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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 FINANCE**

Thursday, February 20, 2025  
2:00 PM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 308

In consideration of  
**HB1025 HD1**  
**RELATING TO THE CENTER FOR CULTURAL AND TECHNICAL INTERCHANGE  
BETWEEN EAST AND WEST, INC.**

Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi and members of the Committee. The Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT) supports **HB1025 HD1**, which designates the Center for Cultural and Technical Interchange Between East and West, Inc., as the State of Hawaii Center for Cultural and Technical Interchange Between East and West, Inc., and authorizes General Fund appropriations exempt from the requirements of chapter 42F, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), to the center.

The East–West Center (EWC), or the Center for Cultural and Technical Interchange Between East and West, is an invaluable education and research organization in Hawaii and the country established by the U.S. Congress in 1960 to strengthen relations and understanding among the peoples and nations of Asia, the Pacific, and the United States.

Its research program conducts studies on economic development, trade, energy, governance, politics, security, conflict reduction, population, health, environment, and the Pacific Islands.

Its education program offers educational opportunities for students and professional development seminars and workshops for educators from the U.S. and the region, in partnership with the University of Hawaii and other universities in Hawaii and the continental U.S.

Its seminars bring professionals from government, civil society, business and the media together for short-term dialogue and exchange programs to share knowledge and address issues of regional and global concern.

These programs significantly contribute to Hawaii's role and position in international affairs, and align with Hawaii's goals in economic development, international relations and education.

Regular support from State resources would help ensure that the East-West Center continues its good work and presence in Hawaii.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

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**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB1025 HD1, RELATING TO THE CENTER FOR CULTURAL AND TECHNICAL INTERCHANGE BETWEEN EAST AND WEST, INC.**

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE ON FINANCE  
February 20, 2025**

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee on Finance:

The East-West Center Employees Association, AFSCME Local 928, AFL-CIO, represents approximately 120 administrative support, professional/administrative, and academic employees currently employed at the East-West Center. We are writing to express our **strong support** for HB1025 HD1, RELATING TO THE CENTER FOR CULTURAL AND TECHNICAL INTERCHANGE BETWEEN EAST AND WEST, INC., which seeks to designate the Center for Cultural and Technical Interchange Between East and West, Inc., as the State of Hawaii Center for Cultural and Technical Interchange Between East and West, Inc., and to exempt general revenues received by the East-West Center from the requirements of Chapter 42F, Hawaii Revised Statutes.

Since its establishment in 1960, the East-West Center has been instrumental in fostering mutual understanding and cooperation between the United States and the nations of Asia and the Pacific. For over six decades, the Center and our union members have significantly contributed to promoting international relations, education, and research, positioning Hawai'i as a unique bridge between East and West. The Center's programs have not only enhanced the State's cultural and diplomatic relations but have also provided substantial economic benefits. While federal and private support for the East-West Center has been invaluable, it has been subject to fluctuations. Regular and predictable state funding, as proposed in HB1025, would ensure the continuity and expansion of the Center's vital programs and initiatives, aligning with the State's strategic goals in international relations, education, and economic development. We believe that exempting the Center from certain statutory requirements will provide the necessary support for it to continue its mission without compromising its autonomy. This support will enable the Center to uphold its high standards of excellence and continue fostering better relations and understanding between the United States and the Indo-Pacific region.

We urge the legislature to pass HB1025 HD1 to ensure the East-West Center can continue to thrive and contribute to the State of Hawaii's role in international affairs and public diplomacy. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this important bill.

Respectfully submitted,

**Bronson K. Silva**  
International Union Representative

**Testimony of James K. Scott, EdD  
Interim President, East-West Center**

House Committee on Finance  
Thursday, February 20, 2025

**HB NO. 1025: RELATING TO THE CENTER FOR CULTURAL AND TECHNICAL  
INTERCHANGE BETWEEN EAST AND WEST, INC.**

Dear Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and members of the House Committee on Finance:

Mahalo for this opportunity for the East-West Center to provide testimony in **strong support** of HB1025. The measure authorizes General Fund appropriations exempt from the requirements of chapter 42F, Hawai'i Revised Statutes.

The designation of the East-West Center as the Center for Cultural and Technical Interchange Between East and West, Inc., underscores the state's recognition of the Center's pivotal role in international and intercultural exchange. This acknowledges not only the Center's stature but also reaffirms Hawai'i's commitment to fostering global understanding and cooperation.

Furthermore, authorizing General Fund appropriations exempt from the requirements of chapter 42F, Hawai'i Revised Statutes, provides the Center with the financial flexibility necessary to effectively plan and implement its programs. This exemption acknowledges the unique nature of the Center's work and the importance of timely and efficient allocation of resources to support its mission.

The East-West Center's programs have a profound impact on Hawai'i's communities. By hosting international scholars, conducting research on critical regional issues, and facilitating dialogues among leaders from various sectors, the Center enriches the cultural fabric of our state and contributes to its economic vitality. The Center's activities attract global attention, bringing scholars, policymakers, and students to Hawai'i, thereby enhancing its reputation as a hub for international engagement.

In conclusion, the East-West Center supports HB1025. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this important measure.