

# HCR 55

REQUESTING THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS AND THE BARACK OBAMA FOUNDATION TO SUPPORT AND RECOMMEND HAWAII AS THE SITE FOR THE BARACK OBAMA PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY AND CENTER.



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## Legislative Testimony

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Testimony Presented Before the  
Senate Committee on Government Operations  
April 21, 2015 at 1:15 pm  
by  
David Lassner  
President, University of Hawai'i System  
and  
Robert Bley-Vroman  
Chancellor, University of Hawai'i at Manoa

HCR 55 – REQUESTING THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS AND THE BARACK OBAMA FOUNDATION TO SUPPORT AND RECOMMEND HAWAII AS THE SITE FOR THE BARACK OBAMA PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY AND CENTER.

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Nishihara, and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HCR 55 expressing support for Hawai'i as the site for the Barack Obama Presidential Library and Center, and for the proposal submitted to the Barack Obama Foundation by the University of Hawai'i in collaboration and with support from state and community leaders.

The University of Hawai'i is optimistic that President Obama and the Barack Obama Foundation will strongly consider locating significant programmatic elements in a Barack Obama Presidential Center in Hawai'i. While there is strong competition from elsewhere for the primary records and library facilities, the opportunity for Hawai'i to be a significant focus of President Obama's post-Presidential work is also of great interest and value. As the Barack Obama Foundation finalizes its plans in the coming months, creative engagement from the University of Hawai'i, State leadership, and the community will be critical in maximizing this opportunity. We therefore greatly appreciate the Legislature's expression of support through this Resolution.

To further align the Resolution with programmatic opportunities for which we expect Hawai'i to be particularly competitive, we respectfully suggest that the Committee may wish to consider language modifications such as the following:

[Suggested revisions to title and first three paragraphs]

REQUESTING THAT THE BARACK OBAMA FOUNDATION ESTABLISH A PRESIDENTIAL CENTER IN HAWAII.

WHEREAS, presidential centers are important institutions that both preserve the historical record and sponsor programs to make a better future;

WHEREAS, presidential centers have evolved since their founding by Franklin Delano Roosevelt to include multiple components, including: archives, museum exhibitions, conference facilities, university research programs, and educational initiatives;

WHEREAS, the distinct elements of a presidential center can be located in a single location, as in the case of the George W. Bush Presidential Center in Dallas, or in more than one site, as with the Clinton Presidential Center in Little Rock and the Clinton Foundation, headquartered in New York;

...

[Suggested revisions to 6th paragraph, starting with line 8]

WHEREAS, as the world's attention pivots to the Asia-Pacific region due to its growing economic and geopolitical prominence, Hawai'i represents the ideal location to create a Barack Obama Presidential Center; and

...

[Suggested revisions to resolution clause, starting with line 20]

BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the Twenty-eight Legislature of the State of Hawai'i, Regular Session of 2015, the Senate concurring, that this body requests that the Barack Obama Foundation support and recommend the establishment of a Barack Obama Presidential Center in Hawai'i;

\* \* \* \* \*

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony.

HAWAII  
PRESIDENTIAL  
CENTER

**Testimony before the Hawai'i State Senate Committee on Government Operations**

By Avelino J. Halagao  
President, Hawai'i Presidential Center

April 21, 2015

**House Concurrent Resolution 55**

REQUESTING THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS AND THE BARACK OBAMA FOUNDATION TO SUPPORT AND RECOMMEND HAWAII AS THE SITE FOR THE BARACK OBAMA PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY AND CENTER

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Nishihara, and Members of the Committee:

My name is A.J. Halagao, and I am co-founder and serve as president of the Hawai'i Presidential Center, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit group, established to work in concert with the University of Hawai'i, in bidding for the presidential center. On behalf of the Hawai'i Presidential Center, I write in **full support** of this resolution.

We believe Hawai'i is the perfect place to illuminate the president's legacy and carry forward his work. The islands' multiculturalism, global connections, mature visitor industry, and unrivaled natural beauty will enable President Obama to create a uniquely vibrant presidential center. Building a world-class research, education, and advocacy institution will also benefit the people of Hawai'i, spurring economic development and tourism, strengthening the university, and enhancing public education.

## HAWAI'I PRESIDENTIAL CENTER

Hawai'i's bid to host the Obama presidential center is a unified, statewide effort—led by the University of Hawai'i, with full support from the State of Hawai'i and the City and County of Honolulu, and in cooperation with institutional and community partners across the state. Over the past five years, we've been honored that several institutions have passed resolutions in support of this initiative, including the Hawai'i State Legislature, the Honolulu City Council, the University of Hawai'i Board of Regents, the UH Manoa Faculty Senate, the Associated Students of the University of Hawaii, and the UH Manoa Graduate Student Organization.

What we're most proud of is that this has been a collaborative effort, involving our last two Governors and Lieutenant Governors, our four Mayors, our entire Congressional delegation, the Hawai'i State Legislature, Honolulu City Council, and education, business and community leaders across the islands.

Institutions such as Office of Hawaiian Affairs, East-West Center, Castle Foundation, Kamehameha Schools, Punahou School, Department of Education, Hawai'i Community Development Authority, and Hawaii Tourism Authority, among many others, have been trusted partners in this initiative. Together, we've developed proposed programs that will benefit our residents and our visitors: a K-12 Leadership Academy, an action-oriented Convening Institute, a Center of Community Organizing and an engaging, interactive Visitor Center.

Hawai'i has a historic opportunity to partner with President Obama to create a world-class institution that will help us build a better future. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **full support** of HCR 55.

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**Date:** Monday, April 20, 2015 11:57:00 PM  
**Attachments:** [HCR55 Testimony of Wayne Takamine.pdf](#)

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**HCR55**

Submitted on: 4/20/2015

Testimony for GVO on Apr 21, 2015 13:15PM in Conference Room 414

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Wayne Takamine	Kaka'ako Makai Community Planning Advisory Council	Oppose	Yes

**Comments:**

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

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**Testimony in Opposition to HCR55**  
**Wayne Takamine**  
Before the  
**COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS**  
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair  
Senator Clarence K. Nishihara, Vice Chair

DATE: Tuesday, April 21, 2015

TIME: 1:15 P.M.

PLACE: Conference Room 414

**HCR55**

REQUESTING THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS AND THE BARACK OBAMA FOUNDATION TO SUPPORT AND RECOMMEND HAWAII AS THE SITE FOR THE BARACK OBAMA PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY AND CENTER.

My name is Wayne Takamine. I participated in the Kaka'ako Makai Master Planning process as the Chair of the Kaka'ako Makai Community Planning Advisory Council (CPAC). CPAC's community efforts culminated in the approval of the Kaka'ako Makai Conceptual Master Plan by the HBDA Board in 2011.

The Kaka'ako Makai Community Planning Advisory Council (CPAC) was initiated by the 2006 legislature via HCR30, which called for the creation of a community working group to meaningfully participate with the Hawaii Community Development Authority (HCDA) in the development, acceptance and implementation of any future plans for the development of Kaka'ako Makai. The CPAC's founding members and participants have a clear understanding of the public fiduciary responsibilities for the Kaka'ako Makai public lands with the State as trustee of this public trust resource, which we have followed in the public interest since 2006.

CPAC leaders and Kaka'ako Makai stakeholders met with UH Foundation's Obama Library consultant Townscapes LLC. to discuss the proposal and the following is the CPAC summary from the August 18, 2014 meeting.

**OBAMA LIBRARY NOTES FROM THE 8-21-2015 MEETING WITH CPAC LEADERSHIP -**

Meeting participants were: CPAC members, representing the Oahu Parks Conservancy, AIA Hawaii, Kaka'ako Small Businesses, Point Panic Body surfers, Kaka'ako United and individual Kaka'ako residents. The Townscapes consultant handed out copies of the 1-page project description dated August 2014. He explained that his role was not to be an ADVOCATE for the project, but to hear and record issues and concerns that park users might have in regards to a Presidential Center facility on the Kaka'ako Makai shoreline. A summary of the discussion follows:

- The Obama Presidential Center proposed by UH is yet another LAND GRAB of this last remaining and vitally needed public shoreline land in urban Honolulu.

- This proposal wants to take 8 acres of Kaka'ako Makai public shoreline lands for an EXCLUSIVE USE. HCDA has also proposed taking 9 acres of the park for a fenced-off commercial "light show." This is removing essential recreational open space needed for the projected population of 30,000 to 45,000 people in Kaka'ako Mauka.
- Kaka'ako Makai has only 30 acres of recreational open space. The national urban recreational open space standard is 2 to 2 1/2 acres per 1000 capita.
- For land to be used, there doesn't have to be something on it. Open space is useful and serves a purpose. Once open areas of this park are used for buildings, those open areas are GONE and can't be replaced. Even New York City has open space. Open space is important.
- HCDA has taken away on-street parking in this area, so everybody has to crowd into the public parking lot at Point Panic – including customers of the "53 By the Sea" restaurant who park at Point Panic to avoid the restaurant's valet parking charges. If the Obama Center is constructed here, will it have adequate free parking? If NOT, then there will be still more impact on the Point Panic parking lot and local people will have difficulty finding parking space there.
- Parking is only a part of the problem. They want a "global attraction" with a "critical mass" of 300,000 visitors annually. This critical mass will stifle the diverse recreational uses and enjoyment of this shoreline by the many people we see here all week long, and many more in the future with Kaka'ako Mauka's 30,000 population increase.
- This complex will DESTROY our park's NEEDED recreational open space for our growing population.
- The community-based MASTER PLAN for Kaka'ako Makai provides for an EXPANSION of park space. The proposed Obama Presidential Center at this location will REDUCE needed park space.
- The community's vision is to expand the park's green open space to the Kewalo Basin Channel and mauka up to Olemehani Street, which is a natural boundary for recreational open space; with inviting public park facilities in a park-like setting that carries the essence of the park to Ilalo Street - like San Francisco's Golden Gate Park and New York's Central Park, yet as Honolulu's unique Hawaiian cultural park.
- Expanding the park and the Lei of Green have been the most popular of the master plan principles that have been well-vetted and STRONGLY SUPPORTED by the larger community.

- The huge building complex overtaking 8 acres will not be compatible with the surroundings.
- What about SECURITY ISSUES – if high level people gather at this Presidential Center from time to time, will this ENTIRE AREA BE CORDONED OFF AND CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC? APEC serves as one example of this requirement. Will Point Panic be closed? Will the Park be closed? Will the surrounding shoreline and its water be closed as it is during presidential vacations?
- Will public ingress to and egress from the Kaka’ako Makai peninsula between the channel and the harbor be BLOCKED by secured events at the proposed center?
- We have no objection to an Obama Presidential Center per se – but this is the WORST POSSIBLE SITE for the Center!
- If this is turned into a global center it will RUIN this popular area for surfing and for our residents.
- Why would they build an attraction to heavily impact this last Honolulu shoreline recreational open space, instead of providing an area for this facility where there is room to bring in so many people?
- The UH Team should consider OTHER SITES. What about a site on the UH West O`ahu Campus or at the Second City of Kapolei?
- We will soon have a new Governor – will there be new and better thoughts on this Presidential Center and its location?
- NEXT STEP: CPAC leaders would like to work with area elected officials to schedule and convene an open informational meeting on the Obama Presidential Center. The UH Team would be invited to give a presentation on their concepts for the Center. Members of the public would be given an opportunity to ask questions and to comment on these concepts. CPAC leaders would like the UH Team to agree to participate in this meeting. CPAC leaders would also like the UH Team to explain their site selection criteria and process at this informational meeting.

Over the years CPAC has been following the UH Foundation’s proposal for the Obama Library at the Point Panic, Kaka’ako Makai location. These comments have been consistent with Kaka’ako Makai Stakeholders, Kaka’ako Community Groups, Park User Groups and Individuals over the years. Many have voiced their concerns for the Obama Library at Point Panic as being inconsistent with the Kaka’ako Makai Conceptual Master Plan. CPAC is also critical with the political nature of a strongly Democratic Legislature and Administration that is in support of our local born Democratic United States President and questions, “is this really the best solution for

limited Kaka'ako Makai shoreline recreational area for our growing Honolulu population?" Is this just politicians gathering in line with the President? Where are the public hearings and discussions on this plan? What is happening to our Shoreline "Lei of Green?"

Since the Obama Library proposed by the UH Foundation is for Kaka'ako Makai, the CPAC will follow the concerns from Kaka'ako Makai stakeholders, the Kaka'ako Community and concerned individuals to decline support for HCR55 until a more open public planning process has been created or another site is being considered.

Thank You for Your Consideration,

Wayne Takamine  
Kaka'ako Makai CPAC Chair  
Honolulu Resident

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## **HCR55**

Submitted on: 4/21/2015

Testimony for GVO on Apr 21, 2015 13:15PM in Conference Room 414

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
michele matsuo	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments: Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Nishihara, and members of the Committee, I strongly oppose HCR 55, for many of the same reasons cited by Wayne Takamine, which are incorporated herein by this reference. In addition, putting the Presidential Library on the shoreline in an area projected to be inundated by sea level rise will subject President Obama and his reputation to mockery and charges of hypocrisy for decades to come, and after it is wiped out by a hurricane or tsunami, it will be mocked ironically. As a little update on sea level rise, please know that it is much higher than anticipated already, and may progress faster than previously expected due to the warm waters under the Antarctica ice sheet and the volcanic rift with magma now under the ice sheet. You might also consider this when pushing forward this resolution and also with Honolulu's Rail project and associated TOD projects. Please also consider that governments may be found liable to insurance companies for reimbursements for claims paid for damages suffered due to climate change and climate change related weather events, and a noted UH law professor told the Hawaii State Bar Association Convention that the tort nexus is likely to be demonstrable now. So, it may be risky for governments to even grant approvals in areas likely to be impacted by climate change. I cannot imagine the possible extent of liability when the government actively encouraged or lured the development in such areas. Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Respectfully submitted, Michele Matsuo

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### **HCR55**

Submitted on: 4/19/2015

Testimony for GVO on Apr 21, 2015 13:15PM in Conference Room 414

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Bianca Isaki	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments: I strongly oppose HCR55. The proposed library will essentially be a tourist-attraction. It will increase traffic and other pedestrian and user congestion, and is wholly inappropriate to the public recreational park areas in which it is proposed to be situated. C-PAC, the primary voice for community input from regular users of Kaka`ako areas, has strongly opposed the library as well. I urge you to seriously consider their, and my, reasons for opposing HCR55. Sincerely, Bianca Kai Isaki

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**HCR55**

Submitted on: 4/19/2015

Testimony for GVO on Apr 21, 2015 13:15PM in Conference Room 414

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Victoria Cannon	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

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**HCR55**

Submitted on: 4/15/2015

Testimony for GVO on Apr 21, 2015 13:15PM in Conference Room 414

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Javier Mendez-Alvarez	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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