

STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 1989, HD1

RELATING TO VETERANS

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON INTERGOVERNMENTAL  
AND MILITARY AFFAIRS

MARCH 14, 2008

BY

OFFICE OF VETERANS SERVICES

Chair Inouye and members of the Committee, I am Mark Moses, Director of the Office of Veterans Services (OVS). We support the over-all concept of House Bill 1989, HD1 provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in our Executive Supplemental Budget Request.

Currently, Hawaii Revised Statutes Paragraph 363-2 (3) provides that the OVS Director shall have the power to "Administer funds allocated for the office, and apply for, receive, and disburse grants and donations from all sources for veterans programs and services provided under this chapter."

OVS authority to accept and expend private contributions has long been established. A Trust Fund was authorized accordingly in 1991. Collections into this separate fund do not and have never reverted to the State General Fund. Transactions into this account continue to provide resources to support the veteran community. Transactions out of this account have been used exclusively to supplement veteran benefits and entitlements.

For this reason, we believe it may be unnecessary to create an additional trust fund. The bill's language includes recommendations that would create significant

problems for us to comply with. We are woefully understaffed and lack the professional expertise to engage in investment activities. Additionally, we do not have suitable facilities to house, even temporarily, both real and personal property. Establishment of a Veterans' Gift Trust Fund may create additional burdens of establishing and maintaining a new fund as required by this legislation. I defer to the Attorney General as to the ability of OVS to accept stocks and real estate.

Finally, should the bill get approved, we will prepare for Administrative Rules hearing, and wish to advise this body, that the recently concluded round of Administrative Rules hearings cost OVS over \$8000, and we would ask the Legislature to appropriate this amount for the purpose of this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.