

THE SENATE
TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION OF 2011

LATE

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Sen. David Y. Ige, Chair
Sen. Michelle Kidani, Vice Chair

Hearing: Friday, February 25, 2011
Time: 9:00 a.m.

Place: Conference Room 211, State Capitol

TESTIMONY OF LOWELL K.Y. CHUN-HOON
RE: SB 239, SD 1, RELATING TO HAWAII TOBACCO SETTLEMENT FUND
(SUPPORTING PASSAGE)

Chairman Ige, Vice Chair Kidani, Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony regarding SB 239, SD 1. My name is Lowell Chun-Hoon, and I have been a practicing labor law attorney in Hawaii for thirty-three years. I am a member of the Advisory Committee for the Hawaii Immigrant Justice Center and a board member of the Legal Aid Society of Hawaii, the Pacific Survivor Center, Kuan Yin Temple, and the A.Q. McElrath Fund for Social & Economic Justice. I speak in support of the proposed bill.

SB 239 would among other things furnish \$800,000 in funding to support legal services to the indigent in our community and to protect the most acutely vulnerable individuals in our local society. From my particular perspective as a member of the Advisory Board of the Hawaii Immigrant Justice Center at the Legal Aid Society of Hawaii, a portion of these funds would be utilized to support attorneys and paralegal workers who further the unique services furnished by our program within LASH.

We are engaged in assisting, among others, victims of human trafficking, immigrant victims of domestic violence, political asylees, immigrant victims of crime, and others who suffer human rights violations. Without the modest additional increments of resources available, these individuals often have no means of securing counsel or redress for the egregious wrongs perpetrated against them. I therefore respectfully urge that SB 239, HD1 be passed by your committee.