



Committee: Committee on Judiciary
Hearing Date/Time: Monday, April 2, 2012, 2:15 p.m.
Place: Conference Room 325
Re: Testimony of the ACLU of Hawaii in Support of H.R. 119/ H.C.R. 155

Dear Chair Keith-Agaran and Members of the Committee on Judiciary:

The American Civil Liberties Union of Hawaii (“ACLU of Hawaii”) writes in support of H. R. 119/ H.C.R. 155.

On December 10, 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the foundation of our modern human rights principles, was adopted by the United Nations.

Created following the atrocities of World War II, the UDHR enumerates fundamental human rights that are to be protected for people worldwide regardless of race, gender, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. These inalienable rights are the basis of freedom, justice, and peace in the world.

Human rights have everything to do with civil liberties.

The framers of the Constitution believed in equality and the inalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. In fact, many of the rights laid out in the Constitution apply to *all persons*, not just citizens. The UDHR is an international document that in many ways mirrors our Constitution -- a way to bring these rights to the entire world.

Unfortunately, since the UDHR was adopted, the United States has done much to undermine the document’s power internationally. In addition, the U.S. has viewed the document as a guideline for foreign policy only.

The ACLU believes that the UDHR should be more than simply a set of standards to which we hold other countries; it should also be an extension of our Constitution to be used to examine that state of human rights in our own country. In this way, we see issues such as the government’s inadequate response in the wake of hurricane Katrina; pervasive discrimination against minorities in the areas of education, housing, and criminal justice; use of the death penalty; treatment of undocumented immigrants; and torture and indefinite detention of “enemy combatants” as violations of both civil liberties and human rights.

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Chair Keith-Agaran and Members of the Committee on Judiciary

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Please pass this resolution recognizing Hawaii as a human rights state dedicated to holding the U.S. and state government accountable to universal human rights principles in addition to rights guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution.

The mission of the ACLU of Hawaii is to protect the fundamental freedoms enshrined in the U.S. and State Constitutions. The ACLU of Hawaii fulfills this through legislative, litigation, and public education programs statewide. The ACLU of Hawaii is a non-partisan and private non-profit organization that provides its services at no cost to the public and does not accept government funds. The ACLU of Hawaii has been serving Hawaii for over 45 years.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Laurie A. Temple
Staff Attorney

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Testimony for HCR155 on 4/2/2012 2:15:00 PM

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mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov [mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov]

Sent: Friday, March 30, 2012 4:00 PM

To: JUDtestimony

Cc: Jashuamw@hawaii.edu

Testimony for JUD 4/2/2012 2:15:00 PM HCR155

Conference room: 325

Testifier position: Support

Testifier will be present: No

Submitted by: Jashua M. Walker

Organization: Individual

E-mail: Jashuamw@hawaii.edu

Submitted on: 3/30/2012

Comments: