



LATE TESTIMONY

Hawai'i Council for the Humanities

*Nā Mana Wai Pio 'Ole e Ho 'ōla ana i ka 'Āina
The Many Sources of Water Make the Land Live*

The Honorable Rep. Karen Awana, Chair, International Affairs Committee
The Honorable Rep. Mark Hashem, Vice Chair, International Affairs
Committee, House of Representatives, State of Hawaii

Date: March 31, 2011

Re: Testimony in Support of House Concurrent Resolution 249
Friday, April 1, 2011. 11:00 am Room 312, Hawai'i State Capitol
To establish a Sister Province relationship with the Province of
Rabat-Sale-Zemmour-Zaer, Kingdom of Morocco

From: Robert G. Buss, executive director,
Hawai'i Council for the Humanities

Honorable Chair, Vice Chair and Members of the Committee:

I hereby support House Concurrent Resolution 249 for the establishment
of a Sister Province relationship between our State of Hawaii and the
Province of Rabat-Sale-Zemmour-Zaer, Kingdom of Morocco.

In noting the founding legislation from Congress in creating the national
Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), of which the Hawai'i Council for the
Humanities is an affiliate through the NEH Division of Federal/State
Partnership, "democracy demands wisdom." A large part of that wisdom
revolves around understanding our own history and cultural heritage as
well as that of other places around the world. We cannot be active and
engaged citizens without such understanding and connection. The intent
and implication of this bill takes this rationale a step further by extending
knowledge into the arena of active relationship. It is a noble aspiration
and statement that HCH fully endorses and supports.

In particular, as we look to the vital interests of our own nation, it
becomes especially relevant to know more about the Middle East and
North Africa, and of civilizations with different cultural and historic roots
than our own. Or, more accurately, it is important to understand the
subtle history of possibilities where cultures and civilizations are in active

contact and exchange with each other, but avoiding the conflicts, mistrust, miscommunications, and wars all too common when cultures meet. That the Kingdom of Morocco has largely been able to have a history of co-existence, peace, and mutual respect among its Christian, Muslim, and Jewish roots, while situated geographically among the nations and civilizations that reflect them is exceedingly relevant to us today. It is also a condition somewhat shared by our own state and local history, which has mainly managed to deal with cultural and historical exchange through Hawaiian values like aloha and pono that can mitigate against intolerance and bigotry even when disagreement or misunderstandings arise. It is highly appropriate for this shared aspirational history to be reflected and confirmed via sister-province relationship.

Finally, such a status provides us with a tremendous opportunity to involve our young people in a better understanding of the world around them. As NEH Chair Jim Leach said in addressing students at National History Day: "The mission of young historians, should you choose to accept it, is to bring greater perspective to the past so we can better manage problems of the present and understand looming ones of the future. This could necessitate the need, as Einstein implies, to change our way of thinking. No greater challenge has been given a more promising generation." Exchanges between students of Morocco and Hawai'i that sister-province status could foster would be inspirational and of mutual benefit.

Both Hawaii and Morocco are viewed cultures that have lived their values in their history avoiding the dark sides of human nature to exemplify our commonality. Please support this effort to symbolize this shared legacy by creating this relationship between the State of Hawai'i and the Province of Rabat-Sale-Zemmour-Zaer, Kingdom of Morocco.

Mahalo and malama,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robert Buss', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Robert Buss
Executive director
Hawai'i Council for the Humanities