



**DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS,
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM**
KA 'OIHANA HO'OMOHALA PĀ'OIHANA, 'IMI WAIWAI
A HO'OMĀKA'IKĀ'I

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Statement of
JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA
Director
Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism
before the
**SENATE COMMITTEES ON TRANSPORTATION AND CULTURE AND THE ARTS;
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM**

Thursday, March 13, 2025
1:00 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 229

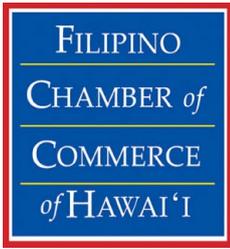
In consideration of
HB437, HD1
RELATING TO OUT-OF-STATE OFFICES.

Chairs Lee and DeCoite, Vice Chairs Inouye and Wakai and members of the Committee. The Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT) supports the intent of HB437 HD1 which establishes an out-of-state office in the Philippines.

There exists a long history of cultural and business ties between Hawaii and the Philippines. An office in the Philippines can strengthen, expand and promote these ties for economic development and cultural exchanges between the two jurisdictions.

An appropriation in the amount of \$200,000 in fiscal year 2025-26 is needed for salaries, operating expenses, programmatic expenses, and start-up costs including a study as to where best to locate the office. An appropriation in the amount of \$175,000 is needed for fiscal year 2026-2027 and thereafter on a recurring basis.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



FILIPINO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF HAWAII

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Statement of
Melody Calisay, Ph.D.
President

Filipino Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii
before the

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND
TOURISM**

**AND
SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND CULTURE AND
THE ARTS**

13 March 2025

1:00 PM

State Capitol, Conference Room 229

In Consideration of
HB437 HD1

RELATING TO OUT-OF-STATE OFFICES

Chairs DeCoite and Lee, Vice Chairs Wakai and Inouye and members of the Committees. The Filipino Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii (FCCH) supports HB437 HD1 which requires, and appropriates funds for, the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism to establish an out-of-state office in the Philippines.

Hawaii and the Philippines share a long history of cultural and business ties. An out-of-state office in the Philippines solidifies and promotes these ties especially with regard to increased economic development.

With Filipinos comprising approximately 25% of Hawaii's population, this initiative strengthens trade, cultural exchange, and economic partnerships between Hawaii and the Philippines. The office will serve as a bridge for collaboration, promoting small business opportunities and mutual growth.

I urge you to support this bill. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

P.O. BOX 1572 HONOLULU, HAWAII 96806

Website: <https://filipinochamber.org>

Email: filipinochamber@gmail.com

March 11, 2025

Thursday, March 13, 2025

1:00 PM, Conference Room 229& Videoconference

Hawaii State Capitol

Honolulu, HI 96813

Hawaii State Senate

Committee on Transportation and Culture and the Arts

Senator Chris Lee, Chair & Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Vice Chair & Members

Committee on Economic Development and Tourism

Senator Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair & Members

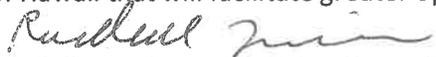
Dear Chairs, Vice Chairs and Members

RE: HB437HD1

Aloha and Mabuhay! My name is Randall Francisco and I am writing in **very strong support** of this bill as a further outreach to trade, investment, goodwill and friendship between the people and State of Hawaii and the Republic of the Philippines. As one of the founding members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Philippines has over the past decade emerged as an important economy which today joins its counterparts of Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore and Vietnam. This legislation and its intent will significantly contribute to strengthening and leveraging opportunities for economic, social, workforce development and, prosperity for all. The past two decades have seen a significant turnaround of the economy as policies, institutions and infrastructure continue to provide important advancements and confidence in the economy.

Especially significant are the youth who will continue to contribute towards a young workforce essential for critically contributing to the growth and development of both the Philippines and Hawaii. One great example are the current Philippine-trained teachers recruited by the Hawaii Department of Education and who under the current J-1 Cultural & Exchange Visa Program are providing data-drive improvements contributing to students success. The recent Goodwill and Trade Mission by the Filipino and Kauai Community Councils of Hawaii, the Kauai Filipino Chamber of Commerce and Filipino Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii who just returned from the Philippines a week ago to strengthen business contacts demonstrates this continuous relationship evolving as more and more Hawaii businesses are recognizing the value of the Philippines and its workforce in health, education, information technology, manufacturing and entrepreneurship.

Having a presence in the Philippines demonstrates a high level of commitment by the state and people of Hawaii that will facilitate greater opportunities for all. Aloha and Selamat Po.



Randall Francisco, Hanapepe, Kauai, HI

Former President/CEO, Kauai Chamber of Commerce, Former President, Kauai Filipino Chamber of Commerce, Former Vice President, Filipino Chamber of Commerce Hawaii

Former Assistant Professor, Kapiolani Community College (International Programs) and Dean, Leeward Community College

Former Kauai Film Commissioner (Creative Industries and Business)