

Senator Michelle Kidani

(D) Senate District 18— Serving Mililani Town, Waipio Gentry, Waikele, Village Park, Royal Kunia



Aloha friends and neighbors,

The process of putting together the State's budget, deciding on priorities for spending State funds, and seeing those programs and projects become a reality is a deeply rewarding experience for me. The responsibility to residents of the 18th district and across the State for using our taxpayer dollars wisely is something that I take very seriously.

The public facilities in the communities I serve - outside Oahu's urban core - consist mainly of public schools and libraries and the major highways that make up our transportation infrastructure. I'm happy to say that I think we have received our fair share of funding for these facilities, especially our schools, and a visit to any of our high school, middle school and elementary campuses shows that improvements are underway virtually everywhere.

Funds continue to be made available. Just a few days ago, the State released money for the following projects:

- ◆ \$1,251,000 - **Mililani High School** - Design and construction to reconstruct the tennis courts and to resurface the lower parking lot to be ADA compliant
- ◆ \$1,100,000 - **Mililani High School** - Design and construction of additional restrooms and concession improvements at the MHS athletic field
- ◆ \$750,000 - **Kanoelani Elementary School** - Design and construction of a covered walkway to connect up to five buildings with the cafeteria to protect students and staff from inclement weather and the sun
- ◆ \$625,000 - **Kaleiopuu Elementary School** - Design and construction of a second emergency evacuation ramp through the back of the campus
- ◆ \$550,000 - **Kaleiopuu Elementary School** - Construction to upgrade the electrical system to provide adequate power infrastructure to support technology-based curriculum
- ◆ \$200,000 - **Kipapa Elementary School** - Construction to replace the air conditioning system at the school's admin building

In addition, contracts have now been awarded for \$291,700 for electrical system upgrades at **Kaleiopuu Elementary** and another \$260,425 for construction of a parking lot and drop-off area at **Kipapa Elementary**. This work should be underway later this year.

Several other projects have already been approved by the Legislature over the 2012 and 2013 sessions that are being evaluated and await the release of funds. I'll be monitoring their progress to assure that all of our public school students have the safest and most up-to-date learning environments they deserve.

Me ke Aloha,

Legislative hearings continue between sessions

It was a standing-room-only crowd for our hearing last month during which the **Senate Committee on Tourism & Hawaiian Affairs** heard testimony from the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands. DHHL was responding to an audit critical of the Department's oversight of the Homestead Services Division.

The audit cited insufficient record-keeping, a lack of effective policies and procedures and poor communication that severely hamper DHHL's mission to serve Native Hawaiians.

Department Director, Jobie Masagatani, assured us that changes in policies and procedures are already being made and that issues in the audit will be fully addressed by the end of this year.



*Tourism and Hawaiian Affairs
Committee hearing — May 23, 2013*



Debating GMOs ~ Public Access Television Special Programming

`Olelo Community Media— the private, nonprofit provider of community access television services and resources on O'ahu—this week began a series of programs exploring pros and cons on the important issue of genetically modified organisms (GMOs). The shows began on Monday on `Olelo Channel 55 and will conclude at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, June 27. Because of great community interest, `Olelo has scheduled repeat broadcasts of this series at various times during the day through July 11. The schedule for these rebroadcasts is at www.olelo.org.

GMOs were a topic of great interest at this year's session of the Legislature, and the issue is likely to be debated again in 2014. Discussions by experts on this public affairs series can help the public understand what's at stake, and I urge you to watch them.

The shows are also available for online viewing through 'OleloNet On Demand at www.olelo.org



Governor Abercrombie was a featured speaker at the **3rd Annual Design Thinking Bootcamp** this month, sponsored by the research and engineering firm Oceanit. The 3-day event focused on leadership, creative problem solving and managing change. Among the 300 participants were several principals and teachers from Waipahu area public schools who attended sessions aimed at improving observation and interviewing skills.

*Above, I am seated between **Oceanit President Patrick Sullivan** and **Vice President Jan Sullivan**.*



New Punahou graduate **Blaise Tolentino** of Mililani is heading to UH Manoa in the fall. *At right, I offered my congratulations with **State Representative Romy Cachola**, **Congresswoman Colleen Hanabusa**, and proud parents **Lori and Art Tolentino**. Art is long-time head of Sheet Metal Workers Union Local 293.*



Mililani Presbyterian Church—one of the earliest providers of preschool services to our community—has opened new classroom facilities, and has received grant support in the amount of \$100,000 from the Legislature to continue its improvements and expansion.

*At left, I joined contractor **Gary Cordery** and Mililani Neighborhood Board member **Marilyn Lee** for this week's blessing.*

YWCA of Oahu Honors Hawaii Women Leaders

I attended the YWCA's **36th Annual LeaderLunch** this month at which four outstanding women were recognized for their accomplishments as leaders in the community. I was especially impressed by the great work that **Dr. Sylvia Yuen** has done on behalf of the **UH Center on the Family** that she established many years ago. The Center's informative reports were front page news as recently as last Monday's *Star Advertiser*, with current information about the numbers of Hawaii's *keiki* who live in poverty. Here's more about the Center and its good work:



The Center on the Family's mission is to enhance the well-being of Hawaii's families through interdisciplinary research, education, and community outreach. The Center is actively engaged in a variety of social indicator and evaluation projects such as **Hawaii Kids Count** and the **Homeless Service Utilization Study** that track the health and safety of our families and their *keiki*.

These efforts provide much needed high quality data and information that inform local policy and programming discussions, as well as raising the visibility of issues such as the quality of early care and education, homelessness, and drug abuse prevention and treatment that affect the welfare of our youngsters and families. The Center's outreach programs produce resources for families to support their decision making. These include **Raising a School-Ready Child** and **Choosing Quality Child Care**.

Access the Center's publications on the Web at <http://uhfamily.hawaii.edu>.



*YWCA LeaderLuncheon honorees included **Dr. Sylvia Yuen** (above); **Dee Jay Mailer**, retiring Kamehameha School CEO; **Paula Rath**, artist, fashion and lifestyle writer; and attorney and public health educator **Lorenn Walker**.*



Photo from UH Center on the Family