testimony

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> Testimony in strong Support of SB 2233
> Sumitted originally to testimony@capitol.hawaii.gov
> >> Hearing: Feb 6, 2008
> > Time 1.15 p.m
> > Room 225 State Capital
> COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES AND PUBLIC HOUSING
> Senator Norman Sakamoto, Chair
> Senator Jill Tokuda. Vice Chair
> From: Myrna B. Murdoch Children's Rights Council Commission on Fatherhood
> Subj: Testimony in strong Support of SB2233
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> > My name is Myrna B. Murdoch.
> >>>
> TWENTY-FOURTH LEGISLATURE, 2008, STATE OF HAWAII
>
> Chair Senator Sakamoto, Vice-Chair Senator Tokuda and members of the
> House Committee on Education, my great thanks for this opportunity to
> testify before you to strongly endorse SB 2233 establishing a Global Youth
> Center in Hawaii, within and in collaboration with the University of Hawaii.
> We are grateful to the East-West Center for providing the location and
> environment for its development.

> As you know, swift passage of Bill SB 2233 into Hawaii law will not
> require any funds, but it offers three important benefits to leaders of
> today and tomorrow — and to the future of Hawaii.

> First, Bill SB 2233 creates an opportunity for our Hawaii Global
> Youth Center to be the Pacific focal point for a new global youth initiative
> recently launched by the United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon
> himself — and to increase recognition for the ability of many
> of the best minds in Hawaii to help youth to tackle the most pressing
global issues of the day, including poverty, health issues, illiteracy and the environment. Let me explain ...
The foundation and superstructure of this Center have been well-defined, developed, and thorough, over many years — almost totally by volunteer service. It is more than ready for the resources now available. This represents considerable work and endorsements from the United Nations, from thinkers and doers from all over the world — the United States, Canada, Mexico, (Pacific Rim countries too), the United Kingdom, Nigeria, Europe, from younger people and senior professionals, from individuals and well-respected organizations — all people of skill and vision (see GYC Family Tree attached). All eyes are on Hawaii. The time is right to move forward.

Governor Linda Lingle puts it powerfully. She speaks of the importance of transcending Hawaii’s land and tourist-based economy to develop a new base of intellect and ideas. The Hawaii Global Youth Center should become the single, most dynamic vehicle for coming of age in the 21st Century. As Governor Lingle said in her 2006 Inaugural remarks: “Our shared vision for the future is an assurance that there will always be a place here at home for our young people when they are ready to build their own lives, and that they will be a part of finding solutions to the challenges that lie ahead.”

The third and final reason why we strongly endorse the passage of SB 2233 to establish a Global Youth Center is that it has the potential to influence the lives of every student here in Hawaii at all levels—and tens of thousands more around the globe—who want to train and prepare for leadership in dealing with truly global issues. This is perhaps the most important reason for urgency.

Our traditional treatment of young people has been to care for them, nurture, educate and train them, and then to trivialize their role in our society. In 1970, United Nations Under-Secretary-General Simeon O. Adebo brought to his United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) a means to apply Hawaii’s successful approach to creating youth leaders (the programs of PAAC) to developing nations. I joined his UNITAR staff in New York with this direct assignment. He found, instead of receptivity at the United Nations, roadblocks of traditional disdain for the role of youth: "What have we to do with children? This is a serious and respectable Institute", so I was relegated to developing training programs for baby diplomats, new delegates coming to the United Nations for the first time. I couldn’t help recalling the wisdom of Elizabeth Barrett Browning,

"Earth's crammed with heaven,
And every common bush afire with God;
But only he who sees takes off his shoes;
The rest sit 'round it and pluck blackberries."

The tsunami of December 2005 made the reality of global citizenship apparent to every child, man and woman on this planet with the knowledge, for the first time in history, that they are global citizens. There was an
outpouring of compassion, an agony of shared response, and an eagerness to help, from all over the world. It unleashed unprecedented wealth from unimaginable sources from everywhere, from all generations, and these resources remain. There are still serious lessons in management and distribution to be learned, but we cannot afford to miss this potential for our Hawaii Global Youth Center.

The Hawaii GYC will develop for youth, both in Hawaii and globally,

a Center that will give our young people the means and incentive to take their place in the world, not only later when they are educated to do so, but now when many generations can benefit from their insights from new ways of thinking — from the different ways they see the world from the ways in which we do. Never in history has it been more important to develop new ways of thinking, of doing everything to save humanity and the planet from the imminent threats of nuclear suicide, the entrapment of terrorism and environmental degradation. We need the new thinking of our young people now. The call of this century is expressed in the mandate of the Russell-Einstein Manifesto of 1955: "We have to learn to think in a new way." and "Remember your humanity, and forget the rest."

How do we do that? How do we escape the perceptions that lock us into the fear of terrorism and the realities of nuclear proliferation, and provide for real environmental sustainability? We need all the help we can get. How can we create the opportunities for our youth to unlock their potential and encourage their contributions to our mutual future now?

The Hawaii Global Youth Center presents the groundwork for this new hope, not only for youth in Hawaii, but, by invitation, from members of their generations all over the world. There are tremendous efforts taking place today that would provide great partnerships within our Global Youth Center. They would give us the mandate and imperative for seeking funding that is equal to the challenge. Thousands of small efforts, related but unconnected, can be gathered in the embrace of our Global Youth Center, providing a basis for funding that is worthy of the effort required. There are mega-foundations and funds seeking projects of the magnitude we propose.

We are faced with global challenges. In the Global Youth Center lies the vision that is seeking responses of global magnitude.

It is time to launch. This Bill SB 2233 presently before the 24th State Legislature is presented for action now. All the ingredients are ready, and so are we! We support this Bill and ask for its immediate passage without reservations.

What an honor it has been for me to work with this vision since the 1960s and now to be welcomed home to Hawaii to see this fulfillment take place.

Greatest thanks to Hawaii for the privilege of gathering support for Hawaii's Global Youth Center from around the world: from the United Nations, the United States, Canada, Mexico, (Pacific Rim countries too), the United Kingdom, Nigeria, Europe. We look forward to working with youth at all economic levels, both locally and globally, in realizing the benefits of Hawaii's Global Youth Center. Bravo for this incentive, Hawaii — and IMUA.

(from the Global Youth Center by-laws: Intent and details relevant to legislation)
SECTION 1. World peace is a major collaborative goal and youth are the key to attaining world peace, environmental sustainability and human health and well being for future generations. Hawaii’s location at the center of the Pacific rim region between Asia and the Americas, its diverse culture, and its many shared languages provide an excellent strategic forum for meetings and exchanges, as demonstrated by the Millennium Youth People’s Congress that was held in Hawaii in October, 1999.

This act is consistent with the vision to effectively address our global society threats from international conflict and violence, as well as social, economic, and environmental problems that put human security at increasing risk. New tools and methods need to be developed within an interdisciplinary framework in order to actively search for and realize sustainable and equitable solutions. To this end, the people of the world, particularly the youth, must learn to think and act collaboratively in new ways.

The purpose of this Act is to establish a Global Youth Center in Hawaii within and in collaboration with the University of Hawaii.

SECTION 2. Chapter 304A, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended by adding a new section to part IV, subpart M, to be appropriately designated to read as follows:

"SS304A—Global Youth Center; establishment. (a) There is established a Global Youth Center within and in collaboration with the University of Hawaii. This Global Youth Center is established for educational purposes, to support collaboration linking Hawaii youth with people around the world, working together to discover creative ways to develop our global future, and help shape a more peaceful and healthier Earth.

(b) The Global Youth Center shall support collaboration between Hawaii and International youth in order to empower them to accomplish the following four goals:

(1) Identify and address major global issues
(2) Develop and use their leadership potential worldwide
(3) Interact directly with policy decision makers and public opinion makers
(4) Develop and lead partnership projects that positively impact communities and people locally and world-wide.

(c) For purposes of subsections (a) and (b), the Global Youth Center shall collaborate with Hawaii’s leaders in education, politics, business and appropriate international organizations."

SECTION 3. New statutory material is underscored.

SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

Important Background:

This Global Youth Center for Hawaii is the outcome of years of local effort and tradition. In 1887, King David Kalakaua knew that a modern Hawaii
would need leaders to take its place among the nations of the world. He
initiated a youth leadership education program to provide opportunities for
future leaders to study abroad.

In the 1930s, the forerunner of the Pacific and Asian Affairs
Council (PAAC) began international education activities in Hawai'i's high
schools. I was privileged to continue these in the 1960s as PAAC's Executive
Director. In 1970, my work at the United Nations’ Institute for Training and
Research (UNITAR) only sharpened the clear perception of the need to build
on Hawai'i's experience to benefit the world's young people. The outgrowth of
Hawai'i's PAAC experience in Canada, called "INTRODUCING: THE WORLD",
provides an excellent prototype and model for the Hawaii GYC, as well as
potential software for worldwide projects like Nicholas Negroponte's One
Laptop per Child (OLPC) — a proposed Space Camp for Hawaii, ongoing
dialogue, and exploration across continents and cultures among young people
and mentors all over the world. Today, the alumni of both PAAC and the
Canadian experience that grew out of it advise us on the development of the
GYC and want to be part of it. These alumni of all ages are people whose
lives have been changed by their experience and these opportunities. Dr.
Jeffrey Boutwell, Executive Director, International Pugwash Conferences on
Science and World Affairs (Nobel Peace Prize 1995) came to Hawaii in
2007 to
help launch the proposals that will put this Global Youth Center into being.

When you read the work contributed by Juan Pablo Pardo-Guerra,
Chairman International Student/Young Pugwash (ISYP), Dr. Jeffrey Boutwell,
my own records and those of local leaders, you will see how this experience
developed. You'll also find inspiring achievement. See its history in the
Summary and Talking Points presented to Hawaii's Legislature last year.

This project was launched by the Hawaii Legislature after experience with the
Millennium Youth Congress in 1999 and because of the vision of its
leaders:
Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland, Representatives Dennis Arakaki and Helene Hale
and now Representatives John Mizuno and Rida Cabanilla. I was invited to
join them as they launched HCR 153 and 151 bringing this into being. The
Volunteer Committee that grew out of those early hearings in 2003 has
already contributed valuable thought, dedication and hours of effort.
Just
since the last session of the Legislature, they have formed themselves into
a Board with Roland Lagareta, President, Sister Joan Chatfield, Treasurer,
and Teresita Bernales, Co-ordinator. During these past months, this Board,
along with volunteer specialists, created and approved the mission
statement, by-laws, registrations and procedures for moving forward. In
2007, the Bill presenting the Global Youth Center successfully passed every
committee of the House and Senate that heard it. However, that Bill now
remains in the final Conference Committee without having been heard by that
Committee. It remains there today, waiting for passage, with the powerful
testimony that caused it to clear all the committees that heard it. The
present Bill, SB 2233 asks the support of the Legislature in Hawaiian law
without reservation and without asking for funds to make clear Hawaii's
support of this vision and to enable it to move forward internationally.

The Children’s Rights Council strongly believes
that SB 2233 should be supported.
Testimony on SB 2233
by
Namji Steinemann
Director, Asia Pacific Education Program
East-West Center

I appreciate the opportunity to offer testimony in support of SB 2233, which calls for the establishment of the Hawaii Global Youth Center (HGYC). The HGYC would provide educational programs and other opportunities for Hawaii’s youth to become actively engaged with the world and many of the major global issues that directly affect them and the rest of us. This is a vital interest for the State of Hawaii, and I congratulate the authors of this proposed bill for their vision.

Because of its location in the cradle of the Pacific and its cultural, economic, political, and military links to the Asia Pacific region and other parts of the world, Hawaii is well positioned to provide leadership in training Hawaii’s youth — our future leaders — to work toward constructing a better future. However, we now live in a knowledge-based, interconnected global economy in which technology helps bridge geographic distance to facilitate market transactions. This fast-changing new world requires a citizenry that is better attuned to the world and more adaptable to its changes. Therefore, to fully take advantage of the opportunities inherent in its own global linkages, Hawaii needs to provide more opportunities, especially for its youth, to develop a strong base of global knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in a global world. As such, the SB2233 outlines a task of vital importance to the State of Hawaii.

East-West Center is a national organization established by the U.S. Congress in 1960 to promote understanding and relations between the United States and the nations of the Asia Pacific region. As part of this mission, the Center seeks to prepare Americans for an era of much greater global involvement with the Asia Pacific region and the larger world. We do this through a wide array of cooperative study, research, and public programs we offer, but most especially through our educational programs including the Asia Pacific Leadership Program, a graduate certificate program that combines the development of Asia Pacific regional expertise and the cultivation of individual leadership capacity in future world leaders, and the Asia Pacific Education Program, which promotes understanding of the Asia Pacific region by K-12 teachers and students.

The Asia Pacific Education Program, formerly called CTAPS (Consortium for Teaching Asia and the Pacific in the Schools) has worked in partnership with the Hawaii Department of Education to offer professional development support to Hawaii’s teachers for nearly 20 years and, more recently, to work directly with Hawaii’s youth to provide them with exposure to issues that affect them and to provide with a forum to develop strategies to address these issues. As such, the goal of SB2233 is directly relevant to the goals of the Asia Pacific Education Program, and I am personally prepared to support the work of the Hawaii Global Youth Center.