ENCOURAGING PEACE CORPS WASHINGTON TO REOPEN PEACE CORPS EAST TIMOR.

WHEREAS, Peace Corps was created in 1961 by Senator John F. Kennedy and has since trained and arranged for nearly 200,000 volunteers to serve in 139 host countries; and

WHEREAS, Peace Corps East Timor was the first new Peace Corps program of the 21st century, and the diplomatic note of 2002 formally establishing the program was signed by Nobel Peace Laureate and East Timor Minister of Foreign Affairs Jose Ramos-Horta; and

WHEREAS, Peace Corps volunteers worked to meet crucial community development needs in East Timor, such as organizational development, health promotion, small-scale agriculture, water and sanitation, nutrition, environment, HIV/AIDS, and women’s and youth development; and

WHEREAS, Peace Corps volunteers were the first international group to be trained in Tetum, the local language of East Timor; and

WHEREAS, since Peace Corps East Timor volunteers were evacuated in 2006 due to civil unrest and government instability, the country has stabilized and is safer now than it was when the Peace Corps East Timor program was first established in 2002; and

WHEREAS, the need for Peace Corps volunteers in East Timor is greater now than ever, as the country remains one of the poorest in Asia and throughout the world, and 40% of its population survives on less than $1 per day; and
WHEREAS, nearly half of the country’s population is children under the age of fifteen, many of whose parents are struggling to support them; and

WHEREAS, Peace Corps Washington is sending an assessment mission to East Timor in April, 2010 to determine whether or not to reopen the country’s Peace Corps program, just as it will reopen Peace Corps Indonesia in the summer of 2010 after 45 years of absence from the country; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Representatives of the Twenty-fifth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2010, that this body urges Peace Corps Washington to reopen Peace Corps East Timor as soon as practicable for the mutual benefit of Peace Corps Volunteers and the people of East Timor; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Resolution be transmitted to Peace Corps Washington, the offices of the President and Prime Minister of East Timor, the Embassy of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste in Washington DC, the United States Embassy in Timor-Leste and USAID in Washington, DC and Timor-Leste.

OFFERED BY:

[Signatures]

MAR 10 2010