

LEADERS' DIGEST

Political empowerment is still a treasure that eludes us as a community here in America. While we are the second largest Asian American community in the United States, we have yet to harvest the power that comes from our numbers. The Voice of FilAmerica features elected and appointed officials—regardless of political affiliation—in the different US states who are of Filipino ancestry. As your Filipino American community newspaper, the Asian Journal recognizes the fact that we all have a responsibility towards bringing political empowerment to fruition, especially for our future generations. It is our hope to have our voices heard all over America.

Lynn Berbano Finnegan

Hawaii House of Representatives Minority Leader

by JOSEPH PIMENTEL
AJPress



FILIPINO-American Lynn Berbano Finnegan is one of the rising politicians in Hawaii.

Finnegan, a republican, is the Hawaii House of Representatives Minority Leader. She's served that post since 2005 when her colleagues appointed her.

The Aspen Institute's Rodel Fellowships in Public Leadership recently named the 38-year-old Finnegan as one of its Top Young Elected Officials to its fourth class of Aspen-Rodel Fellows. Each of the members of the class was selected on their reputation for intellect, thoughtfulness, and a bipartisan approach to governing, according to the Aspen Institute.

Finnegan was elected to the House of Representatives in 2002. She represents District 32, which consists of Lower Pearlridge, Aiea, Halawa, Hickam, Pearl Harbor, Moanalua Gardens in Hawaii. This is her fourth term as a State Representative.

Prior to serving as an elected official, Finnegan worked as a Senior Loan officer at Primary Residential Mortgage. She graduated from the Christian Private School Hanalani Schools before moving on and receiving a degree at the University of Hawaii.

She said that Hawaii Governor Linda Lingle is the reason why she was inspired to run for office.

In 2002, Lingle had presented a vision for Hawaii's future and wanted to challenge the mostly Democratic state that is Hawaii.

"I believe a thriving democracy lies in a government that operates with at least two political parties encouraging thoughtful debate," said Finnegan in her Opening Day Speech during the first day of the 2008 legislative session. "This contributes to a more transparent process and results in better laws representing a greater number of Hawaii's people. I also believe that within this process respect can be earned even when values and views differ."

Finnegan currently serves on the Education, Health, Higher Education, Interim Task Force on Standards of Conduct and Legislative

Management committees. The key issues Finnegan focuses on are Crime Reduction and Drug Use Prevention, Education Reform, Charter School Funding, Improving Business Climate and to help the Senior and Elder.

She has been awarded Hawaii's Ten Outstanding Filipino Young Women of 2004, Hawaii Medical Association's 2006 Legislator of the Year, and Patrick Henry Award from the National Guard Association in 2007, according to the Ilocos Times.

She is one of the advocates of establishing a sister-state relationship with the Philippines and passionate about the Filipino community.

She is also a member of a number of organizations from the Imago Dei Community Church, Moanalua Lions Club to national organizations like National Foundation of Women Legislators and Council for State Government West Leadership Academy Class of 2004 Education Commission of the States, State Committee.

Finnegan is married to Honolulu Fire Department Captain Peter Finnegan. They have two children Piikea and Luke. ■

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