

## community corner: an intern's story

BY LANSON HO'OPAI

Some applied at Mickey D's for a part-time job. Others turned to a library for work. Not me; I ventured into a realm where most dare not to set foot in: politics.

I interned under House Minority Leader Lynn Finnegan who represents my community. During this time, I gained invaluable knowledge of the legislative process, the officials who work there, and the capitol itself.

Some people tell our officials to work harder however, the majority of our Reps. and Sens. do work as hard as they can in their positions. As an intern, I witnessed first-hand the type of work Rep. Finnegan had to accomplish, and the enormous pressure that she had to endure. And she

did it all with a heart for the people, and only for the people.

Also, as a result of various errands around the capitol, I can now name and converse comfortably with the legislators. My FB friends marvel at my knowledge of our elected officials.

Regardless of political affiliation, I would encourage anyone to seek an internship at the Capitol. The sheer knowledge any person gains from a prolonged time there will stick for a lifetime and any fear of politics will

inevitably diminish, if not fade completely. Besides, the internship will look pretty dang good on any resumé! Get involved and most importantly...VOTE!




Representative *Lynn* Finnegan District 32

# Finnegan



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# 2010 Legislative Wrap Up Report

*Aloha Neighbors and friends!*

What a year! This session began with the "hope of change" in the way we do business here in Hawaii's government. At the time of my opening day speech I reminded my colleagues that we would be faced with tough decisions based on the "nice to have's" and the "need to have's." The 2010 legislature could be an opportunity to fundamentally CHANGE the way we do things in Hawaii. Failure to change would be just that...a FAILURE. I advocated that as a body, we make a difference in the two main areas that dominate the hearts and minds of Hawaii's people: Education and the Economy. I took into consideration and reviewed the surveys sent in by all of you; neighbors, friends, and community leaders.

In this newsletter you will find not only the survey results in its entirety but also a table reflecting how

**YOU SPOKE AND I LISTENED** to what you, the majority of the people of our community, support or oppose on important issues.

Starting with Education, over 66% of you are not satisfied with the quality of our school system beginning with the Furlough Friday situation. 89% wanted the children

back in school while an overwhelming 95% would like the legislature to ensure that DOE money is spent at the classroom/school level with more accountability systems in place. This past year we passed a constitutional amendment question for the ballot allowing the people of Hawaii to decide whether the next Governor should appoint the BOE members. Only 20% of you opposed making the superintendent of DOE a cabinet position accountable to the Governor however, the legislature did not pass any legislation to ensure this.

On our Economy, most of you spoke out in strong support (75%) of additional state department cuts from our state budget, reducing governmental programs and most importantly the size of government. Two of our largest state departments include the Department of Education and Department of Human Services. The EPOD program which stands for Eligibility Processing Operations Division, attempted to reduce the number of state workers who processed welfare recipients in an effort to save \$8 million and reduce labor costs for 200+ positions. Along with the 75% support to reduce the size of government, over 50% of you favored the continuation of layoffs of state positions. While the EPOD program would not have compromised the quality of the service rendered to the recipients, it wasn't a popular decision. Therefore the legislature passed a

bill to stop the program before it started and overrode the Governor's veto as well.

As a district about 70% of you are clearly against raising GET, having a new sales tax and almost 80% opposed raising personal taxes. Hearing that mandate I opposed many of the tax increases which included opposing the \$1.05 barrel tax advocating the impact it will have on our families and households.

Although Hawaii is not out of our economic turn with more fiscal decisions to come for many small businesses and individual families, as taxes and fees have been increased, there are some hopeful signs of recovery; our unemployment looks pretty good now that we've started the prioritization process. However, I feel we can go further especially in government spending.

I am grateful for your trust in me to work with you on the various constituent concerns as well as statewide policy decisions. Although this session by far has been the most difficult - for various reasons - I would not have taken a different route. I have been both privileged and honored to represent you, the great constituents of House District 32. Mahalo a nui!

Faithfully serving you,

*Lynn*

## 2010 Community Survey Results

At the beginning of the session, I asked for your participation by responding to our survey. I thank the community members who took time to participate. Your responses and written personal comments, helped form my decisions on policy issues that affect our community.

	Strongly Support	Support	Against	Strongly Against	Unsure/ No Opinion	No Answer
<b>ECONOMY/BUDGET</b>						
Institute additional targeted departmental cuts, reducing governmental programs and the size of government.	50%	26%	10%	5%	8%	2%
Continue laying off state workers.	20%	32%	23%	11%	13%	2%
Raid the Hurricane Relief Fund (less than \$200mil) and other funds and give state workers a 5% pay cut.	7%	17%	30%	34%	12%	2%
Enable the Legislature to take the County's share of the hotel room tax (TAT).	7%	16%	29%	32%	16%	3%
Raise the general excise tax (a pyramiding tax on every step of the production and sale of goods and services).	7%	18%	21%	47%	8%	3%
Allow the Counties to impose a new sales tax, in addition to the current general excise tax (GET).	5%	16%	24%	48%	7%	1%
Increase the personal income tax.	3%	9%	32%	47%	8%	4%
<b>EDUCATION</b>						
I am satisfied with the quality of Hawaii's public education.	4%	16%	22%	44%	14%	4%
Resolve the Furlough Fridays issue, getting children back	61%	28%	5%	3%	3%	4%
Ensure that most of DOE's \$2.1 billion budget actually gets spent at the classroom and school level.	72%	23%	0%	2%	2%	2%
Focus on results and the quality of education children are receiving, instituting more accountability mechanisms for DOE.	61%	31%	3%	2%	3%	3%
Make the Superintendant of Education a cabinet position, reporting directly to the Governor.	37%	24%	9%	12%	18%	3%
Create local school districts and local school boards, instead of one statewide, centralized system.	31%	26%	14%	11%	18%	4%
Continue support for Hawaii's charter schools.	27%	38%	8%	6%	22%	4%
<b>CIVIL UNIONS</b>						
Support civil unions/same sex marriage.	10%	12%	8%	63%	7%	1%
Take up civil unions/ same sex marriage issue in this legislative session.	15%	12%	10%	53%	10%	3%
<b>FIREWORKS</b>						
Hawaii should enact a complete ban on all fireworks.	44%	14%	20%	16%	7%	0%



# YOU SPOKE AND I LISTENED

(Summarized survey. Please see complete results on page 4.)

PRE SESSION SURVEY QUESTIONS	YES	NO	Bill #	SESSION RESULTS	Pass/Fail/Veto Override	Lynn's vote
<b>ECONOMY/BUDGET</b>						
Institute additional targeted departmental cuts, reducing governmental programs and the size of government.	76%	15%				
Continue laying off state workers.	52%	34%	SB 2650	Prevents DHS changes in welfare eligibility program.	P V O	No
Raid the Hurricane Relief Fund (less than \$200mil) and other funds and give state workers a 5% pay cut.	24%	64%	HB 2542	Raids \$45 million excess balances from special funds to general fund.	Pass	No
Raise the general excise tax (a pyramiding tax on every step of the production and sale of goods and services).	25%	67%	HB 2877	Temporarily increases GET from 4% to 5%.	F	No
Increase the personal income tax.	12%	79%	HB 2421	Increases tax on crude oil from \$.05 to \$1.05/barrel.	P V O	No
<b>EDUCATION</b>						
Resolve the Furlough Fridays issue, getting children back into the classroom.	90%	8%	SB 2124	\$67 million from Hurricane Relief Fund to end furlough Fridays.	P	Yes
Make the Superintendent of Education a cabinet position, reporting directly to the Governor.	64%	21%	HB 2377	Governor to appoint BOE with advice and consent of the Senate.	P	No
<b>CIVIL UNIONS</b>						
Support civil unions/same sex marriage.	22%	71%	HB 444	Establishes civil unions similar to marriage for adults.	P V	No
<b>FIREWORKS</b>						
Hawaii should enact a complete ban on all fireworks.	58%	36%	SB 1059 HB 1987	Allows counties to ban fireworks and enact stricter ordinances. Allows for forfeiture of property if involved in illegal fireworks.	P P	Yes Yes

## 2010 Report on Legislative Passes and Failures

Bill #	Description	P=Pass F=Fail V=Veto O=Override	Veto	Action	Lynn's vote
<b>Budget/Government</b>					
HB 2598	State retains counties' share of hotel tax			F	Yes
HB 2542	Raids \$45 million excess balances from special funds to general fund			P	No
HB 444	Establishes civil unions similar to marriage for adults			P	No
<b>Business/Taxes</b>					
SB 2405	Sets up internet/mail order sales tax			F	No
HB 2421	Increases tax on crude oil from \$.05 to \$1.05/barrel			P V O	No
SB 2461	Raises rental car customer facility charge from \$1 a day to \$4.50 a day			P	No
SB 2401	Suspends high tech business investment tax credits for 3 years			P	No
HB 2877	Temporarily increases GET from 4% to 5%			F	No
SB 2402	Assesses GET on 1% on condo association fees and certain non-profits			F	No
HB 2866	"Reinstates Hawaii death tax after April 30, 2010"			P V O	No
SB 2159	Raises Traffic Abstract fee from \$7 to \$20			P V O	No
SB 2840	Requires 80% local workers on public construction projects			P V O	No
<b>Crime/Safety</b>					
SB 2045	Establishes sexual human trafficking offenses			P	Yes
SB 1059	Allows counties to ban fireworks and enact stricter ordinances			P	Yes
HB 1987	Allows for forfeiture of property if involved in illegal fireworks			P	Yes
SB 2897	Finalizes breath alcohol ignition interlock device program for DUI			P	Yes
HB 2759	Authorizes Native Hawaiian casinos			F	No
<b>Education</b>					
SB 2124	Dedicates \$67 million from Hurricane Relief Fund to end furlough Fridays			P	Yes
HB 2376	Governor to appoint BOE with advice and consent of the Senate			P	No
HB 1853	Bans the sale of ice cream and candy by public schools			F	No
HB 2486	Increases instructional days to 180 for school year 2011-2013			P	Yes
<b>Health/Social Services</b>					
SB 2469	\$24 million Rainy Day funds for health & human services agencies			P	Yes
SB 2395	Teachers health insurance (VEBA) to merge with state employees' EUTF 12/10			P	Yes
SB 2650	Prevents DHS changes in welfare eligibility program			P V O	No
SB 2599	Mandates health insurance coverage for colorectal-cancer screenings			P	Yes

