



**DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS,
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM**

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Statement of
LUIS P. SALAVERIA
Director
Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism
before the
**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS, MILITARY,
& INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, & CULTURE AND THE ARTS**

Monday, March 21, 2016
9:00am
State Capitol, Conference Room 312

in consideration of
HCR 123/HR 77

**REQUESTS THE HAWAII SISTER-STATE COMMITTEE TO REVIEW AND
CONSIDER THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A STATE/PROVINCE RELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN THE STATE OF HAWAII OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
AND THE PROVINCE OF AKLAN OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES.**

Chair Ito, Vice Chair Tokioka and Members of the House Committee on Veterans,
Military, & International Affairs, & Culture and the Arts.

The Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT) would like to provide comments on HCR 123/HR 77, which requests the Hawaii Sister-State Committee to review and consider the establishment of a state/province relationship between the State of Hawaii of the United States of America and the Province of Aklan of the Republic of the Philippines.

In 2006, the Legislature established the Hawaii Sister-State Committee. Its responsibility includes providing recommendations to the Legislature and the Governor on proposed sister-state relationships. Accordingly, the Hawaii Sister-State Committee has developed an application and process for entities seeking to establish a sister-state relationship with the State

of Hawaii. After a comprehensive review of an application, the Committee forwards its recommendation to the Legislature and the Governor for their review and decision.

We recommend that the entities pursuing a sister-state relationship between the State of Hawaii and the Province of Aklan follow the process established by the Legislature.

The State of Hawaii already has five sister-state relationships with provinces in the Philippines, which is the most it has with any country. Exchanges, especially in trade, education, investment and other mutually beneficial economic development areas have been limited.

DBEDT recommends that efforts be placed on revitalizing existing sister relationships within the Philippines rather than enter into new ones.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer these comments.

Testifier: DR. DANILO E. ABAYON, President II, Aklan State University, Banga, Aklan, Philippines
The Committee to which the comments are directed: House Committee on Veterans, Military and
International Affairs and Culture and the Arts.

Date and Time of the Hearing: Monday, 21 March 2016 at 9:00 am

Measure Number: H. C. R. No. 123 / HR 77

TESTIMONY

TO THE HONORABLE MEMBERS OF THE HAWAII STATE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

On behalf of the Aklan State University, a state institution for higher education in Banga, Aklan, Philippines, we are greatly honoured by your passage of H.C R. No. 123/HR 77 entitled "REQUESTING THE HAWAII SISTER-STATE COMMITTEE TO REVIEW AND CONSIDER THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A STATE/PROVINCE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE STATE OF HAWAII OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND THE PROVINCE OF AKLAN OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES". We, therefore, humbly request your consideration for the establishment of a state/province relationship between the State of Hawaii of the United States of America and the Province of Aklan of the Republic of the Philippines.

Furthermore, we strongly believe that your profound consideration of the stipulations in H.C.R. 123 will open up long lasting and productive international cooperation with two academic institutions – the Aklan State University in the Province of Aklan and University of Hawaii, Hilo of the State of Hawaii.

A memorandum of understanding has been proposed which aims to establish general modalities of cooperation in the fields of instruction, research, professional development and collaborative sustainable development initiatives may be enhanced between institutions.

The areas of cooperation are slated to include the following:

- (a) Exchange of faculty and staff, and student mobility activities;
- (b) Joint research activities; publishing and information sharing;
- (c) Professional development and other activities to build capacities;
- (d) Collaborative sustainable development initiatives

On March 10, 2016, the Board of Regents of the Aklan State University approved the proposal to forge a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the University of Hawaii, Hilo.

The University's Board of Regent is presently chaired by Hon. Patricia P. Licuanan, Chair of the Philippines Commission on Higher Education (CHED), she is duly represented by Commissioner Maria Cynthia Rose Bautista, a commissioner from CHED. The undersigned, Dr. Danilo E. Abayon sits as the Vice Chair. The members are: Senator Pia S. Cayetano of the Philippine Senate representing the Senate Committee on Education, Arts and Culture; Congressman Roman T. Romulo of the House of Representative's Committee on Higher and Technical Education; Regent Ro-Ann A. Bacal, the Regional Director of the National Economic Development Authority (NEDA); Regent Rowen R. Gelonga, the Regional Director of the Department of Science and Technology; Regent Roy A. Abaya, Regional Director

of the Department of Agriculture; Regent Marlon Julius E. Lao, a private sector representative; Regent Lyle T. Ibabao, an alumni federation representative; Regent Sergio F. Tolentino, representative of the faculty federation, Regent Rogie Abenir, a representative of the Supreme Student Council.

If I may recall, the University had collaborative research with the East-West Center several decades ago. We can level up much greater commitment when this relationship agreement is passed.

Very truly yours,

DANILO E. ABAYON, PhD
University President II

LATE

March 20, 2016

The Honorable Representative Ken Ito, Chair
The Honorable Representative James Kunane Tokioka, Vice Chair
& Members of the Veterans, Military, & International Affairs, & Culture and the Arts
Conference Room #312, State Capitol
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Ito, Vice Chair Tokioka, and Members of the Committee:

RE: HCR 123 – RELATING TO THE STATE/PROVINCE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE STATE OF HAWAII AND THE PROVINCE OF AKLAN, PHILIPPINES

I am appealing for your support of HCR 123 to consider the establishment of a State/Province relationship between the State of Hawaii and the Province of Aklan, Philippines.

My name is Mary Jean Castillo and I am the Vice President of the Aklan Cultural Society of Hawaii. I was born and raised in Makato, Aklan, 10 miles away from Kalibo, the capital of Aklan. I came to Hawaii in 1995.

Aklan Cultural Society of Hawaii is a nonprofit corporation organized to perpetuate the Philippine culture of the Aklan, Panay Region specifically the two internationally known tourist attraction: the Ati-Atihan Festival and Boracay Island. Our goal is to partner with the government agencies, community-based organizations, and schools in promoting the Ati-Atihan Festival.

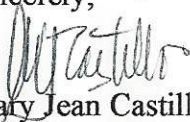
Our Province of Aklan is a world renowned tourist destination for almost half a century because of the 2 main attractions: Boracay Island located in Malay, Aklan and Ati-Atihan Festival held every third Sunday of January. Although Kalibo Ati-Athihan is seasonal, people from all over the world fly to Aklan all year round to enjoy our famous Boracay Island known for its “sugar-like refined white sand” and crystal clear water that if you drop a quarter 20 ft, it’s still visible . Boracay Island beaches have unique properties: The sand retains moisture so as that its temperature remains the same at mid-day and you can walk without wearing slippers. This is another reason why Australian Beach Volleyball competition is held in Boracay Island each year.

I support HCR 123 because it will bear a fruitful and beneficial relationship.

Hawaii is one of the best places to live and visit because we continue to develop and create sister-state/province relationship around the globe.

I humbly urge you to support HCR 123.

Sincerely,



Mary Jean Castillo
Co-Founding Member
Aklan Cultural Society of Hawaii Foundation



**CONSULATE GENERAL OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
HONOLULU**

21 March 2016

LATE

The Honorable Representative Ken Ito, Chair
The Honorable Representative James Kunane Tokioka, Vice Chair
Members of the Veterans, Military, & International Affairs, & Culture and the Arts
Conference Room #312, State Capitol
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Ito, Vice Chair Tokioka, and Members of the Committee:

**RE: HCR 123/HR 77 – RELATING TO THE STATE/PROVINCE RELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN THE STATE OF HAWAII AND THE PROVINCE OF AKLAN,
PHILIPPINES**

Aloha! I am writing to express my strong support for the establishment of a State/Province relationship between the State of Hawaii and the Province of Aklan, Philippines.

Through this State/Province relationship, we hope to pursue our mutual economic, cultural, environmental and educational relationship.

1. ECONOMIC

The province of Aklan is home of the world-famous Boracay beach, which has received awards and accolades from numerous international travel publications and beaches. Aklan is also the home of the "Mother of All Philippine Festivals", the Ati-Atihan Festival, which continues to draw visitors not just from the other islands of the Philippines, but from across the globe, every January.

The province of Aklan, like the State of Hawaii, depends highly on tourism as one of its drivers of economic growth. Agriculture, fishing and weaving and manufacture of textile from pineapple fiber (pina) which is used to make Philippine national attire, are also top industries of Aklan.

2. DISASTER PREPAREDNESS/ENVIRONMENT

Aklan is located in the Western Visayas region, situated in the northwest portion of Panay Island and bordering the provinces of Antique and Capiz. As an island like Hawaii, it is prone to natural disasters such as typhoons and hurricanes. Through the establishment of a State/Province relationship, Hawaii and Aklan may share best practices in disaster preparedness and mitigation and sustainable development.

3. EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGES

A State/Province relationship will help reinforce or strengthen educational exchanges among students and faculty between Hawaii and Aklan. I would like to inform the committee that the Aklan State University (ASU), through the Philippine Consulate



**CONSULATE GENERAL OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
HONOLULU**

General in Honolulu, has submitted last month a draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between ASU and the University of Hawaii in Hilo to establish a mutually beneficial relationship promoting academic exchange and cooperation, particularly on sustainable development initiatives. Said draft MOU is currently with US Hilo for its consideration and review and we are optimistic that this undertaking will be beneficial for both faculty and students of UH and ASU.

The above are just a few of the advantages we could have if the State/Province relationship between Hawaii and Aklan is realized.

I am in full support of the HCR123/HR 77 and I am highly positive that this will bear a fruitful and mutually-beneficial relationship.

Thank you very much and I respectfully request that you consider supporting this initiative.

With my best wishes, I remain

Very truly yours,


GINA A. JAMORALIN
Consul General