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LATE

**Testimony of Martha Townsend
Executive Director**

**in opposition to
HB318 Relating to Government Buildings and Naming Rights**

**before the
Senate Committee on Government Relations
Thursday, March 19, 2015 at 1:30 PM in rm. 414**

Aloha Chairman Nishihara and members of the Government Relations Committee,

The Outdoor Circle has serious concerns about the implications of this bill and respectfully **requests that this Committee defer decision-making** on it at this time. As of this morning, this is the only testimony submitted on HB318. More time is needed to allow for proper public discussion of what this bill means and how it would change our current naming rights practices.

Naming a public facility after someone is a well-respected, time-honored method of honoring individuals who dedicate much of their time, wealth, and expertise in service of the public good. Hawaii, and especially the City and County of Honolulu, has used this tradition well to benefit the people of Hawaii. Just as one example, Ms. Hazel McCoy gifted \$1.7 million to the City to build a pavilion in Ala Moana Park, widely recognized as the people's park. To honor this gift, the City named the pavilion after her husband and the first parks administrator, Lester McCoy.

Unfortunately, in other jurisdictions, the culture behind naming rights is evolving from one focused on acknowledging services rendered for the public good to negotiating upfront for payment in exchange for public acknowledgement. The result of this form of "transactional charity" is bidding wars for publicity. A recent example of this trend is David Geffen's controversial purchase of naming rights for the Lincoln Center in New York City.

If the City and County of Honolulu hopes to engage in this type of transactional charity to fund its parks program, then there needs to be a more robust discussion