

18 February 2010

Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs
House of Representatives
Hawaii State Legislature
State Capitol
415 Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii

Ramon Maui Quizon (Cell: 228-0915)
Master Sergeant, Hawaii Air National Guard
360 Mamala Bay Drive
Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii 96853-5517

Re: H.B. 2344: Hearing Date/Time/Location: Friday, February 19, 2010, 2:00 p.m., Conference Room 308, State Capitol, 415 South Beretania Street, Honolulu, Hawaii

Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the House Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs, I appreciate the opportunity to testify in opposition to H.B. 2344 - RELATING TO UNIFORM MAINTENANCE ALLOWANCE. "The purpose of this bill is to repeal the uniform maintenance allowance for enlisted personnel."

I'm Master Sergeant Ramon Maui Quizon, a member in good standing with the Hawaii Air National Guard, and current Vice President-Air, Hawaii National Guard Enlisted Association, representing over 4,000 enlisted men and women of the Hawaii Army and Air National Guard.

As stated in the bill, modernization of the (Hawaii National Guardsmen) service uniforms (wherein they are designed wash and wear fabric) no longer requires dry cleaning. However, the uniform modifications to "wash and wear" fabric is a design feature of guardsmen utility uniforms, i.e., battle dress uniforms.

The intent of the uniform maintenance allowance for enlisted personnel in the Hawaii National Guard (established in 1967 to assist with certain expenses) still remains an important source of uniform maintenance allowance, as guardsman are still responsible for covering anticipated costs (e.g., dry cleaning, alterations) in maintaining SERVICE DRESS, DRESS, AND STANDARDIZED FUNCTIONAL UNIFORMS.

Service dress, dress, and standardized functional uniforms include multiple combinations of pant/trousers, short/long sleeve shirt, jacket, coat, as well as physical training uniforms.

Aside from the benefit of receiving an allowance to help subsidize the cost of maintaining service dress, dress, and standardized functional uniforms, the uniform maintenance allowance continues to be a valuable tool of recruitment for the Hawaii Army and Air National Guard. The uniform maintenance allowance is one of several proven tools setting the foundation to provide the State of Hawaii the best possible means to recruit and retain our citizen-soldiers.

Recruiting and retaining Hawaii National Guardsmen means we will continue to have a Guard able and equipped to respond to emergencies/natural disasters, that not only helps our local government, but ultimately the people of the State of Hawaii.

I fully recognize the budget crisis faced by the State government, yet firmly believe the uniform maintenance allowance continues to be warranted. Serving in the guard (now more than ever) is a difficult and demanding duty, especially when service members make every effort to balance their finances, their jobs, their families, and -- maintain service dress, dress, and standardized functional uniforms.

Our enlisted membership knows from years of experience how vital it is to the State of Hawaii that we maintain an effective National Guard presence. We are fortunate to have a balanced joint force of guardsmen throughout our great state, with Hawaii National Guard Soldiers and Airman located on each major island (Oahu, Kauai, Maui and the Big Island).

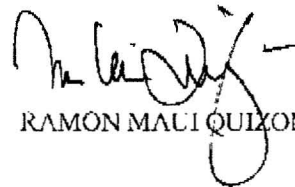
With their presence, you have seen time and again the people of Hawaii can count on the Hawaii National Guard to respond quickly and effectively across a wide range of natural or man-made disasters, providing soldiers and airmen trained and equipped to deal with any emergency that may threaten the citizens of Hawaii and our "malahini".

I strongly oppose H.B. 2344, to repeal the uniform maintenance allowance for enlisted personnel. I enlisted in the Hawaii Air National Guard in 1984 and the uniform allowance was \$1.50 per day. That was 26-years ago, and the allowance rate has not changed. Today it costs me nearly \$20.00 to clean and service one set of standardized functional uniforms (and even more for service dress/dress uniforms), a substantial difference compared to the \$1.50 daily rate uniform maintenance allowance.

This bill will negatively impact the real life requirements of our guardsmen, as it eliminates our ability to help absorb some of the direct personal cost to us and our families. Passing this bill may also send a message to our soldiers and airman that, after many long years, we may be losing the support of the State of Hawaii.

As our guardsman (continue to) return from active duty deployment and transition back to their families and civilian life, I strongly believe we should (continue to) honor and take care of our men and women, ensuring the State of Hawaii is and will remain prepared and ready to deal with any emergency that could harm us.

Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the House Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs, thank you for your time, commitment and dedication to the well-being of our State of Hawaii and the Guardsmen who defend it.



RAMON MAUI QUIXON, MSgt, HIANG

From: MSgt Eric Daido, Citizen Airman, 204th Airlift Sq, Hawaii Air National Guard

Subject: Testimony to oppose HB2344

Chair, Vice-Chair, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Master Sergeant Eric Daido; I am a Loadmaster with the 204th Airlift SQ, Hawaii Air National Guard. I have proudly served in the Guard for over 23 years. I have served the citizens of the State of Hawaii in hurricane Iniki relief, and our nation in Iraq, Afghanistan and other places around the world. I have proudly worn our Hawaii State flag on my shoulder all over the world. That patch is worn on a uniform that requires up keep and laundering.

I am providing testimony to oppose HB2344, which provides to repeal the annual uniform clothing allowance given enlisted personnel of the Hawaii National Guard. This modest allowance helps alleviate the cost of laundering /upkeep to our enlisted guard members. The small fiscal support provided from the state is an important symbol showing support to our citizen soldiers and airmen of Hawaii. Newer uniforms worn by our citizen soldiers are considered wash and wear; however our dress/service uniforms are not. Most guardsmen wear this dress uniform at least one day of the work week and during community activities, such as the Veterans Day, Memorial Day, Presidents Day, funeral ceremonies, and any events that we are requested to support. These dress uniforms that are proudly worn when representing our state militia are still dry cleaned and professionally laundered. The current financial assistance given to us by the state helps to alleviate this cost is greatly appreciated by our members.

Our active duty counterparts receive an annual uniform allowance that varies from \$250 to \$575, depending on their rank and years of service.

Do we really want to send a message to our volunteer citizen soldiers that our lawmakers do not care or support the soldiers and airmen of Hawaii? Every Guardsman wears their uniform proudly and professionally because it represents home, it represents Hawaii! We wear our uniforms to show our commitment we have to our State and nation.

Our guard members have made many sacrifices to support our state and nation during times of need and war. Serving in the National Guard can be a difficult commitment to uphold. The careful balance of a civilian job, our military commitment and to our families is a delicate tightrope we must walk. To take away the clothing allowance will only add a burden to our already high cost of living. We should honor, care, and show support for our part-time citizen soldiers and airmen. Not just in words but in deed. The State of Hawaii remains prepared and ready to deal with any state or national emergency. Why? Because of the dedication that the men and women of the Hawaii National Guard show each and every time they put on their uniforms. As I am speaking somewhere, someplace around the world our state flag is being worn by one of our guardsman who will proudly answer "Hawaii"! when asked where they are from.

I urge you to show your support for your volunteer National Guardsmen by continuing the clothing allowance given to each one of them, so they can continue to wear the Hawaii State flag around the world with honor and respect as they represent the citizens of Hawaii.

Thank you for your time and I look forward to seeing this bill repealed as a symbol of your continued support and commitment to our citizen soldiers and airmen that stand ready to defend this state and our nation every day.

V/R

//Signed//

MSgt Eric Daido
204th Airlift Sq
Hawaii Air National Guard

FINTestimony

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Friday, February 19, 2010 11:24 AM
To: FINTestimony
Cc: luke.sakanashi@hihick.af.mil
Subject: Testimony for HB2344 on 2/19/2010 2:00:00 PM

Testimony for FIN 2/19/2010 2:00:00 PM HB2344

Conference room: 308
Testifier position: oppose
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Luke Sakanashi
Organization: Individual
Address: 360 Mamala Dr. Hon, Hi
Phone: (808)448-7752
E-mail: luke.sakanashi@hihick.af.mil Submitted on: 2/19/2010

Comments:

My name is Sergeant Luke Sakanashi, member of the Hawaii Air National Guard

I am providing testimony to oppose the repeal of HB2344, which provides an annual uniform clothing allowance for enlisted personnel of the National Guard. This bill helps alleviate laundering uniform costs to enlisted guard members. The small fiscal support provided from the state bill is a vital key to showing support to our citizen soldiers and airmen of Hawaii. Even if our current Airman Battle Uniform may be wash and wear attire, we still wear the dress/service uniforms one day of the work week and during our community activities, such as the Veterans Day, Memorial Day, Presidents Day, funeral ceremonies, and any event that we are requested to support. These dress uniforms that are proudly worn when representing our state militia are still dry cleaned and professionally laundered. Any financial assistance to alleviate this cost is appreciated by our members.

Our active duty brethren receive an annual uniform allowance to absorb any fair wear and tear uniform costs. The annual allowance varies from \$250 to \$575, depending on their rank and years of service.

Each and every one of us wear our uniforms proudly and professionally because we represent the current state militia and the commitment we have to the State and our nation.

The support to continue this bill will also show that the state recognizes the loyalty of the guardsmen and reservists to our State, its citizens, and our nation. Our guard members have made many sacrifices to support us during our times of need for the State and Nation. Serving in the National Guard may be a difficult commitment to uphold and balance with cost of living expenses. I believe we should honor and care for our part-time citizen soldiers and airmen to ensure that the State of Hawaii remains prepared and ready to deal with any emergency that may come upon us.

Thank you for your time and dedication to the well being of our State and the state militia that defends it.