



HCR90 / HR72

**URGING THE STATE OF HAWAI'I DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE AND THE MILITARY AFFAIRS
COUNCIL OF THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF HAWAI'I TO ESTABLISH A WORKING
GROUP TO ASSESS THE FEASIBILITY OF A CONSOLIDATED MILITARY TRANSITION,
IMMERSION, AND EDUCATION CENTER.**

House Committee on Veterans, Military, & International Affairs, & Culture and the Arts

April 3, 2013

11:05 a.m.

Room 312

The Beneficiary Advocacy and Empowerment (BAE) committee of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS** HCR90 / HR72, which would create a working group to study the feasibility of a consolidated transition and education center for military personnel and families transferring to Hawai'i. An OHA representative is explicitly named as a member of the working group, along with representatives from other agencies and groups.

A transition and education center for military personnel and their families holds much potential for increasing their understanding of our islands. In addition to our direct advocacy on Department of Defense undertakings, OHA has also supported numerous Department of Defense cultural training programs, which aim to convey the uniqueness of our cultural landscape to military personnel who work in Hawai'i. Although conflicts do arise, we continue to welcome opportunities to educate and would look to do so through our participation on this working group and beyond.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this important measure.

**Testimony to the House Hearing for the Committee on Veterans,
Military, and International Affairs and Culture and the Arts**

Wednesday, April 3, 2013

11:05 AM

Conference Room 312

**RE: URGING THE STATE OF HAWAII DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE AND THE
MILITARY AFFAIRS COUNCIL OF THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF HAWAII
TO ESTABLISH A WORKING GROUP TO ASSESS THE FEASIBILITY OF A
CONSOLIDATED MILITARY TRANSITION, IMMERSION, AND EDUCATION
CENTER.**

Chair Takai, Vice Chair Ito, 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 **support of the intent** of House Concurrent Resolution 90/ House Resolution 72, urging the state of Hawaii Department of Defense and the Military Affairs Council of The Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii to establish a working group to assess the feasibility of a consolidated military transition, immersion, and education center.

The measure would result in establishing a centralized center to service all military personnel and their families transitioning to a military assignment in Hawaii.

As we understand it, each military branch of service is responsible for in-processing military personnel and their family members upon arrival in Hawaii. The in-processing procedure involves important quality of life issues such as registering children in schools, registering personal vehicles in Hawaii, clearing family pets of quarantine requirements, temporary living accommodations, locating permanent housing, and more.

We understand that in-processing procedures are established independently by each of the services and that updates of changes in procedural requirements are not always made in a timely manner. This could lead to inconsistencies and newly arriving families experiencing personal hardships.

We concur that making the transition to Hawaii as seamless and painless as possible has merit. The positive or negative experiences encountered by newly arriving members are very important because they shape one's tour in Hawaii. Not many people understand that Hawaii is an overseas assignment that is unlike being assigned to a base on the US mainland. The state should not ignore the importance of a quality transition program because it does influence the military's attitude as to whether the state is a "military friendly" place.

However, we are not familiar with the extent of the issues faced by military members and families, what resources would be required to accommodate the issues, nor if the military desires that such a Center be created outside the military structure.

Therefore, before steps are taken to establish an interagency working group as proposed in the measure, we believe that the appropriate action is to first contact the senior commanders by way of a resolution from the legislature to inquire if the commanders believe there is a need to establish the proposed Center. This would offer commanders the opportunity to determine if the military has a need for support from outside the military structure to meet the quality of life needs of its members and families.

An interagency working group led by the state Department of Defense or Military Affairs Council could be established after the military identifies and validates the need, and the state is able to provide the necessary funding and other required resources via a grant to complete the required actions.

In light of the above, we recommend that the resolution be amended accordingly and that a copy be forwarded to the Commander of the US Pacific Command and Commanders of the US Pacific Fleet, Pacific Air Forces, US Army Pacific, Marine Forces Pacific, and 14th Coast Guard District seeking their determination on the specific areas where the state could partner with the military in streamlining the transition process for incoming military members and

their families. This initiative would provide military commanders an important opportunity to share any concerns their members may have relative to transitioning for a military assignment in Hawaii.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

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Military, and International Affairs and Culture and the Arts

Wednesday, April 3, 2013
11:05 PM
Conference Room 312

RE: URGING THE STATE OF HAWAII DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE AND THE
MILITARY AFFAIRS COUNCIL OF THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF HAWAII
TO ESTABLISH A WORKING GROUP TO ASSESS THE FEASIBILITY OF A
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Dear Chairman Takai and Vice Chair Ito, and members of the committee:

This testimony is in support of HR 72 and HCR 90.

My name is Dina Poma-Barnes; I am a military reservist and a military spouse that has lived on Oahu for almost two years. I have lived both abroad and throughout the continental United States. Both being in the military and now being a military spouse, I have the experience of many military moves. It is through these experiences, and through the feedback from my peers whom have also moved numerous times throughout the world, that these statements and observations are made.

HR 72 and HCR 90 outline the first steps in establishing a Center that could be of great importance to military family members moving to Hawaii. Both resolutions urge the State of Hawaii Department of Defense and the Chamber of Commerce, Military Affairs to establish a working group of stakeholders that would assess the feasibility and affordability of establishing a Joint Military Transition, Immersion and Education Center. These resolutions would energize various parties throughout the state to meet and start a dialogue about an issue that is talked about at the grassroots level and all the way up to state-wide military conferences; however, if a working group is established, this conversation would have a potential solution to work towards—the concept of creating the joint Center.

The idea of creating a joint center was outlined in HB580; HR72 and HCR90 take the first steps of identifying the founding agencies (both State and Federal) that would be responsible for identifying the needs of military families, the resources available, and designing innovative ways of collaboration, consolidation and resource sharing.

The idea of creating a Joint Military Transition, Immersion and Education Center is a long-term, robust and complex goal. Some might argue that this is the most inopportune time to start assessments and possible planning of such a Center due to sequestration and defense budget cuts. However—this may be the best time

to start such a dialogue because the stakeholders would have to be resourceful and examine the best cost cutting and value added measures to both save money for both the state and federal expenditures. Due to the times the working group can also reassess what has been value added up to date, and what programs can be purged in order to make room for new ones.

Hawaii has shown great support for the military members stationed here. This is another way that Hawaii can show lead the way in supporting our service-members, and hopefully, help save costs and resources in the process.