

JAN 23 2025

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that fifty years ago, Act
2 82, Session Laws of Hawaii 1975, established an educational non-
3 profit public corporation to administer and operate what is today
4 known as the East-West center. The mission of the East-West
5 center is to benefit local residents and the State's
6 international partners by strengthening the State's international
7 ties and advancing cooperation across the Pacific. It has been
8 an invaluable partner that is well suited to continuing to assist
9 the State in building partnerships, expanding economic
10 development and education, and collaborating abroad.

11 The legislature further finds that in 2014, the State of
12 Hawaii joined an international partnership between Pacific
13 island nations, states, and territories, committed to green
14 economic development, cooperation, and together addressing the
15 many challenges each island community faces. In Hawaii this
16 became known as the Aloha+ Challenge, which was adopted by the
17 legislature with the passage of S.C.R. No. 69, S.D. 1 (2014).



1 The Aloha+ Challenge sets six integrated targets for
2 sustainability in the State on clean energy, local food, natural
3 resource management, waste reduction, smart sustainable
4 communities, and green workforce and education. This effort was
5 led by Hawaii Green Growth, a coalition of local businesses,
6 community organizations, schools and students, who are well
7 positioned to continue tracking Hawaii's progress toward the
8 State's shared international goals, and build bridges with
9 economic, academic, and community partners abroad.

10 The legislature further finds that strong sister-state,
11 sister-school, and similar relationships benefit the State's
12 businesses and economy, improve access to flights and
13 transportation, expand high school and college student
14 educational exchanges, broaden access to Pacific culture and
15 arts, preserve the State's relationships to the places of origin
16 of its immigrant communities, and spur sub-national government
17 collaborations to address common priorities, including the
18 eradication of invasive species, promotion of economic
19 development, advancement of clean energy, and preservation of
20 peace between nations. Further, it is appropriate for the State
21 to explore and take advantage of additional ways that Hawaii can



1 benefit from international partnerships, including generating
2 revenue abroad similar to many other jurisdictions. For example,
3 hosting facilities abroad for local farmers and retailers to more
4 easily sell Hawaii products in key markets, or investing in
5 projects that generate a return. This enables direct financial
6 benefit that can create revenue to support Hawaii programs and
7 services without additional expense to local taxpayers.

8 The legislature also finds that international relations
9 between East and West across the Pacific have been rapidly
10 changing. Additionally, previous generations of the State's key
11 community, business, and government leaders who have carefully
12 fostered and maintained these important relationships are
13 retiring or passing on. If local residents are going to
14 continue to benefit from the State's international ties, and if
15 Hawaii is going to take advantage of international business and
16 revenue opportunities abroad as so many other jurisdictions
17 currently do, it is critical that the State adjust its engagement
18 strategy, ensure continuity with its sister-state communities and
19 partners, and plan for the future.

20 Therefore, the legislature finds that in celebration of the
21 fiftieth anniversary of the legislature's establishment of the



1 East-West center, the State must update its international
2 engagement strategy, and reaffirm its commitment to building and
3 maintaining the international partnerships that have benefitted
4 the State over the years, so they can continue to benefit local
5 residents for generations to come.

6 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to:

- 7 (1) Engage local leaders with strong relationships abroad
8 to support the governor and legislature in
9 strengthening international partnerships, by
10 redesignating the Hawaii sister-state committee as the
11 Hawaii sister-state and international partnerships
12 commission;
- 13 (2) Enable the East-West center and Hawaii Green Growth to
14 better help and maintain the State's international
15 relationships, programs, and partnerships; and
- 16 (3) Enable the State to more easily generate revenue from
17 international partnerships and investment as other
18 jurisdictions do, where appropriate.

19 SECTION 2. Chapter 201, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
20 amended by adding two new sections to part I to be appropriately
21 designated and to read as follows:



1 "§201- East-West center. (a) The official designation
2 of the East-West center shall be the center for cultural and
3 technical interchange between East and West, Inc.

4 (b) The qualifying standards and conditions related to the
5 receipt of funds under chapter 42F shall not apply to funds
6 received by the East-West center; provided that if the East-West
7 center contracts with a recipient or provider, then the
8 qualifying standards, conditions, and other provisions of
9 chapter 42F shall apply to the recipient or provider and the
10 contract.

11 (c) The allocation of state support shall not impinge on
12 the autonomy of the East-West center, nor imply state control
13 over its programs or policies, except as provided in this
14 section.

15 §201- Hawaii Green Growth. (a) The official
16 designation of Hawaii Green Growth shall be the Hawaii Local2030
17 Hub.

18 (b) The qualifying standards and conditions related to the
19 receipt of funds under chapter 42F shall not apply to funds
20 received by Hawaii Green Growth; provided that if Hawaii Green
21 Growth contracts with a recipient or provider, then the



1 qualifying standards, conditions, and other provisions of
2 chapter 42F shall apply to the recipient or provider and the
3 contract.

4 (c) The allocation of state support shall not impinge on
5 the autonomy of Hawaii Green Growth nor imply state control over
6 its programs or policies, except as provided in this section."

7 SECTION 3. Section 201-17, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
8 amended by amending subsection (b) to read as follows:

9 "(b) The office shall:

10 (1) Develop policies that promote and strengthen relations
11 with other countries in the areas of international
12 business, economy, culture, and the arts;

13 (2) Develop policies that promote transportation between,
14 and tourism with, other countries;

15 (3) Develop and promote international telecommunications
16 and high technology exchanges;

17 (4) Encourage the development of international sister-city
18 programs, pairing Hawaii cities with cities around the
19 globe for artistic, cultural, economic, educational,
20 and faith-based exchanges;



(5) Develop and promote Hawaii as the economic, trade, commerce, transportation, banking, and tourism hub of the Pacific;

(6) Develop an international affairs and peace education curriculum that includes studies of international affairs and peace initiatives and takes a proactive, strategic approach to the development of policies that promote the prevention of national and international conflict, nonviolent intervention, mediation, peaceful resolution of conflict, and structured mediation of conflict; ~~and~~

(7) Provide for exchanges of individuals between Hawaii and other nations to develop international and peace-based initiatives~~[-]~~; and

(8) Provide support to the Hawaii sister-state and international partnerships commission."

SECTION 4. Section 201-81, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended to read as follows:

"§201-81 Establishment of out-of-state offices; purposes.

The department of business, economic development, and tourism may establish and operate offices and facilities in out-of-state



1 locations, including foreign nations, to effectuate the
2 following purposes:

3 (1) Develop programs to reach targeted companies or
4 industries in the respective area and surrounding
5 regions;

6 (2) Monitor out-of-state government policies and
7 regulations that have an impact on business, markets,
8 sales, tourism, and related activities;

9 (3) Host government and business officials at conferences,
10 meetings and social occasions, or other events on
11 matters pertaining to business opportunities and
12 attraction of investments for the State;

13 (4) Develop and conduct advertising efforts, promotional
14 events, media coverage, and educational programs
15 regarding commerce in the State; ~~and~~

16 (5) Conduct related operations as needed, such as hiring
17 or contracting for consultants[-];

18 (6) Support sister-state, -province, and other
19 partnerships that promote and enrich the people,
20 cultures, environments, and economies of the State and
21 its international partners; and



1 (7) Generate revenue for the State."

2 SECTION 5. Section 201-82, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
3 amended to read as follows:

4 "**§201-82 Powers of the department.** The department,
5 subject to the approval of the director of budget and finance,
6 shall have the following general powers to operate out-of-state
7 offices and facilities established:

8 (1) To enter into contracts, leases, or cooperative
9 agreements, or perform other transactions with any
10 person, firm, partnership, association, company,
11 corporation, or foreign nation, as may be necessary in
12 the conduct of its business and on such terms as the
13 department may deem appropriate, using competitive
14 procurement practices, to the extent practicable, in
15 accordance with rules adopted by the policy board;

16 (2) To establish operational bank accounts in out-of-state
17 locations, including foreign denomination accounts, as
18 may be necessary in the conduct of its business,
19 notwithstanding the provisions of chapter 38;

20 (3) To receive by gifts, grants, devises, bequests, or
21 otherwise from private sources or a foreign nation,



1 any property, real, personal, or mixed, intangible or
2 tangible, absolutely or in trust, to be used and
3 disposed of, either the principal or the income
4 therefrom, in accordance with the conditions under
5 which it was received;

6 (4) To buy, sell, lease, rent, hold, maintain, use, and
7 operate any property, real, personal, or mixed,
8 tangible or intangible, in accordance with the
9 conditions under which it was received;

10 (5) To hire such personnel as may be necessary in the
11 conduct of its business and on such terms as the
12 department may deem appropriate; and

13 (6) To do any or all other acts reasonably necessary to
14 carry out the objects and purposes of this part,
15 provided that the department shall not obligate any
16 funds of the State not appropriated to the
17 department."

18 SECTION 6. Section 229-2, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
19 amended to read as follows:

20 "~~[(f)]~~§229-2~~[(f)]~~ **Hawaii sister-state ~~[committee]~~ and**
21 **international partnerships commission.** ~~[(a)]~~ ~~There shall be~~



~~1 established the Hawaii sister-state committee, to be placed
2 within the department of business, economic development, and
3 tourism for administrative purposes only, consisting of five
4 members appointed by the governor as provided in section 26-34.~~

~~5 The purpose of the committee shall be to advise the
6 governor and the legislature on matters relating to sister-state
7 or province relations and relations, in general, between the
8 State and the states or provinces of foreign countries.~~

~~9 [(b)] The governor shall appoint five members, one member
10 from each of five lists of nominees submitted respectively by
11 the following:~~

- ~~12 (1) Speaker of the house of representatives;~~
- ~~13 (2) President of the senate;~~
- ~~14 (3) Native Hawaiian cultural organization;~~
- ~~15 (4) East-West Center; and~~
- ~~16 (5) Hawaii State Association of Counties.~~

~~17 A chair and vice chair of the committee shall be appointed
18 by the committee members from among themselves. Members shall
19 serve without compensation but shall be reimbursed for expenses,
20 including travel expenses, necessary for the performance of
21 their duties.]~~



1 (a) There is established within the department of
2 business, economic development, and tourism the Hawaii sister-
3 state and international partnerships commission for
4 administrative purposes only.

5 (b) The commission shall support the governor,
6 legislature, and office of international affairs in building and
7 maintaining strategic long-term sister-state, -province, and
8 other partnerships that promote and enrich the people, cultures,
9 environments, and economies of the State and its international
10 partners.

11 (c) The commission shall consist of the following members:

12 (1) Three members appointed by the governor; provided that
13 two of the three members appointed by the governor
14 shall be from a list of at least three nominees
15 submitted respectively by the:

16 (A) Office of Hawaiian affairs; and

17 (B) East-West center;

18 (2) One member appointed by the president of the senate;

19 (3) One member appointed by the speaker of the house of
20 representatives; and



1 (4) The chairs of the respective senate and house
2 committees with jurisdiction over international
3 affairs who shall serve as ex-officio, non-voting
4 members of the commission.

5 (d) The commission shall elect from among its members a
6 chairperson and vice-chairperson.

7 (e) Members of the commission shall serve without
8 compensation but shall be reimbursed for expenses, including
9 travel expenses, necessary for the performance of their duties."

10 SECTION 7. Section 229-3, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
11 amended to read as follows:

12 "~~[§]229-3[§]~~ **Initiating sister-state relationships.** The
13 Hawaii sister-state ~~[committee]~~ and international partnerships
14 commission shall evaluate and develop recommendations for the
15 initiation of all sister-state or province relationships and
16 forward its recommendation to the legislature. The legislature,
17 if it so chooses, shall implement the recommendation to initiate
18 a sister-state or province relationship by either adopting a
19 concurrent resolution or by enacting session law to that
20 effect."



SECTION 8. Section 229-4, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended to read as follows:

"[f]§229-4[+] **Maintaining sister-state relationships.** The Hawaii sister-state [~~committee~~] and international partnerships commission shall periodically evaluate established sister-state relationships and forward its recommendations on maintaining a sister-state relationships to the governor and to the legislature."

SECTION 9. Section 229-5, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended to read as follows:

"[f]§229-5[+] **Dissolving sister-state relationships.** The Hawaii sister-state [~~committee~~] and international partnerships commission may make a recommendation to terminate a sister-state relationship it deems to be defunct, moribund, or not beneficial and forward its recommendation to the legislature. The legislature, if it so chooses, shall implement the recommendation to terminate a sister-state relationship either by adopting a concurrent resolution or by enacting session law to that effect."

SECTION 10. There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$180,000 or so much



1 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2025-2026 and the
2 same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year
3 2026-2027 for the office of international affairs to develop an:

- 4 (1) Updated strategy for the State's international
5 engagement in the twenty-first century; and
6 (2) Analysis of potential investment and revenue
7 generation abroad.

8 The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department
9 of business, economic development, and tourism for the purposes
10 of this Act.

11 SECTION 11. There is appropriated out of the general
12 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
13 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2025-2026 and
14 the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal
15 year 2026-2027 for the East-West center to assist in the
16 development and maintenance of the State's international
17 relationships, programs, and partnerships.

18 The sums appropriated shall be expended by the university
19 of Hawaii for the purposes of this Act.

20 SECTION 12. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed
21 and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.



1 SECTION 13. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

2

INTRODUCED BY: 



S.B. NO. 1518

Report Title:

DBEDT; Office of International Affairs; Hawaii Sister-State and International Partnerships Commission; East-West Center; Hawaii Green Growth; Sister-State Relationships; Appropriations

Description:

Establishes the Hawaii Sister-State and International Partnerships Commission. Requires the Office of International Affairs to provide support to the Hawaii Sister-State and International Partnerships Commission. Allows the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism to establish out-of-state offices and facilities to support sister-state and other partnerships that promote and enrich the people, cultures, environments, and economies of the State and its international partners, generate revenue for the State, and buy property. Appropriates funds.

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