

SCR139 / SR75

ENCOURAGING THE MILITARY STRATEGY OF FORWARD-BASING A VISIBLE MILITARY FORCE IN HAWAII AND URGING THE MILITARY AFFAIRS COUNCIL OF THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF HAWAII TO CONTINUE WITH ITS WORK AS THE LIAISON FOR HAWAII IN MATTERS RELATING TO THE MILITARY'S PRESENCE IN HAWAII.

**Testimony to the Senate Committee on Public Safety, Government
Operations, and Military Affairs
Tuesday, March 27, 2012
2:45 PM
Conference Room 224**

**RE: SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 139 / SENATE RESOLUTION
NO. 75, ENCOURAGING THE MILITARY STRATEGY OF FORWARD-BASING A
VISIBLE MILITARY FORCE IN HAWAII AND URGING THE MILITARY AFFAIRS
COUNCIL OF THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF HAWAII TO CONTINUE WITH ITS
WORK AS THE LIAISON FOR THE HAWAII IN MATTERS RELATING TO THE
MILITARY'S PRESENCE IN HAWAII.**

Chair Espero, Vice Chair Kidani, and members of the committee.

My name is Charles Ota and I am the Vice President for Military Affairs at The Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii (The Chamber). I am here to state The Chamber's strong support of Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 139 and Senate Resolution No. 75, Encouraging the military strategy of forward-basing a visible military force in Hawaii and urging the Military Affairs Council of The Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii to continue with its work as the Liaison for Hawaii in matters relating to the military's presence in Hawaii.

The measure requires the state to express Hawaii's strong support of US security and economic strategy established for the Asia Pacific and the continued use of the Military Affairs Council (MAC), established at the request of the Governor of Hawaii as an unencumbered affiliate of The Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii in 1985, to serve as the liaison for the state in matters relating to the military.

The MAC has successfully served as the liaison for the state in matters relating to the U.S. military since 1985, and has assumed the added responsibility of providing oversight for the State's defense industry, which accounts for generating more than \$12.2 billion annually into the state's economy. The work

of the MAC has succeeded in protecting the defense industry from adverse actions that would cause serious declines in revenues and jobs, and is focused on enhancing Hawaii's role as the premier site for security operations in the Asia Pacific.

The MAC now faces the huge challenges posed by congressional actions that require the US Department of Defense to cut upwards of 500 billion dollars from its budget, with a potential to add \$500 billion more should budget sequestration be effected in January 2013. The MAC will seek to enhance Hawaii's role in the security of the Asia Pacific as the state can ill-afford measures that would cause even a small cutback in defense spending.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in strong support on this important measure.