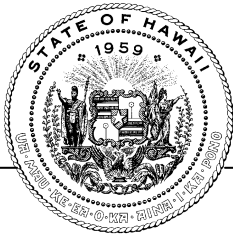


SB2512

Measure Title: RELATING TO A KOREATOWN.
Report Title: Koreatown; Appropriation (\$)
Description: Appropriates funds to the office of planning for the designation or formal adoption of a special district to be known as Koreatown.
Companion: [HB2062](#)
Package: None
Current Referral: WTL/TEC, WAM
Introducer(s): DELA CRUZ

Sort by Date		Status Text
1/17/2014	S	Introduced.
1/21/2014	S	Passed First Reading.
1/21/2014	S	Referred to WTL/TEC, WAM.
1/28/2014	S	The committee(s) on WTL/TEC has scheduled a public hearing on 02-06-14 1:20PM in conference room 414.



**OFFICE OF PLANNING
STATE OF HAWAII**

NEIL ABERCROMBIE
GOVERNOR

JESSE K. SOUKI
DIRECTOR
OFFICE OF PLANNING

235 South Beretania Street, 6th Floor, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 2359, Honolulu, Hawaii 96804

Telephone: (808) 587-2846
Fax: (808) 587-2824
Web: <http://planning.hawaii.gov/>

Statement of
JESSE K. SOUKI
Director, Office of Planning
Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism
before the
**SENATE COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND
AND
SENATE COMMITTEE TECHNOLOGY AND THE ARTS**
Thursday, February 6, 2014
1:20 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 414

in consideration of
SB 2512
RELATING TO A KOREATOWN.

Chairs Solomon and Wakai, Vice Chairs Shimabukuro and Nishihara, and Members of the Senate Committees on Water and Land and Technology and the Arts.

The Office of Planning (OP) offers the following comments on SB 2512, which appropriates a sum to be determined for the designation or the formal adoption of a special district to be known as Koreatown.

There appears to be community support for the designation or formal adoption of a Koreatown (See OP's report *Options for the Establishment of a Koreatown in the City and County of Honolulu: A Report to the Hawaii State Legislature in Response to H.C.R. 169, Twenty-Sixth Legislature, 2012* (Dec. 2013)).

If the proposed special district were in the City and County of Honolulu, the Revised Ordinances of Honolulu § 21-2.70 sets forth provisions for the establishment of special districts within the City and County of Honolulu. As described in this ordinance, the City Council and

Planning Commission are the lead agencies to propose and coordinate the process of establishing a special district in the County. Thus, a grant-in-aid to the City and County of Honolulu for the establishment of a Koreatown is the most appropriate vehicle to accomplish the bill's intent.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



CITY COUNCIL

CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-3065

ANN H. KOBAYASHI
COUNCILMEMBER, DISTRICT 5
CHAIR, COMMITTEE ON BUDGET
TELEPHONE: (808) 768-5005
FAX: (808) 768-1227
EMAIL: akobayashi@honolulu.gov

February 5, 2014

The Honorable Malama Solomon, Chair
Senate Committee on Water and Land
The Honorable Glenn Wakai, Chair
Senate Committee on Technology and the Arts
Hawaii State Capitol
Honolulu, HI 96813

Re: Senate Bill No. 2512 – Relating to a Koreatown.

Dear Chairs Solomon and Wakai and members of the committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on Senate Bill No. 2512, Relating to a Koreatown. The purpose of this bill is to appropriate funds to the Office of Planning for the formal adoption of a special district to be known as Koreatown.

The designation of a special Koreatown district in urban Honolulu would be the first government-established ethnic district in the State of Hawaii. It is true that we already have a Chinatown, but that district grew from a collection of Chinese merchants who gathered in the area in the 1800's without any direct government support. These Chinese merchants were originally laborers for the sugar plantations who opened businesses in areas such as Chinatown after their contracts expired.

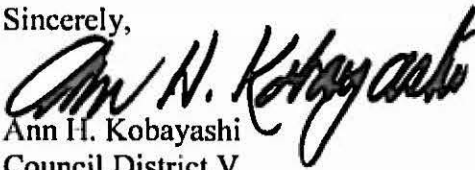
Honolulu is a place where everyone is accepted, and has an equal chance to make their dreams come true. Our city is a wonderful place to live and do business- regardless of location or ethnicity.

I believe this appropriation bill however well-intentioned it may be, falls short as it creates a special district for only one of the many different ethnic groups that live and work in the City and County of Honolulu. The Moiliili community rejected the idea of establishing a Japantown because of our state's multi-cultural heritage and feeling of inclusiveness – the Keeaumoku/Kaheka community should follow their lead and continue to keep Hawaii the crossroads of the Pacific.

Chairs Malama Solomon and Glenn Wakai
February 5, 2014
Page 2

Thank you again for the opportunity to present testimony and for your consideration on this matter.

Sincerely,



Ann H. Kobayashi
Council District V

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
To: [WTLTestimony](#)
Cc: asc@amandachang.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for SB2512 on Feb 6, 2014 13:20PM
Date: Thursday, January 30, 2014 9:48:30 AM

SB2512

Submitted on: 1/30/2014

Testimony for WTL/TEC on Feb 6, 2014 13:20PM in Conference Room 414

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Amanda Chang	Hawaii Korean Cultural Center	Support	No

Comments: We support the SB2512 to designate a special district, Koreatown, similar to Chinatown in Honolulu, Hawaii. This small investment will bring a huge return in terms of economic boost we need from tourists visiting the special district and also more business activities among the locals in the district. There are already many Korean-themed shops and restaurants in Ala Moana area alongside Kapiolani Blvd. and Keeaumoku Street to support this effort as well. We have cultural centers in Hawaii celebrating cultures of Japan, Okinawa, Philippines and China, but there is none for Korean cultures. The creation of Koreatown as a special district will bring the rich cultures and heritage of Korea to be shared with the locals and tourists from different parts of the U.S. and other countries.

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

Do not reply to this email. This inbox is not monitored. For assistance please email webmaster@capitol.hawaii.gov

Brian Sakamaki
731 Amana Street, PH-4
Honolulu, Hawaii 96814
Tel. (808) 306-9472

Testimony for Thursday, February 06, 2014
1:20 pm

Conference Room 414
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Opposing SB 2512
RELATING TO A KOREATOWN

COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND
Senator Malama Solomon, Chair
Senator Brickwood Galuteria, Vice-Chair

COMMITTEE ON TECHNOLOGY AND THE ARTS
Senator Glenn Wakai, Chair
Senator Clarence K. Nishihara, Vice-Chair

Aloha, Chair Solomon, Chair Wakai, Vice-Chair Galuteria, Vice-Chair Nishihara and Committee Members.

My name is Brian Sakamaki. My testimony is strongly in opposition to SB 2512 relating to a Koreatown. I am a property owner of this area. I would have not purchased my condominium unit had I known that the State of Hawaii was going to change the area to Koreatown. Also no one in our condominium or the condominium across the street knows about this proposed legislation. Most of the condominium owners in our building Coty Towers are elderly and only own one property which is the condominium unit at Coty Towers on Amana Street.

Please defeat and void this bill.

We all know of the dysfunctional Aloha Tower Special District, the Honolulu Community Development Authority's Kakaako special district and all these other costly, cumbersome and autocratic bureaucracies that arise out of special districts, I think it is unthinkable that another special district is being created. All special districts do is cater to special interest groups at the expense of the average citizen. And this one will cost \$250,000 to \$400,000 just for the initial consultant fees.

Isn't this exactly what a democracy was supposed to prevent—special interests created to encourage more special interests, and ethnic ones at that.

I thought that the State was on a strict budget and yet the State has \$400,000.00 for the initial consultant fees. I am also worried that the State may have to spend additional fees such as legal fees for defending the State in the event property owners in the area file lawsuits against the State of Hawaii. I was told recently that labeling the Kapiolani-Kalakaua-King-Piikoi area Koreatown may have a negative impact on property values. This is a very large and significant business/residential condominium area.

Why condemn an entire area? A Korean Community Center, like the Japanese Community Center, the Okinawan Community Center and the Filipino Community Center would do far more to further the memory and culture of the Korean community without excessive disruption to the non-Korean community. Why not spend the \$400,000.00 for a Korean Community Center. Or why not a Hawaiian Community Center? Could we know why and who is proposing this bill? They have not thought this through and the effects of it.

Thank you for your time.



Brian Sakamaki

Donna Walden
3939 Old Pali Road
Honolulu, Hawaii 96817
Tel. (808) 306-9472

Testimony for Thursday, February 6, 2014
1:20 p.m.

Conference Room 414
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Opposing SB 2512
RELATING TO A KOREATOWN

COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND
Senator Malama Solomon, Chair
Senator Brickwood Galuteria, Vice-Chair

COMMITTEE ON TECHNOLOGY AND THE ARTS
Senator Glenn Wakai, Chair
Senator Clarence K. Nishihara, Vice-Chair

Aloha, Chair Solomon, Chair Wakai, Vice-Chair Galuteria, Vice-Chair Nishihara
and Committee Members,

My name is Donna Walden and I am presenting this testimony in opposition to SB 2512 relating to a Koreatown. I am an owner of properties in the area in the Kapiolani-Kalakaua-Piikoi-South King neighborhood. We are very active real estate investors in the area.

I am strongly against it.

I have a \$50,000 Korean video collection, I contribute to the Korean community, I have many close Korean friends and feel very uncomfortable testifying here today.

This is the very reason I am speaking against Koreatown. What this bill is going to do is begin to separate cultures against other cultures in Hawaii. I thought Hawaii was the melting pot? Why are you trying to separate communities by ethnicity? Do we really want to have a Koreatown, a Japantown, a Filipinotown, a Samoatown and an "every ethnicity" town? All that would do would be to divide rather than bring people together.

The other reason I am speaking against this bill is that I purchased several properties in the area you are designating Koreatown and have already consulted with a commercial bank appraiser with an MAI designation about this and he told me that having this area designated as "Koreatown" would lower both

residential and commercial values. He told me that certain nationals such as Japanese Nationals, Chinese Nationals and even Korean Nationals and others will not purchase properties in culturally designated areas and mentioned that this would act as a downzoning by the State.

I would not have purchased the properties we did in this area had I known it would eventually be designated Koreatown, Japantown, Filipinotown, etc. because I believe it would have a negative impact on property values, lowering the values and causing certain ethnic groups to avoid buying the properties because of the labels placed on the area. Can you imagine the disruption this will cause to the other businesses and residents of the area, most of whom are non-Korean? Also Koreans do not own the majority of land in this area.

This is an ill-conceived and poorly planned and shallow attempt to make a few people in the Korean community happy, who have failed to fully consider the impact of this bill on all of the small and large businesses and residents in this area. I am surprised a significant issue such as this is being quietly proposed at the legislature without notice to the general public. This is not fair to the community when they have a lot at stake - especially the elderly and moderate income group who only own one property - the condo that they live in. This will impact condo values in the area. I only found out about this a few days ago by chance but I am sure more people would be here had they known about it. Did the people promoting the bill advise all of the property owners and tenants, Bishop Estate, Walmart, Walgreens, all of the condominium owners, First Hawaiian Bank, and many others that a special district will be created and that they will be given a name that they did not anticipate when they acquired or leased their property in this area.

Thank you for your time listening to my opinion on this matter and giving this bill careful thought to the negative impacts both short and long range.



Donna Walden

Giampaolo Boschetti
1087 Market Street
San Francisco, California 94103

Testimony for Thursday, February 06, 2014
1:20 pm
Conference Room 414
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Opposing SB 2512
RELATING TO A KOREATOWN.

COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND
Senator Malama Solomon, Chair
Senator Brickwood Galuteria, Vice-Chair

COMMITTEE ON TECHNOLOGY AND THE ARTS
Senator Glenn Wakai, Chair
Senator Clarence K. Nishihara, Vice-Chair

Aloha, Chair Solomon, Chair Wakai, Vice-Chair Galuteria, Vice-Chair Nishihara and Committee Members.

My name is Giampaolo Boschetti . This testimony is in opposition to SB 2512 Relating to a Koreatown. I am an owner of properties in the area where this bill proposes to create a special district. I have been purchasing condominium units in the neighborhood where Koreatown is proposed.

I am completely opposed to this bill.

It creates a preference for one ethnic group in one geographic area, and this area has no real connection to the Korean community. I am Italian and was born Italy. However, I would feel the same sense of opposition if this neighborhood were to become a 'Little Italy.' We should be welcoming all sorts of businesses and ethnicities to this area and not just one group.

Please vote against this bill.

Giampaolo Boschetti



ROBERT MCFARLANE
765 Amana Street, 5th Floor
Honolulu, Hawaii 96814
Tel. (808) 947-1326

Testimony for Thursday, February 06, 2014
1:20 pm
Conference Room 414
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Opposing SB 2512
RELATING TO A KOREATOWN.

COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND
Senator Malama Solomon, Chair
Senator Brickwood Galuteria, Vice-Chair

COMMITTEE ON TECHNOLOGY AND THE ARTS
Senator Glenn Wakai, Chair
Senator Clarence K. Nishihara, Vice-Chair

Aloha, Chair Solomon, Chair Wakai, Vice-Chair Galuteria, Vice-Chair Nishihara and Committee Members.

My name is Robert McFarlane and I am presenting this testimony in opposition to SB 2512 Relating to a Koreatown. I am an owner of a property in the area where this bill proposes to create a special district.

I am strongly against it.

It will create a special district, solely for one ethnic group, and does not acknowledge that long-time owners like myself, simply have no connection or affiliation with this group. It is forcing us to adopt a name, spend public funds for, and create just another bureaucratic agency with more bureaucratic nightmares, more restrictions that will ultimately devalue my property and by favoring just one special interest group.

I believe that this bill is divisive and ignorant of our multi-cultural heritage and should fail right here and now. It ignores the simple fact that the Ala Moana-Kapiolani-Kalakaua-Piikoi area should be open to all.



Robert McFarlane