



*National Weather Service  
Employees Organization*

## **National Weather Service Employees Organization Endorses Representative Mazie Hirono for U.S. Senate**

(Honolulu, HI, September 9, 2012) The National Weather Service Employees Organization is pleased to announce its endorsement of Hawaii Congresswoman Mazie Hirono in her bid for U.S. Senate.

“Mazie Hirono understands the importance of accurate weather forecasting and tsunami predictions for the people of Hawaii. Time and again, she has shown her commitment to Hawaii’s emergency preparedness. She supports the Hurricane Forecast Improvement Program and with her leadership, Hawaii will be more prepared for severe weather,” said NWSEO President Dan Sobien. “Mazie also recognizes the importance of the dedicated professionals who work for the National Weather Service. NWSEO is proud to endorse Mazie Hirono for U.S. Senate.”

Hirono said, “I am humbled to be endorsed by the men and women who are charged with providing our isolated island state with critical weather information that could mean the difference between life and death. The necessity for accurate and readily available weather information is vital to providing the people of Hawaii with critical minutes needed to mobilize in the event of a natural disaster, such as a severe storm or tsunami. At a time when Republicans continue to attack the role and value of government, we must stand up for the kinds of federal support needed to make Hawaii a safer place to live and visit.”

NWSEO announced its endorsement in conjunction with the anniversary week of Hurricane Iniki – Tuesday, September 11, 2012, is the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Hurricane Iniki devastated the island of Kauai on September 11, 1992, killing six people and causing \$1.8 billion in property damage.

While in Congress, Hirono successfully championed efforts to make Hawaii more prepared for hurricanes, tsunamis, and other natural disasters. Her achievements include:

- Securing more than \$3 million in funding for the Army Corp's Surge and Wave Island Modeling Studies which will enable scientists to make more accurate island inundations predictions during hurricane/typhoon conditions to enhance public safety.
- Securing nearly \$3 million in funding for the development of a computer model that identifies island populations vulnerable to hurricane-related hazards, public shelter capacities, transportation routes, and evacuation data for use by local emergency planners.

- Securing more than \$1.5 million in funding for the Pacific Island Land Ocean Typhoon Experiment (PILOT) Program, which uses a test site at Mokuleia on Oahu to collect data to further the understanding of wave run-up during a hurricane/typhoon.
- Successfully opposing efforts to decrease funding for the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center on Oahu.

NWSEO is the labor organization and professional association that represents 4,000 employees of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in the U.S. Department of Commerce, including:

- Forecasters, technicians and support personnel of the National Weather Service, the nation's official source for weather forecasts and warnings;
- Scientists and support personnel at the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center in Hawaii;
- Attorneys in NOAA's Office of General Counsel;
- Civilian crews of the "Hurricane Hunter" aircraft;
- Technicians who track and command the nation's weather satellites;
- Hurricane researchers and other scientists and support personnel at the Atlantic Oceanographic and Meteorological Laboratory in Florida.

NWSEO is confident that as a U.S. Senator, Mazie Hirono will continue to effectively secure funding necessary to make Hawaii more prepared for natural disasters.

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