



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

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Statement of
JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA
Director
Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism
before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Monday, February 24, 2025
10:00 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 308

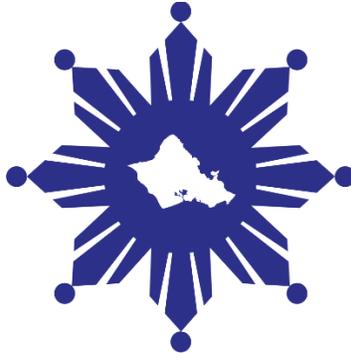
In consideration of
HB437, HD1
RELATING TO OUT-OF-STATE OFFICES.

Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi 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.



**OAHU FILIPINO COMMUNITY COUNCIL
Honolulu, Hawaii**

February 21, 2025

Testimony in Support of HB 437 HD1 - Relating to Out-of-State Offices

To: Chair Kyle Yamashita, Vice Chair Jenna Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee on Finance

From: Oahu Filipino Community Council

Date: February 24, 2025

Time: 10:00 AM

Place: Conference Room 308, State Capitol

Subject: Support for HB 437 HD1 - Relating to Out-of-State Offices

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

The Oahu Filipino Community Council respectfully submits this testimony in strong support of HB 437 HD1. This bill requires, and appropriates funds for, the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism to establish an out-of-state office in the Philippines, effective July 1, 3000.

Establishing an out-of-state office in the Philippines will significantly enhance the economic and cultural ties between Hawai'i and the Philippines. This office will serve as a vital resource for fostering business opportunities, tourism, and collaboration between our communities. Such an initiative is essential for promoting mutual growth and strengthening the longstanding relationship between Hawai'i and the Philippines.

Key Points of Support:

1. Economic Growth:

- The establishment of an out-of-state office will facilitate business ventures and investments between Hawai'i and the Philippines.

- It will create opportunities for economic development and job creation in both regions.

2. Cultural Exchange:

- The office will promote cultural exchanges and strengthen the bonds between the Filipino community in Hawai'i and their counterparts in the Philippines.
- It will enhance mutual understanding and cooperation through various cultural programs and initiatives.

3. Tourism Enhancement:

- The office will serve as a hub for promoting tourism between Hawai'i and the Philippines.
- It will attract more visitors, boosting the tourism industry and contributing to economic prosperity.

We believe that HB 437 HD1 aligns with our commitment to fostering economic development and cultural exchange. This bill represents a proactive approach to building stronger international relationships and creating opportunities for collaboration and growth.

We urge the Committee on Finance to pass HB 437 HD1. We appreciate your attention to this matter and look forward to your positive response.

Thank you for your dedication to economic development and international cooperation.

Mahalo nui loa,

Melodie Aduja
Chair, Social Action Committee
Director, Oahu Filipino Community Council

HB-437-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 2:25:21 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
amy agbayani	hawaii friends of civil rights'	Support	In Person

Comments:

Amy Agbayani , co-chair

Hawai'i Friends of Civil Rights

We strongly support establishing an office in the Philippines to increasr trade between the Philippines and Hawai'i. There is a long history between these two communities and currently 25% of the state has Filipino heritage and immigrants from the Philippines continue to be the largest immigrant group.



FILIPINO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF HAWAII

LATE *Testimony submitted late may not be considered by the Committee for decision making purposes.

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Statement of
Melody Calisay, Ph.D.
President

Filipino Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii
before the
**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND
TECHNOLOGY**

23 February 2025
10 AM
FIN, Conference Room 308

In Consideration of
H.B. 437
RELATING TO OUT-OF-STATE OFFICES

Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey and members of the Committee, the Filipino Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii (FCCH) supports **HB 437** which establishes an out-of-state office in the Philippines. The FCCH mission is to strengthen the links between Hawaii and the Philippines and an office in the Philippines can strengthened expand and promote these ties for economic development and cultural exchanges between the two countries.

This office will also improve communications and collaborations between Hawaii and the Philippines and will facilitates discussions on issues that affects businesses in Hawaii and the Philippines.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify

HB-437-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2025 1:44:41 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sandy Ma	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Finance Committee,

I support HB437, HD1. This bill requiring and appropriating funds for the Department of Business,

Economic Development, and Tourism to establish an out-of-state office in the Philippines is an innovative way to strengthen relationships with the Philippines. The Filipino community is the

second largest population in Hawaii. It is therefor prudent to build ties to the Philippines. Thank

you for the oppportunity to testify in support of HB437, HD1. I urge you to pass HB437, HD1 out of your

Committee.

HB-437-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2025 6:39:24 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Corinne Solomon	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose HB437. Please vote NO on this bill.

Also, there should never be any bills with a blank appropriation line.

You have to at least let us know how much of our tax money you plan on wasting.

HB-437-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2025 7:20:27 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marlies Lee	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose

No out of state offices

Marlies Lee

HB-437-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2025 7:44:10 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Emerson	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Let the free market reign. This sounds like money launder. You all blame capitalism and then go ahead and turn it into a monopoly. Making it difficult for people to do business. I did not approve of my tax dollars to go to this. You guys are not far from a DOGE investigation.

HB-437-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2025 7:58:55 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
James K. Rzonca	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill. No "new" taxes

HB-437-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 8:39:26 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cheryl Rzonca	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill. Why are we funding offices in foreign countries? The embassies our federal government has are sufficient. This bill doesn't even state an amount of how much it's going to cost the taxpayers. I say no to using my tax dollars to fund this project.

HB-437-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 12:17:10 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Paul Littleton	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose HB437

HB-437-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 7:35:01 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Candace Vizcarra	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Taxes for out of of state offices?!?! Are you kidding me?!?! You all are just crazy and do not deserve to be in office!! You deserve what is coming because GOD knows and sees all!!

HB-437-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 9:51:01 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Zac Nosugref	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill.

HB-437-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2025 8:25:51 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joelle Seashell	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

No.

HB-437-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2025 8:43:32 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mylene Reyes	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a business owner, I strongly support HB437 to further strenthen economic ties bet Hawaii and the Philippines.

HB-437-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2025 10:03:40 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Terri Yoshinaga	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill.

HB-437-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2025 8:56:11 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alice Abellanida	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose Bill. Vote no