

NEIL ABERCROMBIE
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



**STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

HISTORIC PRESERVATION DIVISION
KAHUIHEWA BUILDING
601 KAMOKILA BLVD, KAPOLEI HI 96706

**Testimony of
WILLIAM J. AILA, JR.
Chairperson**

**Before the House Committee on
VETERANS, MILITARY & INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS &
CULTURE AND THE ARTS**

**Wednesday, February 6, 2013
8:30 a.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 312**

**In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 1396
RELATING TO THE JAPANESE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE IN HAWAII**

House Bill 1396 proposes to make an appropriation to the Department of Land and Natural Resource (Department) of \$500,000 for planning, design and construction of a center in West Oahu that would incorporate a Nisei Veterans Legacy Center and a Honouliuli Internment Camp Educational Center. Matching funds must be secured prior to the release of the appropriation. **The Department has the following comments.**

Act 235, Session Laws of Hawaii 2012, set forth the following:

1. Require the Department to establish a seven-member Honouliuli park site project advisory group to develop recommendations to leverage funding for an educational resource center at the Honouliuli site;
2. Require the advisory group to submit a report to the Legislature prior to the Regular Session of 2013 on its progress and the status of designating the site as part of the United States National Park Service (NPS); and
3. Appropriate funds from the Hawaii Historic Preservation Special Fund for Fiscal Year 2012-2013 to fund the advisory group established pursuant to this Act.

The Group first convened in October and has met four times, including a site visit to the Internment Camp. Approximately \$52,000 is being used to match a Preserve America Grant to develop a high school teachers guide and curriculum materials to accompany the film, “*The 1800: The Untold Story of the Internment of Japanese in Hawai‘i.*” The remaining \$48,000 will

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HISTORIC PRESERVATION
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LAND
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be used to hold a visioning meeting/charrette with stakeholders and to develop outreach materials including maps and story boards.

The Honouliuli Internment site is being studied as a possible NPS park site, and to that end, Monsanto has begun the process of subdividing the Honouliuli parcels. Monsanto plans to transfer the Honouliuli Internment Camp to NPS.

At this point, the Honouliuli Advisory Group is considering possible locations for the education center. Things to consider include infrastructure, access, how to tell the story, and how to relate this story to other Valor in the Pacific sites.

The Nisei Veterans Legacy Center is an effort by the sons, daughters and supporters of the Nisei Veterans to preserve and educate the public about the roles and contributions of the Nisei during World War II. Their goal is to open their doors by 2015.

The Department has not had an opportunity to meet with both groups, nor have the groups had an opportunity to meet with each other. However, the Department believes funding for the planning, design and construction of these projects should go directly to each of these groups via grant funds.

The Department suggests that the funding run for five years, rather than for one year with an option to extend the ability to use the funds after five years, and upon a request to the Legislature for an extension.



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Veterans, Military & International Affairs,
& Culture and the Arts
February 6, 2013 at 8:30am
By Gene I. Awakuni
Chancellor, University of Hawai'i – West O'ahu

HB1396 – RELATING TO THE JAPANESE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE IN HAWAII

Aloha Chair Takai, Vice Chair Ito and Members of the Committee:

The establishment of a Nisei Veterans Legacy Center would create a facility dedicated to researching, preserving, and interpreting the history of 100th Infantry Battalion, 442nd Regimental Combat Team, Military Intelligence Service, and the 1399th Engineer Construction Battalion to develop deeper understandings of their unique place in history.

Additionally, the Honouliuli Internment Camp is a major historical site located on property currently owned by Monsanto in West O'ahu. The United States National Park Service, Japanese Cultural Center of Hawai'i, University of Hawai'i-West O'ahu, the State of Hawai'i, Monsanto, and other stakeholders are working to preserve and share the existing remnants of the internment camp, with a planned educational center and memorial.

HB1396 appropriates monies for the planning, design, and construction of the Nisei Veterans Legacy Center and a Honouliuli Internment Camp Educational Center.

UH West O'ahu supports HB 1396 as locating a Nisei Veterans Legacy Center in West O'ahu near the University of Hawai'i-West O'ahu would complement academic and research programs offered at the university such as the Center for Labor Education and Research's Labor Archives and the Henry Guigni film collection.



HAWAI‘I CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION

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February 6, 2013
8:30 a.m.
Conference Room 312

To: The Honorable Mark Takai, Chair
and Members of the House Committee on Veterans, Military &
International Affairs & Culture and the Arts

From: Linda Hamilton Krieger, Chair
and Commissioners of the Hawai‘i Civil Rights Commission

Re: H.B. No. 1395

The Hawai‘i Civil Rights Commission (HCRC) has enforcement jurisdiction over state laws prohibiting discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, and access to state and state-funded services. The HCRC carries out the Hawai‘i constitutional mandate that "no person shall be discriminated against in the exercise of their civil rights because of race, religion, sex or ancestry". Art. I, Sec. 5.

The HCRC supports H.B. No. 1396 which makes an appropriation to be expended by the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) to plan, design and construct a Nisei Veterans Legacy Center as well as a Honouliuli Internment Camp education center. The story and legacy of Hawai‘i’s Nisei soldiers is well known, but the history of the Honouliuli is less known.

During WWII, over one thousand Japanese Americans in Hawai‘i were initially detained because of their Japanese ancestry. While most of the detainees were later sent to mainland camps, approximately 300 people were interned in Honouliuli for the duration of the war, without being officially charged for any acts of espionage or sabotage. The Honouliuli internment camp site is thus an important reminder of a time when fear and prejudice overrode the civil rights of a minority group, and the HCRC supports an appropriation for the creation of an education center at the site, with preserving the remnants of the internment camp with a memorial.

H.B. No. 1396 appropriates funds for both the Nisei Veterans Legacy Center and the Honouliuli Internment Camp Education Center, to educate future generations about the WWII Japanese American experience, offering more than a celebratory perspective on race, discrimination, and social change in Hawai‘i and the United States. The HCRC supports this measure.