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Rep. Gene Ward, Ph.D

H.B. 2032 Relating to the Employees' Retirement System

Conference Room 329, 8:30 a.m.

January 28, 2008

Testimony of Invisible Children Hawaii Club

Honolulu, Hawaii

Good morning Chair Rida Cabanilla and Vice Chair Karen Awana and Representatives Belatti, Bertram, Green, Mizuno, Rhoads, Shimabukuro, Tokioka, and Ward,

Invisible Children Hawaii (ICH) is a group of college students from Hawaii Pacific University dedicated to relieving the suffering of children both in Hawai'i and around the world. Created in the spring of 2007, ICH's committed members began by throwing a sleep over on State Capitol grounds to show support for the child soldiers of Uganda. Over 200 people braved rain to join the event. Since then, ICH has continued its work by educating hundreds of students about the tragedies occurring in Northern Uganda, and raising over \$2000 the education of children living in displacement camps. ICH was especially proud to educate local underprivileged high school students about the cause, work with other Hawai'i Pacific University clubs, and sponsor three runners in the Honolulu Marathon. ICH continues to look for new causes both in Hawai'i and abroad, and is confident that a few college students can, in fact, make a difference.

The purpose of the bill "A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO THE EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM" is to voice Hawaii's opposition to the humanitarian crisis presently occurring in Northern Uganda by prohibiting the Employees' Retirement System (ERS) from investing in securities of companies that have active business operations with Uganda.

The citizens of Northern Uganda have faced atrocities for more than twenty years due to the armed conflict between the Government of Uganda and the Lord's Resistance Army, an armed rebel trying to topple the Ugandan government. The United Nations Humanitarian Assistant Chief Jan Egeland has described the guerilla war in northern Uganda as "the world's greatest neglected humanitarian crisis."

Of the 300,000 child soldiers in the world today, 30,000 of these are in Uganda and they make up 80% of the Lord's Resistance Army. Statistics show that 77% of child abductees had seen someone murdered, 39% had been forced to kill someone with their own hands, and 35% of female soldiers had been sexually abused. Most other children had also been beaten brutally and forced to burn down towns and houses and abduct other children.

Currently an estimated 1.7 million people still remain internally displaced in northern Uganda as a result of the conflict between the government and the Lord's Resistance Army. The effects of the war are seen most prevalently in the lives of the children of Northern Uganda. These children face issues of malnutrition, lack of food and water supplies, and other physiological as well as psychological problems from living and fighting in such a long-lasting conflict.

"I support the passage of H.B. 2032, and testify I am against the humanitarian crisis presently occurring in Northern Uganda, by prohibiting the Employees' Retirement System (ERS) from investing in securities of companies that have active business operations with Uganda."

Aya Sato
Sara Ortiz
Chelsea Travis
Lacy Greninger
Paul Tran
Ashley Conroy
Jennifer Scott
Jennifer Zondlo
Joanne Caballero
Jordan Tangonan
Jessica Sintos
Susan Lewis
Mary Jane Riopta
Darlene Loo
James Castro
Michael Williams
Carlee Johnson
Kelly Lawton
Jasmine Pelen-Vergara
Samantha Soufrine
Alita Kristensen
Ashkan Amiri