FROM THE OFFICE OF
SENATOR DRU MAMO KANUHA
District 3 – Kona and Ka‘ū

ALOHA KĀKOU!

Thank you for your vote of confidence to represent District 3 in the Hawai‘i State Senate. It has been a very humbling experience to serve the community that I grew up in at the State level and I am so grateful for the opportunity.

My six years as your Hawai‘i County Councilman (and the first Chairperson from Kona) provided me an opportunity to not only make a real difference in the life of my constituents at the County level, it gave me valuable experience that allowed me to efficiently navigate the legislative process at the Hawai‘i State Capitol.

The 2019 legislative session was productive and full of accomplishments for Kona and Ka‘ū. This session began with a set of key priorities for our community and I truly believe that we have made great strides at accomplishing our goals.

There is a lot of work to be done to ensure a good quality of life for our community, and I am committed to listening and collaborating with you all to come up with solutions for the challenges our community faces.

It's been a great privilege to serve as your Senator and I welcome any feedback that you can provide. Please feel free to contact my team and I at any time.

Mahalo,

Senator Dru Mamo Kanuha

Role in the State Legislature

During his first year, Senator Dru Mamo Kanuha was given the role of Majority Caucus Leader for the 30th Legislature of the State of Hawai‘i. As Majority Caucus Leader, Senator Kanuha presides over the Caucus’ regular meetings – meetings that allow legislators of the same party to discuss legislation prior to voting on the Senate floor.

Before any legislation has the chance to be voted on by the entire Senate body, however, it is referred to different committees that bring focus to discussion on topics that are pertinent to the State.

Senator Kanuha is a member of four Senate committees. As Vice Chair of the Housing (HOU) committee, Senator Kanuha works directly on issues such as affordable and public housing, community development and the sheltering of the homeless. As a member of Ways and Means (WAM), Senator Kanuha has a very unique role in working out the State's budget and taxation policies. Membership in the Education (EDU) committee affirms Senator Kanuha's commitment to strengthening our District's public schools and public libraries. Finally, membership in the Government Operations (GVO) allows District 3 a voice in maximizing government efficiency and overseeing the operation of State departments.
Lifeguards, Physician Assistants and Clean Highways

Physician Assistants
In an attempt to address our State's physician shortage, Senator Kanuha introduced SB1406 SD1 HD1 to authorize supervision of physician’s assistants (PA) by physician groups, permits supervising physicians and groups to establish practice-appropriate record review policies, establishes continuing education requirements and authorizes audits to enforce compliance, and clarifies provisions relating to forfeiture and reinstatement of a license.

Clean Highways
In a response to constituent concerns about dumping at the intersection of Queen Ka’ahumanu Highway and Palani Road, Senator Kanuha introduced SCR83 and SR60 to request the Department of Transportation (DOT) to clean up the site. This parcel of land became a dumping ground for rubbish, and was finally cleared by the DOT in mid-April.

Lifeguards for Kua Bay
Since 2013, there have been 10 spinal cord injuries and 30 significant emergency incidents that have required transport to a hospital from Kekaha Kai State Park. This session, $480,000 was secured in general funds for fiscal year 2020 and fiscal year 2021 for lifeguard services at Kua Bay.

24M Secured for Capital Construction

Kealakehe Elementary School received $15 million for construction of a new classroom building and various other improvements.

Ka‘ū Hospital
$500,000 received for renovation of bathrooms, kitchens and flooring.

Kealakehe High School
received $3 million for an all-weather synthetic track.

Ka‘ū High and Pahala Elementary School
received $200,000 for various improvements.

West Hawai‘i Community Health Center
received $220,000 in GIA funding.

Kealakehe Wastewater Treatment Facility
received $900,000 funds to match the County of Hawai‘i for various projects.

Innovations Public Charter School
received $200,000 for the construction of a community recreational center.

$1.1 million was allocated to acquire land necessary to protect important native forest resources.

Konawaena High School
received $1.1 million for improvements to its softball field and $20,000 for various other improvements.

Ke Kula ‘O ‘Ehunuikaimalino
received $207,000 for various improvements.

Kailua Pier
received $150,000 for replacement of an old loading dock.

Ho‘okena Elementary School
received $200,000 for various improvements.

Honalo Marshalling Yard Facility
received $1.1 million for various improvements as well as Hawai‘i ‘Ulu Producers Cooperative received $150,000 for the additional projects at the yard.

Japanese Cultural Center of Kona
received $70,000 in GIA funding.

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Students lobbying at the State Capitol for stricter enforcement of laws against underage usage of e-cigarettes.

Sen. Kanuha with members of the Hawai‘i County Council at the State Capitol.

Sen. Kanuha with Lt. Gov. Josh Green (left), Gov. David Ige (middle) and Chief Justice Mark Recktenwald (right) on January 16, 2019, Opening Day of the 2019 Legislative Session.


Students from the Kealakehe Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) Academy visiting the State Capitol.

Hawai‘i Island delegation at Gov. Ige's signing of HB1180 HD1: disaster relief funding for Puna families affected by the recent eruption of Kilauea.
Alleviating Traffic

While the recent widening of Queen Ka'ahumanu Highway has benefitted West Hawai'i's roads, "crawls" around the district during morning and pahana commutes are still far too prevalent. A bill was introduced this session to request funding to widen Kuakini Highway between Lako Street and Kamehameha III Road along with a follow-up resolution to request the DOT to prioritize this project, and will be revisited next session.

Affordable Housing and Workforce Development

As Vice Chair of the Senate Committee on Housing, Senator Kanuha introduced a variety of legislation to address Hawai'i's housing crisis. In addition to legislation to give priority to applicants for housing who work within 25 miles of housing sought, the Rental Assistance Program and Qualified Nonprofit Housing Trust Program were reevaluated. Senator Kanuha also plans to continue advocating for non-conventional housing approaches—such as tiny homes and micro housing units.

Ka'ū Hospital

Located over 50 miles away from the nearest medical center, Ka'ū Hospital's four-bed emergency department serves over 3000 patients a year. Through discussion with Ka'ū Hospital's Administrator, Merilyn Harris, it has been identified that an expansion of the hospital's Rural Health Clinic would help improve access to urgent care and outpatient behavioral health services—intended on alleviating pressure on the emergency department.

Advocating for Kona and Ka'ū Coffee Industries

Counterfeit coffee has been a problem that has long plagued our community. Senator Kanuha introduced a variety of legislation this session to mitigate this problem and plans to continue working together with local farmers throughout Kona and Ka'ū to ensure that the coffee being labeled as "Kona" or "Ka'ū" Coffee reflects the quality of coffee that our district is famous for.

Agriculture and Environmental Protection

The passage of SR112 was championed by Senator Kanuha and requests the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) to prioritize the control of high-threat invasive species.

Shorelines

As a site of big cultural significance, the issue of jurisdiction at Kahalu'u Beach Park is one that came up a lot this session. SR168 and SCR209 were passed to request the different agencies with jurisdiction over the park – DLNR, Division of Boating and Ocean Resources (DOBOR) and the County of Hawai'i – to identify and pursue the best course of action to collaboratively address issues at Kahalu'u.

Another issue that will continue to be evaluated will be the balance of commercial and recreational usage of Kailua Pier. SR109 was passed to encourage the implementation of quarterly meetings between DOBOR and Division of Conservation and Resources Enforcement (DOCARE) to open dialogue regarding these issues.

Economic Development

Tourism has long been the driving force of Hawai'i's economy—comprising 21% of the state's economy directly, with many of Hawai'i's largest industries revolving around a constant flow of tourists. To diversify our community's revenue generating industries, SCR86 was passed to request Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT) to conduct a study on potential areas of economic development other than tourism in the County of Hawai'i. Senator Kanuha has also been an advocate for alternative sources of revenue, such as Mega Millions and Power Ball, and increasing taxes on tobacco products to further replenish the State's general fund.

‘A‘ohe hana nui ke alu ‘ia

No task is too big when done together by all