

TWENTY-NINTH DAY

Tuesday, March 14, 2017

The Senate of the Twenty-Ninth Legislature of the State of Hawai'i, Regular Session of 2017, convened at 11:44 a.m. with the President in the Chair.

The Roll was called showing all Senators present with the exception of Senators English, Galuteria, Inouye, and Taniguchi who were excused.

The President announced that he had read and approved the Journal of the Twenty-Eighth Day.

At this time, Senator Kim welcomed a group of fifth-grade students from Gustav H. Webling Elementary School, who were present in the gallery with their teachers Allen Sarbida and Hanlan Bowler, and chaperones Jolie Menchavez and Annie Lukec.

Senator Dela Cruz rose to recognize the Wahiawā Middle School principal.

Senator Chang acknowledged the presence of the Honorable David Y. Ige, Governor of the State of Hawai'i, in the gallery.

ORDER OF THE DAY

ADVISE AND CONSENT

Stand. Com. Rep. No. 916 (Gov. Msg. No. 502):

Senator Kim moved that Stand. Com. Rep. No. 916 be received and placed on file, seconded by Senator Ruderman and carried.

Senator Kim then moved that the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of RODERICK BECKER as Director of the Department of Accounting and General Services, term to expire December 3, 2018, seconded by Senator Ruderman.

Senator Kim rose to speak in support of the nominee as follows:

"Mr. President, it's rewarding to see a local boy who is a product of our public school system – a graduate of Kailua High School and the University of Hawai'i – come before us today to be confirmed as our state comptroller. Roderick Becker began as a budget analyst in the 2000 legislative session. Then he became the Senate CIP program specialist from 2001 to 2005. He left the Senate to work across the street as a legislative analyst for the Honolulu City Council until 2008, when I became WAM chair and he returned to the Senate as our budget chief, where he remained until 2014, when the governor appointed him as the deputy director of finance.

"As a budget analyst and working for WAM, he learned about the budget from the bottom up. We all know the long hours that WAM staff put in every session and, as budget chief, I worked with Rod and watched how he trained and worked with the budget analysts from all walks of life, who often are hired with no prior experience. I found Rod to be hardworking, honest, and not giving into political pressures. When he came on as budget chief, I had him and the entire WAM staff clean out the WAM staff offices that had not changed for decades. The office had rusted filing cabinets, an antique sofa, ancient document binders with spider webs and all. Rod and staff came in on the weekend to clean, paint the bookshelves, and rearrange the offices. We worked to bring a new perspective of the WAM staff by holding a WAM open house, something that was never done before. We wanted Senate members to meet these mysterious WAM staff, get to know what they did, and tour the mysterious WAM offices. Senators were encouraged to feel free to ask questions and get information from the WAM

staff for any budget questions. I believe that Rod will bring that same kind of perspective to DAGS.

"In his opening statement to the committee, Rod read an old reference letter written for him as he embarked on the job market by a UH advisor for student government. In summary, it said:

Roderick's behavior in the student senate was characterized by consistently high standards of ethics and a willingness to stand up for what is fair and just; this meant, at times, supporting a position that was unpopular and subjected him to criticism. He was also known for his intelligence, hard work, and keen understanding of the issues.

"Rod told the committee:

I wanted to share this with you because that's who I was 18 years ago; it's who I've always tried to be. I think it's consistent with the governor's charge to his cabinet. The governor tells us all the time, 'Just do what is right.' This is his principal directive; I believe that I've worked in a manner consistent with that and will continue to do so.

"Mary Alice Evans, deputy director of DBEDT, says, 'Rod is a quiet, thoughtful leader who brings an analytical approach to complex problems.' And finally, Wes Machida, director of finance, said in his testimony about Rod, 'He represents the next generation of leaders that we need to ensure that state government transitions our business practices into the 21st century.' I cannot agree more, and I urge my colleagues to advise and consent to Roderick Becker as the director of Department of Accounting and General Services. Thank you."

Senator Kidani rose to speak in opposition to the nominee as follows:

"I have no prepared remarks because I had no intention of standing in opposition; I was going to go quietly by as a 'with reservations.' However, I feel compelled to say that, in my dealings with Mr. Becker, I do believe that he has not been forthright. I question his character and his integrity. Several weeks ago, I had a conversation with the governor, and it did not deal directly with Rod – it had other issues – but I brought that up, and I brought up other instances that I questioned dealing with relationships with members of his staff. And I don't think that it's a personal issue. When you are in leadership and when you're tapped to be the leader of a large department like DAGS, I think integrity and character and how you treat people comes – something that has to be very forthright and at the start of everything you do in order for people to have faith in you and for you to work with people. And I don't think that he has the capabilities or the experience to carry forth this job in a way that it deserves to be dealt with, and so for that reason, I will be voting 'no.'"

The motion was put by the Chair and carried on the following showing of Ayes and Noes:

Ayes, 19; Ayes with Reservations (Dela Cruz, Kahele, Nishihara, Shimabukuro). Noes, 2 (Chang, Kidani). Excused, 4 (English, Galuteria, Inouye, Taniguchi).

Senator Kim then introduced newly confirmed Director Roderick Becker, who was present in the gallery with his mother, June Becker, and his sister, Sheryl Cruz.

Senator Dela Cruz introduced guests from Wahiawā Middle School, who were present in the gallery, including Principal Ursula Kawaguchi, Steve Grey, Edith Gima, Malachi McSheron, and Dee Gonzales, as well as members of the student choir, who had opened the floor session with several uplifting songs.

At 11:55 a.m., the Senate stood in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

The Senate reconvened at 12:01 p.m.

RE-REFERRAL OF HOUSE BILLS

The Chair re-referred the following House bills that were received:

H.B. No.:	Re-referred to:
H.B. No. 573, H.D. 1	Committee on Government Operations, then jointly to the Committee on Judiciary and Labor and the Committee on Ways and Means
H.B. No. 599, H.D. 1	Committee on Housing, then to the Committee on Ways and Means
H.B. No. 625, H.D. 3	Jointly to the Committee on Public Safety, Intergovernmental, and Military Affairs and the Committee on Economic Development, Tourism, and Technology, then jointly to the Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection, and Health and the Committee on Ways and Means
H.B. No. 880, H.D. 1	Committee on Education, then to the Committee on Ways and Means
H.B. No. 943	Committee on Judiciary and Labor, then jointly to the Committee on Ways and Means and the Committee on Economic Development, Tourism, and Technology
H.B. No. 1028, H.D. 2	Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection, and Health, then to the Committee on Judiciary and Labor
H.B. No. 1031, H.D. 1	Committee on Judiciary and Labor, then to the Committee on Ways and Means
H.B. No. 1135, H.D. 1	Committee on Public Safety, Intergovernmental, and Military Affairs, then jointly to the Committee on Judiciary and Labor and the Committee on Ways and Means
H.B. No. 1249, H.D. 3	Jointly to the Committee on Transportation and Energy and the Committee on Economic Development, Tourism, and Technology, then to the Committee on Ways and Means
H.B. No. 1580, H.D. 2	Committee on Transportation and Energy, then to the Committee on Ways and Means

At this time, Senator Baker rose to speak on a point of personal privilege as follows:

“I would just like to note for the record that there are only 12 session days remaining for which we may receive governor’s messages naming nominees to some very important boards and commissions. Some of our licensing boards are still without adequate quorum. I would respectfully request that the governor not wait until the March 31st deadline but get them down sooner so we can deliberate on them appropriately. Mahalo.”

The Chair commented that the governor’s chief of staff had not yet left the building, and had heard her message directly.

ADJOURNMENT

At 12:02 p.m., on motion by Senator Espero, seconded by Senator Kidani and carried, the Senate adjourned until 11:30 a.m., Wednesday, March 15, 2017.