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**Trusted Leadership for Hawai'i**

The other day Richard Borreca posted an great article clearing the air surrounding the Governor's statements on tax breaks for seniors. I wanted to make sure you saw it. If you haven't please take a look below.

After you read it, help us set the record straight by forwarding this email to 10 of your friends and ask them to join our campaign by [clicking here](#).

Mahalo for your support!

Keith Hiraoka
Campaign Manager
Ige for Governor 2014

Abercrombie woos seniors, but they're not buying it

[By Richard Borreca](#)

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The cries of a politician in trouble are unmistakable, and today, they are coming from Democratic Gov. Neil Abercrombie.

On Thursday, in an interview with Star-Advertiser reporter Derrick DePledge, Abercrombie blasted his primary opponent, state Sen. David Ige, chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, for not approving Abercrombie's package of tax breaks for seniors.

"You'll have to ask the Ways and Means chairman why he thinks it's a good idea not to give tax relief to seniors," said Abercrombie.

"There's obviously some kind of political agenda operating there."

The agenda belongs to Abercrombie, who three years ago saw his popularity nose-dive after proposing his own series of new taxes on seniors.

Now in the year of his re-election campaign, Abercrombie has gone from wanting to take pension money away from seniors, to wanting to shower them with tax breaks.

His bills were introduced in both the House and Senate. Abercrombie did not attack state Rep. Sylvia Luke, chairwoman of the House Finance Committee, who also did not move the senior tax break package.

Instead he bore into his primary opponent.

Ige, in a press release, corrected Abercrombie's understanding of the legislative process.

"The bill did not make it through the legislative process to my committee," Ige said in explanation of why he did not approve it.

Ige noted that his own tax help to seniors came in 2011 when Abercrombie tried to raise the tax on seniors, by taxing pensions.

"Under my leadership, the Committee on Ways and Means killed this bill that would have taxed retiree pensions," Ige said.

Now, Ige said that his committee is moving its own relief package that includes refundable food and tax credits, state help for long-term care services and more money for state programs for seniors.

When the Senate's Human Services Committee heard Abercrombie's senior tax bills, some of the must nuanced testimony came from the politically powerful labor union, the ILWU.

On all three bills, the ILWU questioned the equity in prescribing tax breaks just for those 65 and older.

"While it is nice to provide an extra perk for those 65 and older, we question the rationale," the union said in testimony.

"If the bill were to double the tax credit only for those below a certain income threshold, there may be more justification ... caution should be exercised lest legislators be viewed as looking out only for the interests of seniors," the union advised.

Back in 2011, besides wanting to tax pensions, Abercrombie also called for dropping the state-funded reimbursement for federal Medicare Part B benefits to state workers. Taking away government workers benefits outside of the bargaining table is not permitted, although Abercrombie insisted he could do it.

In defending the pension tax, he repeatedly said he would not tax "those most dependent on their pensions." In reality, Abercrombie's bill would have gone after anyone with an adjusted gross income of \$37,500 and up.

Now, the new Star-Advertiser/Hawaii News Now poll showed that in a race between Abercrombie and Ige, although the governor leads Ige by single digits, Abercrombie loses the senior vote. Ige wins seniors, 44 percent to 39 percent.

Abercrombie is now the victim of his own misreading of state laws and a misunderstanding of public sentiment.

This year, in his State of the State speech, Abercrombie flip-flopped from taxing seniors to putting them on a tax pedestal, saying "I get it."

The polls show that so do voters over 55.

Richard Borreca writes on politics on Sundays, Tuesdays and Fridays. Reach him at rborreca@staradvertiser.com.

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