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Statement of  
**MIKE MCCARTNEY**  
Director

Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism  
before the

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CULTURE, ARTS & INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS**

Wednesday, March 17, 2021

9:30 AM

State Capitol, Conference Room 329

In consideration of  
**HCR 127**

**REQUESTING THE HAWAII SISTER-STATE COMMITTEE TO EVALUATE AND DEVELOP RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE INITIATION OF A SISTER STATE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE STATE OF HAWAII AND THE PREFECTURE OF YAMAGUCHI, JAPAN, AND FORWARD ITS RECOMMENDATION TO THE LEGISLATURE, PURSUANT TO SECTION 229-3, HAWAII REVISED STATUTES, FOR FURTHER ACTION.**

Chair Gates, Vice Chair LoPresti, and members of the Committee. The Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT) supports HCR 127 to establish the Hawaii-Yamaguchi Sister-State Relationship.

Yamaguchi Prefecture and the State of Hawaii have had a strong relationship from the early days of the Kanyaku-Imin when the first immigrants left Japan, with over 10,000 people from Yamaguchi Prefecture, for Hawaii to work as contract laborers. Enabling the official sister-state relationship to be signed will contribute to ongoing people-to-people exchanges in education, culture, business and government between Hawaii and Yamaguchi to thrive.

On March 15, 2021, the Hawaii Sister State Committee (established by the Legislature) recommended unanimously that a sister state relationship between the State of Hawaii and Yamaguchi Prefecture be established.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Rep. Cedric Asuega Gates, Chair  
Rep. Matthew S. LoPresti, Vice Chair  
House Committee on Culture, Arts and International Affairs

FR: Reyna Kaneko  
President  
Japan-America Society of Hawai'i

RE: HCR127 REQUESTING THE HAWAII SISTER-STATE COMMITTEE TO EVALUATE AND DEVELOP RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE INITIATION OF A SISTER STATE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE STATE OF HAWAII AND THE PREFECTURE OF YAMAGUCHI, JAPAN, AND FORWARD ITS RECOMMENDATION TO THE LEGISLATURE, PURSUANT TO SECTION 229-3, HAWAII REVISED STATUTES, FOR FURTHER ACTION

DT: March 17, 2021, 9:30 am  
State Capitol, Room 329

Chair Gates, Vice Chair LoPresti:

On behalf of the Japan-America Society of Hawai'i, we strongly support HCR127 requesting the Hawai'i Sister-State Committee to evaluate and develop recommendations for the initiation of a Sister State relationship between the State of Hawai'i and the Prefecture of Yamaguchi, Japan.

Sister State relationships play a key role in fostering important relationships between Hawai'i and foreign countries. Since the immigration of the Japanese to Hawai'i in the 1800's, persons from Yamaguchi, Japan have played an integral role as contract laborers in Hawai'i, and then, the overall economic, social and cultural development of modern Hawaii. Over the decades, Yamaguchi Kenjinki groups have also upheld the bonds and relationships through cultural and business exchanges between Japan and Hawai'i, including study abroad and academic exchanges and tour groups.

HCR127 would begin the process to formalize a Sister state relationship between the State of Hawai'i and Yamaguchi, Japan, and continue the vibrant relationship that has existed over the years. We recommend this committee support HCR127.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter.

Sincerely,

/S/

REYNA KANEKO  
President  
Japan-America Society of Hawai'i  
808-292-0049

**Ann H. Kobayashi**  
**2711 Puuhonua Street**  
**Honolulu, Hawaii 96822**

March 16, 2021

The Honorable Cedric Asuega Gates, Chair  
House Committee on Culture, Arts & International Affairs  
State Capitol Building  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

SUBJECT: HCR 127 – Requesting the Hawaii Sister-State Committee to Evaluate and Develop Recommendations for the Initiation of a Sister State Relationship Between the State of Hawaii and the Prefecture of Yamaguchi, Japan, and Forward Its Recommendation to the Legislature, Pursuant to Section 229-3, Hawaii Revised Statutes, for Further Action.

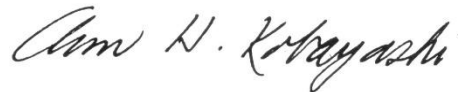
Dear Chair Asuega Gates and Members of the Committee:

I would like to submit testimony in strong support of HCR 127. Many of our families came from Yamaguchi and the relationships between Hawaii and Yamaguchi have continued for generations establishing strong bonds between the two.

Annual visits between Hawaii and Yamaguchi residents serve to strengthen this bond and enhance the sharing and exchanging of cultural and historical information.

I humbly request your support of HCR 127. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Ann H. Kobayashi