

REP. SCOTT K. SAIKI (District 22)

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JANUARY 16, 2013

OPENING DAY SPEECH

Mr. Speaker, Colleagues and Guests,

I would like to begin this morning by thanking some people.

First, and I know I can say this on behalf of all members, thank you to the residents of our respective communities who have given all of us the opportunity to represent them in the Legislature.

Second, thank you to our families and friends – many of whom are seated with us today. They are the ones who stand by us and believe that we are trying to do the right thing. They make more

sacrifices than we do. We thank them for their support and presence in our lives.

Third, there is a member of our Democratic caucus whom we would like to recognize. He is grounded and strives to teach House members to be grounded themselves, to be responsible and to be practical and philosophical. He serves his community, our State and our body with distinction. Thank you to Representative Calvin Say and his family for their service and sacrifice throughout the years.

Finally, there is another House member whom I would like to thank. This Representative also serves with distinction and with steadfast allegiance to our democratic process. He has been a

statesman and has made our transition an orderly one. Thank you to Representative Marcus Oshiro.

Mr. Speaker, we are all here because we have a common goal. We want to ensure that the State of Hawaii is and continues to be a place where we all live in safety, with dignity, and with fair opportunity. This is not a partisan concept – it is embraced by all.

Every legislative session, thousands of students from elementary, middle and high schools throughout the State visit the State Capitol. They usually tour the building and observe our House floor session. The members also meet with them and usually give them a mini civics lesson.

There are two subjects that we discuss with students that I believe are pertinent today.

The first subject is the symbolism of the State Capitol. The building itself represents a volcano that is surrounded by coconut trees and the ocean. Our House chamber is decorated in earth tones and a sun lamp. In contrast, the Senate chamber is shaded in ocean blue with a moon lamp.

I have to say that it is more appropriate that earth colors are on our side – because everyone agrees that the House is the more grounded body in the Legislature.

But don't tell the Senate President I just said that.

Because we have more members and smaller districts, we have a constant check on the pulse of our community.

Mr. Speaker, the second subject that we discuss with students is the legislative process. We explain that the Legislature is an independent and co- equal branch of government and that legislators pass laws. What we don't really explain is how the Legislature and legislators do their work.

Maybe that's on purpose. Everyone knows the saying about the similarities between lawmaking and sausage making. But perhaps the lawmaking process doesn't have to always be that way.

As we keep mindful of the memory of Senator Daniel K. Inouye, we should remember his qualities as a statesman who

placed the bigger picture and the greater good ahead of personal politics. A colleague of his, Senator Rob Portman, a Republican from Ohio, recently said this of Senator Inouye:

**"He was a counselor to younger members like me, a great listener, and a Senator who always put his nation and the people of Hawaii ahead of partisan politics and his own ambition."**

Mr. Speaker, we should follow Senator Inouye's lead, for we know that the public wants us to work together to produce results.

There are 51 members in this body. Each brings experience and perspective. We will rely upon each member to play a meaningful role in the Legislature.

After all, that is what we are all elected to do.

Simply put and geographically speaking, our State is too small, and our challenges too large, for there to be division within the people's House.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to conclude by introducing the newest members of our body. It takes a lot to be a candidate for public office – to put your name and reputation into a public arena – and worse yet, to sign wave every morning and pau hana.

I would like to begin by introducing our two quasi-freshmen.

19 Former Representative, Former Senator, and  
Current Representative Bert Kobayashi

30 Former Representative, Former  
Councilmember, and Current Representative Romy Cachola

Mr. Speaker, we also have five true freshmen who take their work seriously and want to make a difference. Please join me in welcoming them.

|          |    |                |
|----------|----|----------------|
| District | 3  | Richard Onishi |
|          | 6  | Nicole Lowen   |
|          | 9  | Justin Woodson |
|          | 11 | Kaniela Ing    |
|          | 27 | Takashi Ohno   |
|          | 34 | Gregg Takayama |



I want our freshmen to know that we senior members of this body will support them, serve as examples, and work to advance them as leaders.

Mr. Speaker, I know that this will be a productive legislative session that will produce good results for our State.

Thank you very much.