

Prevailing Winds

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McCully-Moiliili Neighborhood Board Feb. 5, 2009

They say that the first 100 days in office is the “honeymoon” period for most politicians, and that period for me has just about expired. I have been spending my days learning how the budget process works and the mechanics of how the budget is produced. I must admit that, from my perspective, government accountants make the Enron accountants look like choir boys. I have attended most of the departmental briefings and find that each department strongly supports their own programs. If we are to believe each department’s performance indicators, we should have perfect government services.

The budget, to say the least, is the most important subject we are discussing at the legislature. I believe since the January 9th Council of Revenues report, most of the legislators now agree that we have a budget deficit of an unprecedented magnitude.

You will be reading about the many ideas that are being considered at the legislature. Be cautioned that these are merely ideas. The final product must be packaged in such a way that we can meet our constitutional mandate for balancing the budget, but keeping in mind the external effects that our decisions will make. My greatest fear is, after we consider and negotiate these items, we may still be in a deficit position.

In the first 100 days of my term, Manoa, University, McCully and Moiliili have been my foremost concern. Therefore, I have introduced \$1,260,000 in Capital Improvement Projects that will directly benefit our district (excluding the CIP for UH):

1. **Manoa Elementary School: \$500,000.** For playcourt cover for blacktop area adjacent to Bldg. E (cafetorium).
2. **Noelani Elementary School: \$200,000.** For multi-purpose class room located above playcourt adjacent to Bldg. A.
3. **Roosevelt High School: \$200,000.** For update of school campus Master Plan.
4. **Manoa Public Library: \$250,000.** Equipment for new library facility—furniture, shelves, racks, displays, white boards & carts.
5. **McCully-Moiliili Public Library: \$110,000.** Construction of security gates and fence around full perimeter of library & parking area.

Interestingly, in the UH budget, there are three possible locations for the UH faculty housing area:

1. Wa’ahila Ridge (expansion of current project site)
2. Woodlawn Drive (current site of College of Tropical Ag. & Human Resources research unit)
3. Makapu’u Ave. (next to Lē’ahi Hospital)

Thanks to all of you who called my office, sent emails and letters, voicing your concerns. All of your ideas have been duly noted and written into bills that I hope will become law. A few highlights:

1. **Salary Freeze** for Governor, Lt. Gov. justices, judges, Admin. Director of the State, departmental directors, deputy directors and members of the Legislature.
2. **Continuation of the Solar Tax Credit** to help cut our dependence on foreign oil.
3. **Repeal 10% ethanol mix in gasoline requirement** since ethanol is now increasing the cost of gas.

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4. **Filing Deadlines for Elections**, Late Filings, Withdrawals & Nomination
5. **Candidate Filing and Withdrawal**—so no one messes up again.
6. **State Foundation For the Culture and Arts; Income Tax Check-off**—to support the arts.
7. **Budget**—Requires the governor or the director of finance to report restrictions of appropriations to the legislature—for more transparency.

This year's session will be very interesting; every special interest group has very convincing testimony to justify their positions. I wish someone would come and tell me that they don't have any needs and don't need any money—I know wishful thinking, what you can expect from a freshman.

In conclusion, I must say that I am impressed with my fellow colleagues. They are genuinely concerned about the people they represent. The amount of hours each of them work is tremendous. The legislative process is a bit slow coming from a business background, but the democratic process is alive and well here. Our forefathers who came up with this system knew what they were doing. Our way of government, although not perfect, is surely the best in the world. I am humbled that I can participate in this process. Please feel free to contact me with questions, voice your concerns, or just talk story.

*Aloha,
Isaac W. Choy*



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To learn more about what's going on in the square building on Beretania St. , you can access the website: www.capitol.hawaii.gov . All bills introduced by the House and Senate are listed with current updates. You can also voice your opinion by submitting testimony in person, by fax or email. We even have a Public Access Room that is available to you with copiers and TV monitors. You can also watch live webstreaming on www.olelo.org.

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