELEBRATES STRIVEHI AWARD

A large crowd gathered for the celebration of the Kea'au High School (KHS) StriveHI award of \$25,000. The award ceremony was officially part of the Music and Art Night; the room was decorated with displays of drawings, portraits, paintings ceramics and photography showcasing the incredible creative talents of the students of Kea'au High School. The school band showed off their talents as well entertaining the participants of this special evening.

Dean Cevallos, Principal, Bill Walters, W.H. Shipman Ltd. President, and Eileen O'Hara, Sen. Russell Ruderman's Community Liaison, made the announcement of the cash award of \$25,000 recognizing their accomplishment of raising both math and reading scores

substantially in the last 2 years. According to Principal Cevallos, KHS is on track to make another sizable gain on math scores this year and are very close to making desired improvements on reading scores. Additionally, KHS has also made a substantial increase in graduating seniors this year as approximately 85% of the senior class will graduate this year compared to over 70% last year. This impressive gain in students graduating will mean that KHS will have met the improvement requirements set for them over a three-year period.

Eileen O'Hara read Senator Ruderman's letter of congratulations, recognizing their accomplishments, on stage. Bill Walters, whose family has a long and rich history of



Eileen O'Hara Sen. Russell Ruderman's Community Liaison, Kea'au High School Principal, and Bill Walters, W.H. Shipman Ltd. President

support in the district then spoke expressing how proud he is of the school's academic accomplishments and emphasizing how proud the entire community is of the great improvements at the Kea'au High School over the last 10 years. Δ

HTA AWARDS FUNDING TO COMMUNITY-BASED PROJECTS UNDER ITS NATURAL RESOURCES AND KUKULU OLA: LIVING HAWAIIAN CULTURE PROGRAMS FOR 2013

2013 Natural Resources Program Awards

Organization

Kau Chamber of Commerce for Interpretive Signs at Pali o Kulani Scenic Point

Project Goal

To create two interpretive signs explaining the story behind the scenery and the growth of plant life overlooking the Pali o Kulani and South Point in the Kau District on Hawaii Island.

Organization

Volcano Art Center for Volcano Rainforest Restoration & Education

Project Goal

To help protect and restore the fragile native rain forest ecosystems of the Volcano area; to pass on knowledge to visitors, newcomers, and residents about the value of the native forests; and to share this valuable resource with the public that encourages sustainable tourism and promotes interactive land stewardship.

2013 Kukulu Ola - Living Hawaiian Culture Program Awards

Organization

Hawaii Homegrown Food Network for Hooulu ka Ulu - Breadfruit Festival Takes Root (Fiscally sponsored by Big Island Conservation and Development Council)

Project Goal

To revitalize ulu (breadfruit) as an attractive, nutritious, abundant, affordable, and culturally appropriate food that addresses modern food security challenges. 2013 Ulu Festivals to take place on Hawaii Island and Kauai.

Organization

University of Hawaii – Hilo, Imiloa Astronomy Center for Hula Enrichment Programming at Imiloa

Project Goal

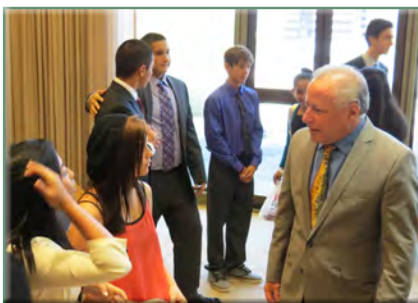
The hula enrichment programming at Imiloa Astronomy Center strives to impact the niche of cultural tourism related to Hawaii's host culture, providing enriching experiences and insights into the history, art, customs, and traditions of our islands as they relate to hula.

SENATE HONORS HANA WILBOURN, BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS OF HAWAII ISLAND'S 2013 YOUTH OF THE YEAR



The Senate of the State of Hawai'i is always proud to recognize young people who embody the highest standards of character and serve as role models for others. Hana Wilbourn is such a person, having been selected as Boys and Girls Club of the Big Island – Kea'au Clubhouse, 2013 Youth of the Year Honoree.

The Boys and Girls Club's Youth of the Year program has brought hope and opportunity to hardworking and deserving young people who have overcome enormous obstacles. The organization's premier character and leadership program, Youth of the Year is a comprehensive, nationwide program that identifies and recognizes outstanding young people, 14-18 years of age for behavior that warrants celebration. It promotes and celebrates Club members' service to the Club, community and family; academic performance, ethical values, life goals, poise and public speaking ability. The program is an effective year-round tool for fostering young people's personal growth and leadership qualities.



Local Clubs in Hawai'i recognize Youths of the Month, followed by the selection of their Club Youth of the Year. These individuals participate in a statewide competition, the winner moves on to the regional competition. Five regional candidates will then compete for the National Youth of the Year honor.



The Senate of the Twenty-Seventh Legislature of the State of Hawai'i, Regular Session of 2013, hereby commends Hana Wilbourn for her outstanding character, congratulates her on achieving Boys and Girls Club of the Big Island – Kea'au Clubhouse Youth of the Year Honoree and extends its best wishes for excellence and success in all future endeavors. Δ

Dorrance Scholarships Go To District Recipients

The Dorrance Scholarship is an innovative, four-year award designed to benefit local students who are the first in their family to attend college. Each year, up to 10 eligible students are awarded need-based scholarships of \$8,000 per year to attend UH Hilo. Awards are renewable for a total of eight semesters of funding, and additional cohorts of scholars will be added in subsequent years.

Prior to their freshman year, Dorrance Scholars will participate in a custom-designed summer bridge program to help them transition from high school to college. In future summers, scholars will take part in international travel and employment preparation, bringing the estimated total value of each award to over \$60,000 for the entire four-year period.

Scholarships continued on page 5

HIGHWAY 130 SPEED LIMIT CHANGES EXPLAINED

I suggested the reduced speed limit because this stretch of road is among the most dangerous in the state. Reducing the speed limit is the one thing we can do immediately to make it safer.

The Puna Community Development Plan (CDP), created by community members, recommended exactly this action.

I greatly appreciate the Dept. of Transportation considering my request, and approving it. This shows a great responsiveness on the part of DOT to our community's concerns.

After a request such as mine, the DOT requests are reviewed by our traffic

engineers on Oahu, by our district personnel on the respective islands and if necessary, by the county police department. For Keaau-Pahoa, the district DOT engineer Sal Panem and his staff were consulted.

The primary criterion in making any change is safety, safety of motorists and all other users of the highway including pedestrians and bicyclists.

Please be assured that none of the other planned improvements for Highway 130 will be delayed or abandoned because of this. But while the expansion proceeds, we can make a large section of road safer now.

In the (approximately) 3 mile stretch that this reduction affects, there are over one hundred roads & driveways that enter onto the highway. I myself do not feel a need for a study to know that reducing speed will make this stretch of highway safer. But the DOT has reviewed records of all the accidents and was able to ascertain that this reduction will help.

I hope you will join me in welcoming this and all improvements to the safety of our community. I am grateful to Director Okimoto for being responsive to my suggestions, and for caring about the safety of our roads. Δ

PLDC LITE? SENATOR RUDERMAN SHEDS SOME LIGHT

The following bills have been characterized as having Public Land Development Corporation (PLDC) - Lite qualities. Here's my two cents:

SB215: A true PLDC-lite was killed in the House last month.

HB70: The other true PLDC-lite bill is still alive! PPPA (Public Private Partnership Agency) portion added on after PLDC died.

This is the one true PLDC ghost still alive, in my opinion. I voted against this twice (similar SB215, killed by House, and HB70 on 3rd reading in Senate) and will do so again on final reading, unless the PPPA is wisely removed in conference committee.

This unfortunate bill started life as a fix to extend the High Technology Innovation Corporation- a previously existing project, with good merit. After the PLDC died, a PPPA was added to this. I do not trust this as it was conceived in haste, attached to an unrelated bill, and has many PLDC like issues. Because another bill was pirated to create this, the public was never aware of the creation of the PPPA's.

I will not support this bill, and I encourage those concerned about "PLDC-Lite" bills to focus their energy on this. I hope & trust that the House will remove the PPPA add-on in conference committee. House & Senate conference committee members on this bill should get your input. The House conferees appointed are Tsuji, Luke Co-Chairs; Choy, Fale.

SB1207: This is a submerged land, commercial harbors exemption, which I believe is a reasonable exemption to allow our harbors to get much-needed repairs. I support shoreline and aquatic protection strongly, and in this case a very limited damage brings a large public benefit.

SB237 & HB865: Public school land development
In the wake of PLDC, I am only willing to trust new public-private partnerships only when they are limited in scope, cautious in implementation, clearly defined and controlled, and for the highest public purposes. Also, they should be legislated in a transparent, fair process with the opportunity for public input on the actual subject of

the bill. This is the only such bill I trust this year.

This is THE 'Public Private Partnership' I will support this year because it is limited as a three year pilot project, benefits our schools by generating revenue through the lease of public school lands for public purposes, and requires reporting to the legislature.

When the need for school funds is discussed, one option which keeps popping up is gambling/lottery. I do not support that at all; thus I support this trial program.

HB1483: Hawaii Health Systems Corporation (HHSC) task force.

There is a move by Banner Health, a private nonprofit organization, to take over the management and operation of some of our Hawaii public hospitals, including Hilo & Kona, through a public-private-partnership. This task force will examine the impacts of this proposed transition. At this time, I do not support this public-private-partnership, but a study of the issue may be useful. This is not an authorization of sale of the hospitals. Δ

Dorrance Scholarships *from page 4*

The 2013 District recipients are;

Rachel Gristock, Kea`au High School, Kurtistown
Tawanaka (Puki) Kaupu, Kamehameha Schools Hawai'i, Ocean View
Gabriel Lubbess, Kamehameha Schools Hawai'i, Kea`au
Benjamin Wada, Christian Liberty Academy, Pahoa

"Higher education is the key to a brighter future," said Chancellor Don Straney. "The Dorrance Scholarship goes to the heart of our mission at UH Hilo, where some 70 percent of our students are the first in their family to attend college and an equal number rely on some form of financial aid.

"The support from the Dorrance family is a very important gift to UH Hilo and we are extremely grateful for their commitment to our Hawai'i Island students," he added. Δ

Senator Hosts Hawai'i Island Albizia Experts at Big Island Delegation Meeting

On April 11, 2013, Senator Ruderman brought attention to a rapidly growing threat to public safety, infrastructure, and native forests at the Hawai'i Island Delegation meeting at the State Capitol. Dr. R. Flint Hughes, Ecosystem Ecologist with the USDA Forest Service Pacific Southwest Research Station, Institute of Pacific Islands Forestry, and Ms. Springer Kaye, Manager with the Big Island Invasive Species Committee, presented to Big Island State Senators and Representatives on the issue of Albizia. The presentation focused on the economic, societal, and ecological threats posed by this invasive weed tree and what can be done to stop it.



Dr. R. Flint Hughes, Ecosystem Ecologist with the USDA Forest Service Pacific Southwest Research Station, Institute of Pacific Islands Forestry, and Ms. Springer Kaye, Manager with the Big Island Invasive Species Committee

The fact that Albizia is the "fastest-growing tree: found to have grown 35 feet in 13 months- or about 1.1 inches per day" awed the legislators. Originally from Indonesia, moist forests are the Albizia's preferred setting, thus it's prevalence in Puna and Hilo. Dr. Hughes explained "these large trees pose a hazard to public and private infrastructure because of brittle wood and weak structure." Ms. Kaye elaborated that "protecting homes, power lines, and roadways from the danger of falling limbs is very expensive" and gave the example of the \$1 million spent per mile to remove 1,500 albizia trees in Kauai by the Department of Transportation. In this case, the trees were back within a few years because surrounding Albizia on private property reseeded the open soil.

But the news wasn't all bad- Dr. Hughes and Ms. Kaye shared a recent community-led effort to tackle Albizia that seems to be working. In the area of Pi'ihonua, above Hilo Hospital, a simple "hack and squirt" control effort, where incisions are made around the trunk of the tree and a few drops of Milestone herbicide is administered, is killing Albizia safely. So far, this method seems to be the best effort because it causes the tree to gradually drop its branches, is cheap, and can be done by almost anyone.

Senator Ruderman's Senate Resolution 41 (SR41) and Senate Concurrent Resolution 74 (SCR74), both urge the Invasive Species Council to develop and implement a comprehensive interagency plan for the control and eradication of Albizia throughout the state; starting with the island of Hawaii, and to partner to utilize Albizia trees that are removed and urging the department of agriculture to investigate biocontrol agents for the control of Albizia. SR41 has passed in the Senate and SCR74 has the support of both the DLNR and DOA and is now headed to the House Finance Committee. Senator Ruderman hopes this legislation will spearhead collaboration to protect our communities against the threats of Albizia. Δ

Public Events Calendar

APRIL

Volcano Art Center • www.volcanoartcenter.org • Ph: 808.967.8222

April 22, 27 & 29 - Mon. at 9:30AM and Sat. at 11:00AM

Niaulani Nature Walk – Free Guided Rain Forest Tour in Volcano. This one-hour nature walk travels through a lush portion of an old-growth Hawaiian rain forest on an easy, 1/7-mile loop trail. The walk introduces individuals, families, and groups to the native plants and birds of Volcano. Guides focus not only on the biological, ecological, and geological features of the area, but also the cultural usages of flora and fauna by native Hawaiians. Offered every Monday and Saturday at VAC's Niaulani Campus in Volcano Village. Free; donations welcome.

Saturday, April 27, 9:00AM–4:00PM Daily

Hula: Images and Implements, an exhibit featuring the photographs of Boone Morrison. Ipu by Kalim Smith and the feather work of Natalie Jensen. The collection shares the beauty of the hula arts and traditions. At VAC's Niaulani Campus, free to the public.

MAY

May 4-5

Ka'u Coffee Festival - attend the ho'olaule'a and visit the farmers. Take part in the Ka'u Coffee Experience to sample coffees from many Ka'u coffee farms brewed by expert baristas.

Get to know the Ka'u coffee farmers who banded together to form the Ka'u Coffee Growers Cooperative years ago and started the Ka'u Coffee Festival in 2009.

<http://kaucoffeefestival.com>

May 5-11

Puna Music Festival - The Third Annual Puna Music Festival celebrates the music of Hawai'i, and the undying spirit of Puna. The 2013 festival remains non-profit, supported by the Hawaiian Tourism Authority, the County of Hawaii, presented by KAPA FM, and stewarded by Kalani.

<http://punamusicfestival.com>