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PRESS RELEASE

Irrational Fear of Lingle Diagnosed at the State Capitol

Honolulu - The Sergeant of Arms is not sounding the alarm, warning signs do not cover the capitol grounds, and crowds are not fleeing in a panic. Nevertheless, some of my colleagues at the State Capitol apparently think we should run for our lives. In actuality, these lawmakers are displaying symptoms of a condition that has once again plagued our state legislature: a phobia identified as *IFOL*, or the *Irrational Fear of Lingle*.

House Bill 2686 passed the lower chamber this past week and has moved to the Senate. This bill would curb the authority of State agencies at the expense of legislative power. In essence it is another attempt by some in the legislature to prevent Governor Lingle from enacting reforms that would benefit our state. What, exactly, do some of my colleagues in the majority fear? Why is it that the legislature now, after nearly fifty years, has a preposterous apprehension of executive power?

The 2008 session is not the first time that Gov. Lingle has had to face this issue. In fact, since she took office, the legislature has taken dozens of measures intending to impede her governance. For example, in 2005, the legislature passed Senate Bill 1808 over the Governor's veto. This bill prevented Gov. Lingle from enacting administrative rules which would have reformed workers' compensation laws; laws that are hurting Hawaiian laborers and businesses. That same year, House Bill 1224 was passed over a veto and took away the Governor's power to appoint members to the Hawaii Simplified Sales and Use Tax Advisory Council. The executive is now hindered from making sure that Hawaii complies with the Streamlined Sales and Use Tax Agreement. Just this past year, the legislature passed, once again over a veto, Senate Bill 1063, changing the procedures for filling vacancies in the State Legislature and U.S. Senate. The Governor now must select a replacement from a list submitted by the political party of the former incumbent, giving further power to political parties and taking away public accountability, while preventing the replacement from taking place in a timely manner.

Thus, House Bill 2686 is just the latest of many signs that the majority in the State Legislature has an irrational fear of Gov. Lingle. While the legislature is busy trying to tie the Governor's hands, our state suffers as many reforms are left undone. The legislature is enacting a "policy of fear." Unfortunately, this phobia is doing great harm to our state.