



Senator

January 2011

Mike Gabbard

19th District, West Oahu

WAIKELE, VILLAGE PARK, ROYAL KUNIA,
KAPOLEI, MAKAKILO, KALAELOA, HONOKAI HALE,
& PORTIONS OF WAIPAHAU & KO 'OLINA

CHAIR
ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

MEMBER
TRANSPORTATION, INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS,
AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
JUDICIARY AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS



Aloha Friends and Neighbors,

Happy New Year! I wish you and your family the best in 2011. It's been a privilege serving as your Senator these past four years. I look forward to working with you in the years ahead. The 2011 Legislative Session kicks-off on January 19th. Please join me for refreshments in Room 201 at the State Capitol at 12pm to celebrate Opening Day.

Please contact me if I can help you in any way. My email is sengabbard@capitol.hawaii.gov and my phone number is 586-6830.

Here are a few things I'd like to share with you.



Listen-Story

My next "Listen-story" community meeting will be held on January 8, 2011 at the Kapolei Starbucks (next to the Chevron Station) from 9:00am to 10:00am. Photo above was taken at the Waikēle Listen-Story meeting on November 20th.

Session Staff Ready to go for 2011 Session

I've got my staff all ready to go for the 2011 Legislative Session, which will kick off on January 19th. Rock Riggs will continue to serve as my Chief of Staff and is a good point of contact for any problems or issues you'd like me to address. Donna Lay, is my new Community Liaison, who handles my scheduling and is taking over for Erika Tsuji who now works at the City Council with my daughter, Councilwoman Tulsī Gabbard Tamayo. Carlton Saito is returning as my Committee Clerk and is my go-to-guy on issues related to the Energy and Environment Committee, which I chair. Third-year UH law student, Carolyn Aguilar, will help out as a Legislative Assistant and Austin Rochon, a UH senior, will round out my staff as a Legislative Intern. My staff and I stand ready and willing to serve you!

Closing Loopholes in State Law

I'm sometimes surprised at the loopholes in our state laws that we find every now and then. This session I'm planning to introduce the following two bills that will make fixes to our laws:

- Absentee Voting – right now our election laws state that absentee ballots “may” be opened and counted. This bill makes a change so the law will read that absentee ballots “shall” be counted.
- Electric Vehicles – a law passed in 1997 gives owners of electric vehicles privileges such as allowing them to drive in the HOV lanes regardless of the number of passengers and also exempts them from paying for metered parking. However, the law also exempts them from “other traffic control measures.” We need to get this one repealed fast before we see some of our new Nissan Leaf owners driving 100 MPH on the H-1.

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Data Security Breaches a Big Problem that Needs a Fix

In October, I received a letter from a constituent who was one of the 40,000 UH West Oahu students who had his personal information mistakenly uploaded to the web by a researcher and left there for a year. The constituent wanted to know what could be done to prevent this type of thing from happening in the future.

After receiving this letter, I contacted the Liberty Coalition, a Washington D.C. based civil liberties watchdog organization, that happened to discover the personal information breach of the UH students. I requested that they provide me with a detailed report of the recent breaches in our state. I was shocked to learn that since 2005 at least 479,000 Hawai'i records have been breached. This puts many Hawai'i residents at risk of being victims of identity theft.

Right now, the problem is that victims are the ones who bear all the brunt in recovering from identity theft. It's like having someone break into your house, and then holding you responsible for crimes committed while the thief was wearing your clothes. Most people would agree that if you mess up, you should own up.

I'm working with the Legislative Reference Bureau in taking a look at the Liberty Coalition's legislative proposals to see which ones best fit our state's needs. I plan to introduce the proposals that make the most sense and will help to better protect people's sensitive, personal information from breaches and identity theft.

"...since 2005 at least 479,000 Hawai'i records have been breached."

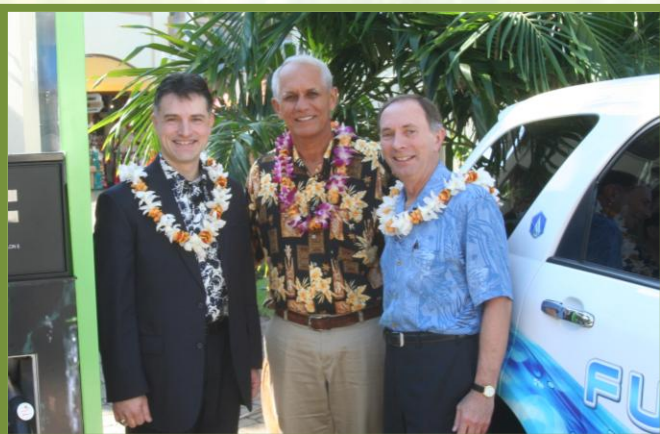


"...victims are the ones who bear ALL THE BRUNT in recovering from identity theft."



Hawai'i Hydrogen Initiative Launch

I participated in the launch of the Hawai'i Hydrogen Initiative (HHI) at the Aloha Tower Marketplace on December 8th. The HHI is a partnership between General Motors, the Gas Company, and 10 other state & federal agencies, the military and private companies to pave the way for hydrogen vehicles to hit our roads by 2015. As part of the plan, roughly 20 to 25 hydrogen "fuel" stations will be installed across the island.



Hydrogen vehicles use fuel cell technology and are powered by converting compressed hydrogen into electricity. The hydrogen that will fuel the cars is produced by the Gas Company during the process of making synthetic gas. The cars get the equivalent of 58 miles per gallon. After the ceremony, I got to test drive one of the hydrogen powered cars. It drove like a dream and is truly a "green" car that produces no emissions.

Pictured (L to R) are Charles Freese, Executive Director for Fuel Cell Activities for General Motors, Senator Mike Gabbard, and Jeffrey Kissel – President and CEO of The Gas Company.



I had the opportunity to visit Taiwan as part of a delegation from the State Senate from December 14th to 21st. The "goodwill tour" was sponsored and paid for by that country's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Other Senators who joined me were Kalani English, Will Espero, Michelle Kidani, Clarence Nishihara, Pohai Ryan and Glenn Wakai.



Taiwan is a beautiful, impeccably clean country of 23 million people. It has many similarities to Hawai'i, including a genuine sense of "aloha" among its residents. While in Taiwan, we had the opportunity to meet with officials from their Bureau of Energy, Ministry of Economic Affairs, Environmental Protection Administration, Bureau of Tourism, and Ministry of Transportation and Communication, and Council of Indigenous Peoples. We also got a chance to ride the Bullet Train from Taipei to Kaohsiung, check out the Taipei MRT (rail transit system),

Kenting National Park Coral Protection Area, Luxen Motor Company (electric car manufacturer), and iWind Inc. (wind power company), the National Palace Museum, Taipei International Floral Exposition, and the Taipei Municipal Zhongshan Girls High School. It was great seeing some of their innovative ideas and programs that could be replicated here.

On a personal note, some of you may know that I've been a vegetarian for almost 40 years. Taiwan happens to be the "mock" meat capital of the world. So I was in hog heaven (pun intended) trying all the different ways they make soy and wheat gluten taste just like the real thing.



IPA Students Becoming Constitutional Experts

Twelfth grade students in the advanced placement (AP) government class from Island Pacific Academy (IPA) are gearing up for the *We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution* competition which will take place in February 2011. On December 11th, the students gathered for a mock hearing at IPA to practice for the competition. IPA Headmaster Dr. Dan White, IPA Secondary School Principal James Nelligan, IPA History teacher Ben Murphy, Waianae High School teacher Frank Farrington, local attorney Edwin White, constitutional



law enthusiast Jake Bradshaw, IPA parent Chris Veazie, and I served as judges to help the students prepare for the competition.

The competition is sponsored by the Center for Civic Education and will involve the students presenting prepared statements on constitutional issues to a panel of judges including Supreme Court justices, law professors, attorneys, and teachers. The students are judged according to their understanding, analysis, participation, and application of constitutional theory, history, current events, and court case references. The Center for Civic Education is based in Calabasas, California and is a nonprofit, nonpartisan educational corporation dedicated to promoting an enlightened and responsible citizenry committed to democratic principles.

My hats off to AP Government teacher Kori Shlachter and all the teachers at IPA for a job well done. I was totally impressed with how much these students knew about protecting the rights granted by the U.S. Constitution. I wish them well in the competition and hope to see some of them running for elective office one day. (Hopefully, not for my seat until after I retire!)



Health and Energy & Environment Committees to Get Answers on Water Quality

Senator Josh Green and I will be co-chairing an informational briefing of the Senate Health and Energy & Environment committees on January 5th at 2:45pm at the State Capitol. The purpose is to get some answers on a study that questions the safety of our drinking water.

The study, which came out in December, analyzed the drinking water in 35 cities around the country and was conducted by the Environmental Working Group. The study found that 31 of those 35 cities had a toxic chemical called hexavalent chromium in their water supplies.

Hexavalent chromium came to the nation's attention with the movie, *Erin Brockovich*, which detailed the story of a lawsuit that was brought against a water utility in California which ended in a \$330 million settlement because of the presence of this very same chemical in their water supply. What is alarming is that Honolulu had the second highest concentration of hexavalent chromium of the 35 cities that were tested.

Big Wind Informational Briefing

Senator Roz Baker and I are holding an informational briefing of the Energy & Environment and Commerce & Consumer Affairs committees to get an update on the status of the interisland wind and undersea cable project. The hearing will take place on January 11th from 1:30pm to 4:00pm in Rm. 229 at the State Capitol.

If you're not familiar, the state has plans to work with developers to locate two 200 MW wind farms, one on Lana'i and one on Moloka'i, and have that electricity sent to Oahu through an undersea cable. Castle & Cooke is planning to build the wind farm on Lana'i and First Wind is supposed to do the one on Moloka'i. Both companies would sell the electricity to HECO. There are many questions and concerns from the community that we want to get out in the open at the hearing, such as the impact it will have on those residents' quality of life and what "community benefits" they will receive. There will be two community groups from Lana'i, Lanaians for Sensible Growth and Friends of Lanai, which will make presentations. We'll also have Hui Ho'ō Pakele Aina and Moloka'i Community Service Council giving their perspective on the planned project.



Senator Mike Gabbard gave a pep talk to the cadets of the Hawai'i Youth Challenge Academy (HYCA) on December 13th at their headquarters in Kalaeloa, a few days before 120 of them graduated.

HYCA is administered by the Hawai'i National Guard and provides 16 to 19 year-old "non-traditional at risk" youth a second chance to obtain their high school diploma and become productive citizens within the community.



CrimeMapping.com: a Great Tool to Protect You and Your Family

You might have heard about the launching of a new website: CrimeMapping.com. This website is run by a private company called the Omega Group and is a great way to keep tabs on what crimes are being committed in your neighborhood. You can visit this website, put in your address, and see a map that pin points all the recent crimes. The best feature is that you can sign up to receive a "crime alert", which allows you to receive an email with a detailed report that lets you know exactly what crimes occurred and where they happened. I encourage you to sign up for this great free tool, which can help you better protect you or your family.

