

Aloha Chair Lee and Members of the Committee:

The East-West Center is pleased that the Thirty-third Legislature of the State of Hawai'i recognizes our efforts to serve as a bridge between Hawai'i, Pacific Island Nations, and other countries around the world in the areas of tropical agriculture, food security, public health, education, clean energy, and sustainable development.

We will continue to collaborate with governments, organizations, universities, and community stakeholders to fulfill our mission promoting better relations and understanding among the people and nations of the United States, Asia, and the Pacific through cooperative study, research, and dialogue.

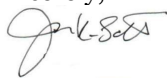
For example, the Pacific Islands Development Program (PIDP) was formed at the specific request of the region's island leaders, including the Governor of the State of Hawai'i, George Ariyoshi. Since 1980, PIDP has served as a forum through which Pacific leaders discuss critical issues of development with interested countries, donors, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector. On four occasions heads of governments, under the auspices of the Pacific Islands Conference of Leaders (PICL), have met with presidents of the United States at the East-West Center.

PIDP is the only East-West Center program whose activities have a defined geographic focus informed by both the area studies and disciplinary expertise of its staff and participants. PIDP activities draw heavily upon the expertise in other areas of the East-West Center.

We respectfully recommend a technical edit to Page 1, Lines 12 to 15, to include mention that the United States Agency for International Development has also played a significant role in good governance and capacity building as it relates to the free press and media professionals.

This resolution, which we strongly **SUPPORT**, is a critical step toward building stronger relations among the people of Hawai'i, Asia, and the Pacific. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Jim K. Scott  
Interim President, East-West Center

## **EWC / EWCA Chennai Chapter President Dr.S.RAJAMANI - Testimonial Report to Hawaii State Legislature for Funding to EWC, Hawaii.**

I, Dr. Sengoda Gounder RAJAMANI, President - EWCA Chennai Chapter and Executive Board Member of EWCA, Hawaii on my behalf and on behalf of our Chennai Chapter team pleased to present this Testimonial Report to Hawaii State Legislature for funding to EWC, Hawaii.



**EWCA Chennai Chapter Team during the visit of Ms.Christina - March 2024**

We diversified experts from various Pacific Basin & Asian countries got the opportunity to participate in the EWC organized and supported programs for the past 60 years. During 1994 and 1996, I have participated the programs organized through Pacific Basin Consortium (PBC) Environment & Health, gained knowledge in Environmental Protection aspects in Asian and Pacific basin countries such as USA, Canada, Japan, China, South Korea, Singapore, Malaysia, India, etc.



**EWCA participants from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, etc. -  
Unity among diversified alumni team**





**Participation of EWCA members from various countries during 2018 Seoul Conference**

In addition to the gaining knowledge and experience in the relevant field, we could establish EWCA Chennai Chapter and render voluntary services in the area of education, environment, climate change and health aspects. We also disseminate the knowledge, excellent role and responsibility undertaken by EWC, Hawaii in organizing various needy programs.

The EWCA Chennai Chapter got the "Best Chapter Award" for two times and also the Best Volunteer Award.



**Dr.S.Rajamani received the “Best Chapter Award” during the EWC/EWCA Manila Conference 2016**

EWC Alumni members numbering about 60000 from about 30 countries could establish a unity and network inspite of diversified expertise and background. We interact periodically through National & International conferences. We strongly recommend that the unique EWC/EWCA setup has to be financially supported by the Hawaii State Legislature.



**Dr. S.Rajamani with Ms. Christina, Director - Office of Alumni Engagement and Ms. Suzanne Vares-Lum, Recent Past President of EWC, Hawaii**

**Dr. S. Rajamani**

President - EWCA Chennai Chapter,

Executive Board Member - EWCA,

Chairman - Asian International Union of Environment (AIUE) Commission,

Technical Expert - United National Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) &

Board Member - Pacific Basin Consortium (PBC) Environment & Health, USA.

**SCR-178**

Submitted on: 3/17/2025 8:16:20 PM

Testimony for TCA on 3/20/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jotisri Vasudevan	Testifying for East West Centre (Yseali Spring 2024 cohort)	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Project Director, NEXUStartups****Funded by the U.S. Department of State & East-West Center, Hawai'i**

Aloha Chair(s) and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of **178 SCR**, which urges the East-West Center to expand international engagement and serve as a bridge to share Hawai'i's expertise in tropical agriculture, food security, public health, education, clean energy, and sustainable development.

As the Project Director of **NEXUStartups**, a community service initiative supported by the U.S. Department of State and the East-West Center, I have witnessed firsthand the impact of the Center's work in fostering international collaboration. Through my experience leading a program that engages young entrepreneurs across Southeast Asia in sustainable business development, I have seen the demand for expertise in **climate resilience, food-water-energy nexus solutions, and public health innovations**—areas where Hawai'i has significant experience and leadership.

Expanding the East-West Center's engagement globally would enable more communities to benefit from **Hawai'i's unique insights and research**, particularly in regions facing challenges similar to those in the Pacific. Strengthening these international connections would also position Hawai'i as a **global hub for sustainable development** while reinforcing its commitment to addressing **climate change, resource management, and public health equity**.

I urge the Committee to support **178 SCR** and recognize the **East-West Center's pivotal role** in fostering international partnerships that contribute to a more sustainable and resilient future for communities worldwide.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

**Jotisri Vasudevan**Project Director, **NEXUStartups**

**SCR-178**

Submitted on: 3/17/2025 11:44:35 PM

Testimony for TCA on 3/20/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sarosh Bana	Testifying for East-West Center, Hawaii	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am the EWC Mumbai Chapter president and also Convenor of the WhatsApp networking group that I have formed of all EWC alumni from India. It is called Hello Hawaii and comprises all the existing Chapters in India, namely, Mumbai, Chennai, Delhi and Chandigarh.

As a proud alumnus of the EWC - I had been its Jefferson Fellow in 1990 - I strongly endorse Senator Chris Lee's Bill. The East-West Center (EWC) - that has for over 60 years espoused understanding and cooperation among peoples and nations across regions through collective study, research, and dialogue - can no doubt play a crucial role in deepening understanding of Tropical Agriculture, Food Security, Education, Public Health, Climate Change, Clean Energy and Sustainable Development across regions and formulating workable solutions in each of these vital fields.

A key requisite of our independent, public and nonprofit Center, established by the US Congress in 1960, is to serve as a “resource for information and analysis on critical issues of common concern, bringing people together to exchange views, build expertise, and develop policy options”.

It is imperative that the EWC is recognised for what it stands and receives the necessary support from both the Federal and State administrations.

**SCR-178**

Submitted on: 3/18/2025 6:29:15 AM

Testimony for TCA on 3/20/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
VENNESSA KUEK WENG YAN	Testifying for YSEALI Academic Fellow	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear all,

The East-West Centre has been where connections are formed between two sides of the world -- but more importantly, it has been crucial in creating a safe environment for sincere relationships to be formed. People change people.

As part of the YSEALI Academic Fellowship Spring 2024, being at EWC has deeply changed me and empowered me to stand taller and more firmly in advocating for what I believe in -- in sustainable, climate-resilient and inclusive development everywhere. The people I have met through the program, from Southeast Asia but also scholars in EWC, have allowed me to build projects that plants seeds of a better future within the minds of young leader in SEA, specifically through the Sponge City Innovation Design Challenge, which was an idea born from my time at EWC. The resources given have not been in vain, and the opportunity that I had to learn and experience life at EWC was an opportunity given through me (and not to me) to my community. I learnt a substantial amount of what has worked and what hasn't, especially in Hawai'i's community, and have been inspired by the ways of the people here and how grassroots have moved continuously throughout the years to keep public infrastructure public. These have been lessons that I've kept in mind during my engagements with my own community, and of those in different countries.

The people of SEA that I have met in EWC are on incredible pathways, directly contributing to improving entire countries and communities through international relations, targeting common issues to grow together. This has included everything from empowering disabled communities, empowering youths to grow into positions of decision-making, agricultural food security, improved access to health and safe living infrastructure... all of which are crucial to pushing our world towards sustainable and continuous growth.

For the sake of the world's well-being, I urge you to continuously expand international engagement through EWC. It has proven to bring a high return on investment, especially through the regional relationships created that have pushed forth innovations, ideas, and sustainable growth.

Thank you for your time.

**SCR-178**

Submitted on: 3/19/2025 12:24:15 PM

Testimony for TCA on 3/20/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
amy agbayani	Testifying for Hawai'i Friends of Civil Rights	Support	In Person

Comments:

Testimony in strong support of SCR 178 and SR 148

Amy Agbayani, co-chair Hawai'i Friends of Civil Rights

I came to Hawai'i 60 yerars ago as an EWC student grantee from the Philippines and currently am an active EWC volunteer alumni coordinating a small program providing volunteer mentors from the community and university to new students. I am an enthusiastic supporter of the EWC's research, student and professional programs that promote understanding and exchange with the USA, Asia and the Pacific. I support this resolution because there are tremendous benefits for the Asia and Pacific region, USA, including the state of Hawai'i and the University of Hawai'i.

I want to express my sincere appreciation to the EWC for providing me with a wonderful graduate education experience that has been life-changing and allowed me to provide professional and community service to our state.

Please support hb1025



**SCR-178**

Submitted on: 3/19/2025 4:40:55 AM

Testimony for TCA on 3/20/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Oke Soe Htet	Testifying for Gulf of Mottama Project in Mawlamyine, Myanmar	Support	Written Testimony Only

## Comments:

As an alumnus of the Spring 2024 YSEALI Fellowship, hosted by the East-West Center, I always feel something special when I contribute to my indigenous communities in Myanmar by uplifting the locals' momentum to combat the environmental conservation issues effectively. If so, where did I get this value-based skill not only to utilize for my personal growth but also for my coastal community of my hometown, Mawlamyine? Definitely from the East-West Center and its inspiring scholars, fellows, academic staffs and reputation. Since Hawaii is well-known for its unique conservation efforts that propels to the fulfillment of SDGs, the other young leaders around the world MUST have the equal rights to learn every single sector of the Hawai'i so that they can surely grow well in their home country with confidence by addressing the respective issue. EWC is always in my heart and really thankful for any supports even beyond the fellowship. Thanks.

**SCR-178**

Submitted on: 3/19/2025 3:03:55 PM

Testimony for TCA on 3/20/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Maria Priska Numberi	Testifying for PapuaOcean	Support	Written Testimony Only

## Comments:

My name is Maria Priska Numberi, and I am honored to submit this testimony regarding my experience at the East-West Center in Hawaii as a participant in the YSEALI Academic Fellowship on Environmental Issues. I come from Papua, Indonesia, where I work on marine conservation, community engagement, and youth education through PapuaOcean.

The East-West Center provided an invaluable opportunity to engage with experts, policymakers, and fellow environmental leaders from across Southeast Asia. Through immersive discussions, site visits, and hands-on projects, I gained a deeper understanding of environmental sustainability, climate resilience, and community-driven conservation efforts. The program strengthened my ability to collaborate on regional solutions and reinforced the importance of integrating indigenous knowledge into environmental policies.

One of the most impactful lessons I learned was the role of cross-sector collaboration in addressing marine pollution—a key issue I am working on in Papua. Seeing how Hawaii manages its marine resources, balances development with conservation, and engages local communities has inspired new strategies for my work back home.

I strongly encourage continued investment in programs like the YSEALI Academic Fellowship at the East-West Center. These initiatives not only empower young leaders but also create long-term environmental and diplomatic benefits for the region. I recommend expanding support for cross-cultural exchanges, research collaborations, and capacity-building programs to further strengthen regional environmental leadership.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my experience. I appreciate the committee's dedication to environmental education and leadership development. I look forward to any opportunities to contribute further to these important discussions.

Sincerely,

Maria Priska Numberi

**SCR-178**

Submitted on: 3/20/2025 11:49:34 AM

Testimony for TCA on 3/20/2025 3:00:00 PM

**LATE**

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elizabeth F Milo	Testifying for Asia Pacific Leadership Program Alumni Association Chapter President	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha! This is Saima Huma from Pakistan.

I'm deeply grateful to the East-West Center for the opportunity to be part of the Asia Pacific Leadership Program.

This experience has been truly transformative. APLP gave me the chance to meet people from many different cultures. I discovered that we're all connected, even with our different backgrounds. I learned about my leadership, made strong friendships, and challenged some of my old beliefs.

This program helps create peace and friendship in the region. Being on the board lets me connect with new leaders, and we learn and grow together.

I wholeheartedly support APLP and its mission. I believe in its power to foster understanding and collaboration, and I'm excited to witness its continued growth and impact. Thank you.

Sincerely

Saima Huma

Alumni Relations Officer- APLP Board 2024-2026

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**SCR-178**

Submitted on: 3/17/2025 3:03:39 PM

Testimony for TCA on 3/20/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ted Meehan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support SCR 178.

The East-West Center is a singular entity that has the opportunity to spread culture, ideas and educational agendas throughout the Asia Pacific community. It has a long heritage of doing so, unique in its global partnerships.

I urge you to support SCR 178. Thank you.

Ted Meehan

**SCR-178**

Submitted on: 3/17/2025 9:15:05 PM

Testimony for TCA on 3/20/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mega Ayu Lestari	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

## Comments:

The entire experience at the East-West Center was significant for me. I gained numerous insights and engaged in fruitful discussions while addressing the intersectionality of conservation issues, barriers, and the current development agenda across Indonesia and beyond. One key takeaway was the recognition of the centrality of small-scale fisheries (SSF), Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs), and minority groups to conservation success. For both my personal and professional growth, I appreciate that the East-West Center's efforts will continue to reflect, respect, and sufficiently guarantee our meaningful participation in their initiatives, whether with IPLCs, smallholder farmers, or other groups. Therefore, I will continue to support, advocate for, and escalate ongoing efforts toward broader international engagement across the East and West. Through their continued learning immersion programs, we will have the opportunity to delve deeper, understand, and collaborate in exploring the potentials and challenges across these regions.



**SCR-178**

Submitted on: 3/17/2025 11:31:00 PM

Testimony for TCA on 3/20/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sandra Sukma Maharani ( <a href="https://www.linkedin.com/in/https://www.linkedin.com/in/">https://www.linkedin.com/in/</a>	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chairpersons and Members of the Committee,

My name is Sandra Sukma Maharani, and I am honored to submit this testimony in strong support of SCR178/SR148, which urges the East-West Center to expand its international engagement and serve as a bridge to share Hawai'i's expertise in tropical agriculture, food security, public health, education, clean energy, and sustainable development.

As a YSEALI (Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative) Fellow, I have personally experienced the transformative impact of international educational and leadership programs. The East-West Center has played a crucial role in fostering global cooperation, knowledge exchange, and leadership development. During my fellowship, I was able to learn effectively and exceed my own expectations through the opportunities provided by the program.

The knowledge and experiences I gained through this program were not just theoretical but deeply practical and applicable when I returned home. It was truly a life-changing education, allowing me to contribute meaningfully to my community. The global challenges we face—ranging from food security to sustainable development—require collaborative solutions, and the East-West Center is uniquely positioned to facilitate these exchanges.

Expanding the East-West Center's engagement worldwide will ensure that more individuals like myself can benefit from its resources and expertise, bringing valuable insights and solutions back to our home countries. This resolution is timely and essential for fostering international collaboration and uplifting communities that need it the most.

I strongly urge the committee to support SCR178/SR148 and ensure that the East-West Center continues to serve as a global bridge for knowledge-sharing and sustainable development. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Sandra Sukma Maharani

**SCR-178**

Submitted on: 3/18/2025 2:37:39 AM

Testimony for TCA on 3/20/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jose Marie A. Eslopor	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

## Comments:

I am one of the alumni of the Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative (YSEALI) Academic Fellowship program for Environmental Issues of the U.S. Department of State and the East-West Center. I am from a tropical country with a very abundant biodiversity, however is also very prone to disaster. My short stint in the academic fellowship facilitated by the EWC has imparted a lot of knowledge, experience, and even linkages for me to better understand environmental issues, management and governance, and even the interconnectedness of culture to the environment. It provided me an avenue to replicate my learnings and extend what I learned from my fellowship to remote areas in the Philippines. I am writing this testimony to support SCR178 as I see its benefits in empowering more communities in terms of environmental conservation, and leadership and management. I have also witnessed firsthand how the diverse and very progressive programs of the EWC has shaped a lot of local and global leaders from the Pacific to Asia, and even America. Through these capacity building initiatives, we are strengthening the Indo-Pacific identity, ties, and even diplomatic presence among each region and forward a collaborative development that we want for the environment and the people. Therefore, the support towards materializing this bill is also a support and investment towards the American people, its neighboring countries in Asia-Pacific, and the environment.

**SCR-178**

Submitted on: 3/18/2025 7:31:26 AM

Testimony for TCA on 3/20/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sirisay Vongsamphanh	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

## Comments:

As a YSEALI alumni from Laos, I am writing to strongly urge the East-West Center to expand its international engagement and strengthen its role as a bridge between communities worldwide. The East-West Center really support and empower communities globally, especially in regions where such knowledge and resources are critically needed.

Through my engagement with YSEALI under the East-West Center's host, I have deepened my understanding of US foreign policy which allows me to positioned myself as a bridge to connect my community to the US. I will always have kind words about the US as I have witnessed firsthand how the exchange of knowledge can drive positive change. By expanding its outreach and fostering greater international collaboration, the East-West Center can create meaningful opportunities for knowledge exchange and capacity building.

As someone from Laos, a country where sustainable development, environmental and economic challenges remain crucial, I believe that the East-West Center's expertise could make a significant impact. Strengthening partnerships, facilitating training programs, and sharing best practices would create lasting benefits for communities striving to build a more sustainable and equitable future.

I am confident that the East-West Center's continued leadership and expanded engagement will foster deeper international cooperation and contribute to building a more resilient and connected world.

Sincerely,

Sirisay Vongsamphanh  
YSEALI Alumni, Laos

**SCR-178**

Submitted on: 3/18/2025 10:25:55 AM

Testimony for TCA on 3/20/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Chan Namgoong	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Hawai'i legislators

As I believe this bill will surely help Hawai'i State to develop global connection through EWC and facilitate communication among Indo Pacific countries, I am strongly for the bill. Please pass the bill so that Hawai'i State may stay as the center of global cooperation in the time of Indo Pacific.

Thank you for your continuous service for Hawai'i State.

Sincerely

Chan Namgoong

**SCR-178**

Submitted on: 3/18/2025 10:55:44 AM

Testimony for TCA on 3/20/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Matthew Ruane	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

## Comments:

Aloha. I have been a member of the EWC's Asian Studies Development Program, attending institutes on South Asia in 2010, China and Japan in 2012, and Korea in 2019. I have also been involved with the ASDP Alumni Chapter for the last 10 years, as Secretary, Vice-President/President-Elect, President, and now Past-President. I have also been involved in higher education, both as a professor and an administrator for 25 years. The multiweek workshops provided by the EWC and the ASDP in particular, have helped me design courses and coursework for my college and university students in areas in which I would have had no real academic training in before these workshops. This has included specific courses on Japanese Samurai in Film, Television and Culture, a course on British India, and lectures on Korean history and culture, on Korean politics, on Chinese literary censorship, and on numerous conference papers I would not have otherwise been involved with.

Moreover, the ASDP Alumni Chapter represents more than 3000 alumni who have attended institutes, workshops, and conferences sponsored by the EWC, and these educators have followed similar trajectories that I have done, providing information that helps to bridge East and West and brings people together with a greater understanding of the other's society and culture. By training these college educators to infuse their learning into their own courses, they have increased the reach of the EWC and the ASDP far beyond the direct work done in Hawaii.

This work needs to continue, especially in light of current tensions between the US and Asia, especially China. As the political funding from Washington is currently unpredictable, funding from the state of Hawaii for the mission of the EWC and especially its ASDP is fundamental to the state and the nation's wellbeing. I urge you to support this legislation helping to provide an additional and more secure funding stream for the East West Center and its constituent components.

Mahalo,  
Dr. Matthew Ruane  
Culinary Institute of America (and formerly the Florida Institute of Technology)



**SCR-178**

Submitted on: 3/18/2025 11:17:05 AM

Testimony for TCA on 3/20/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Taine Duncan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

## Comments:

My name is Dr. Taine Duncan. I am not speaking on behalf of any specific organization, though I do serve as the President of the East West Center Association board, a volunteer board of alumni from all over the world who have had experiences at the East West Center. My experience came in 2013, when, as a faculty member in central Arkansas, I was able to apply for an Infusing Institute at the Center. From the day I arrived at the Center, where I was offered extensive educational training on incorporating Asian and Asian American perspectives into my courses, I found a community of caring, intelligent, and dedicated individuals who knew that a bridge could and should be built between the United States and Asia. When I finished my infusing institute, I joined the Asian Studies Development Program alumni organization, and soon served on the board. This is a particular group of EWC alumni who are dedicated to the mission, "the goal of ASDP is to improve the long-term capacity of American higher education to teach about Asian cultures. ASDP promotes a comparative approach to infusing Asian material into the undergraduate curriculum, especially core courses in the humanities and social sciences, believing that in this way, not only do students come to understand more about other cultures, they better understand their own." Belonging to ASDP and serving on volunteer boards for the alumni organization has not only improved my teaching and my own knowledge about Asia, but it has also enriched my life. I have an international and intergenerational network of people who have served as research, workshop, and teaching collaborators with me for over a decade. I have been able to visit Hawaii every few years to engage in the community directly, while annually participating in workshops and conferences that continue to expand my connections to our increasingly interdependent global society. I can honestly say without hyperbole, that the cultivation of the community of learning and teaching fostered through the East West Center has been one of the most profound experiences of my life. Hawaii has not only served as my bridge to Asia, but also my bridge to serving the heartland of America, and helping my students expand their knowledge and worldview. I cannot imagine a world in which EWC is unable to serve this mission--so vital to the strength of our education, political connectivity, and business development which all require global perspective and exchange. Please pass Bill 178 SCR to provide funding for the East West Center to continue its valuable mission through programs like the Asian Studies Development Program. Thank you!

**SCR-178**

Submitted on: 3/18/2025 1:07:39 PM

Testimony for TCA on 3/20/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Charlene Chan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In support of SR148.

**SCR-178**

Submitted on: 3/18/2025 3:54:53 PM

Testimony for TCA on 3/20/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Aung Pyae Khant	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

**Comments:**

I am Aung Pyae Khant from Myanmar. I studied at East-West Center in 2022 Fall under the YSEALI Academic Fellowship Program. I also recently attended the YSEALI Alumni Workshop on Environmental Issues organized by East-West Center in Luang Prabang, Laos. As an alumni of the East-West Center, I genuinely support SCR178 and SR148, which urge the East-West Center to expand international engagement around the world and serve as a bridge to share its unique expertise with tropical agriculture, food security, public health, education, clean energy and sustainable development.

Since I used to study at the East-West Center, I would like to share my personal testimony here. I used to be inexperienced in the field of environmental issues, and incapable of making a change before I joined the YSEALI Academic Fellowship on Environmental Issues at East-West Center. I learnt a lot about environmental issues through invaluable lectures, memorable site visits, and even community work. After completing the program, I was able to come up with my own projects to make an impact on my own community.

As a person who grew up from a small, underdeveloped town, studying at EWC means a lot to me. It opens my eyes, widens my horizons, and equips me with knowledge regarding environmental sustainability as well as leadership skills. To summarize, EWC played a big part to transform me, resulting in impacting my own community afterwards. I believe EWC has touched many lives of people who are from various communities all over the world in the same way it did to me, impacting many people.

Therefore, I would like to strongly support SCR178 and SR148 that urge EWC to continue expanding its global outreach, and impact many communities through its specialized knowledge.

My name is Duane Okamoto, and I am writing in strong support of SCR 178.

For sixty-five years the East-West Center (EWC) has worked towards strengthening the bonds between Hawaii, the United States, and the people of the Indo-Pacific region.

Through the leadership of former EWC President Suzanne Vares-Lum, the East-West Center developed and is in the process of implementing its strategic plan which encompasses tropical agriculture, food security, public health, education, clean energy, sustainable development, and empowerment of women. These areas of focus complement those identified by the state as being of significant importance.

In the current climate of transactional diplomacy, the East-West Center has a long history of demonstrating the value of relationships built on mutual respect and understanding.

I respectfully ask for your support of SCR 178. Thank you.

**SCR-178**

Submitted on: 3/18/2025 6:26:43 PM

Testimony for TCA on 3/20/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sai Manish	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

## Comments:

I have had the honour of being an EWC alumnus and have participated in the Cross Border workshop for journalists in Kathmandu and the International Media Conference in Manila. The workshop was an excellent platform to learn from some of the best minds in US media and experts. The EWC allowed journalists to collaborate on stories of human interest across borders. Without EWC, these stories would never have been told. The learnings at EWC have enabled many independent journalists to forge new connections and articulate their perspectives to newer audiences. EWC has enabled journalists from the entire Asia Pacific region to collaborate and learn from some of the best minds in American journalism.



**SCR-178**

Submitted on: 3/18/2025 6:39:21 PM

Testimony for TCA on 3/20/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Fithriyyah	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

## Comments:

I am supporting the East-West Center to keep continuing international engagement in various development topics. As an alumnus of the Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative program hosted by East-West Center, I can testify to how East-West Center has become an amazing host institution that provided a good high-quality fellowship curriculum and practical experience which has enabled me to develop my personal skills and knowledge on natural resource management. Therefore, I extremely believe that the East-West Center must get support to sustain its efforts especially bridging the US and international relationship on education and youth exchange.

**SCR-178**

Submitted on: 3/18/2025 7:53:11 PM

Testimony for TCA on 3/20/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Junko Kobayashi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The East-West Center has provided ongoing international engagement for the broader Asia-Pacific region. We testify that the East-West Center is an activity that not only provides educational opportunities, but also generates exchanges and contributes to global security at large.

**SCR-178**

Submitted on: 3/18/2025 9:46:44 PM

Testimony for TCA on 3/20/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Fadhil Abdillah Ahmad	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Fadhil Abdillah Ahmad from Indonesia, and I strongly support SCR 178 (2025), introduced by Senator Chris Lee, which recognizes the vital role of the East-West Center (EWC) in fostering international collaboration, leadership development, and research.

As a participant in the YSEALI AFP Fall 2024 program at EWC, I had the opportunity to present and discuss innovative environmental projects with young leaders from across the Indo-Pacific. Through EWC's platform, I was able to share insights on sustainable coastal management in Indonesia, engage with experts, and collaborate with peers to develop real-world solutions. This experience not only strengthened my leadership and problem-solving skills but also reinforced the importance of EWC in shaping future leaders who are committed to addressing global challenges.

The resources, mentorship, and network provided by EWC are unparalleled—they create lasting impacts not just for individuals but for entire communities. Without its support, many emerging leaders would lose access to these transformative opportunities.

I urge you to fully support this resolution and ensure the continued strength of EWC's mission. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Fadhil Abdillah Ahmad

**SCR-178**

Submitted on: 3/18/2025 10:55:28 PM

Testimony for TCA on 3/20/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
ThanhLo Sananikone	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I would like to support this bill in its entirety.

**SCR-178**

Submitted on: 3/19/2025 3:16:06 AM

Testimony for TCA on 3/20/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Yang Lee	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am one of the beneficiaries of the EWC's international engagement on Sustainable Development, having stayed there for 5 weeks for the YSEALI 2022 Fall Academic Fellowship Programme.

In EWC, I had the opportunity to meet many young leaders from across Southeast Asia and learnt from the warmest, brightest and most experienced scientists, politicians and volunteers from Hawaii. Immersing myself in the local culture, I learnt lots from everyone I met there.

Bringing what we learnt back to Southeast Asia, me and a few other participants started our project - Recycle Dalat. In 1 short year, we collected 8 tonnes of waste, planted 7,000 trees and reached 13,600 youths from Vietnam and across Southeast Asia, many of whom started their own projects. All these impact, made possible only by the EWC.

I cannot stress how important the work done by the EWC is, and the importance to continue their efforts. I hope that my story, along with many others, serve to illustrate this point. Thank you.



**SCR-178**

Submitted on: 3/19/2025 3:56:55 AM

Testimony for TCA on 3/20/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Chatchai Karuna	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

**Comments:**

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Concurrent Resolution 178, which urges the East-West Center to expand its international engagement and serve as a bridge to share Hawaii's unique expertise in tropical agriculture, food security, public health, education, clean energy, and sustainable development with communities around the world.

As an alumnus of the Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative (YSEALI) and a professional with experience in the Ministry of Energy in Thailand, as well as ongoing research in energy justice, I have witnessed firsthand the transformative impact of international collaboration and knowledge exchange.

**Key Points of Support:****1. Tropical Agriculture and Food Security:**

- Sharing knowledge on sustainable agricultural practices can help improve food production and resilience in vulnerable regions.

**2. Public Health:**

- Addressing public health issues such as infectious diseases, nutrition, and maternal and child health can significantly improve the well-being of communities worldwide.

**3. Education:**

- Hawaii's educational institutions have developed innovative programs that can be adapted to meet the needs of diverse populations.
- Promoting educational exchanges and partnerships can foster mutual understanding and capacity building.
- As a Master's student, I have experienced the profound impact of educational exchanges. These programs not only enhance academic knowledge but also build bridges between cultures, fostering global understanding and cooperation.
- The East-West Center can play a pivotal role in expanding these opportunities, allowing more students and professionals to benefit from Hawaii's educational expertise.

**4. Clean Energy and Sustainable Development:**

- Hawaii's advancements in clean energy technologies and sustainable development practices can serve as a model for other regions striving to reduce their carbon footprint and achieve environmental sustainability.

- My research in energy justice highlights the importance of equitable access to clean energy solutions, ensuring that all communities benefit from sustainable development.
- Collaborative efforts in renewable energy projects can contribute to global efforts to combat climate change.
- My work on microgrid systems in Thailand aims to provide practical solutions for sustainable energy access. By sharing these insights, we can help other regions develop resilient and sustainable energy infrastructures.

**SCR-178**

Submitted on: 3/19/2025 5:02:10 AM

Testimony for TCA on 3/20/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Niels Gabriel Nable	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support SCR 178, urging the East-West Center to expand its international engagement. As a past participant in the Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative (YSEALI) Fellowship back in 2023, I personally benefited from the EWC's programs, which provided invaluable knowledge, leadership training, and cross-cultural collaboration opportunities.

Hawaii's expertise in tropical agriculture, food security, public health, education, clean energy, and sustainability is critical to addressing global challenges. The East-West Center is uniquely positioned to share these insights with communities that need them most.

I urge the Committee to advance SCR 178 and recognize the East-West Center's vital role in fostering international cooperation. Thank you for your time and consideration.

**SCR-178**

Submitted on: 3/19/2025 5:11:26 AM

Testimony for TCA on 3/20/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Afnan Saud Hanifuddin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Honorable Chair and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of Senate Concurrent Resolution 178 (SCR 178), which urges the East-West Center to expand its international engagement and further its mission of sharing the unique expertise of the State of Hawai‘i in critical global areas.

The East-West Center has long been an organization committed to helping new initiatives in Southeast Asia, establishing itself as a hub of learning, promoting global collaboration, and facilitating the exchange of ideas across borders through the Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative (YSEALI). By broadening its global presence in areas such as sustainable development and environmental education, the Center can more effectively address the pressing challenges our world faces today. Hawai‘i’s unique location and culture provide essential knowledge and solutions in these fields.

Sincerely,  
Afnan Saud Hanifuddin

**SCR-178**

Submitted on: 3/19/2025 8:41:59 AM

Testimony for TCA on 3/20/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Pratibedan Baidya	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

**Comments:**

As a participant of the East-West Center (EWC), I deeply appreciate the value of the programs run by EWC, as they provide the best opportunities for people like me—those from economically marginalized communities in one of the poorest countries in the world, Nepal. In the context of a changing world, EWC's contributions are truly praiseworthy. I believe such programs should be expanded, as they offer platforms for sharing knowledge and culture.

I am grateful to the EWC and the U.S. Department of State for providing these opportunities and strongly believe they are life-changing. I am committed to empowering poor and marginalized communities in my country, and the knowledge and experience I gained at EWC have been instrumental in my achievements.

Pratibedan Baidya from Nepal, currently serving as CEO of Pustantaran Nepal, a social enterprise focusing on elderly people and youths.

**SCR-178**

Submitted on: 3/19/2025 12:35:08 PM

Testimony for TCA on 3/20/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
KYAW LWIN MAUNG	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Sir Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Kyaw Lwin Maung, and I am one of the East-West Center program students with a Graduate Degree Fellowship. I am submitting this testimony in strong support of Senate Concurrent Resolution 178 (SCR 178) which urges the East-West Center to expand international engagement and share Hawaii's expertise in tropical agriculture, food security, public health, education, clean energy, and sustainable development.

The East-West Center is uniquely positioned to expand global engagement by providing valuable opportunities for Hawaii's students, researchers, and professionals to gain international experience, contribute to global problem-solving, and develop lasting relationships with counterparts around the world.

The East-West Center's Graduate Degree Fellowship Program is crucial in supporting SCR 178. This fellowship emphasize on leadership development to ensure that participants are well-equipped to address complex challenges in their respective regions. This enviornment enhances international collaborations and disseminating Hawaii's specialized knowledge in critical areas, thereby contributing to global sustainable development and public health initiatives.

Moreover, Hawai'i has been recognized for its commitment to fostering 100% renewable energy and its integration of traditional ecological knowledge into climate initiatives, building community resilience. The East-West Center can serve as a vital bridge between Hawaii and global communities by offering notable programs like Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative (YSEALI) and Asia Pacific Leadership (APLP) Programs to share these successful models with communities worldwide facing similar challenges.

I strongly agree with adopting SCR 178 to support the East-West Center to fully utilize its expertise and networks to build resilient, sustainable, and equitable solutions for communities worldwide.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Kyaw Lwin Maung



**SCR-178**

Submitted on: 3/19/2025 12:46:53 PM

Testimony for TCA on 3/20/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
David Gustafson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support the EWC resolution to endorse the research and student assistance of the EWC.



**SCR-178**

Submitted on: 3/19/2025 2:38:26 PM

Testimony for TCA on 3/20/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Asia Yeary	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello,

The East West Center is doing fantastic work here in Hawaii and globally. I hope you will support this important Center by support this bill.

Thank you!

Sincerely,

Asia

**SCR-178**

Submitted on: 3/19/2025 3:25:34 PM

Testimony for TCA on 3/20/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Zawani Hussin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

178 SCR URGING THE EAST-WEST CENTER TO EXPAND INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT AROUND THE WORLD AND SERVE AS A BRIDGE TO HELP THE STATE SHARE ITS UNIQUE EXPERTISE WITH TROPICAL AGRICULTURE, FOOD SECURITY, PUBLIC HEALTH, EDUCATION, CLEAN ENERGY, AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, WHERE IT MIGHT BE MOST HELPFUL TO OTHER COMMUNITIES AROUND THE WORLD. TCA/HRE

**SCR-178**

Submitted on: 3/19/2025 4:38:55 PM

Testimony for TCA on 3/20/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Glenn van Zutphen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

## Comments:

*To the Honorable Senator Chris Lee and the Honorable members of the Hawaii State Senate.*

*I am writing in support of SCR178 - urging the East-West Center to expand its international engagement and serve as a bridge to help Hawaii share its unique expertise with tropical agriculture, food security, public health, education, clean energy, sustainable development, and trans-Pacific dialogue. Since its formation in 1960 by an act of the US Congress, the East-West has brought great opportunity, attention, and praise to Hawaii by playing an outsized role in the above fields. As a proud, alumni and given the current level of insecurity around Federal funding, I respectfully request that the Hawaii Senate consider SCR178 to help the East-West Center continue its vital mission.*

*As a proud EWC Alumni, I attended the Jefferson Fellowship program in 2002, when I was an anchor and reporter at CNN International. The EWC Journalism programs are excellent and serve Americans and journalists from Asia Pacific. I was also the inaugural recipient of the East-West Center 21st Century Outstanding Service Award in 2016 (2016) for my volunteer work across the Asia-Pacific region - in support of the East-West Center. I now sit on the East-West Center Alumni Board.*

*As a Chicago native and now resident of Asia (Tokyo, Hong Kong, and Singapore) for 35 years, I have seen the out-sized value and impact the the EWC has had across many nations. The staff and programs are truly amazing and bring great credit and attention to Hawaii. I was heartened over the years to see the staunch support of the late Senator Inouye for the Center.*

This organization has proven its worth to the citizens of Hawaii and the global community for decades. I urge you to please help with its funding going forward as we have seen the current Federal Government shut down funding for organizations like the EWC.

While I cannot be there in person to contribute my comments (I live in Singapore), I deeply thank you for considering my thoughts and would be happy to further engage with this committee if it would be useful to you.

Sincerely,

Glenn van Zutphen  
gc.vanzutphen@gmail.com  
+65 8133 6633

**LATE**

**SCR-178**

Submitted on: 3/19/2025 5:46:20 PM

Testimony for TCA on 3/20/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shigeo Tonoike	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Shigeo Tonoike, and I am currently on the East West Center Association's executive board. I was fortunate enough to receive an EWC scholarship and obtained my PhD from the University of Hawaii. That helped immensely with my career as a university professor and a researcher. I would not have had the life I had had it not been for the East West Center and all the financial, educational and other assistance that it accorded me. I have formed strong bonds not only with the Center and the University of Hawaii, and many EWC alumni from the U.S., the Pacific, and Asia but also with people of the State of Hawaii, and I and my wife, who is also an EWC alumnus, consider Hawaii our second home.

The East West Center is a unique institution that has provided such opportunities to tens of thousands of people from the United States, countries in the Pacific region and Asia. This bill will further promote the founding goals of the center and strengthen Hawaii's ties with the countries and the peoples around the Pacific rim.

**LATE**

**SCR-178**

Submitted on: 3/19/2025 6:30:18 PM

Testimony for TCA on 3/20/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kazuko Tonoike	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To the Honorable Senator Chris Lee and the Honorable members of the Hawaii State Senate.

I am writing in support of SCR178-urging the East-West Center to expand its international engagement and serve as a bridge to help Hawaii share its unique expertise with tropical agriculture, food security, public health, education, clean energy, sustainable development, and trans-Pacific dialoguw.

*Since its formation in 1960 by an act of the US Congress, the East-West has brought great opportunity, attention, and praise to Hawaii by playing an outsized role in the above fields. As a proud, alumni and given the current level of insecurity around Federal funding, I respectfully request that the Hawaii Senate consider SCR178 to help the East-West Center continue its vital mission.*

My experience at the East-West Center in 1978-1980 let me to form lifelong friendship with many students from all over the world. To this day I am still in touch with them and enjoying opportunities to be reunited with them in may retirement life.

Sincerely yours,

Kazuko Tonoike (EWC-PI 1978-1990)

1212 Nuuanu Ave. #3112, Honolulu HI 96817

**LATE**

**SCR-178**

Submitted on: 3/19/2025 11:27:22 PM

Testimony for TCA on 3/20/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bishambar N Makhija	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

East West Centre Hawai'i has been a great force for promoting peace around the world through promoting mutual understanding between students, leaders and academics on various issues facing the world. This has become more important today than at any time in the past.

**LATE**

**SCR-178**

Submitted on: 3/20/2025 6:15:18 AM

Testimony for TCA on 3/20/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christina Monroe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As an East-West Center alumna, former staff member, and resident of Hawaii, it is without hesitation that I write in support of SCR178 and SR148.

It must be noted the the Center would not exist without the vision of Hawaii's leadership. The US Congress, under President Eisenhower, established the Center but only because of John A. Burns, Hawai'i's Territorial Delegate to Congress, pushed the idea forward. He understood, as I hope Hawaii's leaders do today, that the benefits to Hawaii are immense of having such an institution hosted here. While this potential has been differently realized over its history, it can and should be a place to bolster Hawaii's cultural, environmental, social, technical assets, while simulataneously sharing lessons to Asia and the Pacific.

The State can leverage the Center's 65-year legacy and powerful community, which includes over 70,000 alumni globally, for the benefit of Hawaii residents and environment. By continuing to "address challenges of common concern", the Center can help the State in its international, regional, and local partnerships. As noted in the bill's language, the areas of expertise within the Center's strong network are relevant to the problems Hawaii faces today.

Over my 20 years at the Center, whenever there as been a threat to the Center's future, I have received overwhelming requests from alumni across Hawaii, the U.S. mainland and the Asia Pacific asking me, "What can I do to help the Center?". This is one of those times. I would like to be able to say that the leadership of Hawaii saw this opportunity, saw the incredible community ready to support, and saw the potential to improve the State and the region, and stepped up.

Mahalo nui loa for considering my testimony and for your leadership.



**SCR-178**

Submitted on: 3/18/2025 4:17:07 PM

Testimony for TCA on 3/20/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mark Joseph Laceste	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

## Comments:

I attended the East-West Center in 2023 for a YSEALI Academic Fellowship program, where I had the chance to meet and converse with Senator Lee. I was truly inspired by his commitment to upholding climate protection for Hawaii. This experience has been one of the best things that has ever happened to me.

Being surrounded by incredible leaders at EWC and learning directly from them was such a grounding experience. The values they instill, along with their awareness of global challenges and diverse perspectives, have been instrumental in shaping my leadership.

I've also witnessed the powerful networks formed through EWC—connections that have directly supported my community of women fisherfolk in Palawan, Philippines. As a social entrepreneur and marine conservationist, EWC has shown me what true leadership is. They have guided me, helped me mobilize my advocacy, and continue to inspire me to do so.

I truly hope that EWC continues to expand its programs, tap more leaders, and scale its impact to address systemic issues. By doing so, they can raise more leaders who will advocate for these causes and drive meaningful change in their communities.

**SCR-178**

Submitted on: 3/19/2025 1:54:29 PM

Testimony for TCA on 3/20/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Edward Shultz	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

## Comments:

This brief testimony supports Senator Lee’s bill to help sustain the East West Center’s (EWC) programming. Today I will focus on what the EWC contributes to the state of Hawaii and our people.

Through the many students and scholars brought to Hawaii by the EWC, the people of Hawaii are enriched by our exposure to new ideas and attitudes. As many of the EWC’s endeavors focus on Asia and the Pacific, our people gain even greater insight into the history and cultures of those areas, the ancestral homeland for many of Hawaii’s people. Whether it is through classroom visits, homestays with local families, attending concerts or lectures, Hawaii’s people reap the benefits of a first-hand glimpse into the thinking and attitudes of other nations. Furthermore, when many of these EWC participants return home, they inevitably carry the positive experiences they had while in Hawaii. The EWC participants become great ambassadors for the Hawaiian way of aloha.

In conclusion, the East West Center is a “win-win” for both the participants and Hawaii’s people and the United States. The state of Hawaii needs to stand firm and support the programs of the East West Center.