



Testimony Presented Before the  
Senate Committee on Ways and Means  
February 21, 2013 at 9:00 a.m.  
By Gene I. Awakuni  
Chancellor, University of Hawai'i – West O'ahu

SB 1317 SD1 – RELATING TO THE JAPANESE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE IN  
HAWAII

Chair Ige, Vice Chair Kidani and Members of the Committee:

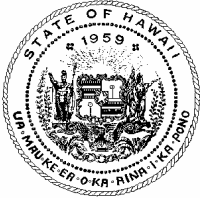
***UH West O'ahu supports the intent of SB 1317 SD1*** as locating a Nisei Veterans Legacy Center in West O'ahu near the University of Hawai'i at West O'ahu would complement academic and research programs offered at the university such as the Center for Labor Education and Research's Labor Archives and the Henry Guigni film collection.

SB 1317 appropriates an unspecified sum for the planning, design, and construction of the Nisei Veterans Legacy Center and a Honouliuli Park Site Project Advisory Group with release of the appropriation subject to matching funds. Although the bill calls for the University to be the expending agency for appropriations made to support the Honouliuli Park Site Advisory Group, we believe funding should be appropriated directly to the Advisory Group via grant funds.

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 the history and share the legacy of Americans of Japanese ancestry who were detained in these internment camps during World War II.

**UH West O'ahu supports the SB 1317 SD1 provided its passage does not compete with other priorities in the University's budget.**

**LATE**



## HAWAI‘I CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION

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February 21, 2013  
9:00 a.m.  
Conference Room 211

To: The Honorable David Ige, Chair  
and Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means

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

### Comments on S.B. No. 1317, S.D.1

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 S.B. No. 1317, S.D.1, provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities in the Executive Budget. This bill 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, preserving the remnants of the internment camp with a memorial.

S.B. No. 1317, S.D.1 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, provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities in the Executive Budget.