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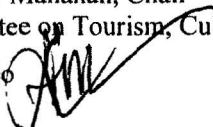


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March 30, 2009

TO: Honorable Joey Manahan, Chair
House Committee on Tourism, Culture, & International Affairs

FROM: Danny A. Mateo
Council Chair 

SUBJECT: **HEARING OF MARCH 30, 2009; TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HCR 241/HR 210, DECLARING OCTOBER 11TH A STATE HOLIDAY IN HONOR OF BLESSED DAMIEN**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this important measure. The purpose of this measure is to consider October 11th a State holiday in honor of blessed Damien.

The Maui County Council has not had the opportunity to take a formal position on this measure. Therefore, I am providing this testimony in my capacity as an individual member of the Maui County Council.

I support this measure for the following reasons:

1. Father Damien's work in Kalaupapa on Molokai marked a turning point for the community, where basic laws were enforced, shacks became painted houses, working farms were organized, and schools were erected.
2. Father Damien's efforts in alleviating the distresses and mitigating the sorrows of the unfortunate have been recognized both nationally and internationally.
3. Father Damien has been beatified by Pope John Paul II and venerated in not only the Roman Catholic Church, but the Anglican Communion and individual Lutheran Churches, and continues to be a source of inspiration and comfort for those with Hansen's Disease (leprosy), HIV and AIDS.

For the foregoing reasons, I support this measure.

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