

BIOGRAPHY
SENATOR DANIEL K. AKAKA

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United States Senator Daniel K. Akaka of Hawaii was elected to his current term in 1990. He brought with him more than 13 years of experience in the U.S. House of Representatives, including an extensive and prominent tenure on the powerful House Appropriations Committee.

Senator Akaka is well-situated as a member of the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources. The post ideally serves his longstanding commitments to energy independence and security for Hawaii, safeguarding our environment and addressing the needs of Native Hawaiians. Just last December, two Akaka measures aimed at protecting Hawaii from the ecologically devastating brown tree snake were signed into law. The Senator is now pursuing the passage of a comprehensive Hawaiian tropical forest initiative, the centerpiece of his 1992 environmental legislative package, as well as a proposal to prevent the introduction of destructive alien plant and animal species into the State.

Senator Akaka was successful in seeing that the provisions of the National Energy Bill: (1) give Hawaii priority access to the Strategic Petroleum Reserve during supply disruptions, (2) prohibit consideration of U.S. territories in the Pacific as nuclear waste disposal sites, (3) provide support for electric vehicle development and (4) make solar water heaters eligible under the low-income weatherization program. In February, he chaired the Committee's first-ever oversight hearing on the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act of 1920.

The Senator is also on the Governmental Affairs Committee, whose scope of authority encompasses the entire spectrum of federal agencies. It enables him to have an impact in such diverse areas as programs for the homeless, monitoring lead content in ceramic ware, disaster assistance, cleanup of radiologically contaminated sites and release of the Kennedy assassination materials.

Through his position on the Veterans' Affairs Committee, Senator Akaka plays a critical role in ensuring the swift completion of Hawaii's long-overdue veterans hospital. He passed legislation establishing the Pacific Center for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in Hawaii, which could open its doors as early as this summer. Also enacted into law last year was an Akaka measure designating an Assistant Secretary for Minority Veterans Affairs.

Finally, Senator Akaka sits on the Select Committee on Indian Affairs, which is vital to his ongoing efforts to bolster health care, education, housing and other much-needed programs for Native Hawaiians.

Daniel Kahikina Akaka is the first U.S. Senator of Native Hawaiian ancestry and the only Chinese-American member of Congress. He graduated from the Kamehameha School for Boys. During World War II, he served with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Saipan and Tinian. He earned a Master of Education degree from the University of Hawaii.