



Vol 9.

## SENATOR WILL ESPERO & YOUR LEGISLATURE WORKING FOR YOU

### ADJOURNMENT SINE DIE

The Legislature accomplished a great deal, thanks to all the ideas, suggestions, comments and support from you on how to improve Hawaii. These are highlights of bills that the Legislature passed this year. You can read more about these bills and others on the Capitol website: [capitol.hawaii.gov](http://capitol.hawaii.gov).

### BUSINESS & CONSUMER PROTECTION

A tourism emergency trust fund would be created under **HB 575** to deal with situations that substantially interrupt state commerce and adversely affect Hawaii, such as an occurrence of a world conflict, terrorist threat, natural disaster, outbreak of disease, or other catastrophic event.

A resident can put a security freeze on her credit report to protect against identity theft. **HB 1612**.

Additional protections will be conferred to purchasers of cemetery or funeral services under **HB 1337**, such as the right to: cancel before receiving the services; a refund less costs for canceling an unused service; and notice and opportunity to cure a default of a contract. The cemetery must make a map, file a copy with the Bureau of Conveyances, and keep a copy of the map as a permanent cemetery record.

**HB 122** requires all entities and organizations receiving state funds to be fully disclosed online.

Mixed martial arts (MMA) contests would be regulated for the safety of its participants under **HB 1866**. The bill prohibits no rules combat, extreme fighting or similar contests. The director of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs would have oversight authority to set out rules to protect MMA fighters and their fans against harm that might occur.

## EDUCATION

Teacher excellence is a legislative priority. **HB 777** expands the Hawaii Educator Loan Program to recruit and retain qualified teachers to teach in hard-to-fill positions and in rural area schools. **HB 24** awards incentive bonuses to teachers who achieve and maintain national board certification.

Project EAST (environmental and spatial technology) will be maintained in existing schools and expanded to schools statewide under **HB 1630**. Project EAST teaches important critical thinking, problem-solving, and analytical skills needed for success in high technology-based jobs, by integrating cutting-edge technology (computer-assisted drafting, geographic information systems, global positioning systems, and computer graphic applications such as soft image) into the educational curriculum.

**SB 885** funds several career and technical education initiatives: Career & Technical Education; Agriculture Education and its coordination with culinary arts; Hawaii Excellence Through Science & Technology; Fostering Inspiration & Relevance Through Science & Technology Pre-Academy; Robotics & Problem-Based, Applied Learning; Research Experiences for Teachers; Business/Education Internship & Mentorship; as well as a professional development program to allow science and math teachers to keep current in their field. Stipends are available to persons who hold degrees in science, technology, engineering and mathematics as an incentive obtain secondary education teaching certificates.

**SB 1820** grants the DOE more autonomy and flexibility in financing much needed school facilities; gives the DOE the authority to enter into private-public partnerships to fund new school facilities; and creates a special account for paying lease-purchase agreements.

**HB 19** sets out the new methodology for identifying need areas and calculating school impact fees to finance new or expanding educational facilities.

**SB 686** will require the Department of Education to report to the Legislature on repricing class levels and other career ladder enhancements for educational assistants

## ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

By 2020, greenhouse gas emissions would be cut to 1990 levels. **HB 226** creates a reduction task force and assigns them to prepare a work plan and regulatory scheme to achieve the statewide limit.

Renewable energy efforts get support from **HB 1003**, which creates the Hawaii Natural Energy Institute at the University of Hawaii and a special fund to develop renewable energy and energy efficient technologies. The Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism will be required to prepare a bioenergy master plan for developing a bioenergy industry in Hawaii.

## HEALTH

Excessive, inadequate or unfairly discriminatory health insurance premium rates are prohibited under **SB 12**. Insurers will be required to submit rate filings for approval by the insurance commissioner.

The John A. Burns School of Medicine is required to establish the "teachable moment" model for screening, brief intervention and referral to treatment for substance abuse or alcoholism at an emergency department of a major medical facility under **HB 367**.

Youth suicide early intervention and prevention programs would be established statewide through the Department of Health under **HB 55**.

The Hawaii Health Systems Corporation acquires Kahuku Hospital under **HB 843**.

## HUMAN SERVICES

**HB 531** creates a task force to study the feasibility of expanding early intervention services given to infants and toddlers under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act to preschool aged children, and provides funds for developing the infrastructure and support services needed.

**HB 1830** confers immunity from prosecution to persons who leave an unharmed newborn at a hospital, fire station, or police station or emergency services personnel within 72 hours of the child's birth. Immunity is also conferred on the hospital, fire station, police station, or personnel who receive the newborn. The personnel receiving the infant must make a reasonable effort to obtain certain information regarding the child from the person leaving the child, such as the infant's medical history.

**SB 1917**, the Housing Omnibus Bill, funds various housing and homeless programs and projects. Residents of care homes and long-term care facilities will get a needs allowance under **SB 1182**.

## PUBLIC SAFETY

**SB 932**, the Community Safety Act, will create a comprehensive continuum of support services and case management to help ex-offenders successfully re-enter the community. Assessing an offender's re-integration needs will be done at the start of the sentence so he/she has the opportunity to develop skills to function as a law abiding citizen after leaving prison. The re-entry system will include literacy and education, employment and vocational training, substance abuse and mental health treatment, housing and employment assistance, help with family and other life issues, and other programs for the offender's individual needs. A comprehensive network of transitional programs will be created to support those leaving prison. Moreover, the PSD would adopt policies to support family cohesiveness and participation in helping the offender's re-entry.

## TRANSPORTATION

Pedestrian safety improvements would be funded under **SB 1191**. Additionally, **HB 375** clarifies a driver's duty to stop for a pedestrian in a crosswalk, and imposes fines for drivers and pedestrians who fail to comply with the crosswalk law.

Ethanol would be exempted from the general excise tax under **HB 1757**. The tax credit for qualified ethanol production facilities is extended to January 1, 2017, under **HB 506**. Fuel used for intrastate air transportation would be exempted from general excise and use taxes under **SB 1034**.

## WATER, LAND, AGRICULTURE & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

Soil and water conservation districts will be funded under **HB 399**.

An archaeological data survey as an online database will be created under **SB 870**, within the State of Hawaii Museum of Natural and Cultural History. The Museum is authorized to withhold from the database any information that may pose a threat to valuable sites and artifacts.

## OTHER

A memorial to the World War II Japanese internment camp experience will be determined, and funds are appropriated for it, under **SB 1228**.

The Department of Accounting and General Services will establish hurricane resistive standards for buildings under **SB 795**.

**SB 1882** creates a low income food / excise tax credit.

*(You can reach my office by e-mail at [senespero@capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:senespero@capitol.hawaii.gov), telephone at 586-6360, or fax at 586-6361. I represent Ewa through lower Waipahu.)*