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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM**
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Statement of
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Director
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before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CULTURE, ARTS, INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Wednesday, March 20, 2024
10:30 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 309

In consideration of
HCR 96
**SUPPORTING A CLOSER PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND
TAIWAN IN VALUES AND COMMON GOALS, THE RELATIONSHIPS AND
EXCHANGES BETWEEN THE STATE OF HAWAII AND TAIWAN, TAIWAN'S
INTERNATIONAL PARTICIPATION, AND THE SIGNING OF A UNITED STATES-
TAIWAN BILATERAL TRADE AGREEMENT.**

Chair Tam, Vice Chair Martinez and members of the Committee. The Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT) supports HCR 96 which advocates for a closer partnership between the United States and Taiwan in values and common goals. This bill highlights the importance of fostering positive relationships and exchanges between the State of Hawai'i and Taiwan, as well as increasing Taiwan's international participation and the possibility of signing a United States-Taiwan bilateral trade agreement.

DBEDT and its Business Development and Support Division (DBEDT/BDSD) believe Taiwan is a valuable economic and strategic partner for Hawai'i, and the potential benefits of strengthening our ties with Taiwan are numerous. Taiwan is already a key trading partner for our state, and a bilateral trade agreement with Taiwan could open new opportunities for economic growth and job creation in Hawai'i.

Additionally, the cultural and educational exchanges between Hawai'i and Taiwan are invaluable in promoting mutual understanding and cooperation. By deepening our relationship with Taiwan, we can enhance opportunities for collaboration in various fields, such as tourism, education, technology, and environmental protection.

Through the State of Hawai'i Office in Taipei, DBEDT/BDSB has been working with the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office (TECO) in Honolulu to promote economic growth, enhance cultural exchanges, and advance shared values and goals that benefit both Hawai'i and Taiwan.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Honolulu fully supports this resolution, and seeks yours too!

2024 marks the 45th anniversary of Taiwan Relations Act and 31st Anniversary of Hawaii-Taiwan Sister State Relationship.

Reaching bilateral agreements such as United States-Taiwan Initiative on 21st Century Trade, Bilateral Trade Agreement, Bilateral Investment Agreement and Avoidance of Double Taxation Agreement between US and Taiwan, as well as Gift Scholarship, Academic Cooperation and Agreement of Cooperative 3+2 Master Programs, and Mandarin Exchanges Programs between Hawaii and Taiwan will definitely pave the way for further friendship and connections that are precious for both sides.

Taiwan has become a successful democracy.

Its model upholds transparency, rule of law, respect for human rights, and values that shared with all the United Nations (UN) members. Taiwan plays critical role in the global high-tech supply chains, economy and a hub of travel, culture, and education. Taiwan should be viewed as a valued partner and trusted friend of UN member states.

Taiwan's meaningful participation in the UN system is a pragmatic issue

As the international community faces an unprecedented number of complex and global issues, it is critical for all stakeholders to help address these problems. This includes the 24 million people who live in Taiwan. Taiwan's meaningful participation in the UN system is not a political issue, but a pragmatic one.

Taiwan's robust participation in UN specialized agencies for the past decades proves its value for the international community.

Taiwan has full membership in 40 intergovernmental organizations and

their subsidiary bodies, including the World Trade Organization, Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, World Organization for Animal Health and Central American Bank for Economic Integration. It also enjoys observer or other statuses in 25 IGOs and their subsidiary bodies, including the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and committees of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and Central American Integration System. In light of Taiwan's robust capital market and pivotal position in Asia, the Central American Bank of Economic Integration opened an office in Taiwan in 2021, making it the first new branch to be opened outside of Central America.

Taiwan's robust participation in UN specialized agencies for the past decades proves its value for the international community. However, despite tens of millions of passengers traveling annually through its airports, Taiwan was not represented at the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) triennial assembly. Although Taiwan's response to COVID-19 and its healthcare system is one of the best in the world, Taiwan was not at the World Health Assembly(WHA). Members of international community engage every single day in activities at the UN, while Taiwan's are blocked from participating in these activities.

Achieving Universal Health Coverage — Taiwan can help!

Every second, three people around the globe fall into financial difficulties due to illness, resulting in innumerable family tragedies. In order for all people to receive the health services they need without suffering financial hardship, the World Health Organization(WHO) has made universal health coverage part of its core mission.

Taiwan was the first nation in Asia to marshal its resources and founded a single-payer national health insurance system, which provides equal coverage of health care to all citizens and foreigners who legally work or

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reside in Taiwan. Taiwan is willing to share its experience on setting up this system to help all nations promote health equity and realize the third U.N. Sustainable Development Goal of ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all at all ages.