



The Hawaii Law Enforcement
Memorial Foundation

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Executive Director

Katherine Kcaloha,
Director

Debbie Luna,
Director

Sidney Hayakawa,
Director

Ku'uhaku Park,
Director

Rick Omellas,
Director

LATE TESTIMONY

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Rep. Marcus R. Oshiro, Chair

Rep. Marilyn B. Lee, Vice Chair

RE: HB 1622

Dear Representatives Oshiro and Lee:

Let me take this opportunity to introduce myself. I am Thomas K. Aiu, JD, a retired Senior Special Agent with the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ). I am also the primary Advisor for the Hawaii Law Enforcement Memorial Foundation (www.hlemf.org).

I respectfully submit testimony today in support of HB 1622 which states that "*a state law enforcement memorial shall be constructed in the capitol district preferably on the diamond head side of the Kalanimoku building; provided that private funds shall be solicited and used for the construction of the memorial.*"

HB 1622 follows on the heels of House Concurrent Resolution 139 which was passed unanimously on April 23, 2010, without objection, by both houses of the Hawaii State Legislature.

HCR 139 recognized that Hawaii is the only state which does not have a Memorial honoring the supreme sacrifice of its Hawaii's law enforcement officers who died in the line of duty. It also recognized the Foundation as the not-for-profit organization charged with raising private funds, which along with its law enforcement partners, would then design, construct, and maintain a Hawaii Law Enforcement Memorial.

Finally, HCR 139 set aside land on the grounds of the Hawaii State Capitol for the Memorial.

When law enforcement officers, police, sheriff, and federal agents alike, take that oath of office and swear to uphold the Constitution, we do so in an unwavering manner. After months of training, we entertain lofty goals of serving and protecting and making a difference. We long to find that missing child, rush to a robbery in progress, or save the life of a victim. Many times, this exuberance comes at the expense of our families and loved ones. We forego birthdays, anniversaries, and holidays; all for

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the job. We live to catch the bad guy and even after our shift is over; we can't wait to go back to work the next day. We wear our badge with pride and although a few may fall by the wayside, for the most part, we never think to tarnish ourselves or our agency.

We also know, in the deep recess of our mind, that at some point, we will be called to search a dark alley, look for gang members in an abandoned building, stop a car on a lonely stretch of highway, pursue an armed drug dealer, or confront a dangerous fugitive. We rely on our training and our survival instincts. We hope and pray that the outcome is favorable for us, and the violator. Most times, that's the case. Our one compelling thought "Just get home so the wife won't have to see it on the news, or worse, experience the quiet approach of a commander's vehicle with somber news."

Sometimes, though, things go bad. We're taught to trust in our training. But even when we do everything by the book, follow all the rules, and when it's least expected, some are called to make the ultimate sacrifice. And, when that happens, it's done selflessly, protecting the life of a fellow officer, an innocent bystander, or simply ourselves.

As a federal agent, I was fortunate to work with law enforcement officers from across this great nation. I have seen firsthand the professionalism of our country's police and federal agents. I have also witnessed the tragedy and heartbreak when an officer is killed in the line of duty. It's a grim reminder that it could have been me, since we've all faced those same dangers.

Those fallen are honored for paying the ultimate sacrifice while protecting their country, their city, their very neighborhood. But after the tears, the heartfelt speeches, the posthumous praise, and the conferred medals of valor; after s/he's laid to rest, the family, friends, and colleagues continue to grieve, many times alone.

States across the country have a memorial which stands in tribute to the sacrifice of their officers. Washington, D.C. is home of the National Law Enforcement Officer's Memorial where every Hawaii officer killed in the line of duty is honored and recognized. Hawaii, too, should maintain its own place of solitude, honor, and peace. A reminder of the sacrifice; a place where families, friends, and colleagues may go to remember.

Since the passage of HCR 139, the Foundation has been very active meeting its obligations as outlined in the Resolution. It has met with the past State Comptroller and working with our law enforcement partners, identified a parcel of land just diamond head of the Kalanimoku Building as the Memorial site.

The Foundation has also partnered with the University of Hawaii at Manoa, School of Architecture to design the Memorial. In November 2010, the School assembled over 250 architectural students to compete in a contest to design the Memorial. Over a month's time period, 30 design renderings were presented. A jury of professors from the School of Architecture, as well as local design professionals, selected 5 semi-finalists. Later, the Foundation's Board of Directors met further narrowing the field to 3 finalists.

As its primary fundraising Event (in accordance with HCR 139 to raise private funds) the Foundation held its 1st Annual Gala Benefit on 12.11.10 at the Sheraton Waikiki Grand Ballroom. This Event was Co-Chaired by U.S. Senators Daniel K. Inouye and Daniel K. Akaka. Over 900 guests attended to include law enforcement executives from federal, state, and local agencies, state legislators, county

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officials, and business and civic leaders. That evening, the 900 guests, after scrutinizing the final design renderings, all in full 3D mock ups, voted for the final Memorial design.

The Foundation is well on its way to raise the necessary funds for the Hawaii Law Enforcement Memorial. Passage of this bill will require NO funding from the State of Hawaii.

I, therefore, urge your support of HB 1622 on behalf of those who have died in the line of duty.

Sincerely,

/s/

Thomas K. Aiu, JD
Senior Special Agent, DEA (Ret.)