



Political File

**News, notes and anecdotes
on government and politics**

Monday, May 17, 1999



Ward ponders future beyond legislator's staff

Working as Rep. Mark Moses' chief of staff during the recently concluded legislative session allowed former House Republican leader Gene Ward to become vested in the state's retirement plan. But the future job prospects for Ward, who needed only three months more to qualify for state retirement benefits, aren't promising at the moment.

For now, he'll remain as chief of staff for Moses (R, Kapolei). "How long that will be, I have no idea," Ward says.

Moses has given him the option to remain an aide, but it is difficult to support his wife and 4-year-old adopted daughter on a \$2,605-a-month salary, adds Ward, 56, who gave up his legislative seat to run -- unsuccessfully -- against Democratic U.S. Rep. Neil Abercrombie last year.

Acknowledging that he has been criticized for taking a job to become eligible for benefits, Ward says he was never against pensions for state workers. What he fought were the so-called "high three" pension perks that lawmakers once received, Ward says. "I have a 'low three.' That's a big difference."

Some fat just harder to trim: When this year's legislative session began, 13 House members with "somewhat thick to extra-thick" waistlines, as Rep. Ezra Kanoho puts it, entered a weight-loss contest. Well, it turned out to be more like a weight-gain contest.

Only five were lighter when the session recently ended.

The winner: Health Chairman Alex Santiago (D, Pupu-kea), who dropped from 235 pounds

to 204.

Second was Majority Leader Ed Case (D, Manoa), who weighed in at 224 after shedding 17 pounds. Third was Kanoho (D, Lihue), who went from 183 to 176.

Finance Chairman Dwight Takamine (D, Hilo) dropped three pounds to hit 225 for fourth place. Finishing fifth was Education Chairman Ken Ito (D, Kaneohe). Ito placed by losing just one pound, to weigh in at 184.

Since Kanoho didn't disclose if any Republicans were contestants, it would be unfair to say that GOP lawmakers were unable to trim their own fat.

[E-mail to City Desk](#)

Text Site Directory:

[\[News\]](#) [\[Business\]](#) [\[Features\]](#) [\[Sports\]](#) [\[Editorial\]](#) [\[Do It Electric!\]](#)
[\[Classified Ads\]](#) [\[Search\]](#) [\[Subscribe\]](#) [\[Info\]](#) [\[Letter to Editor\]](#)
[\[Stylebook\]](#) [\[Feedback\]](#)

© 1999 Honolulu Star-Bulletin
<http://archives.starbulletin.com>