



August 30, 2010

Dear HGEA Member:

Every election year, your union Political Action Committees (PAC), which are made up of your fellow members across the state, interview dozens of candidates for elective office at all levels, and make endorsement recommendations to your Board of Directors. This year was no different, but clearly the issues charging the political air have generated more interest and controversy surrounding the elections.

Both Neil Abercrombie and Mufi Hannemann have stood with Labor and have been consistently supportive of HGEA – and our union has supported them throughout their respective tenures, which made it difficult when they both decided to run for the office of Governor.

Each Island Division PAC invited Mr. Abercrombie and Mr. Hannemann to visit members at a “Meet & Greet” forum. During the PAC interview, both were evaluated to determine who would be best suited to lead our state through these difficult times. The PAC evaluation was based on core public-sector union issues: fixing our economy; support for collective bargaining, including the enforcement of the law as written for negotiations; revamping the EUTF and restoring a fair split in premiums between the employer and employees; governing ability for day-to-day operations; protecting retirement benefits; the candidate’s familiarity with the issues that face Hawaii and a clear plan for our future. While we recognize the importance of other social issues, they were not factors in the PAC’s decision, as the process relied only on core work-related issues.

After much review and deliberation, the PAC and Board decided that Mufi Hannemann was the better candidate to support for Governor. Throughout the endorsement process, Mr. Hannemann faced questions and gave honest answers – answers that not everyone agreed with, but were straightforward. He articulated his vision for the future, and pledged support to work with HGEA to address critical issues. Many members reported that Mr. Abercrombie did not clearly respond to questions at the different forums, and lacked specifics for how he felt Hawaii should move forward.

I realize that this endorsement of Mr. Hannemann has not been universally accepted by our members. Mr. Abercrombie has long been a labor advocate, so it comes as no surprise that he has supporters in the HGEA ranks. I certainly understand and accept that there are members who disagree with this recommendation – to those members I ask that they consider our endorsements in their proper context, which takes into account what issues are most important for public employees. I believe our endorsement process continues to have integrity, with sound logic behind it, and I would hope that you would take a moment to review the candidate material that you will soon be receiving in the mail or visit our website (www.hgea.org/elections2010), and consider our recommendations before voting.

Thank you for your consideration, and I sincerely ask for your continued support as we work to preserve a strong public service in Hawaii.

In Solidarity,

Randy Perreira