

Keiki Caucus Meeting Notes
Tuesday, June 20, 2006

The Keiki Caucus meeting was convened in room 225 at the Capitol on Tuesday, June 20th at 11:30 am. Sen. Suzanne Chun Oakland conducted the meeting. The usual representatives of agencies and departments working in the health, education and welfare areas were in attendance.

Emergency Preparedness: Emergencies may be hurricanes, tsunamis, terrorist attacks, floods, pandemics and perhaps others we don't know about yet. One or more of these events **WILL** occur in the future. We just don't know when. We must prepare now. When the event is upon us, it is too late.

Layton from the State Civil Defense staff talked to us on the subject of preparedness. There is a Federal level, a State level, a County level and finally the local community/family level. He gave us handouts on all aspects, including pets. HECO has been a leader in the private sector publicizing what needs to be done. The plan must include live practices to ensure that everyone knows what to do when the emergency hits.

The Keiki Caucus sees planning and practicing at the local family and community level as very important. At the very least, families should have a survival box and a plan for where members will go and how they will keep in touch.

At the City and County level there is an office responsible for setting up Community Emergency Response Teams in our local communities. John Cummings, phone, 523-4121, is in charge of this activity.

The Keiki Caucus will look at possible legislation which would support activities at the local community and family level.

Glenn from the DOE told us about the steps they are taking to meet these emergencies. Every school in the state has a plan to meet these emergencies. Each has a emergency response team which will go into action when needed to back up the administration. Evacuation drills, lockdown drills and shelter provision are all practiced. The hard part for the schools will be to keep communications with the parents. This is an area which requires further work by parents and schools to get a functional plan.

A great deal of work has been done for emergency preparedness but more still needs to be done, especially at the local level.

Tobacco-Flavored Cigarettes and Cigars: Tobacco companies have escalated marketing of flavored cigarettes and cigars over the past few years. They are targeting the population 24 years and younger. Flavors are changed regularly to attract new customers. "Cigars" are really very much like cigarettes. They are sold individually which avoids the tax and makes them cheaper. Bills are being developed which will address this form of tobacco marketing.