

Legislative Update from...

Senator Mike Gabbard

May
2015

Aloha e Friends,

Here at the Capitol, things are moving swiftly to a close as we approach the May 7 finish line for the 2015 Legislative Session. It's been an exciting month! Be sure to keep an eye out for my June newsletter next month, where I'll provide a complete Legislative Wrap-up! Amidst the business of passing bills into laws, my eldest daughter, Congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard, got married April 9 to Abraham Williams, a fine young man who we've welcomed wholeheartedly into our ohana. Also, in an effort to raise money for the Hawai'i Foodbank, my office put on our third "Capitol Idol" and sold over 100 plates of veggie lasagna! Read all about how we earned MVP for 2015 by bringing in over \$1400! And as always, please feel free to contact me at 586-6830 or email sengabbard@capitol.hawaii.gov if I can help you or your family in any way. You can also follow me on Twitter [@senmikegabbard](https://twitter.com/senmikegabbard), Instagram [@sengabbard](https://www.instagram.com/sengabbard), or Facebook at facebook.com/senmikegabbard.

COMMITTEE CHAIR

Water, Land & Agriculture

MEMBER

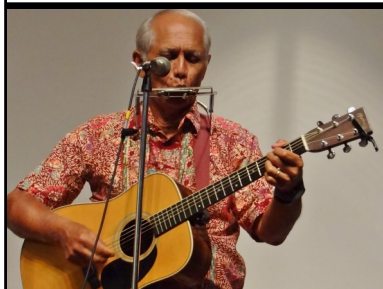
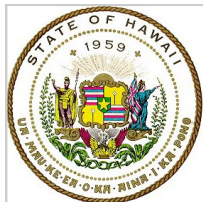
Transportation & Energy

Judiciary and Labor

Higher Education and the Arts

District 20

Kapolei, Makakilo and portions of Ewa, Kalaeloa, and Waipahu



"Listen Story" Meeting

My next Listen Story meeting will be held May 16 from 9 a.m. to 10 a.m. at Kapolei High School cafeteria, next to the teachers' lounge.

Foodbank Fundraisers 2015

"Capitol Idol" is an entertaining fundraiser for the Hawai'i Foodbank, founded by my office in 2012. Capitol Idol III kicked off on April 20 in the Capitol Auditorium. Members of the Senate, House, and Administration (with Governor Ige

attending to show his support) vied for the audience's support in the hopes of winning the perpetual individual and team trophies, not to mention major bragging rights. Radio show host, actor, and former State Representative Devon Nekoba emceed this year's event. There were six acts: representing the Executive Branch, there was Ryan Kalei Tsuji, Deputy Director of Protocol, who sang, "Feeling Good" accompanied by the Capitol Darling dancers--Jodi Leong, Deputy Director of Communications (and former co-anchor with KITV news) and Yasmin Dar, Digital Media Specialist. Ms. Leong also did a moving solo of "On My Own."

Kekoa Kaluhiwa, Deputy Director of the Department of Land and Natural Resources, with Colonel Kenneth Hara, Deputy Adjutant General, Hawai'i State Department of Defense sang a heartwarming version of "Home." From the Legislature, Representative Andria Tupola represented the House, belting out a beautiful rendition of the Italian opera, "Amarilli mii Bella." Senator Russell Ruderman played guitar and sang, "The Beauty of Mauna Kea" by Keola Beamer; and I did a medley of folk songs from the 1960s, including "Scarborough Fair," "Punky's Dilemma," and "Sounds of Silence" (Simon and Garfunkel), "The Motorcycle Song" (Arlo Guthrie), **(cont. on page 2)**



L-R: Sens. Sam Slom, Roz Baker, Russell Ruderman, Donna Mercado Kim, Mike Gabbard.

(from pg 1) "The Times They Are 'A Changin'" (Bob Dylan), and "Both Sides Now" (Joni Mitchell). Check it out on YouTube here: <http://bit.ly/1GLP54s> (See videos of past Idols, too!)

In 2012, the House won the team award, with the Execs winning in 2014. So, it was destiny (or good karma!) that the Senate won the 2015 group perpetual trophy, with yours truly taking home the individual award. And the best part? \$707 was raised for the Hawai'i Foodbank!

We also, with the help of my wife, Carol, raised \$700 for the Hawai'i Foodbank by preparing and selling over 100 plates of our renowned vegetarian lasagna. As always, it was a huge hit! Combined with our "Capitol Idol" event, my office was awarded MVP by raising the most money on the Senate side - over \$1,400!



L-R: Rep. Chris Lee, Commissioner Lorraine H. Akiba, Sen. Mike Gabbard.

Hawai'i Clean Energy Panel

On April 8, I was a panelist at the Hawai'i Clean Energy Conference at the YWCA in Honolulu, along with my Energy & Environment counterpart in the House, Representative Chris Lee, and Commissioner Lorraine H. Akiba of the Public Utilities Commission (PUC). The topic was "Future Directions in Law, Policy and Finance." Chris and I discussed what the Legislature is doing this session to meet our state's energy goals. My speech focused on: the Aloha + Challenge; PUC Docket on Distributed Energy Resources; Green Market Securitization Program (GEMS); and Community-Based Renewables.

Civil Cafe

Recently, Rep. Chris Lee, along with Hawai'i State Energy office's Mark Glick and I held a lively conversation hosted by Civil Beat, called "Civil Cafe." The panel was moderated by reporter Nathan Eagle, and filmed "live" here at the State Capitol. The topic was on our state's goal to reach 100% clean renewable energy, and whether that's something that can really happen. Short answer? Yes! So much money, \$3-5 billion annually, is spent importing dirty fossil fuels that aren't good for the environment, our future sustainability, or our pocket books. Ke Akua has blessed our islands with abundant, renewable energy and we should be using these resources for the benefit of our people and the 'āina. This is our chance to show the world that this can be done. House Bill 623 raises the state's clean energy goals to 100% by 2045 and the Legislature will vote on it May 5th! I'm very optimistic it will pass and be sent to the Governor's office by the time session is pau - allowing us to be the first in the nation to set a 100% goal. We will set the standard and be the model for other states - even nations - to follow. If we pull this off, we'll achieve the biggest energy turnaround in the country, going from 90% dependence on fossil fuels to 100% clean energy. I'm very excited about the progress we've made so far. It really is a "kakou thing." All of us, working together, can make this a reality.



Capital Improvement Project Funds

I'm happy to report that I got word on April 10, the Governor has released \$5,381,000 in funds that the Senate appropriated last year for road improvements for Senate District 20. Specifically, the funds are for the H-1 addition and modification of freeway access for the Palailai Interchange to Makakilo Interchange (Kapolei Interchange Complex, Phase II). These improvements will go toward construction on the Wakea Street overpass at the Kapolei Interchange in order to provide an off-ramp from the H-1 Freeway to Wakea Street, and an on-ramp from Wakea Street to Farrington Highway, in order to reduce traffic congestion in these areas.

Hemp Seed Blessing

After a long and arduous process to secure the hemp seeds, finally, on April 10, my colleagues and I had a commemorative planting ceremony. The blessing took place in beautiful Waimanalo and marked the official start of Hawai'i's Industrial Hemp Research Project, initiated almost a year ago when the bill I introduced (SB1275) was signed into law as Act 56 on April 30, 2014.

The long delay was due, in part, to the still existing confusion between hemp and marijuana seeds. Getting the seeds across state lines wasn't easy. However, in February 2015, the importation of the hemp seeds was finally approved by the Drug Enforcement Agency. With over 25,000 uses—from textiles to cosmetics, paper, food, medicine, biofuel – hemp is an incredible crop that would be perfect for our state. And contrary to what some people may think, it won't get you high! Here are some interesting facts about the cost of growing hemp, from the Rocky Mountain Hemp Association:

- Cost of seed - \$3 to \$15 a pound
- Need 20 to 40 pounds of seed per acre
- The ¼ acre test plot in Waimanalo would use about 10 pounds of seed
- It takes 90 to 120 days to grow to harvest size
- It requires about 30% of the water required to grow corn
- There's no need for fertilizers or pesticides
- Labor costs would be the main price driver
- Hemp can yield 3 to 8 dry tons of fiber per acres

This legislative session, I've been working with "Vote Hemp," Hawai'i Farmer's Union United, Senate Agriculture Committee Chair Russell Ruderman, and others on legislation that would continue moving us forward on hemp. The bill (SB 375) would have authorized registered growers of industrial hemp under the Farm Bill, for research purposes and pilot programs. Unfortunately, it wasn't passed as written, but I'm still hopeful we'll see some positive movement here before session is pau!



L-R: Sen. Russell Ruderman; Rep. Cynthia Thielen; Dr. Harry Ako, Lead Scientist for the Hawai'i Hemp Project; Sen. Mike Gabbard; Rep. Chris Lee; Rep. Richard Creagan; Sen. Gil Riviere; Rep Lynn DeCoite; and Maria Gallo, Dean of University of Hawai'i College of Tropical Agriculture & Human Services.



L-R: Rep. Ty Cullen, Sen. Mike Gabbard, Rep. Sharon Har, Dr. Yoshiaki Matsu-mae, Professor Kiyoshi Yamada, and Interim Chancellor Edward J. Shultz.

Hawai'i Tokai International College Grand Opening

On April 17, I attended the Grand Opening Celebration of Hawai'i Tokai International College, next to the University of Hawai'i West O'ahu. HTIC is coming over to the west side from its previous location on Kapiolani Boulevard. The new campus encompasses six acres of land fronting UH West O'ahu and will enroll up to 300 students. These two schools have developed a partnership; many of the students who complete their two-year coursework at HTIC may enter the four-year programs at UH West O'ahu in their efforts to earn a bachelor's degree. HTIC is part of the Tokai University Educational System, a network of education and research institutions in Japan, Denmark, Korea and Thailand. The beautiful new campus was designed by John Hara & Associates Inc., where their vision of a sustainable campus, includes the residence halls and dining facilities. HTIC has been in Hawaii since 1992, and is considered an international gateway for students, learning various perspectives and ideas. I'm very excited about this latest addition to our West O'ahu ohana!

Save the Dates!

- May 2 Free Comic Book Day starting 9am at Waipahu Public Library — come & get a free comic book!
- May 2 Honolulu Theatre for Youth will perform the play "Happy" - Waipahu Public Library @ 11:30am
- May 9 Commencement Ceremony at the University of Hawaii—West O'ahu
- May 9 Grand Opening of a new ride at Wet n' Wild — the "Waimea Whirl"
- May 20 (Tentative) First Solar Powered Plane lands at Kalaeloa Airport



I met with 7th grade kids from Island Pacific Academy (IPA) from Kapolei on April 7, including 13 exchange students from IPA's sister school, Instituto Thomas Jefferson, in Queretaro, Mexico. The school has a very high level of education and promotes international mindedness in their curriculum, and part of the exchange program is to give the students the opportunity to learn about the culture and life in Hawai'i nei.

April 24 was Hemp Aloha Friday, and my colleagues and I marked the occasion by wearing our favorite hemp shirts! (L-R: Sens. Maile Shimabukuro, Gil Riviere, Gil Keith-Agaran, Suzi Chun Oakland, Les Ihara, Russell Ruderman, Laura Thielen, Mike Gabbard, Sam Slom.)



March 27 marked the 70th Anniversary of the end of the war in the Pacific. MIS (Military Intelligence Service) Veterans of Hawaii were honored during Session. The MIS Veterans Club of Hawaii had a reunion that weekend to honor the memory of their contributions and to celebrate the service of the veterans who responded to our nation's call.