



## **HAWAII HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

### **OPENING DAY REMARKS 2016 LEGISLATIVE SESSION BETH FUKUMOTO CHANG MINORITY LEADER HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVE JANUARY 20, 2016**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I do have a few remarks, but first of all, I want to begin by congratulating Candy Kelsey, a minority staffer, for starting her 25<sup>th</sup> year at the Legislature.

Candy has been a constant part of my life at the Legislature, ever since I started my first job here working as her file clerk in 2009. She is one of the most genuinely good people I have ever met, and I'm very blessed to have her in my life. Candy, congratulations and thank you.

Every time I'm around Candy, who has seen tons of different legislators come and go from this building, I remember that I'm nothing but a small, temporary part of a great institution with an important responsibility. And, that is what I want to remind everyone today.

It's not about us. It's not about our titles. It's not about our names on a bill.

We are fortunate, at this moment, to be part of a body that existed long before us and will exist long after us, and we need to make the most of that responsibility while we have it.

Hawaii's problems are big enough that we need everyone's solutions. I'm very appreciative that this House leadership has been willing to listen to our solutions, and that we can bring our diverse perspectives to the table to come up with practical, actionable and effective solutions to Hawaii's problems.

People don't need lofty and dogmatic statements that have no basis in substantive policy. As an elected official, even I am tired of hearing politicians focus on flashy topics and grandiose declarations instead of actionable commitments.

Politics, at its heart, is simply the art of organizing our shared lives together. And this Minority Leadership is committed to playing an active, constructive role in that process.

Mr. Speaker, in my time here, I've come to truly understand how easy it is to give in to just being destructive, and how difficult it is to be constructive. But it's a good difficult, and being able to contribute to positive change in this state makes the struggle more than worth it.

In that spirit, Mr. Speaker, I am making a commitment to you, and to the rest of this body, that for this session, as the Minority Leader, I will not criticize any measure on this floor without also articulating an alternative solution to the problem the introducer is trying to address.

Our Minority Leadership is committed to staying focused on finding practical solutions to the "right now" problems facing our state. They are real. They are urgent. And as a legislative body, it is our duty to the people of Hawaii to act right now.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.