

SR92

Testimony
by
TERESITA G. BERNALES, ED.D.

**In Consideration of
SCR 193/ SR92
Preserving Honolulu as a Two Daily Newspaper**

**Judiciary and Government Operations Committee
Sen Brian Taniguchi, Chair
and
Sen. Dwight Takamine, Vice Chair**

TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE, 2010, STATE OF HAWAII

Introducers: Senators Ihara, Baker, Chun Oakland, Espero, Fukunaga, Gabbard, Galuteria, Hooser,

From: Media Council Hawaii (formerly Honolulu Council Community Media Council)

Date: Wednesday, March 24, 2010

Subject: SCR193/SR92: In support for Preserving Honolulu as a Two Daily Newspaper

The Honolulu Community Media Council (HCMC) was established in 1970 and is the oldest of the five volunteer media councils that exist in the United States. The Council is composed of individuals from the community and the media, which seek to improve public access to information, strengthen public support for First Amendment rights and freedoms, broaden public understanding of the role of the media, and promote accurate and fair journalism in Hawaii.

Media Council Hawai'i (MCH) has long supported competition, diversity and localism in Hawai'i's news media market. These are the bedrock values of a healthy democratic media.

We unfortunately live in a time when news media owners would rather consolidate than compete and thereby squelch diversity and localism so essential to responding to the community's needs. For this reason we find it distressing that Honolulu Star-Bulletin

owner David Black is planning to purchase his competitor, The Honolulu Advertiser, and merge the two newspapers.

The result will be the loss of another editorial voice in the community. This comes on the heels of the KHNL TV newsroom being shuttered by Raycom Media. Some 900 Advertiser and Star-Bulletin employees have been plunged into uncertainty about their future, with many of them surely facing loss of their jobs. Inevitably, the quality and quantity of the news we get will diminish as trying to squeeze more from less employees inevitably results in less—less news and information so vital to knowing about what's going on in this community.

We believe competition is healthy in all media markets and we believe Black should share that belief.

Toward that end, MCH calls on Black for transparency in the current efforts to sell The Star-Bulletin. Black should publically disclose all details of the sale such as what assets will be sold. Black should reveal information of what the U.S. Justice Department is requiring in the sale. For example: Does it include the sale of Midweek? And, MCH joins members of the community in asking for a longer period in which The Star-Bulletin is offered for sale. A deadline set at the end March hardly seems sufficient time to find a buyer and seems rushed in a way that creates the impression that Black's intent is to block any possibility of competition in Hawai'i.

These are important issues for our community. We hope Black will carefully consider the implications of what he is doing and weigh the impact on the community and the lives of men and women who have devoted their lives to keeping Hawai'i informed.

We urge you to support preserving the two daily newspapers in Honolulu.

Sincerely,

Teresita G, Bernales
Treasurer
Media Council Hawaii
Email: tg103@gmail.com

From: Antonette Port [portr001@hawaii.rr.com]
Sent: Saturday, March 27, 2010 12:00 PM
To: JGO Testimony
Subject: SCR193 & SR 92

Hearing: Monday, March 29, 2010, 9:35 a.m.

Testimony: SCR 193, SR 92 URGING THE OWNER OF THE HONOLULU STAR-BULLETIN TO PROVIDE SUFFICIENT TIME TO FIND A NEW OWNER FOR THE NEWSPAPER TO PRESERVE TWO INDEPENDENT DAILY NEWSPAPERS IN THE COMMUNITY.

Sen. Brian T. Taniguchi, Chair
Committee on Judiciary & Government Operations

Dear Senator Taniguchi,

This testimony is in strong support of both SCR 193 & SR 92 "Urging the owner of the Honolulu Star-Bulletin to provide sufficient time to find a new owner for the newspaper to preserve two independent daily newspapers in the community".

Hawaii has been blessed with having two statewide daily newspapers. This has been beneficial for all of the following reasons:

1. Two Editorial Voices - Encouraging the publication of diverse opinions on subjects of importance to our community encourages our citizens to examine various viewpoints. This is critical to democracy and democratic values.
2. Reportage of News - We know that two reporters may see and report a story differently. The public is better served when two newspapers are able to send reporters to cover a story. Moreover, sometimes only one newspaper may send a reporter to cover a story. With only one daily newspaper, some important stories may go uncovered. In Hawaii in recent years, we have seen important stories covered by only one of our daily newspapers.
3. Competitive Ad Rates - Competition in ad rates will always be beneficial to our community. With only one daily newspaper, businesses, small and large, will, to a certain extent, be at the mercy of one daily newspaper.
4. Staffing of our Newspapers - Hawaii has benefited over the years from some great newspaper staff. This includes not only the ones whose names we see, although we have had some excellent reporters, it also includes some great people who have worked and continue to work at our two daily newspapers in the clerical, printing and distribution of the Honolulu Advertiser and the Honolulu Star-Bulletin. I would be remiss if I did not point out that this is not merely about jobs, this is about quality people who care deeply about Hawaii and perform a great service for all of our citizens.

Mr. David Black knew the importance of our great state having two daily newspapers when he purchased the Honolulu Star-Bulletin. It is my fervent hope that he will continue in this belief and provide an opportunity for others to continue to publish the Honolulu Star-Bulletin.

I urge your committee to approve these resolutions and request the support of your colleagues in the Hawaii State Senate and the Hawaii House of Representatives.

Sincerely,
Richard Port

SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

**Sen. Brian Taniguchi - Chair
Sen. Dwight Takamine V. Chair**

Monday, March 29, 2010

9:35 am

Conference room 016

RE SCR 193 SR 92

Testimony Submitted by Jim Shon

I support both resolutions.

The Honolulu Advertiser's current investigative series on the holes in Hawaii's Kupuna support system by Rob Perez is an excellent example of the kind of journalism Hawaii needs more of, not less.

It is increasingly clear that the traditional role TV news has played in providing important information for citizens had drastically declined. When I had the honor of serving in the legislature, there were reporters and cameras all over our State Capitol. Floor debates were covered. The Committee on Health that I chaired seldom generated front page news, yet there were many times in which reporters sat through my hearings and interviewed several legislators or testifiers. Those days are mostly gone.

For TV news, the number of genuine investigative reports is almost nonexistent. It is far cheaper to dribble out the weather three or four times every half hour, or download live feeds from national networks. Most stories are little more than reading the headlines with clichéd lead-ins and clichéd tags. The rest is telling the viewers what is coming up after the break. A few years ago, one TV news director told the staff not to waste their time interviewing elected officials because it was too boring. So much for any obligation to keep the public informed of serious, often complicated issues. Today's youth are more likely to get their news from watching late night comics or Daley and Colbert.

Look around this town and notice how many former journalists are employed as public spokespersons for agencies or corporations. This is no longer a town in which an aspiring journalist can hope for a real job. Want to do a blog? That's about it.

We need two news print operations because we need two commitments and competitors for genuine information needed for citizens to be well informed.