



The Senate

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Senate Minority Leader Kurt Fevella
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Mahalo, Mr. President. It's an honor to be here; thank you guys very much. I just want to say aloha, my fellow senators and honored guests, and ladies and gentlemen. I thank the Heavenly Father, for every day, I keep waking up in these beautiful islands that we call home, especially our hometown of 'Ewa Beach, and giving me this opportunity to deliver this Minority speech, being here, representing them. I just want to thank and honor my wife, Donnalee; my daughter, Abigail; and my dad, David; and all my family and friends from 'Ewa Beach. Thank you. Since I've been here on November 7th, I've just had a lot of love and aloha from every one of you here, my colleagues, staff, and people who work within the Capitol every day. It was just so overwhelmed, coming from a community like 'Ewa Beach and, of course, working in the public school system; to come here, it was very overwhelming, walking around this big building and not getting lost. Having a lot of friendly faces and a lot of aloha, especially from our Senate President, our governor, Lieutenant Governor Josh Green, you showed me a lot of love when I came here, and advice, and I took that advice, about being myself, who I am and my community, and what got me here today. So, getting on to: We're not like the mainland, I always said that to people that I meet here. We're not like Washington, DC, because we're one family, one 'ohana. We live on a rock in the middle of the Pacific. At the end of the day, we still call each other family. Whether we agree to disagree, we all live as one and one 'ohana, so, for me, I just want to thank each and every one of you guys here, especially the legislators that I'm going to be working with; it's an honor to be here.

That is why I'm very concerned on how we're going to achieve increasing the minimum wage. I believe, instead of raising the minimum wage across the board, we should start with a pilot program, starting with our government workers first. Also, we need to take care of our kūpuna; we need to pursue cutting taxes for those 65 and older. We must work together in finding ways to help our Hawaiian families with chronic health issues. We must encourage our young people to stay in school and graduate. The economy and the visitor industry are very important, and let's move quickly on the airline corporation bill and work hard with our House of Representatives in getting this to the governor's desk and asking him to sign it.

I will oppose any raise of any transient accommodation tax, and I will work hard with all of my colleagues to collect taxes from currently illegal rentals that are in our community, pushing local families and taking away their quality of life. These homes that come up in our community,

especially in our community of 'Ewa Beach on 'Ewa Beach Road, I particularly say that because, when I grew up there, I knew every single person there by name—rode my bike there; I don't swim, but I go to the beach there and have fun there. Now, because of this kind of lack of taxing and lack of accountability, these homes are popping all over the communities, not just in mine. But this is why I am here today to try to work with my colleagues to try to figure out a way in collecting these fees that are not being paid so that we can take care of family and friends in the community.

We must commit to preserving and protecting our environment. We must not depend on fossil fuels. I support photovoltaic projects and creative energy and expanding our support by buying local first—we need to buy local first, guys. Speaking of, as a proud graduate of public schools, we need to ensure that our children have the best classrooms and facilities to make their education meaningful. We must also give them opportunities to earn their college degrees here at home. We have outstanding public universities, and we should make education affordable for more people. I will seek to have UH West O'ahu expand their curriculum to provide Native Hawaiian students with the means to bear the rising costs of college. I support the completion of the Honolulu rail transit project in its current configuration—this is the alternative of the transportation for my family and friends in 'Ewa Beach and the State of Hawai'i.

Enhancing the quality of life: I have worked many years in serving homeless in 'Ewa Beach. As a legislator, Governor Ige and his administration has made great progress in helping the homeless. From my personal observation, many of our homeless do not want to go on a list and to be sent to downtown Honolulu; they want to stay in their comfort zone in the area where they have their family and their close network, and sending them from 'Ewa Beach or Wai'anae to town, it doesn't make sense, and that's the reason why they prefer to be homeless. We need to also expand our homeless base shelters and communities and especially affordable homes, making it really affordable for our people to have housing.

Wouldn't you agree with me that Hawai'i is the most beautiful place on Earth? Wouldn't you agree with me that one of the reasons it's so beautiful is because of its people and the aloha spirit that binds each and every one of us together? Therefore, in closing, I just want to thank each and every one of you, especially the community of 'Ewa Beach for making their voices heard. I just want to pray for each and every one of us here so that we can work closely together and letting us know that the main reason we're here is for our people and our community. So, in closing, I just want to ask our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, to bless this chamber and this capitol and the people who come and visit here from this Aloha State. I want to ask Him to cover us, to keep us and teach us to be humble and loving to one another, as we should be because we live in the best State of Hawai'i, the Aloha State. I ask Him again, in closing, to love one another like we want each other to be loved, trust each other like how we want each other to be trusted, and we go on and do His great works because, at the end of the day, everybody here, needs to have a better quality of life in the community, especially living for the rest of our life in the most beautiful State of Hawai'i. Thank you, and God bless.