UNITED STATES CONGRESSWOMAN

PAT SAIKI

REPORTS FROM WASHINGTON, D.C.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, WASHINGTON, D.C. — MARCH 1990

Aloha!

The 1990 Congressional year is in full swing with many important issues on the agenda.

The Bush administration has presented its budget for consideration and it continues his "no new taxes" policy.

The federal deficit remains a priority for it looms over us all as we struggle to meet the needs of the nation.

Child care legislation, a clean air policy, education initiatives, housing needs, long-term care strategies, and transportation funding will dominate this year's agenda.

In this my first report of the year, I shall highlight some of the major issues we are facing, and give you a sketch of how the federal government decides how it will budget your tax dollars for the coming year.

I hope the information is helpful as an overview of what is to come.

If you have any questions, suggestions, or thoughts about the work in Congress, please let me know by writing or calling my Washington or Honolulu office. Your input is always very valuable, and I thank everyone who has taken the time to write to me in the past.

Sincerely,

Pat

Patricia Saiki
Member of Congress

Congresswoman Saiki joins Senate Leader Bob Dole and other Members calling for repeal of the social security earnings limitation to allow more seniors to work without losing benefits.

HOUSE PASSES SAIKI AMENDMENT...

HAWAII, PACIFIC FISHERIES PROTECTED

In February, by a vote of 396 to 21, the U.S. House of Representatives passed and sent to the Senate the Magnuson Act, including the Saiki amendment, which includes tuna within the conservation and management provisions of the law.

This is the nation's most comprehensive policy for the development and management of fisheries within Hawaii's and the nation's 200-mile Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

It provides for regional councils to assess the health of the U.S. fisheries and to prohibit foreign fishermen from taking fisheries which are in danger of depletion. *Continued on page 2*

CHILD CARE TOP PRIORITY

Congress this year will very likely send to the President comprehensive child care legislation, the passage of which has been designated a top priority in the House of Representatives.

Currently, House and Senate conferees are meeting to fashion a compromise between two versions of legislation passed earlier.

The need for child care is obvious and national in scope. An estimated 53 percent of mothers with children under age three are employed today, and working mothers with school-aged children number close to 80 percent.

Congresswoman Saiki has long supported measures to provide for the welfare of our young children, and the legislation

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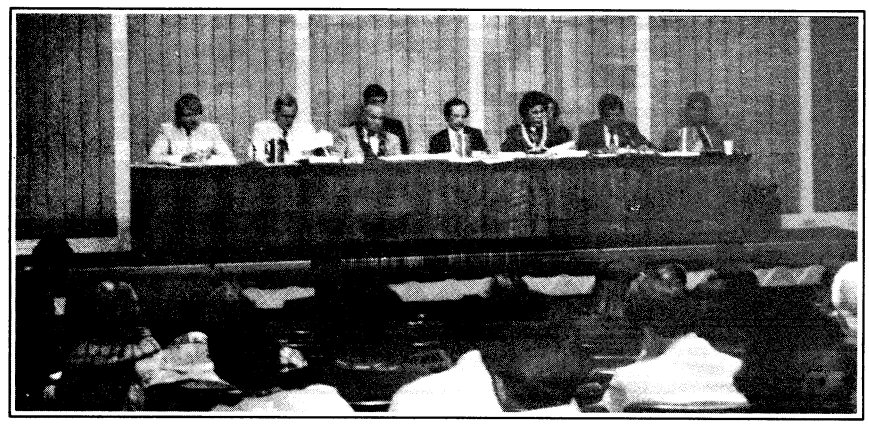
HONOLULU HEARINGS FOCUS ON PACIFIC ISSUES

The Fisheries Conservation and Management Act, known as the Magnuson Act — passed recently by the House and now before the Senate — was one among many issues discussed at special hearings in Honolulu earlier this year.

Congresswoman Saiki was credited with bringing the House Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries to Hawaii for the sessions.

The Committee considered as well the renewal of legislation providing for a federal-state partnership to protect coastal areas; protections against mineral mining of the ocean seabed in the U.S. 200-mile Exclusive Economic Zone; and the extension of the Territorial Sea to 12 miles and the impact of that policy on U.S. Territories.



Congresswoman Saiki and members of the Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee met in Honolulu to hear Hawaii/Pacific experts on marine, coastal and environmental issues.

"As long as the USA has a tuna policy which runs counter to the policies of every other nation, we will be perceived as adversaries in regional tuna management."

—Governor Peter Coleman, American Samoa

"As Hawaii enters the 1990s on a wave of foreign investment and seemingly endless development, it is essential to address these critical environmental issues."

— Skip Spaulding, Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund

"My associates in gamefishing throughout the Islands and countries of the Pacific cannot understand why we do not manage tuna in our own EEZ..."

— Peter Fithian, Chairman, Hawaiian International Billfish Tournament

HOUSE PASSES SAIKI AMENDMENT...

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The Saiki amendment will provide protection to a valuable fishery that otherwise might face depletion from foreign fishermen encroaching into Hawaii waters. This is the first successful passage in 14 years of attempts to include tuna.

Congresswoman Saiki was strongly supported in her effort to secure passage of the tuna amendment by all Pacific Governors and numerous local and national environmental groups.

The measure is now pending in the Senate.

Driftnets Also A Target

The same legislation includes new provisions to secure an international ban against large-scale driftnet fishing . The bill requests that the Secretary of State work toward an international agreement banning these miles-long devices, the effects of which have been described as "strip-mining of the ocean."

They have been criticized as indiscriminate killers of all kinds of sea life including marine mammals and sea birds. Driftnets have been particularly harmful to Pacific Island nations who rely on their healthy fisheries for economic survival.

"How Our Laws Are Made"

If you would like to receive a copy of "How Our Laws Are Made," a booklet on the federal lawmaking process, please send the following information to Congresswoman Saiki's Washington office:

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1609 Longworth HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515

Name_____

Address_____

City/State/Zip_____

CHILD CARE TOP PRIORITY

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being considered addresses the goals of affordable, safe, and quality child care.

Basically, two proposals are being considered:

Version One...

- ❑ Funds early childhood development
- ❑ Expands Head Start
- ❑ Funds schools to start before/after school programs
- ❑ Provides grant programs for low/moderate-income parents to pay for child care of their choice
- ❑ Provides incentives for businesses to start child care facilities

Version Two...

- ❑ Expands Head Start
- ❑ Funds Schools to start before/after school programs
- ❑ Provides most funding to states to begin programs
- ❑ Requires states to adopt standards for all state-supported child care programs
- ❑ Expands the Earned Income Tax Credit for low-income families with children

PENDING PRIORITY ISSUES

Clean Air Act Gains Momentum In Senate: A recent compromise between key Senators and the Administration have given new impetus to clean air legislation. The House has yet to consider the legislation.

Defense Budget Under Scrutiny: Hearings on defense programs have already begun, and the major funding bill for the Department of Defense is expected to reach the House floor by April or early May.

Family And Medical Leave Considered Soon: House debate and action is expected this spring.

Major Housing Legislation: Congresswoman Saiki's Housing Subcommittee will consider major housing legislation in April. A bill is expected to reach the House floor in July.

Congresswoman Saiki, Governor Waihee and Mayor Fasi meet at the U.S. Capitol to stress the strong case for federal funding of Honolulu's mass transit system.

LONG-TERM HEALTH CARE REPORT ISSUED

PEPPER COMMISSION PROMPTS EARLY REACTION

The bipartisan Pepper Commission, named after the late Florida Congressman Claude Pepper, an unequivocal advocate for the elderly, has proposed a major set of recommendations to provide long-term health care for all Americans.

It recommended a $42.8 billion plan to provide long-term health care for all Americans, and was divided on a $23.4 billion plan to assist Americans who currently lack health insurance coverage.

Congress is reacting cautiously, however, especially after last year's controversy over catastrophic health care legislation. Other criticism has surfaced because the Commission did not identify the means for financing the program.

Congresswoman Saiki has advocated a long-term health care plan which would provide government aid to persons in immediate need of long-term care who have financial difficulties, and would preserve the role of private insurers to meet long-term care needs in future decades.

Among some of the commission's proposals:

- ❑ Three months nursing home care assistance
- ❑ Home care assistance for severely disabled
- ❑ Tax incentives for businesses to provide health care

In Hawaii, an estimated 34,000 people need some kind of long-term health care, according to a recent Hawaii Legislative Reference Bureau analysis. The same report predicted that by 2010, Hawaii's senior population will increase by 65 percent, bringing the number to an estimated 188,000.

A federal long-term health care plan might allow Hawaii's families to plan for their retirement with more security and without the fear of financial devastation.

HOW THE FEDERAL BUDGET PROCESS WORKS

Here is a brief summary of how Congress decides to spend our tax dollars this year. Updates on the budget process will be reported on as the year progresses.

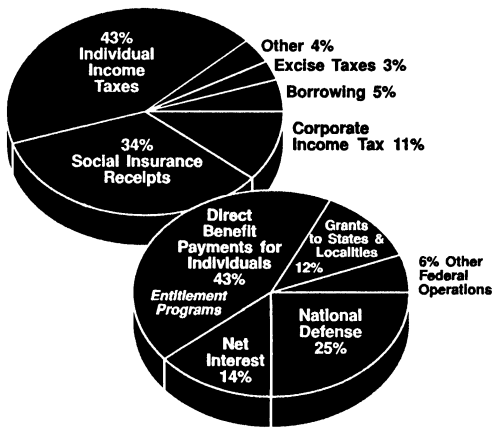
President Bush in January sent his budget proposal to Congress for 1991 which calls for spending $1.23 trillion. If adopted, it would reduce the federal deficit to $63.1 billion with no new taxes. It further calls for elimination of the deficit by 1993.

Where the federal dollar comes from, and where it goes, is shown in the chart below.

President Bush's Proposed Budget

The Federal Government Dollar
Fiscal Year 1991 Estimate

Where It Comes From



Where It Goes

However, many steps are taken before the budget finally passes.

In practice, the President's budget is rarely enacted as proposed. The final law is the product of intense deliberations between Congress and the Administration.

The President may only approve or reject congressional legislation in its entirety, and only Congress has the power to write tax and appropriations laws. Therefore, many feel that Congress wields greater budget power.

Here's a look at the budget timetable...

- ❑ **January 29, 1990: President proposes budget to Congress; Congress holds hearings and develops budget alternatives.**
- ❑ **April 15, 1990: Deadline for Budget Resolution. Congressional passage required.**

This stage has produced only a budget "blueprint," setting overall levels of taxing and spending. Ceilings are set for major program areas, and now important legislation to "fill in the blanks" remains to be worked out.

First the House, then the Senate, must pass "appropriations bills" for 13 major areas of federal spending. Each bill is debated and passed.

Each of these bills must go through the same House-Senate conference procedure to work out any differences between the two chambers' versions of the legislation. These conference agreements must again be passed by both chambers and signed by the President.

- ❑ **May 15, 1990: Consideration begins on appropriations bills**
- ❑ **June 10, 1990: deadline for Committees to send bills to House floor for debate**

The last major step in the federal budget process is generally the "budget reconciliation" bill. This bill usually functions as a catch-all measure to make the legislative changes necessary to reduce spending and/ or raise revenues to accomplish the deficit reductions mandated by the original budget resolution.

- ❑ **June 15, 1990: Deadline for House passage of budget reconciliation bill**
- ❑ **June 30, 1990: Deadline for passage of appropriations bills**

Under the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings balanced budget law, an automatic sequester may take place if the Congress has failed to reduce the deficit to the level mandated by this law.

- ❑ **October 1, 1990: Federal fiscal year 1991 begins**

1991 BUDGET DEBATE

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Official Business

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M.C.

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