



**DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS,
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM**
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Statement of
JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA
Director
Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism
before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TECHNOLOGY

Friday, March 21, 2024
10:00 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 423

In consideration of
HCR 119
**ENDORING TAIWAN'S INTERNATIONAL PARTICIPATION, SUPPORTING THE
SIGNING OF A UNITED STATES-TAIWAN BILATERAL TRADE AGREEMENT, AND
COMMEMORATING THE RELATIONSHIPS AND EXCHANGES BETWEEN THE
STATE OF HAWAII AND TAIWAN.**

Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey and members of the Committee. The Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT) supports **HCR 119** endorsing Taiwan's participation in the international community, advocating for the signing of a United States-Taiwan Bilateral Trade Agreement, and celebrating the strong and enduring relationships between the State of Hawai'i and Taiwan. These actions reflect our shared values, our commitment to democratic ideals, and the ongoing partnership between our people that benefits both Taiwan and the United States.

DBEDT and its Business Development and Support Division (DBEDT/BDSD) believe Taiwan is a valuable economic and strategic partner for Hawai'i, and the potential benefits of strengthening our ties with Taiwan are numerous. Taiwan is already a key trading partner for our state, and a bilateral trade agreement with Taiwan could open new opportunities for economic growth and job creation in Hawai'i.

Additionally, the cultural and educational exchanges between Hawai'i and Taiwan are invaluable in promoting mutual understanding and cooperation. By deepening our relationship with Taiwan, we can enhance opportunities for collaboration in various fields, such as tourism, education, technology, and environmental protection.

Through the State of Hawai'i Office in Taipei, DBEDT/BDSO has been working with the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office (TECO) in Honolulu to promote economic growth, enhance cultural exchanges, and advance shared values and goals that benefit both Hawai'i and Taiwan.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Taipei Economic and Cultural Office(TECO) in Honolulu fully supports this resolution, and seek yours too!

Taiwan and Hawaii share common values

Taiwan shares the universal values of freedom, democracy, and respect for human rights and the rule of law with the United States. With Hawaii in the center of the Pacific and Taiwan in the west coast of the Pacific, the relations between Hawaiian and Taiwanese are deep-rooted. Taiwan is believed to be the ancestral homeland of modern-day Polynesian people and languages. Indigenous people in Hawaii and Taiwan share the same origin and heritage with their brothers and sisters of the Austronesian languages and cultures.

Based on our shared values and common interests, the Hawaii State House of Representatives passed resolution in support of Taiwan's international participation and strengthening the US-Taiwan relationship for multiple times.

Taiwan has become a successful democracy.

Its model upholds transparency, rule of law, respect for human rights, and values that shared with all the United Nations (UN) members. Taiwan plays critical role in the global high-tech supply chains, economy and a hub of travel, culture, and education. Taiwan should be viewed as a valued partner and trusted friend of UN member states.

Taiwan's meaningful participation in the UN system is a pragmatic issue

As the international community faces an unprecedented number of complex and global issues, it is critical for all stakeholders to help address these problems. This includes the 24 million people who live in

Taiwan. Taiwan's meaningful participation in the UN system is not a political issue, but a pragmatic one.

Achieving Universal Health Coverage — Taiwan can help!

Every second, three people around the globe fall into financial difficulties due to illness, resulting in innumerable family tragedies. In order for all people to receive the health services they need without suffering financial hardship, the World Health Organization(WHO) has made universal health coverage part of its core mission.

Taiwan was the first nation in Asia to marshal its resources and founded a single-payer national health insurance system, which provides equal coverage of health care to all citizens and foreigners who legally work or reside in Taiwan. Taiwan is willing to share its experience on setting up this system to help all nations promote health equity and realize the third U.N. Sustainable Development Goal of ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all at all ages.

Taiwan keeps joining Hawaii in helping local communities

Hawaii State Government together with Hawaii Foodbank have been hosting annual Food Drive Fest, under the impact of climate change and conflicts in regions, more and more people around the world are facing food security crises. Food insecurity and malnutrition have become challenges for children and families across Hawaii. As part of the Hawaii ohana, TECO in Honolulu can't miss this wonderful event and make contributions too! TECO has joined this event and will continue to do so based on the spirit of "Taiwan Can Help, and Taiwan is Helping!"