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Testimony of Thomas Smyth

Military Officers Association of America, Hawaii Chapter

**Before the Committee on Public Safety, Government Operations and
Military Affairs**

Thursday, March 29, 2012, 2:50 pm, Room 224

**SCR10/SR10 Resolution To Support The Repeal Of Combat Exclusionary
Rules**

Chair Espero, Vice Chair Kidani and Committee Members

We have concerns with the intent of SCR 10 and SR 10.

While reported incidents of assaults, rape and harassment of women seemed to have risen in recent years, it is possible this may be due as much to more frequent reporting and disclosure and improved response by senior officials as to the actual increase in incidents. The Armed Services have devoted much time and expense raising awareness by all concerned, of the negative effects of these incidents.

As a former infantry company in Vietnam, I can certainly attest to the great difficulty I and my unit leaders would have had, had women been assigned directly to our unit. We did not have suitable billeting conditions to separate the sexes and related issues of sanitation, medical services and other privacy matters were not possible.

On the other hand, later in my career I was proud to be the commander of the first combat support battalion in the Army or the Marine Corps to have officer and enlisted women in my unit. We made many important decisions regarding privacy, sanitation and billeting, resulting in a cohesive and valuable support element to our combat units.

The idea there should never be any restrictions on combat exclusion makes this "one-size fits all" edict likely to cause more difficulties than it will solve. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.