

# State Senator Sam Slom

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**Hawaii Kai Neighborhood Board #1 • Hahaione Elementary School Cafeteria • 7:00 PM • Tues., September 29, 2009.**

## Teacher Union Settles With State

The **Hawaii State Teachers Association (HSTA)** and the State of Hawaii ratified a two-year contract after votes were taken by union members consisting of all of Hawaii's public school teachers. The teachers settled for a 7.9% pay cut through a system in which 17 furlough days will be taken on Fridays beginning next month.

The teachers are the first union to settle with the state and accept a furlough plan. The 17 furlough days will impact on student class instruction time, shutting down schools on those days. Details for each school are being worked out.

## \$98 Million Budget Shortfall to Trigger More Spending Reductions for State

The Hawaii State Council on Revenues predict that tax collections this fiscal year will decline by another 1.5%. The resulting decline would expand the state budget shortfall by another **\$98 million to at least \$878 million** by June 2011.

Governor **Linda Lingle** and other state leaders are trying to find more ways to balance the budget in light of the new projection. Nine-hundred non-union employees in the executive branch will be taking a three-day furlough starting September 16. Meanwhile contract negotiations between the state and public worker unions are still being worked out, with binding arbitration set to begin tomorrow.

Already several state programs and operations have been or will be cut. These include the Kulani Prison Camp on the Big Island, the State Film Office, several positions within the State Dept. of Human Services, library hour cutbacks, and the closure of Wailupe Elementary School. More spending reductions and adjustments are coming.

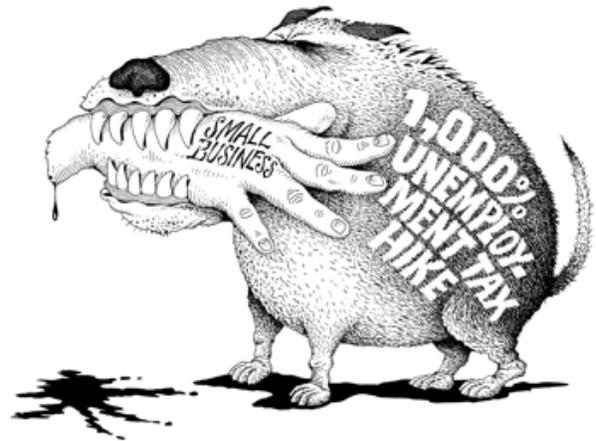
Meanwhile all cards are once again on the table say various legislative and labor leaders. While no special session is planned to tackle the budget crunch this year, some legislators are leaving options open including a general excise tax increase and diverting all of the hotel room tax revenues to the state. The same legislators know that increasing the tax burden is bad for business and everyone else.

I will continue to vote against all tax increases and seek to find solutions to the crunch by reducing spending.

## Elections Office Reform Needed

Last year I called for the firing of Chief Elections Officer **Kevin Cronin** for incompetence. After his appearance before the Senate Ways & Means Committee this week, and his refusal to answer questions, I renew my call for his firing. A competent replacement is needed.

Biting the hand  
that feeds you.



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Cartoon by John Pritchett as published in *Honolulu Weekly*.

## Unemployment Insurance Skyrockets

With half of the state's 45,000 unemployed people collecting unemployment insurance benefits this year, the State is being forced to dramatically increase unemployment insurance costs to businesses to at least \$1,040 per worker annually starting next April. The huge cost impact to business will probably mean less jobs available in the future.

## Street Light Project Curtailed

I was happy to learn that Mayor **Mufi Hannemann** announced that the City's controversial street lighting project for Lunalilio Home Road and other streets in Hawaii Kai has been curtailed. The city is still going forward with the lighting replacement program on Lunalilio Home Road from Kalaniana'ole Highway to Wailua Street. The city will replace old light fixtures with those that use less electricity.

Plans for the residential portion of Lunalilio Home Road and other areas in Hawaii Kai have been put on hold. The community believed and I agreed that the addition of more lights at more cost to taxpayers along the affected roadways were not needed. The mayor bowed to public sentiment at a meeting held on Sept. 17 which I could not attend since I was on my way to the mainland that night for a planned trip long before the meeting was announced.

## Sharks, Libraries, OHA, DOE and The Children & Youth Day Festival

- As a supporter of small businesses, I am not in favor of the City Council's **Bill 67** to ban on **shark tour operations** for Oahu. I supported the Hawaii Kai community's opposition to a new vendor operating out of the marina. I do oppose the ban of current businesses that have been in operation in Haleiwa (not a part of Hawaii Kai) on Oahu for the last 8 years without any adverse impact to the community and ocean users.
- The **Hawaii State Public Library System** kicked off a fundraising campaign to get at least 1 million library users statewide to donate \$3 each to the system to cover funds as a result of the budget shortfall.
- The annual **Children and Youth Day** program at the State Capitol grounds happens this weekend on Sunday, **October 4**. The program runs from 10 am to 3 pm and will feature a number of activities for school children up to 17 years of age. There will be food and entertainment too. Admission is free.
- The **State Department of Education** started a new diploma program that helps students be prepared for college. The new "**Step Up Diploma**" will be first awarded to graduating students in the Class of 2013.
- The **DOE** is seeking legislative authority to have the Superintendent replace principals, teachers and other staffers in schools that consistently fail to meet the federal "**No Child Left Behind**" standards. This will be an issue in the 2010 legislative session.
- The **Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA)** plans to cut 28 positions and offers a long term plan of turning over their assets to a new Native Hawaiian Government. The premise is based on the passage of the Akaka Bill says spokesperson **Clyde Namu'o**.
- Various taped sessions of the State's **50th Anniversary Commemoration Conference** which was held on August 21 will be shown on Olelo's public access channels 49 and 54 through October and November. Check your TV listings for show times or go to Olelo.org.
- Our **Senate Minority Research** office has moved from Room 007 to Room 006 in the State Capitol. They provide the Senate Minority with services such as bill drafting, analysis and document research.
- With the opening of the **Hawaii State Legislature** just 4 months away, it's to send in your bill ideas to me so that we can draft them. **Call 586-8420**.

### SENATE COMMITTEES

Judiciary and Government Relations (JGO) • Labor (LBR)  
 Economic Development & Technology (EDT)  
 Higher Education (HRE) • Tourism (TSM)  
 Transportation, International Affairs & Intergov. Affairs (TIA)

### DATES TO REMEMBER

**Saturday, October 3** — Hawaii Kai Arts & Music Festival  
 Hawaii Kai Towne Center Pavilion 2–7pm benefits Kaiser High School

**Wednesday, November 11**—Veterans' Day

**Sen. Slom & Sen. Hanabusa on Rick Hamada Radio Show**  
 Thursday mornings 7:00 to 8:00 a.m. | KHVH AM 830 Radio

## Small Business Summit Announced

The Hawaii State Legislature's Bi-Partisan Small Business **Caucus** will be holding a small business summit at the State Capitol on **October 20** from **2 to 4pm** in **Room 329**. The theme for the summit is "Problems and Prospects of Doing Business in Hawaii."

Attendees will have the opportunity to tell legislators what the biggest problems facing Hawaii businesses are, suggest how policies can be amended to help keep businesses alive and jobs available during the current economic downturn. The summit is free to all interested parties.

## Civil Rights Commission Opposes Akaka Bill

While President **Barack Obama**, the Hawaii Congressional Delegation, the Governor and the legislature are still supporting the "Native Hawaiian Government Reorganization Act" better known as the "Akaka Bill", a recent letter from the **United States Commission on Civil Rights** have come out in **opposition** of the proposal. In their letter they cite grave concerns about the constitutional authority to recognize racial or ethnic groups as dependent sovereign nations, unless those groups have a history of separate self-governance. They cited among other things, the Kingdom of Hawaii's 1840 constitution signed by **King Kamehameha III** stating that "**God has made of one blood all races of people to dwell upon this Earth in unity and blessedness**". In other words the Hawaiian Kingdom was made up of more than just native Hawaiians. I remain opposed to the Akaka Bill.



Dozens of concerned Hawaii citizens showed up at the State Capitol Saturday morning, September 12 to rally against some of the new federal and state proposals that will impact pocketbooks and lifestyle choices if enacted. Hot issues included nationwide public funded health care insurance, cap n trade, more taxes, and locally, legislative salary increases. Similar demonstrations were held nationwide with the main rally in Washington DC attracting more than 75,000 participants.

## Islam Day Was Inappropriate

I continue to oppose the state's celebration of "Islam Day" which was held last week on Sept. 24, especially since we only "commemorated" our 50th Statehood Admissions Day August 21 and our state did nothing official for 9-11 this year. I think the Islam celebration was inappropriate.