

Senator Michelle Kidani

Twenty-eighth Hawaii State Legislature

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



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**In memoriam
U.S. Representative
K. Mark Takai**

Aloha Friends and Neighbors,

Teachers are reporting to their respective classrooms this week, and students will follow in a few days. I can think of no more appropriate time for a renewed focus on public education.

Earlier this month, over a thousand residents from across the state attended an all-day education forum at the Hawaii Convention Center. The session was part of the public outreach effort by Governor Ige's team of 19 volunteer advisors charged with developing a blueprint for refocusing the way instruction is provided for our public school students.

The focus of the Team and the summit is new federal legislation - the **Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)** - that shifts greater responsibility for student success and leadership accountability away from federally-mandated standards to the state level.

As Chair of the Senate Committee on Education, I serve on the Governor's ESSA Team which has been meeting in all day sessions almost every other Saturday. I invited **Lee Posey, an education policy expert from the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL)**, to present a legislative perspective at the summit. The following week, I accompanied Ms. Posey on a round of Town Hall meetings in Hilo, Wailuku and Kapa'a to discuss ESSA with neighbor island audiences. **See highlights of our tour on page 2 of the newsletter.**



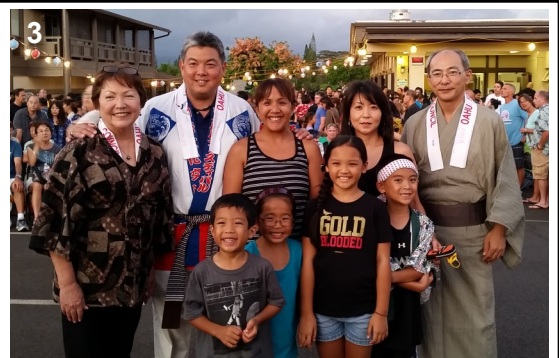
We are feeling deep sorrow and a profound sense of loss with the news that our good friend Mark Takai lost his battle against pancreatic cancer last week. Mark served his country and the State of Hawaii so selflessly for many, many years not only as a Hawaii State House Representative and a U.S. Congressman, but also as a Lt. Colonel in the Hawaii Army National Guard. Many of us grieve as we think about what might have been in the years ahead under his leadership.

Mark was an effective colleague at the State Legislature, and I enthusiastically supported his genuine desire to make things better for Hawaii by stepping up to higher office. Likewise, he encouraged me as I began my service in the Senate in 2009. We remained in touch on important issues for Hawaii's people and it was my honor and privilege to serve with him. Our deepest sympathies go out to Mark's wife Sami and their children, Matthew and Kaila, and to Mark's parents, Eric and Naomi.

Me Ke Aloha Pumehana,

Michelle

Photos below, **1. Newly-elected Congressman Takai** at a ceremonial swearing-in at the Federal Building in Honolulu, January, 2015. **2. Opening Day of the Legislative session, January 2016.** We are posing in front of one of Mark's favorite paintings – *Enchanting Forest*, by Satoru Abe – once mounted in his State Capitol office until he was elected to Congress when Mark had it put up in my office. **3. At the Mililani Hongwanji Bon Dance, August, 2015** – Mark pauses for a photo with (at right) Japan's Consul General Yasushi Misawa.





Keaukaha Elementary



Hilo High

Our **ESSA Town Hall itinerary** on three neighbor islands provided a valuable opportunity to visit school campuses that are truly inspirational in the ways they educate our youngsters. *Above left*, a stop at **Keaukaha Elementary** on Hawaii Island: Education Committee staff **Park Kaleiwahea**, myself, student **Chazz Agpoon**, NCSL education policy advisor **Lee Posey**, student **Aukai Chu-Hing**, my colleague **Senator Kai Kahele**, who represents Hilo, and behind us **Keaukaha Principal Stacey Bello**. We were happy to see Chazz and Aukai again – they had come to Honolulu earlier this year to testify at the Capitol on a resolution requesting equipment for their cafeteria. *Above right*, Lee presents her overview of the **Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)** to the audience that included involved teachers and community residents at **Hilo High**.

My colleagues Maui Senators **Roz Baker** and **Gilbert Keith-Agaran** joined us for the presentations and discussion at our ESSA Town Hall meeting at **Baldwin High** (*below*). A big *mahalo* to Principal **Catherine Kilborne** for hosting us!



Kamali'i Elementary



Maui High

On Maui, **Kamali'i Elementary School Principal Kim Mukai-Otani** (*above left*) took Lee and me to visit the Media and the Library/Reading centers where the school's **Read-to-Succeed** program is nationally recognized. *Above right*, meeting with **Maui High Principal Bruce Anderson** and his **Vice Principal Francoise Wittenburg**. They told Lee, me and ESSA volunteer Susan Kitsu, (to my left) of successes and challenges he and his teachers and staff encounter.



Baldwin High School



Waimea High

On tour on Kauai, **Waimea High Principal Mahina Anguay**, **DOE Principal of the Year** (*at left*) showed off Waimea's on-campus aquaculture facilities.



Kapa'a High

At **Wilcox Elementary**, *at right*, Assistant DOE Superintendent **Clyde Sonobe**, Kauai Representative **James Tokioka**, Principal **Corey Nakamura**, Vice Principal **Ray Carvalho**, and Senate President **Ron Kouchi** with Lee and myself.



Wilcox Elementary School

There was a good turnout at **Kapa'a High** where Lee and I discussed ESSA and engaged attendees to hear their concerns and ideas – a very successful conclusion to our three-island neighbor island visits.

The ESSA Team expects to submit initial reports in a few months and plans public Town Hall sessions for public input. The DOE aims to submit the state plan to the U.S. Department of Education in the spring. As the huge turnout for the ESSA Summit this month has demonstrated, there is high interest in supporting our public schools. Mahalo to ESSA volunteer and former DOE employee Susan Kitsu & the Hawaii State Teachers Association for kokua in organizing our neighbor island Town Hall program.

You can learn more about the Governor's ESSA Team's activities online at <http://governor.hawaii.gov/essa-team/>. Please participate; it's important to the success of our schools, our communities and our keiki - Hawaii's future leaders.

Governor Ige has signed into law several bills introduced this year by the **Women's Legislative Caucus** designed to address the issues of sex trafficking, the backlog of evidence kits in criminal sexual assault cases, health benefits and women's veterans. I was pleased to welcome **Mililani Neighborhood Board member Ann Freed** (*at right*) to the bill-signing ceremony. As a longtime advocate for women, Ann has been interested in House Bill 2272 - now Act 208 - that requires the University of Hawaii to train employees and students on sexual harassment, domestic and dating violence, and stalking policies.



At the bill-signing, from left, Senators **Baker, Tokuda** and myself, and Senators **Kim** and **Thielen**.



Recognizing leadership, among family

I was honored to be invited to this month's change of command ceremony for the Hawaii Air National Guard 154th Wing. **Brigadier General Braden Sakai** stepped down after more than five years as Wing Commander. It was a special day for my family as well, since General Sakai is my cousin, and my visiting sister Leilani was able to join us as a guest at the ceremony.

From left, my colleague, Hawaii Island Senator Kai Kahele, who is an Air Guard pilot, sis Leilani, myself, General Sakai and his proud wife Momi.



We also know the Sakai family as Mililani neighbors. As he leaves the Wing's top spot, the General continues his service to the State and our country as Chief of Staff for the Air Guard.



I have always believed that it's important for eligible Hawaii residents to participate in our elections every two years. Here is information about dates and deadlines for registering to vote, requesting ballots by mail, taking advantage of early walk-in voting locations, and polling place hours on Election Days.

If you have requested a ballot by mail, the Office of Elections should already have sent you the proper documents.

You may still request a mail-in ballot until Saturday, August 6; be sure to return your completed ballot by the specified deadline to make sure your vote counts.

Note that on **Monday, August 1**, early walk-on polling locations will open at City Hall downtown and at Kapolei Hale. Here's the calendar:

Primary Election

Monday, August 1 – Early walk-in voting locations open – 8 am-4 pm

-Honolulu Hale, 530 South King Street, Honolulu 96813

-Kapolei Hale, 1000 Uluohia Street, Kapolei 96707

Saturday, August 6 – Deadline to request a mail ballot

-Call 453-VOTE (453-8683) for information or

check online at elections.hawaii.gov

Thursday, August 11 – Last day for early walk-in voting

Saturday, August 13 – **Primary Election Day**

-Polls open 7 am-6 pm

General Election

Monday, October 10 – deadline for registering to vote in the General Election

-Register online at secure website <https://olvr.hawaii.gov>

Tuesday, October 25 – Early walk-in voting locations open – 8 am-4 pm

(Same locations as above for the Primary Election)

Tuesday, November 1 – deadline to request a mail ballot

-Call 453-VOTE (453-8683) for information or

check online at elections.hawaii.gov

Saturday, November 5 – early walk-in voting ends

Tuesday, November 8 – **General Election Day**

-Polls open 7 am-6 pm

An important safety message from the Hawaii State Chapter



American Red Cross

Free Smoke Alarms for Keiki and Kupuna

No smoke alarms in your home? Are your smoke alarms more than ten years old? Have you tested your alarms this month? Do your alarms need new batteries?

The American Red Cross of Hawaii, the Honolulu Fire Department and other island partners are working together to install free smoke alarms in homes where children and seniors live in Hawaii.

If you would like to be a part of this free program, please call the Red Cross at 739-8111. Leave your name, phone number and address and we'll call you back for an appointment to install the alarms.

On average, seven people die every day in home fires in the US. Working smoke alarms cut the risk of dying in a home fire by 50 percent.

The Red Cross Home Fire Preparedness Campaign aims to reduce home fire injuries and fatalities by installing free smoke alarms, teaching residents how to test them each month, and helping to create and practice a fire escape plan to get out of your home in two minutes or less. **Call today!**

Mark your calendars . . .

State agencies and private-sector corporate sponsors are preparing a full day's worth of activities for youngsters pre-K to teens at the 23rd annual Children and Youth Day in and around the Capitol civic center.

In 1994, the Hawaii State Legislature established the first Sunday of October as Children and Youth Day (CYD) in Hawaii to celebrate and honor our children and youth and the special contributions they make to our community. A few years later, another bill was passed to set aside the entire month of October as Children and Youth Month.

CYD events on Sunday, October 2, include an early-morning Keiki Fun Run, a full range of more than 300 booths, displays and activities around the State Capitol building, tours and cultural activities at `Iolani Palace, the Hawaii State Judiciary History Center and the Hawaii State Art Museum. Best of all, it's free of charge, with ample free parking in a number of locations around the area.

For the latest information, go online to www.hawaiicyd.org or call Kamaaina Kids at 262-3623.

Sunday, October 2, 2016

