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March 17, 2008

The Honorable State Senator Carol Fukunaga, Chairman, and
Honorable State Senator Will Espero, Vice Chair
And Members

Economic Development and Taxation
Hawaii State Capitol
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

RE: Testimony in support of HB 3279 HD1
Relating to the Hawaii United Okinawa Association

Chair Fukunaga, Vice Chair Espero and Members of the
Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to present testimony in
support of HB 3279 HD1 on behalf of the Hawaii United
Okinawa Association.

Recently, it was brought to our attention by the
Department of Budget and Finance that the Legislative
appropriation passed in 2006 to benefit the Hawaii United
Okinawa Association, should be clarified to specifically state the
public purpose and benefit of Act 160 (2006), as specifically
related to the Hawaii United Okinawa Association and to
transfer the administration of the appropriation to the
Department of Accounting and General Services, specifically
the State Foundation on Culture and the Arts. Time is of the
essence. Due to the need for this clarification, the appropriation
has not been released and funds will soon lapse in July 2008.

As provided in the text of the current HB 3279 HD1, the
Hawaii United Okinawa Association ("HUOA") is a 501(c)3 non-
profit organization founded in 1951, created to promote,
preserve and perpetuate the Okinawan culture, provide
community services and to support and encourage the
education of culture and heritage.

The Hawaii Okinawa Center ("HOC"), in Waipio, was built
in 1990 and still serves as the symbol of Uchinanchu
(Okinawan) heritage and perseverance here in Hawaii. The
HUOA, however, struggles to accommodate additional needs
related to cultural events and community service programs. The
2006 budget Act 160 appropriation was intended to further a
public purpose by providing assistance in the form of a grant to
continue providing an opportunity to expand the HOC to allow

for cultural classes for performing arts, language, children's education and international exchange for the general public and not held exclusively for HUOA members.

HUOA has maintained a positive presence in the community for over 50 years. The annual Okinawa Festival is the State's largest cultural festival that depends solely on volunteers and attracts over 70,000 visitors from Hawaii and abroad. Our statewide annual Okinawan Cultural Summer Day Camps for Children hosts cultural education classes for over 200 of Hawaii's children across all of the neighbor islands. HUOA recently coordinated and sponsored various community outreach projects like a good old fashion Okinawan Picnic for needy families at homeless shelters in East and West Oahu. This program has specifically contributed to over 300 families in Waimanalo and Waianae.

Pursuant to Article VII, section 4 of the State Constitution, any allocation of public money shall be used for a "public purpose." The physical expansion of the Hawaii Okinawa Center is vital and necessary to continue the mission of HUOA to serve its members and the public. Additional space and programs are critical to maintain HUOA's support for cultural education, genealogy, crafts, ikebana, music, dance and to maintain the Okinawan cultural significance and preservation here in Hawaii.

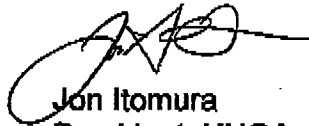
Programs and additional space is required to address identified current and future community needs and HUOA seeks to develop innovative programs such as adult day care and pre-school systems to allow members and community residents to avoid long commutes into Honolulu. Additional parking is also a priority. Currently, members and guests are walking from remote locations when there are large HUOA or conflicting events. Health and safety concerns necessitate the need to provide additional parking to accommodate members, guests and community residents who use HOC's facilities.

This measure currently contains language providing the public purpose declaration from the Legislature representing that the grant to the Hawaii United Okinawa Association is in the public interest.

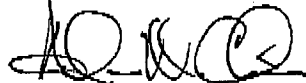
Therefore, we respectfully request that the Senate Committee on Economic Development and Taxation support passage of HB 3279 HD1 seeking to amend Act 160 by

clarifying the legislative intent and provide a public purpose declaration and to transfer the administration of the appropriation to the Department of Accounting and General Services. Specifically, we believe that the State Foundation on Culture and Arts is the appropriate administrator of the appropriation.

Please accept our sincerest Mahalo for this opportunity to provide this testimony to demonstrate our support for HB 3279 HD1.



Jon Itomura
President, HUOA
Hawaii United Okinawa Assn.



Alan Chinen
Capital Campaign Chairman
Hawaii United Okinawa Assn.

testimony

From: Chinen, Alan [ChinenA@CA-FG.com]
Sent: Monday, March 17, 2008 3:26 PM
To: testimony
Subject: HB 3279, HD1

To The Senate Committee on Economic Development & Taxation
Senator Carol Fukunaga, Chair
Senator Will Espero, Vice Chair

Notice of Hearing
Tuesday, March 18, 2008
1:15 PM
Conference room 224
State Capitol

Please support the Hawaii United Okinawa Association in it's efforts to amend the appropriation for fiscal year 2006-2007 (HB3279, HD1)

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