



# LATE TESTIMONY

## CONSULATE GENERAL OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA

Dear Chairman of the House Committee on Water, Land, & Ocean Resources,

It is a great pleasure and honor for the Consulate General of the Republic of Korea to express its support for HCR ~~87-H.R. 1~~<sup>169</sup> before the Committee. The Consulate General of the Republic of Korea submits this testimony to strongly support the bill introduced by Representative Sharon Har to establish a Koreatown in Hawaii.

As you well know, the Korean community in the United States started with a small number of 102 people disembarked on this island on January 13, 1903. And over the last century, the Korean community all across the United States has rapidly evolved into an exemplary immigrant group over the last century, constituting one of the major pillars of the multi-ethnic, multi-cultural society of Hawaii, and contributing to the economic, cultural and social development of Hawaii.

Furthermore, the State of Hawaii has been a close partner of Korea in many aspects. Exchanges on various levels have been rapidly increasing over the years, and a great number of tourists including businessmen and students are going to and fro between Korea and Hawaii every year. In addition, and more importantly, there are currently about 40,000 Korean Americans living in the State of Hawaii. According to the 2010 Census the number of Korean Americans in Hawaii ranked 12th largest in the United States.

In addition, the relationship between Korea and the United States is now stronger than ever, prospering in every field. The Korea-US Free Trade Agreement which recently took effect in March is expected to provide another good momentum for our bilateral investment and trade to expand further in the future.

Despite such a growing people-to-people exchanges and economic partnership, there has yet to be a Koreatown in Hawaii. As the resolution states, we strongly believe that the establishment of the Koreatown in Hawaii is a great way to recognize the above-mentioned long history of the Korean immigration as well as the close bond forged between the Korean community and the local community in Hawaii. Establishing the Koreatown in Hawaii will serve as a great venue for the people of Hawaii to become better acquainted with the Korean people and its culture, reinforcing our already strong bond and cooperative partnership that has served us so well so far.

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Moreover, it will also help Hawaii become a truly diverse and culturally global place, building bridges of understanding with each other.

In this regard, the Consulate General of the Republic of Korea strongly supports ~~HCR87 H.D.1~~ and kindly asks for your strong support and interest with regards to this bill. 169

Thank you very much.

# LATE TESTIMONY

## Petition Supporting Establishment of Koreatown in Honolulu

*In support of S.C.R. No. 174 & H.C.R. 169 (Urging the Establishment of Koreatown and Development of a Master Plan for the Development of a Koreatown)*

Dear Honorable Chair and Members of the Legislature:

My name is Austin Ki Kang, President of The United Korean Association of Hawaii.

The State of Hawaii, our paradise on earth, is home to approximately 45,000 Koreans (or 24,000 according to the 2010 census). The history of Korean immigration goes back 109 years in Hawaii. On January 13, 1903, S.S. Gaelick carrying the first group of Korean immigrants (103 people) arrived at the Honolulu Harbor. They worked at sugar plantations, raised families and educated their children. Over time, several generations of Koreans contributed to the community and produced honorable leaders such as Chief Justice Ronald Moon and HPD Chief Lee Donahue.

Since its formal establishment as the Republic of Korea in 1945, (South) Korea's economy grew dramatically. Korea's annual export grew from mere \$3.5 million in 1945 to over \$1 trillion in 2011. Since the Free Trade Agreement between Korea and the USA went into effect on March 15, 2012, the economic relations and cooperation between the two countries will experience significant growth.

The number of Koreans traveling abroad reached 12.7 million in 2011. Following the passage of the visa waiver program in 2008, the number of Koreans visiting Hawaii in 2011 was over 101,000 and it is expected to grow 30% to 50% annually. There are 14 weekly direct Korean Air flights connecting Honolulu and Korea. Asiana Air flies twice a week and Hawaiian Air flies four times a week. Both Asiana Air and Hawaiian Air will increase their non-stop flights to seven times a week beginning July 2012. With the strong economy, more Koreans are coming to the USA for tourism and investment, encouraged by the Korea-US FTA and the visa waiver program.

Now is the opportune time to establish a Korea Town in Honolulu where Korean based businesses are most active. A Korea Town will make Hawaii, the world famous tourist destination, more inviting and secure for Koreans to come for tourism and financial investments. As we speak, a Korean university is planning to spend tens of millions of dollars to develop a global education center in Hawaii. We sincerely urge the Legislature to vote in favor of the pending resolution and support the establishment of a Korea Town with strong support of 3,480 petition signature. Thank you.



# LATE TESTIMONY

Testifier: David Y. Suh  
Committee: Water, Land & Ocean Resources (House)  
Water, Land & Housing (Senate)  
Tourism (Senate)  
Transportation and International Affairs (Senate)  
Hearing: Thursday, April 12, 2012  
11:30 a.m. (House)  
1:15 p.m. (Senate)  
Measure: HCR 169, HD 1  
SCR 174, SD 1  
SR 104, SD 1  
*Urging the Establishment of Koreatown and Development of a Master Plan for the Development of a Koreatown*

The Honorable Chair(s) and the Members of the Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to speak in support of the resolution urging the establishment of a Koreatown in Hawaii. I am a resident of Honolulu and serve The United Korean Association of Hawaii as a volunteer legal advisor.

Designation of a Koreatown is more than a symbolic act to recognize the Korean culture in this community. Establishing a Koreatown means tangible and positive developments to the economy, tourism and international relationship in Hawaii.

A Koreatown will attract secure and permanent investments from Korea which is the 14<sup>th</sup> largest economy in the world. With the recent enactment of the Free Trade Agreement between Korea and the USA, the trade between the two countries will certainly grow. Hawaii is uniquely positioned in between the two countries to take advantage and reap the benefits of the free trade agreement. A Koreatown in Hawaii will be an incentive for the Koreans to bring more investments and trade activities to the Aloha State.

Tourism in Hawaii will certainly benefit from the establishment of a Koreatown. A Koreatown will be a unique and exiting cultural and historical attraction for tourists from all over the world, especially from Korea. As we are seeing a greater number of visitors from Korean following the passage of the visa waiver program, a Koreatown will be another encouragement for the international tourists to come to Hawaii.

With increases in investments and tourists, a Koreatown will become a focal point of the strengthened and energized local enterprises and business activities, especially in and around Honolulu. Given all the benefits of a Koreatown, I ask for you vote in favor of passing this resolution.

Respectfully submitted,

David Y. Suh  
04/12/2012



# LATE TESTIMONY

Petition Supporting Establishment of Korea Town in Honolulu

Dear Honorable Chair and Members of the Legislature,

I am the president of New Star Realty Hawaii Branch which is the biggest Korean American Real Estate Company Group in the Nation.

The history of Korean immigration began 109 years ago in Hawaii, before moving on to Los Angeles. In the 1970s, a huge number of immigrants traveled from South Korea to Los Angeles. It made up a formation of commercial business around Olympic Blvd in Los Angeles, giving birth to what is now Korea Town. Because Korea Town came into existence, many companies from South Korea opened up trade businesses and invested in real estates. Now, approximately over one million Koreans live in Los Angeles.

In Hawaii, it is already mentioned in the petition by Mr. Austin Kang, the chairman of The United Korean Association of Hawaii, that Koreans continued to grow their businesses near Keeaumoku Street from Kapiolani Blvd to South King Street. Hawaii's famous comedian, Frank Delima, also said that it is "Koreamoku" instead of Keeaumoku. In the past few years, Korean companies invested in commercial Real Estates such as Keeaumoku Block across from the HMSA building.

Even the president of United State, Obama, speaks that Korean parents have very high expectations for their children's education. So, every summer vacation, many Korean mothers bring their children to Honolulu for the Punahou Summer School Program. It is very popular because President Obama graduated from Punahou. A few months ago, one university from Korea formed a sister relationship with the University of Hawaii and purchased a commercial building for their students' dormitory.

As you know, Korea's economy is strong and they have the visa waiver program to the United State. Korean Airline, Asiana Airline and Hawaiian Airlines will increase their non-stop flights between Seoul and Honolulu.

Hawaii is one of best resorts in the world. Many millionaires prefer to own a luxurious vacation home in Honolulu. We had a lot of inquiries for investing in the Hawaii real estate properties from Korea and Mainland through our New Star Network. Korea Town will soon be attracted by Korean global companies. I believe that it will help them further invest in Hawaii.

We sincerely urge the Legislature to vote in favor of the pending resolution and support the establishment of a Korea Town.

Thank you.

