

SENATOR WILL ESPERO

March 2012



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Listed are some of the bills introduced by Senator Espero which are still under consideration in the Legislature.

SB 2247, Emergency Location / Cell Phones. To help emergency responders locate persons in need, mobile phone companies would be required to provide cell phone locations on request. The bill grants immunity from liability for doing so in good faith.

SB 2261, Weed & Seed. This bill creates and funds the well-respected crime prevention and community strengthening program under the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations.

SB 2260, General Excise Tax Exemption for Homeless Shelters. Rent for homeless transitional shelters would be exempt from the general excise tax for qualifying non-profit agencies and government agencies.

SB 2110, Digital Archives. This bill designates the Henry Giugni Moving Images Archive as the state archive and establishes a special fund for it and a tax check-off.

RETURNING HAWAII INMATES

The State Legislature has been working for several years on a plan to return approximately 1700 Hawaii inmates currently incarcerated on the mainland. Our state spends over \$45 million each year on a mainland prison operation. The Legislature believes those funds should be spent locally in our economy.

On February 28, Senator Espero's committee held a hearing with the Department of Public Safety to hear the governor's strategy to return the inmates. Director Jodie Maesaka-Hirata stated several bills are moving in the current legislative session which would help decrease the current local prison/jail population by improving the pre-trial detainees and bail system, hiring more parole officers, funding more re-entry programs, and improving the probation system. These bills are part of the Justice Reinvestment Initiative package formulated by the federal Justice Center based in Washington D.C. If these measures pass, in the next three years about 1000 bed spaces could become available in Hawaii. That would leave approximately 750 inmates on the mainland by 2015. By 2017, improvements on the Big Island, Waiawa on Oahu, and a new correctional facility on Maui would accommodate the remaining inmates.

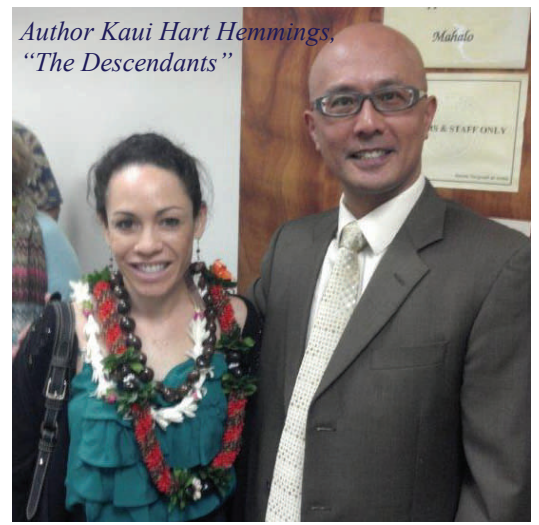
The public safety of our neighborhoods and families is paramount. Helping rehabilitate inmates so they lead productive lives instead of staying in the revolving prison door is a priority of the Legislature. Investment in making the state's corrections and judicial systems more efficient will save tax dollars and allow more spending in other priority areas such as education, social services, and healthcare.



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Watch *Espero Conversation* on
Olelo Ch. 54, 1st Sunday at 9:30 p.m.
2nd, 3rd, 4th Mondays at 9:00 a.m.



James Campbell High School National Cheerleading Champs



Author Kauai Hart Hemmings, "The Descendants"



Waipahu High School Olelo students



Justice Reinvestment Initiative

Senate Passes the Invest in Hawaii Act of 2012



On February 21, the Senate unanimously passed The Invest in Hawaii Act of 2012 ([Senate Bill 2012](#)). The bill will go to the House for consideration.

Garnering bipartisan support, Senate Bill 2012, is an aggressive \$500 million general obligation bond-funded Capital Improvement Program package aimed at creating jobs by investing and stimulating our local economy around the State.

"We are proud of this legislation, which has united all members of the Senate," said Senate President Shan Tsutsui. "This bill will get our economic engine going and create much-needed jobs that will get thousands of people off the bench and back to work."

With Hawaii experiencing the lowest interest rates on record and significant savings made from the State's most recent bond authorization and issuance, now is the time to invest in our State. The Act appropriates funds for shovel-ready projects that will create jobs for all trades in the construction industry, from carpenters to consultants.

"This bill will get our economic engine going and create much-needed jobs that will get thousands of people off the bench and back to work." ~ Senate President Shan Tsutsui

According to conservative estimates by the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism's (DBEDT) job multiplier, this measure could create or sustain more than 5,000 jobs.

"We have an opportunity to address long-standing needs in a cost effective manner. Interest rates are at a historic low and bids for contracted work are currently coming in at discounted rates," said Senator David Ige, chair of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means.

“The convergence of these factors makes now the opportune time to make an aggressive investment in our state’s infrastructure.”

Projects under consideration will focus on repair and maintenance needs to address aging infrastructure concerns and to extend the useful life of existing state-owned assets and facilities. It will also include those that address health and safety code concerns. A portion of Governor Abercrombie’s \$300 million request for construction projects that are shovel-ready or address repair and maintenance concerns are funded by the measure.

The State departments identified as part of the Program are: Education, including the State Public Library System; the University of Hawaii system, including athletic facilities; Accounting & General Services; Agriculture; Defense; Health, and health care facilities of the Hawaii Health Systems Corporation; Human Services; Land and Natural Resources; Public Safety; and the Judiciary. Funding will be allocated depending on each department’s needs and ability to commence work immediately.

“The convergence of these factors makes now the opportune time to make an aggressive investment in our state’s infrastructure.” ~ David Ige, Chair, Senate Ways & Means Committee

Highlights of the funding for the Invest in Hawaii Act:

–\$150 million for repair & maintenance projects and infrastructure needs, such as science and technology, electricity, and other utility infrastructure improvements in the public school system

–\$3 million for State Library repair & maintenance projects

–\$90 million for capital renewal & deferred maintenance projects of the University of Hawaii’s Manoa and Hilo campuses

–\$25 million for capital renewal and deferred maintenance projects of the University of Hawaii community colleges

–\$60 million for repair & maintenance projects of the Department of Accounting and General Services

–\$40 million for repair & maintenance projects of the Department of Human Services

–\$40 million for repair & maintenance projects of the Hawaii Health Systems Corporation

Another priority of the bill is to develop sustainable and renewable energy resources, such as photovoltaic technology.

Investing in renewable energy and upgrades to information technology initiatives throughout schools, hospitals, and office buildings will ultimately lead to cost savings and reducing the State’s carbon footprint.

In order to expedite the backlog of repair and maintenance projects, Senate Bill 2012 makes revisions to the State’s permitting, approval and procurement processes. As a result, the accelerated processes will expedite the creation of jobs and facilitate the return to work for many of our residents.

“This measure means that badly needed deferred maintenance projects and repairs that many state facilities have waited years to do can finally be given the green light to proceed. Passing this legislation now would be an excellent way for us to create the needed jobs for our unemployed trade workers. All companies, including small businesses, are encouraged to register with the State

Procurement Office's online system in order to be eligible to bid on projects," said Senator Michelle Kidani,

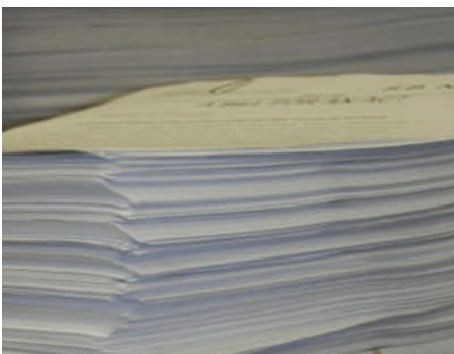
who serves as vice chair of the Senate Ways and Means Committee and who oversees Capital Improvements Projects for the Senate. "The process is fair and transparent with bids posted publicly for everyone to see."

If the measure passes the House and the Governor

approves the bill, projects could begin immediately.

For more information on the bill: www.capitol.hawaii.gov.

First Crossover Deadline



March 8, 2012 marks the 27th day of the 2012 Legislative Session. Called "First Crossover", this marks the deadline for bills to be approved by the chamber in which they were introduced.

"This measure means that badly needed repairs and deferred maintenance projects that many state facilities have waited years to do can finally be given the green light to proceed."

~ Michelle Kidani, Vice Chair, Senate Ways & Means Committee

All bills that are passed by the originating chamber then cross over to the other chamber for consideration there, hence the name "crossover".

At First Crossover, all Senate bills that pass a final vote by the Senate are sent to the House, and all House bills that pass a final vote by the House are sent to the Senate.

Fallen War Heroes to be Honored by Legislature

The Hawaii State Senate and Hawaii State House of Representatives will convene in a joint session to recognize military service members who have made the ultimate sacrifice. The families of these fallen service members will all receive the Hawaii Medal of Honor on behalf of their loved ones.

In 2005, the Legislature passed House Bill 8, which created the Hawaii Medal of Honor (HMOH). This special medal is awarded on behalf of the people of the State of Hawaii to an individual who was killed in action while serving our country



as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. Recipients of the medal include members of the United Armed

Forces, the United States Military Reserves, and the Hawaii National Guard, who were residents of the State of Hawaii, were stationed in Hawaii by order of the U.S. Department of Defense, or attended an educational institution in Hawaii.

The joint session of the Legislature is scheduled for Wednesday, March 28, 2012 at 2 p.m. in the House of Representatives.

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