



Alewa Heights
Kalihi
Kalihi Valley
Moanalua Gardens
Moanalua Valley
Kapalama
Red Hill
Halawa Heights
Aiea

community bulletin

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Aloha, Friends and Neighbors

The 2020 session of the Legislature convened on January 15, and we can anticipate the usual mix of debate, controversy, and accomplishment over the direction of our government and future of our state during the coming weeks.

We're already very busy reviewing proposals carried over from last year, such as the proposal to raise the minimum wage, plus the governor's request for additional budget money and new proposals proffered by legislators.

COMMITTEES

I have the same three committee responsibilities this year: chair of the Committee on

Higher Education, which has oversight over the University of Hawaii; vice chair of the Committee on Education, a body that scrutinizes legislation affecting our public schools and libraries; and membership on the Judiciary Committee, which examines a host of bills on myriad topics.

The former two committees will review educational spending proposals, including those proposed by the executive branch.

BUDGET

In that regard, the Ige administration has submitted a supplemental budget request to add to the biennium appropriation the Legislature approved last year. He is asking for \$62.5 million for the forthcoming fiscal year and another \$429 million for the following year. I should point out that these are requests for the Legislature to approve spending, no matter what the source of the money.

The proposal includes \$41 million for extra compensation for classroom teacher shortage salary differentials; another \$19 million for the expansion of the Hawaii Promise scholarships for all University of Hawaii campuses; and an additional \$220 million in construction for public schools and \$87 million in improvements for the UH campuses.

The executive branch wants \$20 million more for public housing and \$2.5 million for the preparation costs for the School Street redevelopment.

State agencies are seeking \$20 million for infrastructure construction for the Royal Kumia Agricultural Park; funding for positions in the industrial hemp effort; and \$700,000 for the rapid ohia death response.

The H-1 Freeway, from Waikele to Halawa, would be widened if the Legislature okays \$200 million in revenue bonds.

Governor Ige is also seeking \$30 million for the Veteran's Administration long-term care facility on Oahu, more security positions at Maui Community Correction Center, and \$1.5 million for the Kupuna Caregivers program, which I've supported from its inception.

HIGHER EDUCATION

The Higher Education and Ways and Means committees held public hearings on the University of Hawaii in December and January, with testimony leaving us with more questions than answers about the direction of the campuses and the Board of Regents' oversight of the institution. (See "Hot Seat" on page 3 for more details.)

You can expect a continuation of our review into the university during the session.

LEGISLATION

I have introduced several proposals to promote transparency and efficiency at the University of Hawaii; strengthen protection for our kupuna; approve sports betting in Hawaii; and allow the use of campaign funds to pay for certain child care expenses.

These measures are described in more detail on this page.

NATIONAL LEADERSHIP

In November, I was named chair of the National Foundation for Women Legislators (NFWL), a non-partisan, non-profit educational organization for elected women serving in the state, county, and municipal governments.

I've been a member of NFWL since 2013 and look forward to achieving the foundation's mission of empowering and inspiring women to become thoughtful leaders who shape America's future.



2020 ALL-MAIL ELECTIONS

We will be having an election this year, with numerous seats at stake in the Legislature, county mayors and councils, and Congress.

This will also be the first year we will have all-mail voting, meaning you will receive your primary election and general election ballots in the mail, with only a few polling stations open.

This is a significant change, which we've explained in detail elsewhere in the Community Bulletin. Our voting participation is very poor, among the poorest in the nation with less than half the eligible voters casting ballots. Several years ago, I introduced legislation calling for all-mail voting. It took several years to garner enough support for the Legislature to approve a test for Kauai. But the idea has gained traction and it was okayed for statewide elections beginning this year. Let's hope this new system will improve participation in our democracy.

As always, I encourage you to keep me apprised of your ideas and thoughts as the session progresses.

SENATE MAJORITY OUTLINES KEY THEMES

The Senate's Democratic majority has adopted its legislative platform for the 2020 session, with a continued focus on the United Nations' "Sustainable Development Goals" adopted previously.

Priorities for legislation will follow these themes.

Good Health and Well-being. The Legislature will promote health and well-being for all ages by improving access to health care, reducing youth vaping, and finding new uses for underused state facilities.

Quality Education. Legislation will target teacher recruitment and retention, strengthen civic education, increase revenue sources to support secondary education, and expand career and technical learning opportunities for the workforce.

Work and Economic Growth. Senators will back bills to promote sustainable economic growth, job creation and workforce development, innovation, and business plans to invest in the state's future.

Reduced Inequalities. Raising the minimum wage will be high among the senators' priorities, along with requiring paid family leave and creating a retirement savings program.

Sustainable Cities and Communities. The Legislature will seek to expand the inventory of affordable and transitional housing, reduce homelessness, increase local food production, protect agricultural lands, and invest in transportation modernization.

Climate Action. Proposals in this arena will target carbon neutrality, ocean conservation, sustainable land use, and watershed protection.

Peace, Justice, Strong Institutions. Legislators will explore ways to restructure government, increase Hawaii's presence at the international level, enhance public safety, improve social services, expand the sister-state program, and support the state archives.

Partnerships. Achieving the UN goals will require effective public, private, and civic partnerships, establishing a cohesive policy for sustainable development, and balancing sustainable development with economic goals.

SENATOR'S PRIORITIES

Senator Kim is introducing a number of measures covering a range of topics. Among them:

University Transparency. Several bills will seek to promote transparency and efficiency at the University of Hawaii. She will introduce a bill requiring the Board of Regents to live-stream their meetings and have the recordings available for future viewing.

Sports Betting. A Kim measure would create a task force to examine and make recommendations on the feasibility of sports gambling in the islands.

Campaign Spending. The senator will propose that political campaign funds be allowed to pay for childcare costs for candidates while they are campaigning, under certain conditions.

Elder Center. She will propose that the University of Hawaii convert the Charles Atherton YMCA in Manoa to a Kupuna Health, Wellness, and Innovation Center that would ideally include an intergenerational lifelong learning retirement and assisted-living facility to be integrated with the school's Center on Aging, schools of Nursing and Social Work, and other units, including the John A. Burns School of Medicine's Geriatrics Department and Office of Public Health Studies.

Iolani Palace and Bishop Museum. As the only palace on American soil and an important historical repository, Senator Kim will propose dedicated funding for these two institutions to ensure adequate their operation and preservation, to come from hotel room tax revenues.

Mahalo for your support,

Donna Mercado Kim
Senator, 14th District

community survey 2019



LEGISLATURE
2019



Community Survey

Senator Kim is seeking your input on legislation that may be considered during this session of the Legislature, as well as on other issues. The results will be published in the next edition of the *Community Bulletin*.

AUTONOMOUS VEHICLES

Autonomous vehicles, or self-driving cars, are being refined and tested in growing numbers. The technology is advancing so rapidly that these vehicles could be available to motorists in the next six to 10 years. Twenty-two other states have adopted autonomous vehicle legislation. In order for Hawaii to be in the forefront and attract this type of business, we need to have our laws amended so road testing can proceed. Tests show that driverless vehicles are safer and have fewer accidents because they are not prone to human error, distractions like phone texting, driving under the influence, and speeding, to name a few.

How likely are you to ride in a driverless vehicle?

- Very likely
- Somewhat likely
- Not at all

SPORTS BETTING

Betting on the outcomes of sports, of all kinds, is a multi-billion-dollar enterprise. In 2018, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down a 1992 federal law that banned commercial sports betting in most states, opening the door to legalizing the estimated \$150 billion in illegal wagers on professional and amateur sports that Americans make every year.

The decision brought profound changes to the nation's relationship with sports wagering. Bettors will no longer be forced to use offshore wagering or illicit bookies. Thirteen states have some form of legalized, controlled gambling on sports, with many more now considering legislation to authorize it. Such legalization could provide revenue for state, which would in turn provide additional funding for state programs and services.

Should Hawaii join the list of states offering some form of sports betting?

- Yes
- No

If adopted, where would you like the proceeds to go to, e.g., education, housing/homeless, etc.

BULKY ITEM PICKUP

The City and County of Honolulu has switched from scheduled, monthly, curbside bulky-item pickups to an appointment system.

Have you used the new system?

- Yes
- No

If so, was your experience:

- Favorable
- Unfavorable
- No opinion

Have you noticed an increase or decrease in curbside trash in your neighborhood since the new system was introduced?

- Increase
- Decrease
- No difference

AUTOMATIC VOTER REGISTRATION

With automatic voter registration, eligible citizens are automatically registered to vote when applying for or renewing their Hawaii driver's license or identification, unless they refuse. Hawaii has always been an "opt in" state, meaning one needs to choose to become a registered voter, and then engage in the registration process. Making this an "opt out" process means voters are automatically registered unless they decline.

Currently, 17 states and the District of Columbia have approved automatic

voter registration. This translates into improved access to voting, enhanced election security, and savings on resources that would have been used in traditional paper registration and postage.

Would you support automatic voter registration?

- Yes
- No

PHYSICIAN SHORTAGE

The graying of many of our physicians, our high cost of living, housing costs, parental care obligations, and dissatisfaction with the medical community have been cited as some of the reasons for the shortage of physicians, a problem that is likely to grow as greater numbers of doctors retire. The problem is particularly severe on the Neighbor Islands.

Would you be in favor of granting tuition waivers to medical school students who commit to practicing in Hawaii for a certain number of years?

- Yes
- No

If yes, for how long should they stay in Hawaii?

- At least 1 year
- Under 5 years
- More than 5 years

Should we provide taxpayer-funded cash and/or housing incentives to attract doctors from elsewhere to practice in rural areas?

- Yes
- No

Should we offer tax incentives to hospitals and medical clinics to expand in underserved communities?

- Yes
- No

Other ideas: _____

VAPING

Last October, the Health Department issued an advisory urging anyone who vapes to stop immediately until more is known about why people across the country who use vaping devices are getting gravely sick and even dying. The state investigated nearly a dozen vaping-linked lung illnesses last year. Nationally, there have been more than 2,100 reports of serious lung illnesses linked to vaping, and 42 people have died so far. Health officials suspect vitamin E acetate as a possible culprit behind the vaping-related illnesses.

Do you use vaping devices?

- Yes
- No

Health officials are advising people to stop vaping until more information is known, but should the state ban vaping altogether?

- Yes
- No

Should we tax vaping products like we do with tobacco products?

- Yes
- No

LAW SCHOOL LOAN REDUCTION PROGRAM

The University of Hawaii School of Law is proposing an educational loan reduction program for law school graduates who commit to working in rural areas. There is a similar program offered to eligible health professionals, in which they receive assistance with the repayment of their qualified educational loans in exchange for a minimum two-year commitment to work in rural and underserved areas.

Would you support a program like this for law school graduates?

- Yes
- No

Mahalo for taking the time to respond. Please send your completed survey to:

Donna Mercado Kim
Senator, 14th District
Hawaii State Capitol
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

OPTIONAL:

Name _____

Address _____

E-mail _____

Comments _____



Senator Kim on the hotseat



In this edition, Senator Kim responds to constituents who inquired about the critical audit of adult care home licensing and the proposed veterans care home in Aiea

I was outraged to learn that many executive and managerial personnel at the University of Hawaii were given huge pay raises. Why were these raises granted, particularly when student enrollment is down and so many of the buildings on campus are falling apart and are in desperate need of major repairs?

I understand your frustration. I, too, questioned the university's decision to grant such exorbitant salary raises, during a joint budget briefing held in December and January by the Senate Higher Education Committee, which I chair, and the Ways and Means Committee.

Prompted by many complaints from faculty members, we heard testimony that the University of Hawaii administration had awarded sizable pay raises to a handful of executives, this at a time when enrollment is declining and tuition rates are rising.

We simply wanted to know what scrutiny and oversight the Board of Regents was exercising over these types of actions.

Unfortunately, the regents' testimony

left us less than confident that the board is upholding its responsibilities as the policy-setting and oversight body for the institution.

In addition to the executive pay hikes, which raised eyebrows among legislators and faculty alike, there have been other concerns raised about management at the institution.

For example, a costly contract was awarded to a private consulting firm to stimulate enrollment, but has yet to yield significant results. There are concerns about tuition reserves, special funds, and fringe benefits; the Daniel K. Inouye College of Pharmacy at the Hilo campus; and certain construction projects.

You'll recall that less than a year ago, our legislative oversight revealed that UH employees and other personnel were not following institutional travel policies and procedures, including how authorized administrators were reviewing and approving travel. We asked the UH to examine how the West Oahu campus was spending certain federal funds and other extramural funding. We asked the Board of Regents to examine the school's

multiple faculty classifications and teaching workloads to see whether they comply with board policies.

Yes, the state constitution and laws grant the UH a fair amount of autonomy, but with that autonomy comes the need for the Board of Regents, not to mention administrators, to exercise a greater degree of oversight and hold high-paid executives accountable for their actions to ensure taxpayer money, tuitions, fees, and other revenue is spent prudently.

Unfortunately, the regents' testimony led us to believe that they have been largely passive in their oversight responsibilities, leaving UH executives to make major decisions with little questioning on the part of the regents—who are supposed to serve as the public's representatives in the governance of the UH system. This led me to introduce a measure to revamp the Regents Candidate Advisory Council and the process of how regents are nominated and screened.

This is not the end of the matter. You can expect a continuation of our examination into the university during the weeks ahead.

ELECTIONS GO EXCLUSIVELY MAIL IN 2020

Last year, the Legislature authorized all-mail voting beginning with the 2020 elections. Here is what you need to know about this new method.

AUTOMATIC MAILING

All registered voters will automatically receive a mail ballot packet about three weeks before each election. Election dates:

Primary Election: Saturday, August 8

General Election: Tuesday, November 3

If you fail to receive your ballot in time, contact the City and County Clerk's Office at 768-3800.

REGISTRATION

Your ballot will be mailed to your current mailing address, as reflected in your voter registration record. If you've moved or changed your name or mailing address, you must update your voter registration. Check online or call the

county Clerk's Office to confirm the accuracy of your registration.

Unregistered citizens can register online or complete an application and submit it to the appropriate Clerk's Office (honolulu.gov/elections/). Applications are also available at post offices, public libraries, the Hawaiian Telcom Yellow Pages, and most government agencies.

THE BALLOT

Your ballot packet will contain: (a) a ballot for your district, (b) a secret ballot envelope, (c) a return ballot envelope, and (d) instructions.

The Elections Office reminds voters to review the instructions, contests, and candidates on both sides of the ballot and mark the ballot completely with a black or blue pen. If you make an error, contact the Clerk's Office for a replacement.

Ballots are to be refolded, placed and sealed in the secret ballot envelope, and

placed and sealed in the return envelope. You must sign the return envelope for your ballot to be counted.

RETURNING THE BALLOT

Ballots must be received by the Clerk's Office by 7:00 p.m. on the day of the election. That means mailing the ballot at least 2 or 3 days before the election or dropping it off in-person at a Voter Service Center or the Clerk's Office.

Locations and hours of the ballot drop sites and Voter Service Centers will be published in May.

VOTING AND REGISTERING IN-PERSON

Voters can also vote in-person. Voter Service Centers will be open 10 days before each election for voting and same-day registration. Again, the locations and hours will be confirmed in May.

70 Years of Service for Kalihi-Palama Library



Senator Kim and Senator Glenn Wakai presented an honorary certificate in September to Trisha Murakami, branch manager of the Kalihi-Palama Public Library, on the occasion of the library's 70th anniversary.

The library opened its doors as a small, one-room library in Palama Settlement. Now located on Kalihi Street, the library has grown to have a collection of 60,000 books, CDs, and DVDs, and continued to serve the needs of the community.

Disabled Young Adults Showcase Talents at Job Fair



Young adults with disabilities had a golden opportunity to highlight their skills and land their first jobs at the state's second annual Reverse Job Fair at the State Capitol on October 29.

The 77 candidates stationed at individual booths met with human resource representatives from 93 local companies and state and county government agencies. They included Aloha Gas, Central Pacific Bank, CVS/Longs, Hard Rock Café, Hawaiian Airlines, Hawaiian Electric, Hawaiian Telcom, Hilton Hotels, Queens Medical Center, Y. Hata, YMCA, University of Hawaii, and state departments of Human Resources, Agriculture, Taxation, and Transportation.

Senator Kim, who was co-chair of the Legislative Host Committee, said, "The goal of building a diverse workforce is made easier for businesses through this Reverse Job Fair. This event gives our young adults with disabilities the exclusive opportunity to connect with potential employers, showcase their abilities and value, and find meaningful employment."

PACT Feeds Keiki

Senator Kim volunteered to serve lunch to children during a summer food program sponsored by PACT, Parents And Children Together. The event was held on July 26 at Kuhio Park Terrace Family Center in Kalihi.



Aiea Public Library Celebrates Fifth Year

Aiea Public Library marked the fifth anniversary of its relocation to the grounds of the old Aiea Sugar Mill. Library branch manager Tina Takamoto (center) was presented with a joint certificate on July 13 from the Senate and House of Representatives by, from left, Representative Sam Kong, Senator Kim, Representative Aaron Ling Johanson, and Representative Gregg Takayama.



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Senator Joins Seniors for Grandparents Day



In a long-time tradition, Senator Kim made the rounds of senior centers on Grandparents Day in September to honor kupuna in her district. She visited gatherings in Halawa (pictured here), Aiea, and Moanalua.

Hawaii Volleyball Teams Capture Two National Titles

Hawaii's Spike and Serve girls and boys volleyball teams each won the 2019 USA Junior National Volleyball Championships, held in June in Indianapolis. This was the first time in the local program's history that both teams captured national championships in the same year. Senator Kim, whose son Micah serves as the head coach for the boys team, organized the proclamation ceremony with Governor David Ige at his office on August 1.



Senator Joins UH Gym Reopening

Senator Kim joined University of Hawaii coaches, administrators, and fellow legislators for the September reopening of the renovated practice gym for the men's and women's volleyball teams. The 40-year-old facility is the second gym to be fixed, following the renovation of the practice gym used by the school's basketball teams. The gym has new flooring, three practice courts, lights, scoreboards, a sound system, and air-conditioning. The senator chairs the Higher Education Committee, which oversees the university.

