



A NEW DAY IN HAWAII

Small Business and Entrepreneurship

Government that Partners with Local Business

President Obama described today's entrepreneurs as our present day pioneers—those willing to take calculated risks to overcome challenges and create a better future.

But as one local businessperson recently told me, “growing a business in Hawaii today is like growing a seed in scorched earth.” We must improve Hawaii's business climate.

We hear this every campaign season, and the small business owners I'm talking to are rightfully skeptical. They don't believe anyone is listening when they talk about the

skyrocketing costs of doing business in Hawaii—rent, shipping, taxes, fees, healthcare, equipment, utilities, and insurance. And as this continues, we are crippling our economy because there is no significant “multiplier effect” in our economy without strong, locally owned small businesses.

Hawaii has always had tremendous entrepreneurial energy, but we have never fully unlocked our potential. The small business people I've met want to do what is right for Hawaii. They understand their positive role in the community and the need for appropriate regulation and costs. But government is too often a barrier because the systems don't act with the speed, urgency, and understanding that businesses require.

Government has not been a good partner. Locally owned small businesses are too often on their own to find capital for start-up and expansion, break into new markets, and compete with large outside-owned corporations.

Small business is absolutely critical to job creation and our economic recovery. In an Abercrombie Administration, government will listen to small businesses, remove cumbersome barriers, open up opportunities, help solve problems, forge partnerships between businesses and communities, and advocate for local products and services. Hawaii is counting on our entrepreneurs to confront our top challenges by creating good jobs for our graduates, reducing our over-reliance on fossil fuel and imported food, and partnering with schools to create a 21st century education system.

Guiding Principles: Small Business and Entrepreneurship

- Government's role is to be a helpful partner with business
- Fair access to capital
- Community-based economic development
- Buy local
- Sell local

CONDUCT A FULL REVIEW AND REFINEMENT OF REGULATION AND PERMITTING PROCESSES

One of the biggest complaints among small businesses is that permitting and regulation processes are too costly, cumbersome and slow. A review and revision of all processes, beginning with business startup requirements, must be conducted with small business participation and the goal of supporting entrepreneurs. Government agencies that lack capacity or sufficient IT infrastructure will be upgraded. Businesses also need a stable regulatory environment and a higher degree of certainty that rules, regulations, programs, and laws affecting business won't change substantially from year to year.

CREATE A GOVERNOR'S CLEARINGHOUSE FOR FEDERAL OPPORTUNITIES

Growing small businesses is a high priority of the Obama Administration and there are opportunities to access federal funds to start and expand businesses. Building on strong relationships with the federal government and collaborating with local banks and businesses, the Governor's office will have a one-stop clearinghouse for local businesses to get help in securing grants, loans and other federal funds, and will also actively seek out new opportunities.

COORDINATE "BUY LOCAL" EFFORTS

There are many good independent efforts to encourage people to support local businesses. Government needs to take the lead in coalescing these efforts and measuring results. More importantly, state and local government will lead by example by making every effort to buy local and keep dollars here in Hawaii.

PROTECT AND MARKET HAWAII'S BRANDS

The Attorney General's office will clamp down on protecting Hawaii's unique brands so that local businesses can benefit from all their efforts to ensure the high quality and stellar reputation of local products and services. At the same time, government will partner with businesses to coordinate "Hawaii

Channels" that aggressively market products and services via the Internet, television, and other media for global export. And we will build a trade highway for Hawaii small businesses, helping to coordinate trade show presence, consolidating logistics to help businesses break into bigger markets, supporting private trade organizations, and selling more local products through commissaries.

TEACH BUSINESS SKILLS

Financial education must be a standard facet of everyone's education with more opportunities to learn business skills including management, finance, marketing, and entrepreneurship in our high schools, community colleges, and universities. Partnerships with local businesses that provide hands on learning experiences and internships will be expanded. We also need to ensure our system of higher education is preparing highly-skilled individuals who can hold good paying jobs here at home.

IMPLEMENT PROCUREMENT REFORM

Politics has overwhelmed the process of bidding for and performing work for the government. We must have a government procurement system that is fair, based on merit, and free from political pressuring. A well-run and managed procurement system should follow the highest standards of conduct of the various trades, professions and industries to ensure quality and ethical behavior where the contractor and the general public mutually benefit. An Abercrombie Administration will create a level playing field for all.