

STATE OF HAWAII
OFFICE OF VETERANS SERVICES
TESTIMONY ON S.B. No. 571, RELATING TO A VETERAN'S MEMORIAL
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC, REVITALIZATION,
BUSINESS & MILITARY AFFAIRS

March 19, 2009

Good morning Chair Angus McKelvey, Vice-Chair Isaac Choy, and members of the House Committee on Economic, Revitalization, Business & Military Affairs.

I am Mark Moses, Director of the Office of Veterans Services (OVS). I appreciate this opportunity to testify on SB 571, which seeks to establish a memorial to the veterans of the Persian Gulf War and Operation Desert Storm, as long as its implementation does not impact or replace the priorities set forth in the Executive Biennium Budget for Fiscal Years 2009-2010.

Although we support this intent to honor our veterans, we offer the following comments and recommendations.

Memorials are usually built after the conflict comes to resolution. Although it is a common misunderstanding that these are separate conflicts, the federal government considers the Gulf War as starting August 2, 1990, through a date to be set by law or Presidential Proclamation. This has not occurred as of this date, and will include the current ongoing conflict in Afghanistan.

Another concern is that many of the War memorials in Hawaii list the names of the fallen. Since planning for this memorial has not commenced, the form and other details of the memorial have yet to be decided.

Additionally, this measure pre-determines the location of the memorial as within the capitol district. Due to design features including size and materials used, other locations may be more appropriate.

As contained in Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), 363-3, OVS is responsible for inspection and reporting repair and maintenance problems of all state war memorials. Accordingly, OVS should be included in the planning and decision making concerning establishment of said Memorials.

Finally, given the above comments, most importantly the continuing Afghan conflict, and our current economic circumstances, it may not be practical to implement this measure at this time. It most definitely is a matter worthy of consideration when the war is declared ended, and the state's fiscal situation improves.

Thank you for allowing me to present the Veterans' perspective.

I will respond to questions from the committee.