

**SCR 29**

**EDT**

**Testimony of Duk Hee Murabayashi**

**Senate Committee on Economic Development & Technology**

**Wednesday, February 29, 2012**

**1:15 pm, Conference Rm 016**

**In Support of SCR 29**

**Placing a Commemorative Plaque for the former Site of the Korean Boarding School for Boys and the Korean Methodist Church**

I am Duk Hee Murabayashi, former Chair of the Centennial Commission of Korean Immigration to Hawaii (2002-2003), and president of the Korean American Foundation Hawaii, a successor organization to the Centennial Committee of Korean Immigration to the United States.

An increasing number of Korean visitors to Hawaiian Islands want to learn about early Korean immigrants' lives in Hawaii. One of the remarkable activities of early Korean immigrants is that in 1905, a population numbering less than 100 in Honolulu urged the Hawaiian Methodist Mission to establish a school for Korean boys with a pledge of \$2,000 at a time when Korean sugar plantation worker's wage was only \$17 per month. The Korean Boarding School for Boys opened its doors to 65 boys in the fall of 1906 in the old North Pacific Institute on Punchbowl Street near Beretania Street, at the present Kalanimoku building site. The Korean Methodist Church was also located in one of the buildings and the site was commonly known as the Korean Compound.

The school changed its name to Korean Central School and admitted girl students in the fall of 1913, the first coeducational institution for Koreans in the world. The school closed its doors at the end of 1918 and the Korean Methodist Church later relocated to Fort Street.

It is fitting to recognize the location of the Korean boarding School for Boys and Korean Methodist Church, with bronze plaques no larger than 24 by 15 inches mounted on a 24 inch high stone pedestal to be place in appropriate places on the Punchbowl Street side of Kalanimoku Building near the Punchbowl exit.

Such commemorative plaques will serve to inform Korean visitors about the lives and activities of early immigrants.

We strongly support SCR 29 and ask for your favorable action.