

From: Edward Pei [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, March 21, 2010 3:13 PM
To: TCItestimony
Subject: Testimony for TCI Committee Hearing on Monday, March 22, at 9:35am in Conference Room 312: HCR #242

Representative Joey Manahan and Members of the House Committee on Tourism, Culture, and International Affairs:

My name is Edward Pei and I am a Past President of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii. I am testifying today in support of House Concurrent Resolution #242, Urging the United Nations to grant Taiwan meaningful participation in the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). Very simply, there is no good reason that Taiwan has been denied membership to this organization since 1971. This organization, with its 190 member countries, sets the safety standards for global civil aviation and provides countries around the world with guidelines for formulating their domestic civil aviation laws and regulations. Denying membership to any country is inconsistent with its stated goal of developing international civil aviation on the basis of equality of opportunity, harmony, and universality. Taiwan is one of the very few countries in the world that is not a member of this organization, denied access because of purely political reasons.

Taiwan is a key air transportation hub linking Northeast and Southeast Asia. The Taipei Flight Information Region (FIR) provides air traffic control services for over 1.34 million flights. Its 18 airports serve 30 airlines, 23 of which are foreign carriers, accommodating 174,000 flights annually, carrying approximately 40 million passengers, and 1.58 million metric tons of air cargo. (I might add that my wife and I were two of those 40 million passengers that last week transitted through Taipei on our way to and from Hong Kong.) Needless to say, Taiwan plays a critically important role in air transportation in this part of the world.

Air transportation safety and security is so important in the world today. The strength and integrity of the global system relies on the participation and cooperation of every player within the global community. No country should be excluded, as one link severed in the chain could jeopardize the strength of the entire system. While politics has excluded Taiwan as a member of ICAO, we need to emphasize to the United Nations that Taiwan's participation in this organization is critically important. While full membership is the most desirable outcome, being allowed to participate as an "Observer" will achieve its mutual objectives without creating political tension and uncertainty.

I urge you to pass HCR 242. I also urge you to continue to provide support for Taiwan's efforts here in Hawaii. The Taipei Economic and Cultural Office, led by Director General Philip Wang, has been very supportive of Hawaii, and its Chinese community in particular. They have been model citizens, as guests of our State, and contribute a great deal to the richness and diversity of our culture. They have shared unselfishly their technologies, experiences, arts, and history, and deserve our respect and support in their daunting endeavors to overcome the challenges of their political status.

Yours Respectfully,

Edward Y. W. Pei
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