

**Testimony of James K. Scott, EdD
Interim President, East-West Center**

House Committee on Economic Development & Technology
Friday, April 11, 2025

SCR 178 SD1

Dear Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, and Members of the Committee:

The East-West Center **strongly supports** this resolution and is pleased that the Thirty-third Legislature of the State of Hawai'i recognizes and affirms our ongoing efforts to serve as a bridge between Hawai'i, the Pacific Island Nations, and countries around the world. Our work in tropical agriculture, food security, public health, education, clean energy, and sustainable development is rooted in collaboration, cultural respect, and shared goals.

We remain committed to partnering with governments, organizations, universities, and community stakeholders to fulfill our mission of promoting better relations and understanding among the peoples and nations of the United States, Asia, and the Pacific through cooperative study, research, and dialogue.

One notable example is the Pacific Islands Development Program (PIDP), established in 1980 at the specific request of regional island leaders, including then-Governor George Ariyoshi. PIDP has long served as a trusted forum for Pacific leaders to discuss critical development issues in partnership with interested countries, donors, NGOs, and the private sector.

Under the auspices of the Pacific Islands Conference of Leaders (PICL), heads of Pacific governments have convened at the East-West Center on four occasions to engage directly with Presidents of the United States—demonstrating the program's significance and impact on international dialogue.

As the only East-West Center program with a defined geographic focus, PIDP leverages deep regional expertise and cross-disciplinary knowledge across the Center. It exemplifies our approach to regionally grounded, globally relevant engagement.

We deeply appreciate the Legislature's support of this resolution and its recognition of the value of stronger ties among Hawai'i, Asia, and the Pacific. Mahalo for your continued support and consideration.