



WORKING TOGETHER TO HELP OTHERS

Please Join Us for Lunch!

Monday, March 28, 2005

11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Miyama Main Hall, Harris United Methodist Church
Nuuanu Ave. and South Vineyard Blvd.
Ample parking - driveway off Nuuanu Ave.

AGENDA:

11:30 Luncheon – Chili, Salad, Drinks, Dessert by Eloise \$5.00 donation

11:45 Welcome, Introductions and remarks, Larry Geller, President

11: 50 **Program:** Jay Conley, Director of Marketing for Hospice Hawaii, "**The State of Palliative Care in Hawaii**". Palliative care is a holistic approach to relief of pain and suffering for the terminally ill, but also for others who are or are likely to experience serious pain. People need to know about palliative care, how to talk to their physician about it and what it can do for them or their loved one.
Questions and Answers

12:45 Announcements

1:00 Adjourn

Host: Tony Lenzer

BOARD MEETING: 10:00 a.m. Preceding Lunch

Have you paid your 2005 Kokua Council Dues? Can't remember? Check the address label on this newsletter. It will have the date of your last paid membership. Membership payments are due on the first of each year.

A PLACE TO SLEEP

This past month has seen sweeps of the homeless from beach parks, bridge underpasses. Even those calling for the sweeps know they are not the answer and feel terrible about doing them, knowing there is no place for them to stay.

Many initiatives to address longer-term solutions have been proposed and are moving in this legislative session. Proposals such as repairing hundreds of public housing units, building more homes on Hawaiian Homelands, employment and training programs, housing subsidies must continue. These are good but do not address a place to sleep for the homeless.

Some ideas are being circulated; churches are considering taking in a few families in their areas, designating areas of large parks under supervision, using agency and church camp facilities, even old but functional busses. Rev. Bob Nakata, Harris United Church, says "Some of us are dedicating ourselves to such an effort and we need more to join us and while solutions are being considered and developed, a moratorium on these sweeps should be implemented."

PRESIDENT'S LETTER Larry Geller CLEAN ELECTIONS MOVING FORWARD

The House version of the clean elections bill has been debated and passed, and as I write this, the Senate version, after a long wait, was passed after only seven minutes debate. Last year just one bill crossed over, this year both have. That's progress.

Kokua Council hosted a discussion at our January 24 meeting between Laure Dillon of the Clean Elections Campaign and Bob Watada, Hawaii State Campaign Spending Commission, on the subject of publicly funded elections and continues to provide testimony on this important issue.

Today's vote in the Senate was refreshing, with support on both sides of the aisle. Not surprisingly, those who hesitated or voted "nay" included incumbents with large war chests.

While money is still the strongest kingmaker, it is still possible to run an economical campaign and come out on top. Clarence Nishihara demonstrated this in last

year's primary election as he bested Cal Kawamoto, a powerful incumbent with \$250,000 in his campaign account and ten years in office. Nishihara, new to politics and without the endorsement of his own union, pulled off his victory with a campaign fund of under \$11,000.

Kawamoto's fall may have been the magic that is pushing the reform bills forward this year. He opposed publicly funded campaigns and had even introduced legislation to strip the campaign commission of its power. The community was clearly behind Nishihara, who opposed big money's influence in campaigns, and from this year's testimony, it is behind passage of a publicly funded campaign law.

While the progress of the two bills is encouraging, it's only half time and the game isn't over. The two bills are House Bill 1713 and Senate Bill 1689. If you care about the possibility of publicly funded "clean" elections, or if you admire Senator Nishihara's victory against all odds, please take the time to support these bills through the rest of their perilous journey through to enactment.

SENIOR SCAM HOTLINE AVAILABLE

The Better Business Bureau of Hawaii has established a Senior Scam Hotline to help protect seniors from being victimized by fraudulent offers and other scams, a news release said.

Seniors and their caregivers with questions about the legitimacy of offers and propositions can anonymously call 536-8609 from 8 a.m.-2 p.m. free information and advice, the release said.

"The Senior Scam Hotline is there to help kupuna in our community sift through the piles of suspicious offers they get," said Anne Deschene, president and CEO of BBB Hawaii.

"We want individuals and families to know that their lives and problems are meaningful, and that someone understands and can help them make informed choices. We want to hear from them, both to help, but also as a way of helping to warn others."

PRIMETIME EXHIBITION AT BLAISDELL

Kokua Council has a booth Blaisdell Exhibition Hall on March 23. We will spark interest in both the coming Silver Legislature and in Kokua Council. Our booth will feature literature about our organization, the more than 15 Issues Workshops scheduled for the first step of the Silver Legislature, a sign up sheet for the Silver Legislature, literature from our various affiliated organization, a survey AND free giveaways. PrimeTime is scheduled from 9:am to 1 pm. Come visit us.

THE TRUTH ABOUT SOCIAL SECURITY-AARP'S MESSAGE *notes from Alicia Maluafiti's talk* Message One: No Immediate Danger

- Social Security needs to be strengthened now for our children and grandchildren, but the solution shouldn't be worse than the problem.
- . Social Security is in no danger of going "broke". The Social Security trust funds hold over \$1.5 trillion in Treasury bonds and earn interest every year. Without changes, it can pay 100% of benefits well into the 2040's and over 70% after that. But that is not acceptable. We have an

obligation to current and future generations to make sure that benefits will be there when they are needed—that’s why it is our responsibility to advocate for Social Security reform, not to dismantle it.

Message Two: Private accounts that drain money out of Social Security will cut guaranteed benefits while passing the bill to future generations.

- As a program that provides much needed benefits to over 44 million Americans, we cannot afford to drain money out of Social Security which will put at risk the guaranteed benefit people rely on and which will force our children and grandchildren to shoulder an unfair burden—that is why it is our responsibility to advocate for true Social Security reform.
- The “unfair burden” for our children and grandchildren comes in the form of two bills: one where they have to pay off the debt needlessly incurred during the transition to private accounts and secondly, where they have to save more to deal with the loss of secure guaranteed benefits.
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Message Three: By making sensible changes now, we can honor our obligations to all generations

- In order for us to honor our obligations, we must focus our reform on sensible, workable and efficient solutions that can make a real and lasting difference for all generations. Congress should consider options like raising the cap on the amount of wages from today’s \$90,000 to approx. \$140,000.
- Including all newly hired state and local government workers.
- Investing part of the surplus so that it earns higher returns than those offered by treasury bonds.

This last gave rise to spirited objections and discussion as playing into the hands of those wanting to privatize.

VISIT OUR NEW WEBSITE: Kokua Council.org

DEATH WITH DIGNITY UPDATE

The Oregon Department of Human Services (DHS) released its seventh annual report on the Death with Dignity law. The DHS, an independent, non-partisan state agency, is responsible for monitoring and enforcing compliance with the Oregon law. The report provides a summary of the experiences of patients and physicians who participated in the law during its seventh year of implementation (January 1, 2004 - December 31, 2004). The report's findings include: 1. 37 individuals availed themselves of the law in 2003 (approximately 12/10,000 total deaths in Oregon last year); 2. All the individuals were covered by health insurance; 3. 89% were enrolled in hospice care; 4. Those choosing Death with Dignity were well-educated (51% with college degrees) and cited loss of autonomy, decreasing ability to engage in enjoyable activities and loss of dignity as their primary end-of-life concerns; 5. 97% were able to die at home; 6. Cancer was the most common diagnosis.

End of Life Concerns

	2004	1998-2003	Total
Losing autonomy	32(87%)	145(87%)	177(87%)
Less able to engage in activities making life enjoyable	34(92%)	138(83%)	172(84%)
Loss of dignity	29(78%)	31(82%)	60(80%)
Losing control of bodily functions	24(65%)	97(82%)	121(59%)
Burden on family, friends, caregivers	14(38%)	60(36%)	74(36%)
Inadequate pain control or concern about it	8(22%)	37(22%)	45(22%)
Financial implications of treatment	2(5%)	4(2%)	6(3%)

Who Are We?

The **Kokua Council** is one of Hawaii's oldest advocacy groups. Kokua Council seeks to empower seniors and other concerned citizens to be effective advocates in shaping the future and well-being of our community, with particular attention to those needing help in advocating for themselves. "We embrace diversity and extend a special invitation to any senior or intergenerational minded individual interested in advocating for these important issues in Hawaii." All are welcome. There is a \$5 annual membership to defer printing and postage costs. At each meeting, topical issues are presented for discussion and possible action.

WHEN 4th Monday of every month, 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. **WHERE** Harris United Methodist Church @ Nuuanu and Vineyard Blvd., Ample parking and a light lunch are provided for \$5 **REACH US** c/o Harris United Methodist Church, 20 South Vineyard, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

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JOIN KOKUA COUNCIL!

Yes! I want to join Kokua Council. Here are my annual dues and my contact information. I understand that my phone number will be added to the Kokua Phone Tree and I will receive the monthly newsletter and occasional e-mails. Our fiscal year starts in January. Please make checks payable to Kokua Council.

INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS LIFE MEMBER ORGANIZATIONAL MEMBERS
____\$5.00 ____\$100.00 ____\$25.00 DONATIONS _____

Name _____ Phone _____ Fax _____ Email _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Mail to: Treasurer, Kokua Council, Harris United Methodist Church, 20 S. Vineyard Blvd.,
Honolulu, HI 96813