

What's Up With That?
W. Chun
From: www.hawaiireporter.com

I guess you could say I am a “Baby Boomer” and have been around for awhile. We live in a free society and we have a democratic government. We fight for this freedom and try to represent the value of our country because of this freedom. The people in our government represent the people and we, the people, elect them. When members of the government make mistakes we forgive them. When members of our government are corrupt we don't know what to do. I read and hear every day of some retaliatory action(s) taken by members of our State and Federal government and other corruption stories. What's up with that?

Some recent things I remember or observe are:

- Remember the dictatorial days of Cayetano? The corruption and retaliation was rampant and we were unable to do anything about it. At least not until we could elect a new Governor.
- Lately the circumstances surrounding the disapproval of John Kai as regent for the University of Hawaii should have caused an absolute outrage by the voters. The obvious attempt by Clayton Hee to extort his fee for approval appears to be the norm for the Senate Democrats.
- We continue to see the resistance to change. Although we have a new Governor the remnants of the old regime continue. The disapproval of John Kai and the circumstances surrounding the decision only magnifies the problems for change. The Senate Democrats continue to hinder change and more importantly the integrity and professionalism needed is missing. A new Governor and Cabinet can only do so much. The amount of time spent fighting the existing regime and resistance to change exceeds the time spent on progress and improvement.
- The story about Brian Kanno and the Leon Rouse child sex offender case; and the conflict of interest for Calvin Say and Brian Taniguchi with the City Bank issues only emphasize the corruption and disregard for integrity. The improper use of their position in the government represents a clear pattern of corruption.
- The recent legislative session and their successes to further punish and damage small business continues as we standby, helpless.

I spent 25 years of service in the Federal government and rely on some of the things I learned early in my career. One of the most important and consistent lessons is the standard for professionalism. These standards consist of

- (1) The professional must always live and operate at a level higher than the norm. Integrity, openness, free communications and the respect for the rights of freedom were high on the list.
- (2) Ensuring all of the facts are placed on the table and in the open for review to ensure a complete examination of the facts. There can be no hidden agendas when working in a team situation.

- (3) The rules for open communications must remain a focus throughout the process to resolve problems.
- (4) The standard for integrity must be subject to public purview and this standard must always be indicative of a level higher than the norm. The public cannot measure your professionalism unless it is demonstrated by your actions and example. It works both ways.

Today this is missing in our government representatives. The “Culture of Fear” described by Ted Hong in the Small Business News is clearly present and it violates any standard of professionalism or integrity. As a small business owner I see substandard professionalism in all levels of Federal and State government. The fraud, waste of taxpayers’ money, and abuse of authority is rampant in government. Members of the general public are prevented from doing much. I remember the blatant and arrogant retaliations by the Cayetano government and damage to small businesses who would not recognize the culture of fear. Federal and State government employees engage in clear and obvious conflict of interests, waste of public funds and abuse of authority without accountability and this cannot continue.

The contrast is unbelievable to me. There are hard working, industrious, creative and honest small businesses and government workers that are never recognized. The local talent, skills, and abilities of our people are not recognized. The government representatives create the continuing and stifling atmosphere for small business and the recognition of our people. A few years ago I met a microbiologist at the Haleakala research center who was recognized by the international science community for discovery of a unique microorganism. We did not recognize, locally, this amazing accomplishment. In spite of the culture of fear that exists small businesses makeup a large percentage of our economy in Hawaii. The Legislature will not recognize this attribute but work hard to prevent their growth. The Governor is reviewing the increases the Legislature is imposing on small businesses and cites the unemployment insurance pot as an example. It will not cost anyone anything to reduce the high levels of unemployment insurance for this State, but the Legislature will not reduce it. What’s up with that? Unemployment insurance represents a significant cost to small business overhead.

Another significant contrast to the culture of fear is the Hilo Medical Center. This hospital is located in west Hawaii and is the only major medical facility in the area. Yet, the accomplishments by the staff and the facility are never recognized. This medical center must meet the needs of west Hawaii in its entirety with little recognition or resources. For example, an emergency room designed to accommodate a few hundred per year is treating thousands. In contrast Lorraine Inouye, D-Hilo, dedicates her efforts into the disapproval of a fully qualified and recognized local candidate, John Kai as a UH Regent. Her efforts to promote the culture of fear if reversed to serving her community could be astronomical and beneficial for the people in west Hawaii.

We have seen federal contracts awarded to large mainland businesses consistently for the last 25 years. The lucrative contracts have been profit makers for these businesses

and they successfully take the profits outside of our State's economy. The recent award of a large federal contract to a small business concern in Hawaii is a major step in the right direction. Although the effort to obtain the award required significant legal costs to protect the rights of a small business in federal contracting, it was a clear sign of progress for small business. However, the retaliation by the federal government employees/staff to ensure that another small business never fights this hard for a contract is a clear obstruction to small business success and growth. The retaliations are blatant and represent the kind of tactics that we see every day. These retaliations are often based on some common clichés that violate our freedom:

- “You can’t fight City Hall.” Small businesses cannot afford the cost of litigation. The government’s access to infinite funds to create these conditions is a tactic to beat small business into submission.
- “My way or the highway”. Interference by government to dictate functionality and to impose antiquated managerial processes and staffing affect the performance of the small business. The philosophy that “my way or the highway” stymies creative management and innovative work exists. For example, the government structure recognizes one function or job to one person. Small businesses operate under a principle of multi-tasking for each functional resource.
- Simply delaying the work of the small business is detrimental to the business. The delays ultimately prevent completion of the project and increase the cost of the project for the public. Small business cannot survive in any contract where the government delays continue because the small business must bear the cost of the delay.
- The taxpayers pay the cost of litigation for the government. The cost of litigation is paid by the small business and can create a significant loss or cost for extended periods of time. Again this philosophy to utilize the taxpayer’s money to create losses is damaging to the small business.
- A common practice by government is to impose new requirements or demands in the work being performed. This is illegal but continues to restrict progress and drive the costs up for the small business. This is accomplished by “reading into” contractual language. Although phrases, or inferences from portions of sentences or paragraphs are the methodologies the process to communicate is one way. The small business efforts to resolve problems are stymied by the one way communications and refusal to recognize the rights of the small business.

The most recent and obvious event is the disapproval of John Kai. The contradiction and the blatant disregard for recognition of our own people is in the statement by Norman Sakamoto, i.e., that small successful small business owners have no place on any governing board. What’s up with that? The backbone of our economy is in the small business.

So what’s the bottom line?

1. Until our government representatives recognize our local talents and skills we will not be able to grow. The philosophy that we cannot seem to manage and

- direct our own government and businesses is an old insult and we need to recognize our own resources and talents.
2. We must be outraged when our government representatives behave without integrity and honesty. We need professionalism in our representatives. The involvement of government representatives to promote a child sex offender in a private business is intolerable. The extortion of money for approval to positions like the UH Regents is inexcusable. The efforts by the federal government to destroy a small business through illicit and unprofessional contracting practices is an attack on the people of Hawaii.
 3. We need change and we cannot blame one person. The government representatives are clearly focused on questionable behavior that hurts their integrity. The old regime and the culture of fear is still here and we need change. The ultimate impact is to the small businesses and the people of Hawaii.
 4. We the people have a say in how our taxes are spent or wasted. We the people have rights and we have the absolute right to expect our government representatives and their behavior to be at the highest level of integrity. We the people of Hawaii recognize that the small business in this State is the backbone of our economy and our lives. We the people will NOT tolerate the dishonesty and the abuse of authority by the State and Federal government representatives.

Having said all of that, and recognizing that it contains the principles of our democratic government I am scared. I saw first hand the dictatorial and retaliatory actions by the Cayetano regime. I saw businesses in complete ruin and the destruction of people's plans and dreams. I was happy and celebrated when a new Governor was elected and dreamed of a new government with professionals and the support and promotion of our livelihood, i.e., small business. I looked forward to change and quickly volunteered to help. It wasn't too long before I recognized that the culture of fear and the old regime was still here. They will not support the new Governor and it wasn't long before I realized that the new Governor and cabinet would have to spend most of their time fighting the in-house regime. The recent Legislature Session is a clear sign to the small business in Hawaii, they are not here to support or promote small business. Our small businesses are our hopes, plans and dreams for our future. It is unfortunate that the Legislature does not recognize that.

Hawaii has about 51,000 small businesses and over 16,000 fail to support a middleclass standard of living for their owners. What's up with that? It shows that the people in Hawaii are strong, dedicated, professional and honest. If we cannot rely on our government representatives and the integrity of government where do we go? Here is what I do – work hard, try to be unnoticeable, and support my family. I write this article under a pen name because of my past experience and first hand knowledge of the retaliation by government representatives and federal government. I commend John Kai for attempting to serve on a governing board; however I choose to work and support our government behind the scenes. I am embarrassed and ashamed that I live in a free country and live under a culture of fear. What's up with that?