

Chronological: IBEW Local 1357, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, 1992-09-07

Senator Daniel K. Inouye Papers
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STATEMENT BY U.S. SENATOR DANIEL K. INOUE
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MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 1992

America's workers, Hawaii's workers -- we're not lazy, and we're not finished. We are just "Bushed."

It took the President 533 days to acknowledge that our nation was in a recession. And it took the U.S. Senate three tries to extend unemployment benefits and avoid the "Big V" -- the Veto. Meanwhile, our unemployment rate is fast approaching 8 percent, and many states are into double digits. We are experiencing the worst recession since President Hoover's Great Depression.

The Congress just passed another version of the Family and Medical Leave Act. It is such a simple measure -- to allow parents to take unpaid leave to care for their child, themselves, or their parent. We should not force a choice between the family, and the livelihood to support that family. As I left Washington, I was advised that the President would probably "Return it to Sender," stamped once again with the "Big V."

The same is true for the Striker Replacement Act which would prohibit management from hiring permanent replacements for workers who exercise their right to strike. This measure is also very simple -- it restores the balance in the collective bargaining process. We, Democrats, can't even get the measure to the President for the "Big V." With one procedural move after another, Bush's Republican army has put up every road block possible.

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In accepting the Republican nomination in 1988, George Bush promised, and I quote, "30 million jobs in the next 8 years." I don't know about you, but I think we've been "Bushwhacked." And I, for one, am not about to wait around to see if he can make up the 12 million jobs he is already behind on. It's time we send Bush the "Big V."

Throughout my career, I have not been the great political philosopher. I am essentially a pragmatist. I am committed to Hawaii, and concerned about jobs, jobs, and more jobs.

Hawaii's unemployment rate jumped 1.6 percent in the past six months. The recession, which has plagued our nation for over a year, has finally come to our shores. And I refuse to be "am-Bushed" in Hawaiian waters. I have worked to ward off this slump. I will continue to work to bring home the federal dollars we need to keep our economy going and our residents employed.

Numerous transportation experts testified that a new highway -- H-3 -- would relieve traffic congestion. They cited impressive statistics on improved traffic flow. I agreed. But I also had another set of numbers in the back of my mind -- 20,000 jobs. At my request, the Senate approved \$80 million for next year's H-3 construction. I see jobs.

At the city and state's request, we forged ahead to build a mass transit system to reduce traffic congestion and the unbearable gridlocks. This year, the Senate approved my request for \$90 million to move the project forward, plus an additional \$90 million over five years to reduce the local burden on taxpayers. Again, in the back of my mind, I see another number -- 27,500 jobs.

The same can be said about my efforts to build a new road in Kihei to ease congestion, and to rebuild Saddle Road for public safety and to connect East and West Hawaii. It will cost over 100 million federal dollars for both, and I am on the road to getting it. Again, in the back of my mind, I see jobs.

Over the past four years, I have secured over \$60 million to begin construction of top-notch educational facilities at the University of Hawaii -- a new Tropical Agriculture Building, a new Ocean Science Technology building, a new College of Education building, and a new Geo-Science

Building for the Hilo campus. Each will be equipped with the latest and most advanced technology. This is my commitment to Hawaii's future workforce -- to provide them with the best opportunities and resources. More funds are on their way this year to continue to lay the educational cornerstones for a better and brighter future. But again, in the back of my mind, I see jobs and more jobs.

I will fight to keep the Pearl Harbor Shipyard, the Kaneohe Marine Base, and the Schofield Barracks open and operating. It is important to our national security interests in the Pacific. But again, I see more than 75,000 military and civilian jobs -- \$2.9 billion infused into our economy last year, and \$3 billion this year. Hawaii is the only state without a base closure or major reduction in force. In fact, Hawaii had an overall increase. Even with our national defense drawdown, Hawaii will have \$3.2 billion deposited into its economy next year: this works out to 75,000 jobs, plus \$770 million for Hawaii's contractors.

Jobs, jobs, and more jobs -- that is my ongoing focus. But what about training the unemployed and the disadvantaged. Over the past several years, when Hawaii was basking in record low unemployment, I believe that even one person on the unemployment rolls was one too many. I secured over \$34 million to provide targeted job training and placement for the underemployed -- Pacific and Asian immigrants, Native Hawaiians, disadvantaged youth, and single mothers.

For all of this, I am called a "pork barreler." If I could bring you the entire "Kalua Pig," I would. I have no apologies. I have no regrets. Every part of the "Pig" I deliver is not a new federal dollar to increase our deficit. It is at the expense of other state and national programs. This comes with seniority. This, I believe, is my responsibility and duty to you -- to look out for your interests, to grab every possible advantage, and to get a jump on the competition. I am proud to do it. And do you know why?

I am tired of having Hawaii workers relegated to the "Bush League" -- the Minor League -- while we lose our pineapple industry to Thailand where labor is cheap and environmental protections virtually non-existent.

I am tired of being relegated to the "Bush League" while Hawaii's world class sugar is sacrificed to Mexico as an incentive to get a free trade agreement.

I am tired of being relegated to the "Bush League" while our jobs are flowing South, Southeast, Northwest -- anywhere but home -- and then to be called non-competitive and stagnant.

I say to President Bush -- you may prefer cheap labor, but don't take us cheap. We've got your number, and we're ready to retire it. Let's bench him for good. That's the only way we will reach the Major League.