



Legislative Update from...

Senator Mike Gabbard

July 2016

Aloha e Friends,

Happy 4th of July to you and your 'ohana. I hope you're able to join with friends and family to remember and celebrate the blessings of liberty and freedom we cherish as Americans!

On another note, oops, my bad! ☹️ ...I inadvertently left out congratulating the Kapolei High Baseball team in last month's newsletter. The team won the O'ahu Interscholastic Association Division 2 title and was runner-up in the Hawai'i High School Athletic Association State Championship, losing to Kamehameha Schools-Hawai'i 5-4. They should be commended for their excellent accomplishments!

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, Instagram @sengabbard, or Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/senmikegabbard>.

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Listen Story

My next "Listen Story" meeting will be held at the Kapolei High School Teacher's Lounge on July 30th from 9am to 10am.

H-1 Changes a Good Sign

Kudos to the state Department of Transportation (DOT) for thinking out of the box and making some traffic improvements on the H-1 and Farrington Highway. They will make all of the following changes by the dates identified below:

- ♦ Widening the morning eastbound Zipper Lane to two lanes (early August, 2016)
- ♦ Extending the close of the morning eastbound Zipper Lane to 9am, instead of 8:30am (June 27, 2016)
- ♦ Expanding hours for the shoulder lane on the H-1 between the Aiea Heights overpass and the Pearl City exit, which will close at 7pm instead of 6pm (June 27, 2016)
- ♦ Adding an afternoon contraflow lane in the Nanakuli area on Farrington Highway (late August, 2016)

DOT is also proposing a new shoulder lane on the H-1 for eastbound morning commuters in the vicinity of Kualaka'i Parkway.





Sen. Gabbard gave a motivational talk to the Hawai'i National Guard Youth Challenge Academy Class 44 on June 13th, prior to their graduation on the 15th.

Special Session to Confirm Judges

The State Senate held a Special Session on June 23rd and June 24th to confirm Kanani Laubach and James Kawashima as judges by a unanimous vote. Both Kanani and James were nominated by Chief Justice Mark Recktenwald to serve on the bench for six year terms.



As a member of the Judiciary and Labor Committee, I participated in hearings on June 21st and June 23rd to receive testimony, ask questions, and vote on the nominations. Kanani began her career as a deputy prosecuting attorney in Honolulu, where she worked until 2006. She worked as a prosecuting attorney for the County of Hawai'i from 2006-2010. Since 2010, James served as a per diem judge for the District Court of the First Circuit in Honolulu. He has also maintained a private legal practice at the Honolulu firm he established in 2002. There was no negative testimony submitted on these two newly-confirmed judges and the Hawai'i Bar Association deemed them both to be qualified. Congratulations to both of them. I'm convinced they'll do a great job.

Rail Should Proceed as Planned

I was disappointed at the recent announcement by Mayor Caldwell that he wants the rail project to stop at Middle Street, instead of continuing to Ala Moana as has been planned. Last session, I reluctantly voted in support of an extension of the existing 0.5% general excise tax surcharge for O'ahu residents from 2022 to 2027 in order to complete the project. This GET extension was supposed to raise \$1.8 billion to allow the project to be completed. However, recent estimates by Jacobs Engineering Group have found the cost to finish the project could be as high as \$10.79 billion. My fear is that if rail stops at Middle Street most West O'ahu folks will choose to stick with their cars or the bus, instead of dealing with the humbug of having to transfer from rail to a bus to reach their intended destinations. I'm hopeful the Mayor and City Council will roll up their sleeves and find a way to get rail to Ala Moana. The private sector should be tapped as a revenue source to make this work.



Sen. Gabbard received the "2016 Honorary Hempster of the Year Award" from the Maui Hemp Institute for Research & Innovation's Edu. Dir., Denise Key and Exec. Dir., Steve Rose on June 5, during "Hemp History Week in Maui."

Sen. Gabbard introduced Senate Bill 2659 this past session, which is sitting on the Governor's desk waiting to be signed into law. An historic bill, establishing a 5-year industrial hemp pilot program under the Department of Ag to allow the cultivation of industrial hemp for agricultural and academic research, which includes the commercial sale of hemp as marketing and industry development.

Adoption Records Soon to be Opened

I was stoked to finally meet Florida residents, Jeff and Patty Guillemette, in my State Capitol office on June 14th. Jeff had contacted me in 2014 asking that I introduce legislation to make it so adults who were adopted as children could have access to their birth records.



Jeff & Patty Guillemette and Jeff & Joy Tomori came to my office on June 14, 2016. Jeff brought the original bill I had introduced in 2014, for me to sign. It's definitely a Kākou thing (all of us working together..) that the bill finally made it to the Governor's desk and was signed into law June 21.

Jeff was born in Hawai'i and had been trying to locate his birth parents for many years, but wasn't successful because of our rigid state law. So I worked with Jeff to introduce bills in 2014, 2015, and 2016 to make the needed changes. None of the bills I introduced ended up passing the Legislature. But a bill almost identical to my legislation, House Bill 2082, did finally pass in 2016 and was signed into law as Act 80 on June 21st. The bill would allow adopted individuals who are 18 years or older, adoptive parents, and natural parents to have access to sealed adoption records. Unfortunately, both of Jeff's parents are already deceased. However, Jeff did meet his half-brother, Jeff Tomori, and got to visit his mother's grave at Punchbowl. This is definitely a heart-warming story that I'm glad I could play a part in.



Aquatic Violations Bill Signed into Law

I participated in a bill signing ceremony for Senate Bill 2453, which became Act 67, on June 16th at the UH Law School. As the Senate's Water, Land, and Agriculture Committee Chair, I strongly supported this bill to help strengthen our Environmental Court. Governor Ige's bill signing was held in conjunction with the 2016 India-Hawai'i Law Symposium: Environmental Rule of Law, Environmental Courts, Climate, and Constitutions, which was focused on addressing climate trends in Hawai'i, India's climate initiatives and cases, and environmental crimes in Hawai'i. Act 67 is a key new law because it will give our judges more sentencing options when it comes to folks who are guilty of aquatic resources violations. Now, judges will be able to sentence those offenders to a mandatory educational class or community service. I especially like the community service option, because we could use the extra help in caring for our ocean resources.



Sen. Gabbard and Rep. Har presented an Honorary Certificate to Kapolei Middle School Principal Bruce Naguwa on June 2, for winning the 2016 National Distinguished Principal Award.

Ni'ihau Visit a Rare Opportunity

I was fortunate to have the opportunity to visit the island of Ni'ihau on June 9th. The tour was arranged by Leimana DaMate, the Executive Director of the Aha Moku Advisory, in coordination with the island's owners, Bruce and Keith Robinson. Senator Brick-



wood Galuteria and Rep. Ryan Yamane accompanied me on the trip. One of our objectives with the site visit was to observe the impacts of marine debris that has washed up on the island's shores. A recent

study by the Department of Land and Natural Resources has found that 38% of the marine debris that arrives on Hawai'i ends up on Ni'ihau. As background, Ni'ihau is located about 17 miles from the southwest coast of Kaua'i. The island has less than 200 residents and native Hawaiian is the primary language spoken there. The only electricity on the island is a small solar system used to power the elementary school. Potable water has to be shipped in for the residents and their animals, because there's no source of fresh water on Ni'ihau. The site visit helped in gathering information for possible legislation in 2017 to better protect fishing resources for the island's residents.

Boatload of Decision Makers — a Great Learning Experience

On June 3rd, I went on a special charter tour of West Maui reefs with Rep. Ryan Yamane, staff from the Department of Land and Natural Resources, business leaders, environmentalists, and cultural practitioners to learn more about the threats to our coral reefs. Five watersheds within West Maui have been designated by the US Coral Reef Task Force as priority watershed areas for reef stewardship. Coral reefs are the foundation of the ocean ecosystem. In 2014, scientists recorded the worst coral bleaching on record in Hawai'i.

Climate change and warming sea temperatures are seen as factors contributing to stressing the reefs and making them more vulnerable to disease and bleaching. We need to make sure other policy makers, our colleagues, are aware of the situation and that they understand what is happening here. For me, to see this, not just to read about it, is priceless. I would love to get all lawmakers out to see what we saw, as we're not doing enough to protect reefs as the foundation of our ocean. We need to put our money where our mouth is.



Warren Bollmeier's Dedication to Renewable Energy Recognized

I presented Warren Bollmeier with an honorary certificate from the State Senate at a Hawai'i Energy Policy Forum meeting on May 26th at Café Julia. I recognized Warren for his dedication to moving us forward on renewable energy in our state. Warren has been at the helm of the Hawai'i Renewable Energy Alliance (HREA) since its founding in 1995. HREA is a group of renewable energy advocates, technologists, and industrial suppliers along with developers, installers, and operators of renewable systems. HREA has actively intervened in over 35 public utilities dockets related to promoting the interests of independent power producers and particularly for renewable energy projects. HREA is recognized throughout the state government as a strong voice advocating for the interests of its constituency. They humbly describe themselves simply as the "guys that do stuff." Mahalo to President Warren Bollmeier and HREA members for their commitment to Hawai'i's renewable energy sector for the benefit of her land, her people, and her future.