

Waikele, Village Park, Royal Kunia, Makakilo,
Kapolei, Kalaehoa, Honokai Hale,
and portions of Ko 'Olina & Waipahu

Mike Gabbard

State Senator, 19th District



January 2008

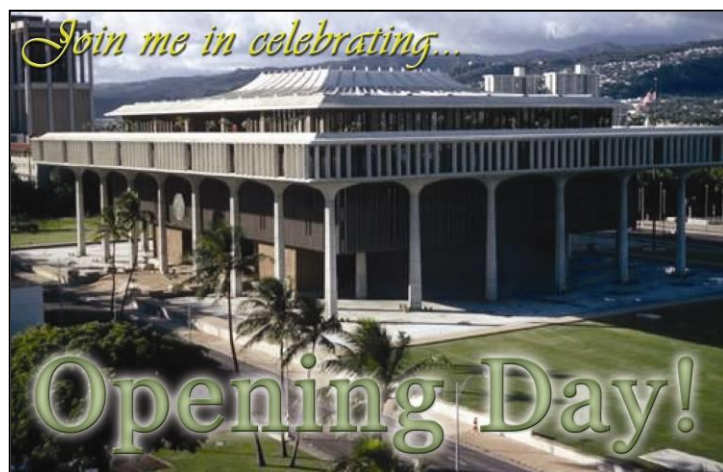
Dear Friends,

Aloha and best wishes to you and your ohana in 2008! It's a privilege to serve as your State Senator, and I look forward to working with you in the years ahead. If you can, please join me for refreshments in celebrating Opening Day of the 2008 Legislative Session in my office, Room 204, on January 16 at 12noon.

Also, I'll be hosting my next "listen-story" meeting at Waikele Elementary School cafeteria on Saturday, February 16, 2008 at 9am. If you can't attend, call or email your concerns.

Please contact me if I can help you in any way. My email is sengabbard@capitol.hawaii.gov and my phone number is 586-6830. Mahalo for the privilege of serving you! Me ka pumehana,

Mike



State Legislature in Session

From January 16th to May 1st, the State Legislature will be in session. During this time, we'll be considering thousands of bills which may or may not become law. I encourage you to get involved in the process by testifying in person or submitting testimony by email or fax. The following are a few of my key proposals that I hope you'll keep your eye on.



Working to Make Our Highways Safer

I've drafted an exciting bill which has the potential to make our roads a lot safer for you and your family.

The bill would do two main things: First, it requires the state by July 2010 to transfer all the revenue it takes in from uncontested traffic fines and give that money to the counties where it rightfully belongs. By uncontested traffic fines, I'm referring to those traffic fines that people pay without bothering to go through the court system. It has never made sense to me that our county police departments are the ones doing the work to issue the tickets, but then the state swoops down and takes that money away.

Secondly, the bill would allow the counties to use the millions of dollars collected from these uncontested traffic fines each year to establish highway patrols. *(Continues on next page...)*



By the way, if the counties don't use this money for a county highway patrol it would go back to the state. This would protect against the counties spending it for other purposes.



I've been a big supporter of creating county highway patrols since my days on the Honolulu City Council. In fact, I introduced a resolution (04-137) which passed unanimously in 2004 to urge the City Administration to set up a highway patrol within the Honolulu Police Department (HPD). At that time HPD supported the concept and stated that it would better equip them to enforce our traffic laws and also free up their traffic division officers to concentrate on other criminal matters. The idea is to have about 10 to 14 highway patrol officers on duty 24-7 on our highways and other hot spots known for excessive speeding and dangerous driving.



To bring the problem into perspective, here are a few startling statistics from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration:

- Hawaii was tied for 2nd in the nation for the highest increase in the number of fatalities from motor vehicle crashes, increasing 15% from 140 in 2005 to 161 in 2006.
- In 2006, Hawaii had the highest percentage of traffic deaths involving alcohol in the nation.
- Police issued 944 citations statewide in 2005 for racing on highways.



As you see, we've got a big problem with reckless, drunken, and speeding drivers who've basically turned our highways into killing fields. It's time that we give our police departments the necessary funding so they can focus on making our roads safer.

I'll need all the help I can get in trying to convince my colleagues at the Legislature that this is what we need to do in 2008. Interestingly enough, I've already recruited some champions for this bill. A couple of weeks ago I was contacted by the students at Moanalua High School who are participating in Project Citizen. This is a federal program which encourages students to take an active role in the political process. I'm pleased that these motivated youngsters have decided to make the passage of my bill the focus of their project.



Telework Tax Credit

The stress and strain that we face fighting traffic everyday takes its toll. To reduce this problem, we should be encouraging businesses, corporations, and governmental agencies to offer workforce flexibility programs. Through these efforts, we can reduce traffic congestion, energy consumption and vehicular pollution, and at the same time improve employee productivity and health, and strengthen families. That's why I've introduced legislation to provide a \$20,000 tax credit for start up costs associated with setting up a telework program. If you're not familiar, telework programs allow people to work from home. The bill would also allow businesses to receive an additional \$1,200 annually for every employee who teleworks.

Combating MRSA and other Infectious Diseases

You might have heard on the news over the last several months how MRSA infections, a difficult to treat form of staph bacteria, have become an increasingly alarming problem in our hospitals. Hawaii hospitals are reporting the highest infections for MRSA in the nation. There were 2,112 hospitalized patients diagnosed with MRSA in Hawaii in 2006. This is why I've introduced a bill to require Hawaii hospitals to develop a Hospital Acquired Infection Prevention program to screen incoming patients for MRSA. The bill would also require hospitals to report their hospital acquired infection information to the Department of Health and that information would be made available to the public on their website. Finally, the bill would set up a Hospital Acquired Advisory Committee which would be dedicated to making our hospitals safer.



Waialeale, Village Park, Royal Kunia, Makakilo, Kapolei, Kalaheo, Honokai Hale, and portions of Ko Olina & Waipahu



Honoring "The Backyard"

I presented an honorary certificate from the State Senate to John and Dionne Rau of Royal Kunia before the kick-off of the Sugar Bowl match-up between the University of Hawaii Warriors and the Georgia Bulldogs on New Year's Day. I was joined by my daughter, former State Representative (Ewa-Waipahu) Tulsi Gabbard Tamayo, in recognizing the Raus.

The Rau home is known simply as "The Backyard" this time of year, although there is nothing simple about the work that they put into it. For the last 6 years, the Raus have built a small-scale, exact replica of the Super Bowl football field in their backyard, complete with field goals, striping, and team logos. Because of the UH Warriors success, the Raus 'made an extra effort to have a mini-Sugar Bowl field ready for the game.



The tradition started when Dionne, a die-hard Tampa fan, wanted to do something special to support her team. John didn't take the assignment lightly and "The Backyard" stadium was the result. Each year since then, the Rau family has spent months reconstructing the field and adding special touches one by one; first bleachers, then a tunnel that the "players" enter through (complete with a special effects "fog" machine), team boards, and authentic stadium lighting. The lights were painstakingly created from thousands of water bottle caps making the environment that much more real for the players (the kids) that play on the field and the fans (their parents).

The Rau family's enthusiasm, team spirit, and willingness to go the extra yard for the benefit of youth and to support the local team makes them a champion in our eyes.

Honoring "Live and Let Live" Poster Contest Winners

Rep. Sharon Har and I presented an honorary certificate from the State Senate to Kapolei High School students Daniel Gallardo, Tisha Shimamoto, and Turner Harrison at the "Live and Let Live" kick-off event at the Kapolei Police Station on December 8th.



Daniel, Tisha, and Turner placed 1st, 2nd, and 3rd respectively in the poster contest which included cash prizes for their art work depicting the importance of safe driving during the Christmas season. The students' posters will be displayed at the Kapolei Police Station for the next several months.

The 2007 "Live and Let Live" Traffic Safety Awareness Campaign is in its 23rd year and is dedicated to increasing awareness of the dangers of speeding, and reckless and intoxicated driving in the Kapolei, Makakilo, Ewa, Ewa Beach, Ko Olina, Honokai Hale, and Kalaeloa communities. The program was founded by community leaders Bella & OC Oclinaría and Wynn & Karlyeen Warner.

The campaign is well-known for placing crashed cars at busy intersections as a startling reminder that the Christmas holidays can be the most deadly time to be on our roads. Each year the activities of the event are coordinated by the Honolulu Police Department and include sign waving to bring this message home.

Below-left – Sen Gabbard was interviewed by Waipahu Elementary & Intermediate students Charlyn Agonoy, Talahiva Salakielu, Jeinstene Agonoy & Gizel Ramos at the capitol on January 9, 2008.



Councilman Apo, Sen. Gabbard, Rep. Pine & Sen. Espero tour the construction site of the North-South Road in Kapolei on Dec. 11th.



Above-right – Sen Gabbard and Rep Awana presented honorary certificates from the State Legislature to the graduates of the Operation About Face! and Community All-Stars programs at their graduation ceremony at Kapolei High School on December 12th.

SENATOR GABBARD'S STAFF

We're at your service!

Rock Riggs, Chief of Staff

Erika Moon, Community Liaison
 Roberta Fillezs, Administrative Assistant
 Alan Teixeira, Committee Clerk

Ph: 586-6830 Fax: 586-6679
 sengabbard@capitol.hawaii.gov

415 S. Beretania St. Room 204
 Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

HELPFUL ONLINE SERVICES:

Legislative Info:
www.capitol.hawaii.gov

City Services:
www.honolulu.gov



Senator Mike Gabbard and Rep. Sharon Har presented honorary certificates from the State Legislature to the American Renaissance Academy upon their Grand Opening in Kalaeloa on December 7th. Pictured (L to R) are Kelly Tanizaki (President), Thomas Dunn (Legal Advisor), Bernadette Ortiz-Brewster (Director), Charles Beeck (Chairman of Executive Board), and world-famous film star, Jason Scott Lee.