

Testimony in Support of SB 2902, COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, 2/6/08, 1:15 PM

<mailto:y@capitol.hawaii.gov> Dear Senator Sakamoto, Chair, and Senator Tokuda, Vice Chair, and Committee Members:

I write to offer testimony in support of SB 2902, which is intended to strengthen educational and service programs relating to peace and provided by the UH Program on Conflict Resolution and Matsunaga Institute for Peace (PCR/MIP), I offer one compelling example of the high quality contributions to the community that are made possible by the important work of this program.

I am citizen and a participant in a newly-formed community advisory group that is being expertly guided by two facilitators from the Program on Conflict Resolution (K. Cross and K. Lowry). This group has formed to serve the important mission of advising the Hawai'i Community Development Authority (HCDA) on planning for Kaka'ako makai. We had not previously functioned as an organized group. The expert facilitation we are receiving is supporting the formation of the Kaka'ako Makai Community Planning Advisory Council (CPAC).

We selected facilitators from the Program on Conflict Resolution/Matsunaga Institute for Peace last fall because of their reputation and the excellent interviews we had with them in exploring our options for the group. I am happy to provide a very positive report on the high quality expert guidance our group is receiving. The facilitators have provided information, analysis, suggestions, and methodologies to guide our work in a successful direction. We have had many points at which their experience and expertise has enabled us to address an issue or decision in a more informed and harmonious way.

I would add that from the larger perspective of the community or our state, I believe it is immensely important that this program lives and thrives in Hawai'i as a place where community groups and organizations can go to find expert facilitation and mediation. This program reflects all the best of the cultural heritage of our citizens in Hawai'i. As such, it is important that this program be supported in its work to engage people from around the world in peace education and peace-making as the foundation of global relationships.

In closing, I note that I am an organizational psychologist with training in conflict resolution, so my opinion is a professional opinion as well as a personal view. I believe the CPAC example well represents the good work of the PCR/MIP program. I enthusiastically support SB 2902.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Hedlund, Ph.D.
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Member, Kaka'ako Makai Community Planning Advisory Council