

2010 Adjourn Sine Die -- Closing Remarks, April 29, 2010
Speaker Calvin K.Y. Say

"Members, thank you for your efforts during this past difficult Session. In January of 2009 in my Opening Day speech, and again in my January of 2010 Opening Day speech, I laid upon us certain challenges. Members for the most part, you answered those challenges. This great recession made our jobs very, very difficult. We made many hard decisions that disappointed, frustrated and even angered certain people. We however, were forced to make those tough decisions because of the dismal economic and budgetary situation.

"If you recall during the 2009 Session, we along with the Senate and Governor closed a \$2.1 billion budget deficit. During this 2010 Session we again with the Senate and the Governor closed another \$1.2 billion budget gap. I am proud of this House because we accomplished this without increasing the general excise tax, without increasing income taxes on the middle class and the lower income families, and for our Neighbor Island colleagues, without scooping the counties' share of the hotel tax, which surely would have led to real property tax increases. History for me I believe, will show that we together with the Senate and the Governor bore the burdens of this great recession we are in.

"Although we had our disagreements, I enjoyed the disagreements on the Floor of this House and the lively debate on issues. We all participated in the legislative process with good faith, with the public good foremost in our mind, and a sense of responsibility for our actions.

"There is one thing I would like to note. In addition to acting responsibly, we mounted a tremendous challenge against the special interest groups. This is the first time in history, for me that is, that we crossed over to the Senate various revenue enhancement bills targeted at the special interests in order to avoid a broad-based regressive tax increase. For the first time in my 34 years we forced into Conference Committee a bill to take away certain general excise tax exemptions for those special interests. For me that was a significant unprecedented step even though, shucks, the bill did not pass. Let us take pride for having acted responsibly and having acted against the special interests to support once more, the ordinary taxpayers.

"We could not have done this without help and I'd like to thank our staff: the House Chief Clerk's Office, Pat, CJ, Denise. Our Sergeant-at-Arms, Mr. Kevin Kuroda, Mr. Lon Paresa and their staff. The House Majority Staff, Ms. Linda Oamilda, and our two chief legal counsels, Mr. Jim Funaki and Mr. Richard Dvonch. The House Minority Research, Boyd. Where are you Boyd? He's hiding, Malia? Okay. The Legislative Reference Bureau, Ken Takayama and Charlotte Carter-Yamauchi. The Auditor's Office, Marion Higa and her staff. And finally to all of you, the Capitol TV. And also thank you very much to the House Majority and Minority leadership teams.

"Thank you to Finance Committee Chair Marcus Oshiro, Vice-Chair Marilyn Lee and all the other Committee members. You did the most important and hardest work of the Session and I commend you, the Chair and Vice-Chair and the Committee members in getting your pictures in the paper on a full page ad this morning.

"Finally I would like to especially thank the Majority Leader, Blake Oshiro. Yes, I disappointed him tremendously in the beginning of Session and I regret that tremendously. Yet he continued to perform his duties with his usual diligence, competence and effectiveness. He was someone I could rely on. Someone with whom I could speak freely with. Someone I could trust without a doubt. In sum, he is someone more than merely a co-worker for all of us. We all consider Blake a true friend. Blake, please stand.

"I also forgot to mention our House Leadership, Vice Speaker Mike Magaoay, Majority Floor Leader Cindy Evans, and our Majority Whip Representative Pono Chong. And Lynn, Kym, Cynthia, Corinne, Barbara, and Gene, thank you very much for all you have contributed to the people of the State of Hawaii.