

baker2 - Michele

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Tuesday, February 24, 2009 11:42 PM
To: CPN Testimony
Cc: nevasaneva1@hotmail.com
Subject: Testimony for SB1223 on 2/25/2009 8:30:00 AM



Testimony for CPN 2/25/2009 8:30:00 AM SB1223

Conference room: 229
Testifier position: support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Michael Darnay Among
Organization: Creations of Hawaii
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Submitted on: 2/24/2009

Comments:
Aloha no kakou everyone!

In September of 2007 "NevaSaNeva"; Honolulu's Premier T-shirt Company was established. As of March 2008, "NevaSaNeva"; has become a member of the organization Creations of Hawaii. I believe that products that carry the "Made in Hawaii"; should be designed and manufactured in Hawaii. A renewed effort to "Enhance the Ideals and Spirit of ALOHA" is defining moment in Hawaii's history. We must give the local consumers as well as tourist an intrinsic value; this adds to the quality of any product "Made in Hawaii. Or else products made somewhere else; other than Hawaii; will continue destroying the ALOHA spirit. Just saying, ALOHA, and attaching "Made in Hawaii"; to products (implying its "Made in Hawaii, when it's not) and selling it; is a form of corruption. Local consumers and tourist are becoming more aware of this marketing deception. For example, when we sell lauhala or grass beach mats and Hawaiian style quilts made in the Philippines. I believe, that this type of rationalizing has brought harm to Hawaii's economy.

I'm convinced that we need to continue to be Hawaii; to develop products "Made in Hawaii"; for the sake of ethical business practices, our children and visitors that travel to Hawaii for the climate, the paradise, and the ALOHA spirit that is still evident. We cannot allow this facade to continue--nevasaneva.

We look forward to continue this partnership in developing and passing this bill: SB1223 on 2/25/09; Section 1 Section 486-119 - Hawaii revised statutes; Hawaii-made products.

Sincerely,

Michael D. Among

Aloha,

My name is Christine Gomez. My husband Mike Leal and I have been actively involved in the craft community of O'ahu for over six years. We are members of several hand crafted and artisan organizations. We care very deeply about our business, as well as the future of Made in Hawai'i products. We work very hard to maintain the integrity of what it means to sell hand made products. While a lot of our loose materials (such as gold and silver wire) may not be Hawaiian, our finished product is always sculpted by hand and finished by us, either in our home or at shows in front of the customer. It has been our experience over the past several years to see other businesses and vendors claiming their products are "Made in Hawai'I" when truly they are not.

As it stands now, it is acceptable for one to claim a product is made in Hawai'i when the finished product contains 51% of Hawaiian products or labor done in Hawai'i. For many vendors, that means they are allowed to take an imported item and just enhance it by either gluing something on top or stringing a few things on a cord. It is not always obvious to the buyer that the "Hawaiian made" Lauhala bag they are buying was actually made in the Philippines with the Hawaiian portion being the 10 minutes of labor it took to hot glue gun a decoration (also made in the Phillipines) to the outside. This is just a small example, but a buyer walking around from vendor to vendor can often notice a pattern, and wonder what it may truly mean to buy a Hawaiian product. *Is it really Hawaiian, or am I buying just another Swap Meet trinket?* If businesses were forced to increase their made in Hawaii value to 65%, it would make it more difficult for the sellers to try to pass off imported items as Hawaiian made.

It is not only the vendors or businesses that fail to maintain integrity, but some show and event promoters as well. Too many times, I have participated in events that claim to sell all made in Hawai'i products, only to find the vendors around me taking items out of plastic bags and boxes clearly labeled "Made in China". In this case, the vendors are not even selling products 51% made in Hawai'i, but are allowed to participate at a venue advertised as a Made in Hawai'i event. This makes it extremely hard to compete in this type of setting. I sign up for an event where I believe I am participating with fellow artists, only to find a vendor next to me selling mass-produced products at half the price of my items. "Made in Hawai'i" is a tag that, as citizens of our beautiful island, we should be proud to assign to products handmade with a little more care and creative energy than these types of items. I believe there is a place for imported items to be sold and it is NOT at advertised "Made in Hawai'i" events.

Not only does there need to be an increase in the percentage of the "Hawaiian value" of the products, but there needs to be dependable enforcement for vendors and promoters to fairly represent their products to buyers and guarantee that the products are indeed Made in Hawai'i if they are labeled as such. By implementing a strict screening process, all vendors will have to prove their products are Hawaiian made and we can all be proud to be in the category of Made in Hawai'i products.

With the current state of Hawaiian made product regulations, true artists and Hawaiian manufacturers continue to be insulted by being lumped together with "enhanced"

imported items. It isn't just the legitimate artists that suffer. The Hawaiian culture itself is being degraded. It is not uncommon to see cultural symbols, mass produced or assembled who knows where, by people who may or may not have any idea what the item they assemble every day means. The product is shipped here, marked with a "Made in Hawaii" sticker, and sold for less than \$5 at a craft fair or corner store. Currently, too many Hawaiian products are compared with things seen in retail markets or the swap meet only because the buyer has no faith in the "Made in Hawai'i" label. If nothing is done to change this, the phrase "Made in Hawai'i" will mean little more to the average buyer than the phrase "Made in China".