

Testimony for JUD 2/17/2011 3:00:00 PM HB1225

Conference room: 325
Testifier position: oppose
Testifier will be present: No
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Submitted on: 2/17/2011

LATE TESTIMONY

Comments:

February 17, 2011

LATE TESTIMONY

Representative Gilbert Keith-Agaran
 Chair, Judiciary Committee
 Representative Karl Rhoads
 Vice-Chair, Judiciary Committee

Transmitting Via Fax to: (808) 586-6211

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IN OPPOSITION OF HB1225 -- Relating to Bingo on Hawaiian Home Lands

Aloha Chair Keith-Agaran, Vice-Chair Rhoads and members of the House Judiciary Committee:

I am in opposition to HB1225. As a former member of the Hawaiian Homes Commission representing Maui I do not believe that providing an avenue to legalizing gambling through the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands for economic gain is acceptable.

I have heard from a number of residents of Hawaiian homesteads on Maui who also do not agree and were unaware of this legislation that would have impacts to their communities. The notice for today's hearing appeared in the late afternoon of Tuesday, February 15 and many learned about it too late to respond in time for today's hearing.

I am in disagreement with the rationale that generating revenue for the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands because the State is unable to adequately provide funding to DHHL is justification for allowing legalized gaming through bingo. While bingo is considered to be a "softer" and more "conservative" side of gambling – it will be the open door to legalizing gambling and done through a doorway provided by a department that serves native Hawaiians.

I also completely disagree with the rationale that legalized gambling will be an important way to attract tourists to Hawai'i, especially those from the Asia market, and give visitors more activities. Our Hawai'i is renowned and valued by both kama'aina and visitors for its exceptional natural beauty and rich history. We have been successful at attracting visitors who enjoy our islands' uniqueness and I believe this can be maintained without including Hawai'i as a place where tourists can add gambling to their travel activities.

During my term as a Hawaiian Homes commissioner and in commission visits to our different islands across the state I was deeply saddened by the effects of drugs, homelessness, mental illness, additions, job losses and crime affecting our communities. Both Hawaiian and non-Hawaiians suffer greatly. While Hawai'i is impacted from many social ills that cross all demographics, native Hawaiians – whether they are on Hawaiian Homestead lands or not – are notably the highest ethnicity found in the majority of our social challenges. We are unable to adequately support our current level of social needs and I'm certain that legalizing gambling will not better our well-being.

In the name of Hawai'i's economy we will be diminishing the quality of life that is already suffering. I ask that HB1225 not be passed.

Mahalo,



Mahina Martin

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