

Senator Inouye's Legacy Calls for Continued Commitment to the Environment

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Advancing research on undersea alternative energy sources, promoting renewable energy generation, supporting habitat conservation and the protection of endangered species and vulnerable ecosystems—this is just a short list of some of the seminal environmental efforts and policies that Senator Daniel K. Inouye's supported over his 58 years of distinguished public service. All of us from Hawaii and all across the nation are deeply saddened by his passing yesterday. He led a remarkable life, ever demonstrating his commitment to the people, natural landscape and precious natural resources of the Hawaiian Islands.

As the state's first U.S. Representative, Inouye helped shape Hawaii's history since statehood. He served the needs and interests of his constituents as U.S. Senator since January 1963 and brought new, important opportunities to the youngest state in the nation. The Senator's legacy not only had profound impacts for the State of Hawaii, but also for the country, and to me personally.

I have lived in multiple states and countries in my life. I moved away from Hawaii over six years ago, but I still think of the Aloha State as home. As a junior in high school, I had the rare opportunity to work with Senator Inouye as his Senate Page. I cannot begin to describe what I learned and experienced that summer in a concise way; however, the experience cemented my passion for politics and shaped my future career. I left this position with the goal of becoming a U.S. Senator from Hawaii; and while my career goals have since shifted, I continued to look to him as a leader and role model.

His passing has laid a pall on the State. His memory, his deeds and his inspiration will live on. As we mourn the loss of this great leader and American hero, it brings me peace to remember all he accomplished to make our lives better. And like me, I hope you too take his last word to heart: "Aloha."

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