

THE OAHU VETERANS COUNCIL

OAHU VETERANS COUNCIL

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OAHU VETERANS CENTER
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5th Regimental Combat Team -
45th Infantry Division Association.
Air Force Assn. - Chapter 138
Air Force Sergeants Association
American Legion Aux. - Dept. of HI
American Legion - Dept. of HI
American Legion - Post 32
American Veterans Empowerment & Support -
Community Operations
BPOE VAVS - Hawaii Dist.
China-Burma-India Veterans Association.
Chosin Few - Aloha Chapter
Combat Infantrymen's Association.
Combat Veterans Motorcycle Club
Disabled American Veterans - Chapter 3
Fleet Reserve Association - Branch
and Unit 46
Hawaii Multiple Schools Unit - Jr. ROTC
Korean War Veterans Assn - Chapter 1
Military Officers Assn. of America -
Aloha Chapter
Military Officers Assn. of America -
Hawaii State Chapter
Military Order of the Purple Heart
Military Order of World Wars
National Association. for Atomic Veterans
National Association. of Uniformed Services
National Sojourners - Hawaiian # 9
National Sojourners - Honolulu # 11
National Sojourners - Kamehameha #439
Pearl Harbor Survivors Association
Radiated Veterans
Samoan Providers
Society of Military Widows - Aloha Chapter
Sons & Daughters of Pearl Harbor Survivors
Special Forces Association. - Chapter VIII
State Office of Veterans Services
Veterans of Foreign Wars - Dept. of Hawaii
Veterans of Foreign Wars - Post 970
Vietnam Veterans of America - Chapter 858
Waves National - Unit 131
Women Veterans of America #26



"a gathering place for veterans"
OAHU VETERANS CENTER

LATE TESTIMONY

April 12, 2011

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE CONTINUING RESOLUTION 163 RELATING TO WEST HAWAII VETERANS COUNCIL SET ASIDE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE HEARING ON WEDNESDAY, APRIL 13TH, AT 10AM, IN CONFERENCE ROOM 308

Aloha Chair Oshiro: The Oahu Veterans Council's member organization's identified in the left margin represent the interests of over 80,000 veterans and their families. The West Hawaii Veterans Council Set Aside issue was introduced to the full council, by one of its sponsors, on Saturday January 22nd. On Thursday, January 27th, our legislative committee decided to testify, in support, as follows:

We firmly believe the West Hawaii Veteran's Council's thanks and gratitude will resonate loudly in their community, for the Legislature's support for this resolution, as the Oahu Veteran's Council has done in our community, at every opportunity, for the past several years.

Oahu Veterans Council delegates performed creditable military service under the flag of the United States of America and the State of Hawaii. We selflessly honor our Nation and State under these flags, and believe this proposed official recognition proclaims that our tradition should never be diminished in any way.

We thoughtfully and respectfully encourage your committee to adopt HCR 163 as written.

Mahalo for allowing us to testify in support of this very important Bill.

Fred Ballard

Fred Ballard; President



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LATE TESTIMONY



Hawaii Chapter, MOAA
P.O. Box 1185
Kailua, Hawaii 96734-1185

Testimony of Thomas Smyth, President

Military Officers Association of America, Hawaii Chapter

Before the Committee on Finance

Wednesday, April 13, 2011, 10:00 am, Room 308

**HCR 163 Requesting The Governor To Set Aside And Transfer
Sixty Acres Of Land To Support The Establishment Of A West Hawaii
Multi-Purpose And Intergenerational Veterans Center**

Chair Oshiro, Vice Chair Lee and Committee Members

Our chapter of 400 retired and currently serving officers of the Uniformed Services across the state supports HCR 163 asking the Governor to transfer 60 acres of land for a West Hawaii veteran's center.

With the increasing number of Hawaii County veterans, there is clearly a strong need for a center where they can meet with peers and can obtain information needed to often help them cope with the increasing prevalence of military-related stress that is occurring across our state. We have seen the tremendous success of the Oahu Veteran's Center both as a gathering place for existing veteran's organizations and as a formidable ally in the continuing need for information and services from both the federal and state government.

There are many services available to veterans but the procedures and processes to obtain them are often complex. Existing veteran's organizations can help this effort, but they need a location to gather, so that others may join them. While current military conflicts generate many younger veterans, there remain thousands who served in previous wars, so the need is clearly intergenerational. Our members know well that peer relationships, mentoring and socializing, is the most effective way to reach out to both young and older veterans. This center would be a tremendous asset to make these relationships possible.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

LATE TESTIMONY

April, 12, 2011

My name is Pamela P. Punihaole and along with my husband Clayton B. Punihaole, Blinded Disabled Veteran (Vietnam War) testifying in support of HR142. Oahu, Maui & Kauai have Vet Centers for reasons why we on Hawaii Island need one as well. The West Hawaii Veterans Center as well as other Vet Centers across the nation remind us of the sacrifices these Vets have made and continue to make every day of their lives. They deserve a center where they can go to and receive quality care and support services and to know that they live in a grateful nation where citizens respect and appreciate their service. It is a center where they can feel comfortable and confident in their continued struggle to reclaim their lives and readjust to society. This center will incorporate all Vet Services in one complex with perhaps services that includes family and the community as a whole. Besides Vet Services the opportunities for sustainability is endless. There are many ideas that have been expressed by veterans and non veterans as well as to what they want to see in and about the vet center. For example, recreation, museum, rental space, kitchen facilities, learning center, chapel, special occasion facility, etc. This center will optimize services for veterans, disabled veterans, blinded veterans, amputee veterans, their families, and the community. Please support his bill. It is the hope and trust that we as a people collaboratively can agree upon that this bill is priority. Thank you.

LATE TESTIMONY

FINTestimony

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Tuesday, April 12, 2011 9:43 PM
To: FINTestimony
Cc: thelums@aol.com
Subject: Testimony for HCR163 on 4/13/2011 10:00:00 AM
Attachments: HCR163 testimony.pages

Testimony for FIN 4/13/2011 10:00:00 AM HCR163

Conference room: 308
Testifier position: support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Herbert C. Lum
Organization: Marine Corps League
Address:
Phone:
E-mail: thelums@aol.com
Submitted on: 4/12/2011

Comments:

Testimony in support of HCR 163

Veterans on the Big Island are sorely in need of a Veterans' Center that will centralize services for veterans to a single location. Hawaii Island is the only one of the major islands without a Veteran Center, yet the distance within the island are much greater. Having a Veterans Center co-locating various needed services would facilitate Veterans traveling to these facilities for needed services.

These services include a Community Based Outpatient Clinic, a central meeting place for veterans organizations, service organizations such as the Office of Veterans Affairs, the Office of the Department of Defense and office of Veteran Services, social and recreation facility for veterans, reservists, and active duty military. The facility will also house offices for veterans organizations that would be centrally located to better organize plan and implement veteran and social programs. Such an organization is the West Hawaii Veterans Cemetery Association (WHVCA) which will effectively manage the Veteran Center.

The WHVCA membership working cooperatively with government agencies, civic groups, businesses and hundreds of volunteers contributed to the coveted shrine status awarded the West Hawaii Veterans Cemetery earlier this year. Particularly noteworthy are the WHVCA efforts that help transform the notorious reputed "Boot Hill" of the cemetery for which the voices of many veterans were heard to say "I don't want to be buried here" to the shrine status where now many veterans have asked "Do you take reservations?"

We are particularly proud of the native reforestation program wherein hundreds of volunteers spending thousands of hours in the past five (5) years have transformed and restored an invasive fountain grass pu'u into a verdant hill of four thousand trees native and shrubs earning in the process a Congressional and numerous local awards and recognition. We are particularly gratified to have initiated hundreds of young men and women student volunteers to the gratifying and self fulfillment of public service which will have lasting, incalculable, positive effects upon our society.

Please support our veterans center in filling their defined needs and enabling the facilitation of our continuing veteran and social programs.

In the words of our Charter President of the WHVCA Mr. Richard Highley, paraphrased as reported to the press: "We come not with our hands out but with our sleeves rolled up and with picks and shovels in our hands"

Herbert C. Lum
Director, West Hawaii Veterans Council

LATE TESTIMONY

**TESTIMONY OF
JOHN GROGAN, PRESIDENT - WEST HAWAII VETERANS COUNCIL
REGARDING HR 142 / HCR 163
SETTING ASIDE STATE LAND FOR A WEST HAWAII VETERANS CENTER
APRIL 13, 2011**

Aloha, Chair Oshiro, Vice-Chair Lee and Members of the House Finance Committee:

I am a six year U.S. Navy veteran with Vietnam service. On behalf of the West Hawaii Veterans Council, I ask for your Committee's favorable approval of our request that sixty (60) acres of State land in West Hawaii be set aside for the purpose of creating a West Hawaii Veterans Center. There are Veteran Centers on the islands of Oahu, Kauai, and Maui that have lead the way and shown how important these centers are for our veterans, and the communities at large. They have also been most helpful in providing us guidance and support for establishing a Veterans Center in West Hawaii.

The State Department of Veterans Services acknowledges that we have 17,000 veterans living on the island of Hawaii. It is estimated that half that number live in West Hawaii - from Kohala to Ka'u. These Concurrent Resolutions HCR 163 (HR142) propose that a centralized Veterans' Center be built midway along the main north - south bus corridor off Queen Ka'ahumanu Hawaii.

There is widespread community support for this centralized Veterans' Center as evidenced by the more than 500 citizens who, during a seven-day period in March, signed Petitions supporting the Veterans Center. Ms. Virginia Isbell will appear in person before the Finance Committee to represent West Hawaii veterans and will provide the Petitions to the Committee.

As the lead 501(c)(3) organization, requesting the Legislature's approval setting aside state land for a West Hawaii Veterans' Center, please be advised that our Association consists of representatives of all the major active veterans' organizations in West Hawaii and that our By-Laws do permit our involvement in veterans' issues that include establishment of a Veterans Center. Our primary focus in the past, however, was being the unofficial caretaker of the West Hawaii Veterans Cemetery.

Representatives of the major veterans' organizations in West Hawaii came together recently to establish a new organization to focus on Veterans' Center issues. This organization, West Hawaii Veterans Council (WHVC), has adopted Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws for this purpose. Officers and directors have been elected and the Council is under the umbrella of the 501(c)(3) while processing the paperwork and proceeding with the first step that is the land set-aside.

We are well aware of the provision that when the West Hawaii Veterans' Center has been established, it must be self-sustaining. We are prepared to achieve that requirement by offering the facility for rent to West Hawaii community organizations and for individual purposes such as funeral services, weddings, and various gatherings.

The proposed Veterans Center site is in the Maniniowali-Awake'e Area of Kona near the West Hawai'i Veterans Cemetery.

The Veterans' Center will be well-managed because we veterans have had the responsibility of overseeing the Veterans Cemetery and we have taken that responsibility very seriously.

I am pleased to inform you that the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs has designated the West Hawai'i Veterans Cemetery as achieving "**Shrine**" status - one of only three State Veterans Cemeteries in America so designated.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and we ask for your favorable consideration of our request.

John Grogan
President - W. Hi. Veterans Cemetery Development and Expansion Association, and
W. Hi. Veterans Council