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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
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Testimony Supporting
Senate Concurrent Resolution 78

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TOURISM AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Senator Gil Kahele, Chairman

Senator J. Kalani English, Vice Chairman

March 30, 2015

Aloha Chairman Kahele, Vice Chairman English, and members of the Tourism and International Affairs Committee,

I am pleased to submit this testimony in **strong support** of designating Hawaii and the state of Goa of the Republic of India sister states. Having recently travelled to Goa, I believe that Goa would make a perfect sister state for Hawaii, and that a sister-state relationship with Goa would greatly benefit the State of Hawaii and complement broader binational cooperation that our two national governments have undertaken.

Hawaii and Goa share more than a few similarities. Nestled along the west coast of India, the relatively small state of Goa is famous for its seascape and welcoming people. Small, tropical, and beautiful, Goa has become one of India's top tourist destinations. Last year alone, more than four million tourists travelled long distances to experience Goa's inviting coastline, excellent climate, inland mountains and protected areas, and the wonderful composite of cultures and traditions that is present-day Goa. While Goa is one of the smallest states in the Republic India, its tourism-driven economy has made it one of the most prosperous in that country.

As is true for the rest of India, Goa is composed of diverse ethnic groups, religions, and languages. However, Goa's unique mix of ancient traditions and colonial influences has fused with modern India in a way that makes Goa culturally distinct. Goa's architecture incorporates Portuguese, British, Indian, and Islamic influences. Its people speak English, Hindi, Matahi, and Konkani, and practice Hinduism, Christianity, Islam, Sikhism, and Jainism. About half of its population is urban, situated mostly along the coast. With Portuguese and Indian influences, Goan cuisine consists of a rich variety of fish dishes, often cooked with coconut and palm oil and local fruits vegetables. The variety that constitutes Goa is rich and interesting, as is the variety that makes Hawaii the incredible place that we know it is.

Goa belongs to a country that is undergoing rapid transformation. An ancient civilization of science and innovation, modern India today is wholly focused on economic growth and development. In fact, India has a top ten gross domestic product and is home to one of the world's fastest growing economies and one of largest middle classes in the world. An

increasingly prosperous and open India means that in the coming decades Indians will travel more and invest more in the rest of the world – including to and in Hawaii. Considering the dramatic progress made over the past two decades, one can only speculate where India, and most of its population that is still under the age of 35, will be a decade or two from now.

As India evolves into an important economic, political, and strategic presence in Asia and the Pacific, so too is our bilateral relationship with India. President Obama’s historic trip to India in January highlighted the importance that the United States places on growing partnership with India. With Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi, our two countries launched a series of dialogues encompassing most every aspect of our bilateral relationship in an effort to rapidly bring our two great countries closer together in a common bond of peace and friendship.

Both born from British colonialism, we are at once the world’s oldest and largest democracies, sharing a deep belief in the rule of law and a strong constitution. It is more than coincidence that India’s constitution begins with the same phrase as does ours, i.e., “We the people” – reflecting a shared, fundamental belief that ultimate power rests with the common citizen, and that democracy hinges on assuring individual liberties. We also have influenced one another in other significant ways. In the 1940s, Mahatma Gandhi led a non-violent independence movement that served as a model for Martin Luther King in forever changing American society for the better. In the 1960s, American agriculturalist Norman Borlaug brought the Green Revolution to India, an act that helped to put food on the table for millions of impoverished Indians who might otherwise have faced a Malthusian catastrophe. Both societies celebrate education and innovation, which in today’s global economy has naturally drawn us closer as our businesses build high-tech hubs together that propel the information age.

For these reasons, I am pleased to recommend that the Sister-State Committee develop recommendations for the initiation of a sister-state relationship with the State of Goa, Republic of India and urge your approval of SCR 78. Thank you Chairman Kahele and Vice Chairman English for holding this hearing today.

Sincerely,



TULSI GABBARD

U.S. House of Representatives (HI-2)

Marsha R. Joyner

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COMMITTEE ON TOURISM AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Senator Gilbert Kahele, Chair

Senator J. Kalani English, Vice Chair

DATE: Monday, March 30, 2015
TIME: 2:45 p.m.
PLACE: Conference Room 225
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street

In Strong Support of SB SCR 78

We are in strong support of SB 78 of a Sister-State Relationship with The State of Goa In The Country of India. We feel that the time is now! President Obama called the U.S.-India relationship a “defining partnership of the 21st century.”

Goa has so much in common with Hawai'i. And a vast amount of experience we can share. Goa like Hawai'i is a center of tourism in India and has a multi-cultural ethnic population, ancient visitor attractions and high-end tourist accommodations, Visa-on-Arrival facility extending this to 43 countries including USA.

U.S. Ambassador to India Richard Verma said in an “India-West” Newspaper interview, “President Obama’s second visit to India was historic in many ways. He was the first sitting U.S. President to visit India twice, and the first U.S. President to attend Republic Day. These are not merely symbolic gestures — the visit reflects the commitment of a President who called the U.S.-India relationship a “defining partnership of the 21st century.”

Here in Delhi, the President said the United States and India were not merely natural partners, but could be best partners. You can see the manifestation of that sentiment in the various joint statements, declarations, and a first-ever joint op-ed we’ve penned with India in the last six months.

It’s especially clear in the Declaration of Friendship the President and Prime Minister signed. That’s just not something we do with everyone, and it’s a clear demonstration of our commitment to advancing out extensive strategic and global partnership aimed at improving the lives of our citizens and the global community.

When asked by India-West, “What are the main action items on your agenda as ambassador in 2015?” The ambassador replied, “I’ll work with my colleagues at the U.S. Embassy and in the Indian government and business communities to make good on the vision of our leaders. We’ll use the various joint statements and commitment pledges from the two summits to guide us in that endeavor, focusing on six major areas of cooperation: strategic; economic and commercial; security; climate and clean energy; development, science and health; and defense. **We’ll work hard on making the U.S.-India relationship even deeper and broader — indeed, in realizing President Obama’s vision of the United States as India’s best partner.**

Aloha pumehana,
Marsha R. Joyner

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Please pass and support SCR78. Society is need of as much promotion of togetherness as possible. The willingness to set this example speaks volumes to those that will benefit from such a meaningful endeavor.

Respectfully yours,

Lyntillus J. Boyd