

April 25, 2006

Dear Senator Akaka,

The Progressive Democrats of Hawaii will be endorsing a candidate for the Democratic nomination for the United States Senate. We are interested in learning your views on issues important to our organization and hope that you will be willing to provide some answers to the questions we have provided below.

We understand that you are very busy, but would appreciate even brief responses, as these would be helpful in aiding our members in making their decisions. We intend to distribute your answers to our members and to post them on our website.

The problems facing the country are, of course, very complex and we do not expect that you will have the time to provide complete answers. But we would appreciate answers that will provide us with a general sense of how you view the issues and what values you bring to bear on these questions.

We hope to distribute your replies to our members by May 9th. Should you have any questions, please feel free to call me at 542-9084.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

Bart Dame, for
Progressive Democrats of Hawaii

PROGRESSIVE DEMOCRATS OF HAWAII QUESTIONNAIRE
U.S. SENATE

1). The United States is now engaged in a very controversial war in Iraq. Please tell us your thoughts about the way this country entered the war.

ANSWER: I opposed invading Iraq without taking time to, first, exhaust all means short of war to enforce United Nations resolutions, second, build an effective international coalition both to fight the war and to win the peace, and third, ensure that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction (WMD). I was one of 23 Senators to make that difficult decision. The most important vote any Member of Congress can take is the vote to send our young men and women into combat. I took my vote seriously. As chairman of the International Security Subcommittee, I held hearings on Iraq's WMD; I attended classified briefings; I participated in Armed Services Committee hearings, and I listened to outside experts. I was convinced that Iraq's purported WMD programs did not pose an immediate threat; that the President's post-war strategy would not work - as I said in 2002, a rush to battle without a strategy to win the peace is folly, and the price of peace both in terms of American dollars and American lives would be costly. Unfortunately for America, my concerns were proven valid. Since the President declared a "mission success" a little over three years ago, more than 2,300 Americans have died and the number continues to grow. Second, the economic cost of the war has skyrocketed. Immediately prior to the war, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld informed Congress that the total cost would be less than \$60 billion. To date, we have spent approximately \$273 billion and there is no end in sight.

How do you assess the current situation in Iraq?

ANSWER: President Bush says that "our strategy can be summed up this way: As the Iraqis stand up, we will stand down." That is a worthy objective but it is not a strategy. We need a plan of action that is a collaborative effort with the Iraqi government that clarifies objectives and goals that our military and the Iraqi security forces will follow to obtain democracy in Iraq. Without such clarity, I am deeply worried. The situation in Iraq is not improving: American casualties are climbing; Iraqi casualties are increasing; improvised explosive devices (IEDs) are becoming more deadly; Iraqi reconstruction is not succeeding and hundreds of millions of American dollars have been wasted. Iraq is now a breeding ground for international terrorists who are spreading into other countries and threatening American interests.

What steps you believe the United States should now take to solve the situation in Iraq?

ANSWER: I believe that it is imperative for the Iraqi people to be able to rebuild and defend Iraq. We cannot do it for them and we cannot want it more than they want it. But, we must provide them with the tools necessary to stand on their own. At the same time, we must ensure that progress is being made. Toward that end, I support the plan outlined by my colleague, the Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Armed Services, Senator Carl Levin, which provides a definitive, achievable exit strategy. According to this plan, the President is required to submit a report to congress every 30 days outlining what progress has been made in Iraq toward the formation of a national unity government. The plan also requires the Administration to inform Iraqi political, religious and tribal leaders that meeting their won deadlines with regard to amending the Iraqi Constitution is a condition for the continued presence of a United States military force in Iraq.

You may be interested to learn that on November 18, 2005, I did speak out on behalf of Representative Murtha (D-PA), who is a great patriotic American, and who called for an exit strategy from Iraq. His service

in the military and in the U.S. Congress cannot be measured. Everyone who knows John Murtha knows that he believes in his heart and soul in the American military and he will do everything he can to help them. He and others like him should be listened to, because he is right.

The Bush administration is making sounds like it may attack Iran over their nuclear program. Please share your thoughts about this prospect.

ANSWER: I was the Ranking Member of the International Security Subcommittee of the Governmental Affairs Committee when hearings were held on Iran. I share the concern that Iran may be secretly developing nuclear weapons and long range missiles to deliver them but I do not believe that military force against Iran is the solution. The consequences of military action, including the possibility of alienating our allies in Europe, Russia, and China who have expressed strong opposition to military action, have not been adequately assessed. We must build international support through the United Nations to impose sanctions while at the same time forming an inter-agency task force on Iran. We cannot repeat the same mistake we made in Iraq and that is to not have a clear and concise strategy for resolving this serious issue.

2). The cost of healthcare in the United States continues to climb. We currently spend more per capita on healthcare than any other industrialized nation, yet 45 million Americans have no health insurance at all, and life expectancy and infant mortality rates are worse than in other countries with comparable wealth.

The costs of healthcare puts a tremendous burden on both our people and our businesses. Families are sometimes driven to bankruptcy by unanticipated medical emergencies and healthcare costs for employers are have become a growing business expense. More and more, we are seeing healthcare as the sticking point in labor disputes.

What do you think can be done to control rising healthcare costs, while expanding coverage for all Americans?

Please share your thoughts on proposals for a single-payer health insurance plan, similar to that in Canada.

ANSWER: We need to enact reforms to ensure generic competition for name brand prescription drugs. The legitimate patent protection period needs to be respected, but we need to make sure that generic prescription drugs get to market in a timely manner and that name brand drug companies cannot simply pay generic drug companies to not make a drug. Greater use of generic drugs will help slow the increase in health care costs without reducing access.

There are too many individuals and families who are unable to pay their health care bills or afford treatment for a loved one in need. All Americans must have access to affordable, comprehensive, and quality health care coverage. I have supported efforts to establish universal health care. A single-payer health insurance plan needs to be seriously considered. However, we need to improve our existing health care system to help people now while the single-payer proposal and other long-term alternatives are studied. We need to build upon the Hawaii Prepaid Health Care Act and our Medicaid expansion waiver to increase access to those who are still without insurance. We need to better utilize programs such as the State Children's Health Insurance Program and make it easier for the self-employed and part-time employees to find and afford health insurance.

However, in the current Congress, the Majority party has taken steps to reduce access to health care rather than expand access to it. The Deficit Reduction Act contained a provision will force Medicaid beneficiaries to verify their citizenship through additional documentation requirements. For most native born citizens, this will require that they present a passport or birth certificate. These additional barriers are unnecessary due to existing requirements that check immigration status and will result in the loss of Medicaid coverage for eligible beneficiaries in communities across the country. The requirements will disproportionately impact low-income, racial and ethnic minorities, indigenous people, and individuals born in rural areas without access to hospitals. In addition, the requirements fail to provide an exemption for individuals suffering from mental or physical disabilities. The real purpose of the additional documentation requirements is to reduce the number of people on Medicaid in a short-sighted attempt to save money. All we have done is make it more difficult for citizens to get Medicaid rather than undocumented immigrants. Denying access to Medicaid unfairly will cost more money than it will save. Denying access to primary care will increase uncompensated care provided by our health care providers. Denying access to primary care will result in more pain and suffering of individuals. I have introduced legislation, S. 2305 to repeal these additional burdensome requirements.

On another health-related issue, during consideration of the bankruptcy bill, Congress failed to act to prevent the exploitation of working families that are short on cash due to unexpected medical expenses or other needs. The bankruptcy bill harmed families that have suffered financially due to illnesses, the loss of a job, or the death of a loved one. I supported efforts led by my friend Senator Ted Kennedy to better protect families forced into bankruptcy due to medical expenses. I offered amendments to better inform consumers about credit card minimum payments and force credit card companies to make concessions to consumers in credit counseling. I supported other reasonable amendments intended to protect low-income families, the elderly, and other vulnerable populations from this overly restrictive legislation. Unfortunately, these amendments were defeated. Not enough members were willing to oppose the advocates for creditors.

I am continuing to fight to protect working families from predatory lenders and overly aggressive creditors. I will also continue working to ensure that trustworthy credit counseling services are available as a viable alternative to bankruptcy, and consumers are provided with relevant and personalized credit card disclosures.

3). The increased integration of the U.S. economy into the world economy has resulted in major disruptions to the lives of many American workers and businesses. Some people believe that international agreements like GATT, NAFTA and CAFTA have undermined U.S. labor and environmental standards, led to the loss of millions of high paying jobs, and driven many small and medium sized companies out of business.

What is your position in the debate over “Free Trade” versus “Fair Trade”?

ANSWER: I believe we must have fair trade. Fair trade comes from having trade agreements that have binding and enforceable labor and environmental provisions. Free trade is not in our interest when it poses a risk to job security, causes humanitarian problems overseas, or results in environmental damage. Globalization should focus on benefitting people, not just multinational corporations. Trade agreements should help improve conditions for foreign workers and prevent environmental exploitation.

The Bush Administration has failed to negotiate trade agreements that include binding and enforceable labor and environmental protections. I have opposed these agreements and continue to fight to improve the environmental and labor provisions as trade agreements are negotiated.

What do you think can be done to ensure high wages and good working conditions in an era of international trade?

ANSWER: Education is an essential component of making sure that our businesses and workers can compete in a global economy. I have long been committed to ensuring that our schools and technology centers receive the support they need. For that reason, I sponsored S. 2450, the Homeland Security Education Act (HSEA), and have strongly supported the Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR).

I introduced the HSEA to ensure our global competitiveness and national security. The programs I proposed in the HSEA would enable our students and teachers to reach higher levels of mastery in the globally critical areas of science, technology, engineering, mathematics (STEM), and foreign languages. The HSEA would also encourage public-private partnerships to improve science and math curricula, upgrade laboratory facilities, and establish internship and mentoring opportunities for students in grades K through 12. I have long supported the need for greater investment in these areas, and, along with my colleague, Senator Richard Durbin (D-IL), have also sponsored similar legislation in the 107th and 108th Congresses to address these critical education issues and recruit individuals possessing these skills to the federal workforce.

In addition, I am an original cosponsor of the Protect America's Competitive Edge (PACE) Act. The legislation follows the guidelines of the National Academy of Sciences report entitled "Rising Above the Gathering Storm," which warns of the urgent, long-term need to cultivate America's global competitiveness in STEM education. The legislation is intended to improve the pipeline of talented STEM practitioners and teachers. The legislation also offers targeted research grants and increased funding for basic science. And for the technology centers in Hawaii, this legislation would double the current tax credits for R&D and make them permanent. Furthermore, it would permit employers to qualify for a tax credit for continuing education for its employees.

Regarding EPSCoR, this is a program funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF) which promotes the development of a state's science and technology resources through partnerships with NSF R&D grant programs and a state's universities, industry, and government. In particular, EPSCoR aims to help researchers and institutions – in states where funding has been historically low, like Hawaii – to secure federal R&D funding toward developing a state's research infrastructure and economic development.

I will work diligently with my colleagues to pass competitiveness legislation and fund research and development so that we ensure that our workforce is able to surpass expectations in the modern economy.

4). Poverty rates have been rising in the U.S. for several years. Currently, 37 million Americans are living in poverty according to government standards, including 27 million children. Yet social programs providing relief to these people have seen major cuts.

Please describe what role you think Congress can play in reducing the effects of poverty upon our people and in creating conditions that will increase economic equality rather continue the trend towards increased economic disparity?

ANSWER: The budget priorities of the current leadership in the Congress and White House are morally questionable and have contributed directly to the growing socio-economic rift that we see in this country. Current budget and tax policies continue to increase the public debt and federal deficit, unfairly target the most vulnerable in society, and disproportionately impact low- to middle-income individuals and families, while providing massive tax cuts for the rich. According to the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), the public debt will spiral to \$6.7 trillion by 2011 under current Bush Administration policies. Additionally, in contrast to the \$128 billion surplus our nation enjoyed at the close of the Clinton Administration in 2001, the deficit in FY 2006 is projected to reach \$371 billion if supplemental appropriations and other policies proposed by the President are enacted.

The Bush Administration's FY 2007 budget proposed a wide array of cuts to education, health, and human service programs, which I oppose. Education funding would be cut 29 percent from \$88.9 billion to \$63.4 billion, eliminating 42 education programs and reducing opportunities for people to acquire important 21st century workforce skills. Proposed changes would cut \$43.3 billion and \$17.1 billion, respectively, from Medicare and Medicaid, which serve greatly lower-income seniors and families, while tax benefits are rewarded to higher income families who are more financially able to participate in the President's Health Savings Account program.

I voted against S.Con.Res. 83, the FY 2007 Budget Resolution, passed by the Senate by a vote of 51 to 49 on March 16, 2006, because it reflects the President's budget in patterns of fiscal irresponsibility and misplaced priorities. The resolution includes \$228 billion in debt-financed tax breaks that disproportionately benefit special interests and multi-millionaires, an insufficient commitment to policies that could help make middle class life more affordable, and inadequate support for measures to enhance national and homeland security. The resolution also includes \$14 billion in net mandatory spending cuts, which will likely be targeted at programs vital to children, seniors, individuals with disabilities, and other vulnerable populations.

I supported maintaining fiscal discipline in the federal budgeting process by voting in favor of a Feingold amendment which would have reinstated Pay As You Go (PAYGO) requirements. Rejected by the Senate by a vote of 50-50, the amendment would have required legislation seeking to cut taxes or increase mandatory spending to be offset by spending cuts. I am pleased that the Senate voted for an additional \$7 billion for programs in the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations bill, which restores funding for certain programs in those areas to FY 2005 enacted levels.

I worked to improve the resolution by offering amendments to restore \$3 billion to Title I programs for disadvantaged students and \$1.5 billion in veterans health care funding, but as with scores of other amendments, mine were narrowly defeated. In sum total, S.Con.Res. 83 fails to address the wide array of cuts made over the previous five years to important domestic programs and continues a pattern of fiscal irresponsibility.

The moral values reflected in President Bush's FY 2007 federal budget do not reflect America. Our nation has stood for fairness and helping those who face challenging life situations. I believe that it is wrong to cut programs and services, particularly those that address the needs of low- to moderate-income families and vulnerable populations, while providing tax cuts for the well-off in our society. As the Congress considers budget priorities and tax policies, I will continue to advocate for a morally-sound federal budget that reflects values of fairness and restores economic equality, rather than leads us further on the path to economic disparity.

I will also continue working to pass real initiatives that work to educate and empower individuals through financial and economic literacy – debt and credit management, better investing, higher rates of savings, and decisionmaking grounded in basic economic principals. I have authored and funded the Excellence in Economic Education Act to increase economic and financial literacy in an age-appropriate manner for elementary and secondary school students.

For the adult population, I have fought to protect Earned Income Tax Credit benefits from being eroded through sometimes triple-digit interest rate Refund Anticipation Loans. I have also worked to combat predatory lending and expand consumer-friendly lending alternatives that do not have hidden fees or exorbitant interest rates. I am working to bring the unbanked into mainstream financial services so that they will not be taken in by such abusively marketed products. We must ensure that Americans are economically and financially literate, which can only help them in their roles as parents, workers, managers, business and government leaders, voters, and citizens in their communities.

5) The federal elections in both 2000 and in 2004 were marred by voting irregularities and by the widespread disenfranchisement of voters. Voters have not had equal access to reliable voting systems, voters have been purged from voting rolls in ways

that appear to have been designed to suppress turnout of poor and minority voters, and there is widespread concern that new, paperless voting systems are being forced upon voters that lack adequate safeguards against votes being lost due to system failures or even deliberate fraud.

What can be done to ensure that all voters have an equal chance of casting their votes, that the votes shall be counted on secure systems, and that the results can be verified in a manner that gives voters confidence?

ANSWER: The right to vote is a foundational part of being an American citizen. Until every citizen has access to the polls, and every vote is accurately counted, our democracy is not as strong as it should be. Each vote should be tabulated accurately with a readily verifiable record. I believe that without a paper receipt system to audit the results, it is difficult to determine if voting machines accurately count all votes. All Americans deserve an election process that is executed expeditiously and fairly. The legitimacy of our government depends on all citizens having equal access to the polls.

I am proud to be an original cosponsor on S. 2703, a bill to amend the Voting Rights Act of 1965. This bill, which was introduced on May 3, 2006, will reauthorize and reinvigorate the temporary provisions of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. In particular, S. 2703 will prevent discriminatory voting laws from being enacted, and will also continue to require bilingual voting assistance. I am hopeful that the Senate will consider on this important piece of legislation this Congress, so that future elections can continue to benefit from these provisions.

6). What are other important issues facing the country?

ANSWER, SOCIAL SECURITY: I support the Social Security as a social insurance program. Social Security has been our nation's most successful and effective retirement and anti-poverty program. Its defined benefit and portability features, coupled with a progressive benefit structure and annual inflation adjustments, provide a degree of financial security for retirees and serve as an important safety net for individuals with disabilities and surviving spouses and children of deceased workers.

Social Security is essential to the retirement security of women. Fifty-seven percent of adult beneficiaries are women. Many women dedicate a considerable number of years raising children or serving as caregivers for elderly parents, spouses, or other relatives. As a result, they are less likely to work in jobs offering pension plans or have adequate resources to invest or save for retirement.

President George W. Bush's privatization proposal is unworkable and unacceptable. Privatization undermines the social insurance principle of the Social Security program and changes it into an investment program. Under privatization, the guaranteed defined benefit social insurance safety net becomes a defined contribution retirement gamble, and I oppose privatizing the Social Security program.

ANSWER, ENVIRONMENT: As many know, throughout my years as a public servant in Congress, I have been a stalwart supporter of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) and subsequent environmental protection laws such as the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, Ocean Dumping Act, and Endangered Species Act, and I know firsthand the positive effect that these landmark measures have had on Hawaii and our nation. Under NEPA, the environmental assessment and environmental impact statement process has prevented or mitigated destruction and degradation of valuable habitats and important cultural sites. The air we breathe, water we drink, and ocean we swim in and rely on for food is safer in part because of NEPA. NEPA has also been a major factor for increasing citizen participation and government transparency.

Our nation has come a long way in protecting our environment since Rachel Carson published *Silent Spring*. Protecting and strengthening our environmental laws is a high priority of mine, and I remain committed to oppose President Bush and majority party attempts to weaken environmental protection measures.

INVASIVE SPECIES – Invasive species have wreaked havoc in some parts of the U.S., especially in Hawaii. On our islands, the threat is especially critical and is the main reason for the loss of biological diversity. Approximately 5,047 species, or 22 percent, of the 23,150 known species of plants and animals in Hawaii are not native, and the rate of new introductions to Hawaii has increased from one per year to an average of 35 per year. I understand the critical importance of mitigating the threats of invasive species in order to protect Hawaii's economic and environmental future. I have championed the fight against invasive species and initiated and signed onto Dear Colleague letters urging increased funding for programs to combat invasive species.

I am an original cosponsor of the National Aquatic Invasive Species Act (NAISA), which reauthorizes, strengthens, and expands the National Invasive Species Act of 1996. It includes provisions requiring vessel operators in U.S. waters to comply with interim standards for ballast water exchange and create management plans that minimize new introductions and transfers of invasive species. The current standards for ballast water exchange are voluntary and compliance is low. NAISA also requires screening for all new importations of live aquatic organisms. The bill provides for the identification of high risk pathways for new species introductions with the long-term goal of preventing new introductions.

I introduced the Public Land Protection and Conservation Act. The bill attempts to create the land-based equivalent to NAISA. It offers a comprehensive plan for federal aid to assist the states in their implementation of terrestrial (land-based) alien species programs. The bill includes state assessments, control grants, and rapid response funds. The bill is one step toward enhancing capabilities at the ground level for invasive species assessment and awareness.

In addition, I held field hearings in Hawaii on invasive species. This resulted in \$700,000 in FY04/05 funding for Hawaii. In addition, I helped secure \$2.7 million to protect Hawaii from the threat of brown tree snakes.

OCEANS, REEFS, AND FISHERIES – I have been a strong advocate for healthy oceans and coral reefs, and sustainable use of ocean resources. I was an original cosponsor of the Oceans Act in 2000 (and a cosponsor in 1999), a bill that established a national oceans commission to review the laws and regulations governing oceans, and to make recommendations on how to improve them. The bill was enacted in 2000, and I supported President Clinton's executive order implementing the Act. The Commission's report was released in 2005, and Congress is now considering changes to the laws and policies dealing with oceans.

Through my advocacy of coral reefs and support of the Conservation and Reinvestment Act (CARA) in 2000, I was able to bring oil revenues from the Outer Continental Shelf to the Department of Commerce in an appropriations deal brokered over CARA (\$25 million for 2 years). Section 104 of the coastal programs section of the bill (Title I) is modeled after my coral reef protection initiative. I also worked to include a strong coastal stewardship title in the bill, including much-needed funding for coral reef resources. The bill allocates \$25 million for coral reef preservation to be divided between the Interior and Commerce Departments.

Because of my long-term commitment, working with Senator Inouye, we were able to fund the Coral Reef program at \$25 million since 2000. I sponsored S. 1888, the Coral Reef Resource Conservation and Management Act (1999), which created a \$25 million research grant program to conserve reefs under the jurisdiction of the Department of the Interior. I also took the lead on Dear Colleagues letters from reef-states (FL, HI) in support of appropriations for coral reef research and education.

I have also long supported bills and activities to prevent and to clean up debris in the oceans – in particular the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands – and provided video remarks to the International Marine Debris Conference on Derelict Fishing Gear and the Ocean Environment, in Honolulu, on August 8, 2000. I am a cosponsor of S. 362, the Marine Debris Research and Reduction Act, which would establish a program to reduce and prevent marine debris.

I supported the establishment of the Humpback Whale Sanctuary. I also supported the establishment of the Northwestern Hawaiian Island (NWHI) Marine Sanctuary since the designation process formally began in 2002. This structured process has given multiple groups including fishermen, scientists, federal and state agencies, and the Native Hawaiian community, opportunity to voice their concerns. I am dedicated to

ensuring that conservation and preservation needs are balanced with the cultural use and wise stewardship of NWHI resources.

I have consistently requested additional appropriations to provide for more observers on the Hawaii longline fishing fleet – to observe for turtles, sea-birds, and other by-catch. This resulted in FY 2004 funding of \$4 million. I supported the introduction of circle hooks and other methods to decrease the number of by-catch turtles and other species by the long-line fleet.

I have also worked hard to protect the endangered leatherback sea turtle, which is one of the magnificent honu that live in our oceans. I have supported additional research on fishing gear improvements to reduce bycatch and restrictions on gear, such as “circle” hooks to discourage bycatch of sea turtles.

A major contributor to the problem of sea turtle decline is the loss of habitat throughout the Pacific and fishing practices of foreign fleets. Both are difficult to influence through the nation’s legislative system. I support U.S. accession to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea Treaty (UNCLOS) Treaty and cosponsored two bills in the 108th Congress (S. 2647 and S. 2648) that embrace many of the principles outlined by the final report of the U.S. Commission and the Pew Commission on Ocean Policy. I will continue to look for ways to support international conventions and oversight of industrial longline fishing. I believe that the UNCLOS Treaty is the best way for the U.S. to be heard internationally on the issues of maritime security, resource governance, and conservation.

FORESTS – In 1992, my bill, the Hawaii Tropical Forest Recovery Act (S. 2679) was signed into law (P.L. 102-574). The Act resulted in new and expanded facilities at the Institute of Pacific Island Forestry and established the Hawaii Tropical Forestry Recovery Task Force. The Task Force was charged with creating a plan for rejuvenating Hawaii’s tropical forests. A draft Hawaii Tropical Forest Recovery Action Plan was distributed in 1994 followed by a five-year strategy to implement the plan. Elements in the tropical forestry plan include the study of biological control of non-native species that degrade or destroy native forest ecosystems and global climate change and the significance of achieving a reduction of greenhouse gases through research associated with the unique atmospheric conditions found in Hawaii and the Pacific Ocean.

I have also been a strong advocate for the preservation and protection of our national forests, wilderness, and wild areas on public lands. I strongly supported the Clinton Administration’s initiative to inventory and protect remaining roadless areas in national forests. In May 2002, I joined my colleagues in the Senate in a letter to President Bush urging him to keep the Administration’s promise made on May 4, 2001, to uphold and defend the U.S. Forest Service’s Roadless Area Conservation Rule to protect 58.5 million acres of America’s wild national forests from road-building. Since the 107th Congress, I have cosponsored the Roadless Area Conservation Act, which would have codified the Roadless Area Conservation Rule into law.

I also believe that we must carefully evaluate drilling in monuments, national parks, and other wilderness areas. I supported legislation (S.Amdt. 879, to H.R. 2217, the FY 2002 Interior Appropriations bill), which prohibits expenditure of Department of the Interior funds for pre-leasing or leasing activities under the Mineral Leasing Act and the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act in all national monuments designated pursuant to the Antiquities Act of 1906. The amendment covers federal oil, gas, coal, and geothermal deposits managed by the Interior Department under the two mineral leasing statutes within the boundaries of all national monuments in effect as of January 20, 2001, unless the proclamation designating a national monument allowed for that activity.

In addition, I have strongly supported the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Forest Legacy program. This has resulted in \$2.7 million for the McCandless Ranch to protect critical habitats and \$3.4 million for purchasing Wao Kele o Puna.

In the Senate, working with delegation members and the Senator James Jeffords, Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, I led the effort to pass the Kilauea Point National Wildlife Refuge Expansion Act of 2004 (P.L. 108-481).

Additionally, I was also instrumental in securing federal funding to help purchase Muolea Point on Maui.

NATIONAL PARKS – I have been a strong advocate for expanding, enhancing and caring for the nation's and Hawaii's national parks and refuges. I had the honor of twice being named a "Friend of the National Parks," by the National Parks Conservation Association, based on my voting record in Congress in support of our nation's parks.

I am the lead Democrat to increase National Park Service (NPS) funding for FY 2007; my similar efforts in FY 2006 resulted in an increase in operations funding over the President's request. I also sponsored an amendment to the transportation bill to increase the amount of funding for parks roads. This resulted in an increase in funding for national park roads.

Additionally, I have consistently advocated for cultural resources and the voice of the people, in insisting that NPS include interpretations of the histories and cultures from all nations and peoples. I introduced S. 2478, the Peopling of America Theme Study Act, for a theme study on the manner that various migrations contributed to the history of America, and to commemorate major 'peopling' or migrations.

I supported President Clinton's initiative in the NPS to document and establish a National Historical Park at Manzanar, Calif., to preserve the site and history of the Japanese-Americans interned during WW II. In the 109th Congress, I cosponsored with Senator Inouye, a bill (S. 1719) to provide for the preservation of the historic confinement sites where Japanese Americans were detained during World War II, and for other purposes. S. 1719 would authorize \$38 million for the national grant program that may be used for eligible sites in Hawaii including the Honouliuli Relocation and Sand Island Detention Centers.

I am an original cosponsor of the Angel Island Immigration Station Restoration and Preservation Act (S. 262), which was signed into law (P.L. 109-119). This Act authorizes appropriations to restore the Angel Island Immigration Station in San Francisco Bay. More than one million immigrants entered the United States through the Angel Island Immigration Station between 1910-1940.

I also sponsored the Hawaiian National Park Language Correction Act of 1999 (P.L. 92-388), which changed the statutory names of certain Hawaii parks to reflect their correct Hawaiian spelling.

My leadership in the Senate as Chair and Ranking Member of the Senate Subcommittee on National Parks resulted in the enactment of the Air Tour Management Act of 2000, which was included as part of the Wendell H. Ford Aviation Investment and Reform Act for the 21st Century (P.L. 106-181). The law required the Federal Aviation Administration and National Park Service to work with air tour companies to develop plans for reasonable air tour traffic around national parks. This resulted in Hawaii being the first state in the nation to have air tour management plans for its national parks (Hawaii Volcano National Park, Haleakala, and Kalaupapa), creating more positive experiences for visitors and residents in and around national parks.

In addition, I have sponsored many park bills for Hawaii that have been enacted into law. These include:

- Hawaii Volcanoes National Park Adjustment Act of 1998 and of 2000
- Pu'uhonua O Honaunau National Historical Park Addition Act of 2001
- Kaloko-Honokohau National Historical Park Addition Act of 2003
- Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail Act of 2000
- Palmyra Island National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) (\$1.25 M for FY 2001)

GLOBAL WARMING – I am very concerned about the impact of fossil fuel emissions on the health of our planet and believe that we must actively seek solutions to curb the buildup of greenhouse gases. I supported carbon sequestration projects in forestry and credits for carbon dioxide reduction prior to the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol. The global warming debate began in Hawaii more than 30 years ago when the Mauna Loa Climate Observatory first documented evidence of increased carbon dioxide levels in the earth's atmosphere. The international scientific community now concurs that human activities are altering the climate system. I have seen firsthand the impact that increased sea levels can have on Hawaii and other Pacific island communities. Coastal shorelines as well as entire islands are slowly disappearing and more protracted El Nino-like events have been forecast by climate models.

I cosponsored legislation to address global warming, including the Climate Stewardship Act (CSA) introduced by Senators Joseph Lieberman and John McCain. The CSA would establish a program to secure

emissions reductions in the short term while providing an emissions cap and trade system with market-based flexibility to minimize the costs to industry. The CSA would limit the greenhouse gas emissions from the electric utility, industrial, and manufacturing sectors, and require aggregate greenhouse gas emissions to be reduced to the 2000 level for these four sectors by the year 2010. The cap and trade system as provided in the CSA, combined with job-generating American technology and ingenuity, can allow the U.S. to take this modest step to be a leader among nations adopting carbon emissions stabilization policies.

FUEL ECONOMY – I am an advocate for increasing fuel efficiency standards for automobiles and trucks. SUVs and light trucks comprise more than half of the new car sales in the U.S., and as a consequence the overall fuel economy of our nation's fleet is the lowest it has been in two decades. The debate over CAFE standards has taken on increased importance because of the growing number of vehicles with lower fuel efficiencies, rapidly escalating gasoline prices, and restrictions in supplies due to events such as Hurricane Katrina.

Fuel efficiency in the transportation sector is an important component of a national energy policy. The transportation sector contributes 32 percent of carbon dioxide emissions from fossil fuel combustion, the vast majority of all our U.S. greenhouse gases, compared to other commercial or industrial sectors. The National Academy of Sciences, in its Congressionally mandated study, concluded in 2002 that significant increases in CAFE standards are technically possible using conventional technologies, without compromising safety, with adequate lead time.

I have cosponsored numerous bills and amendment to address this issue, including legislation offered by Senator Dick Durbin, that would have increased the fuel economy standards for cars and for light trucks, including SUVs. Passenger cars would ramp up to 40 miles per gallon by 2016 and non-passenger vehicles would ramp up to 27.5 miles per gallon by 2016. I also cosponsored the Automobile Fuel Economy Act (S. 255), that would have increased CAFE standards for light trucks and automobiles (up to 10,000 pounds gross vehicle weight) to 27.5 miles per gallon by 2011. The bill would have also increased CAFE standards for certain classes of vehicles in the Federal fleet that are manufactured or purchased after specified dates. I remain committed to increasing CAFE standards for automobiles and trucks.

ENERGY – As a senior member of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, I have been a leader in promoting renewable and alternative energy sources, such as wind, solar, wave, ocean thermal cooling, ethanol, and hydrogen. My energy initiatives have focused on using cleaner and more efficient sources of fuel for the future to alleviate America's and Hawaii's dependence on foreign oil. I have consistently supported budget requests and appropriations for energy sciences and research and development.

My vision looking at our nation's energy future resulted in legislation enacted into law that I sponsored and cosponsored relating to hydrogen and methane hydrates. This has resulted in a cutting-edge hydrogen fuel cell project at Hawaii Natural Energy Institute. Additionally, working with Senator Inouye, I helped secure \$3 million for the Hydrogen Gateway project in FY 2006.

I am a founding member of the Senate Hydrogen Caucus, which is dedicated to increasing the visibility and knowledge of the hydrogen economy. I introduced the Hydrogen Future Act and am committed to pursuing hydrogen legislation to reauthorize programs that will help the nation move away from dependence on foreign oil. I also introduced the Methane Hydrate Research and Development Reauthorization Act of 2005, which reauthorizes the methane hydrate research and development program through FY 2010.

My support for ethanol as a renewable source of energy resulted in \$36 million for demonstration projects to convert sugar cane into ethanol. It is also resulted in a loan guarantee program that will help our state ethanol manufacturers capitalize their production facilities for sugar cane-to-ethanol at \$50 million per project.

I also opposed providing liability waivers for manufacturers of the gas additive Methyl Tertiary Butyl Ether (MTBE) because it would leave it to counties and cities to pay for the cleanup of groundwater contamination, and because it is just bad public policy.

What are your particular legislative priorities and why should Hawaii's voters choose to vote for you?

ANSWER: Over the past 30 years in Congress, I have had the privilege to serve in both chambers to serve the people of Hawaii and this great nation. I am privileged to serve as the Ranking Member of the Veterans' Affairs committee as well as the Subcommittees on Readiness and Management Support (Armed Services), National Parks (Energy & Natural Resources), Oversight of Government Management and the Federal Workforce (Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs). My priorities have been and continue to be:

- ensuring funding for quality VA health care, services and benefits for our nation's veterans
- providing our armed forces with the best equipment and training possible to ensure their safety as defend our nation
- ensuring accountability and transparency in federal contracts
- ensuring that Hawaii's homeland security needs are addressed by the federal government, and ensuring that the non-homeland security functions in the Department of Homeland Security are not overshadowed by homeland security functions;
- working to develop renewable resources and alternative energy, and protect our environment and natural resources, in Hawaii and across the nation
- developing creative methods to address water shortages
- ensuring greater educational access and adequate funding for the mandates in No Child Left Behind
- making the federal government an employer of choice; attracting and retaining a skilled workforce who enjoy competitive pay and benefits with the private sector, and ensuring that collective bargaining and appeal rights of federal employees are protected
- providing educational opportunities for students to learn the basics of economic and financial literacy, and
- formally extending the federal policy of self-governance and self-determination to Hawaii's indigenous peoples, Native Hawaiians.

These are my priorities because they are important to the people of Hawaii.