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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

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RELATING TO INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS.

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

1           SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the Center for  
2 Cultural and Technical Interchange Between East and West Act of  
3 1960, Public Law 86-472, authorized the establishment in Hawaii  
4 of a center for cultural and technical interchange between East  
5 and West, and Act 82, Session Laws of Hawaii 1975 (Act 82),  
6 established an educational non-profit public corporation, the  
7 Center for Cultural and Technical Interchange Between East and  
8 West, Inc., better known and referred to as the "East-West  
9 Center", to administer and operate the center. Act 82 specifies  
10 the purposes of the East-West Center, which include, among other  
11 things, the promotion of better relations and understanding  
12 between the United States and the nations of the East through  
13 the administration and operation of the East-West Center as an  
14 educational institution operating in furtherance of the  
15 objectives of Public Law 86-472 and the promotion, among the  
16 nations of the East and West, of the use of the East-West Center  
17 by qualified persons for cooperative study, training, and



1 research in matters of East-West significance, thus leading to  
2 better relations and understanding as to such matters.

3       The legislature further finds that the East-West Center has  
4 become a pivotal institution in fostering understanding and  
5 cooperation between the United States and the nations of Asia  
6 and the Pacific. Hawaii's unique geographical location and  
7 multicultural heritage make it an ideal location for promoting  
8 international relations, particularly within the Asia-Pacific  
9 region. For over six decades, the East-West Center has  
10 significantly contributed to the State's role as a bridge  
11 between the East and West, enhancing the State's position in  
12 international affairs.

13       The legislature further finds that the East-West center's  
14 programs in research, education, and exchange have directly  
15 benefited the State's economy, culture, and diplomatic  
16 relations. While the federal government has provided  
17 significant funding to the East-West center, this federal  
18 support has fluctuated over the years. The legislature  
19 recognizes that the center would benefit from regular,  
20 predictable state resources to support the development of  
21 programs and initiatives that align with the State's strategic



1 goals in international relations, education, and economic  
2 development.

3       The legislature finds that the East-West center has served  
4 and continues to serve a public purpose of promoting better  
5 relations and understanding between the United States and the  
6 nations of the East and that granting authorization to the  
7 East-West center to receive appropriations of state funds exempt  
8 from the requirements of chapter 42F, Hawaii Revised Statutes,  
9 complies with the public purpose requirement of article VII,  
10 section 4, of the Hawaii State Constitution.

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



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

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

20 Therefore, the legislature finds that in celebration of the  
21 fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the East-West



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

6 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to:

- 7 (1) Establish the official designation of the East-West  
8 center as the center for cultural and technical  
9 interchange between East and West, Inc., and exempt  
10 state fund appropriations to the East-West center from  
11 chapter 42F, Hawaii Revised Statutes;
- 12 (2) Rename the Hawaii sister-state committee as the Hawaii  
13 sister-state and international partnerships commission  
14 and amends its functions and membership;
- 15 (3) Require the office of international affairs to provide  
16 support to the Hawaii sister-state and international  
17 partnerships commission;
- 18 (4) Expand the department of business, economic  
19 development, and tourism's authority to establish  
20 out-of-state offices to include out-of-state  
21 facilities to support sister-state or province



1 partnerships and other partnerships that promote and  
2 enrich the people, cultures, environments, and  
3 economies of the State and its international partners,  
4 generate revenue for the State, and buy property; and  
5 (5) Appropriate funds.

6 SECTION 2. Chapter 201, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
7 amended by adding a new section to part I to be appropriately  
8 designated and to read as follows:

9 "§201- East-West center. (a) The official designation  
10 of the East-West center shall be the center for cultural and  
11 technical interchange between East and West, Inc.

12 (b) The qualifying standards and conditions related to the  
13 receipt of funds under chapter 42F shall not apply to funds  
14 received by the East-West center, or center for cultural and  
15 technical interchange between East and West, Inc.; provided that  
16 if the center for cultural and technical interchange between  
17 East and West, Inc. contracts with a recipient or provider, then  
18 the qualifying standards, conditions, and other provisions of  
19 chapter 42F shall apply to the recipient or provider and the  
20 contract.



1        (c) To receive state funds, the center for cultural and  
2 technical interchange between East and West, Inc., shall:

3        (1) Be licensed or accredited, in accordance with federal,  
4 state, or county statutes, rules, or ordinances, to  
5 conduct the activities or provide the services for  
6 which state funds are appropriated;

7        (2) Comply with all applicable federal and state laws  
8 prohibiting discrimination against any person on the  
9 basis of race, color, national origin, religion,  
10 creed, sex, age, sexual orientation, or disability;

11       (3) Agree not to use the funds for entertainment or  
12 lobbying activities in the State;

13       (4) Be incorporated under the laws of the State;

14       (5) Have bylaws or policies that describe the manner in  
15 which the activities or services for which funds are  
16 appropriated shall be conducted or provided;

17       (6) Have been determined and designated to be a tax-exempt  
18 organization by the Internal Revenue Service; and

19       (7) Have a governing board whose members shall have no  
20 material conflict of interest and serve without  
21 compensation.



1        (d) The comptroller and state auditor may examine the use  
2        of funds appropriated to the center for cultural and technical  
3        interchange between East and West, Inc.

4        (e) The allocation of state support shall neither impinge  
5        on the autonomy of the center for cultural and technical  
6        interchange between East and West, Inc., nor imply state control  
7        over its programs or policies, except as provided in this  
8        section.

9        (f) The center for cultural and technical interchange  
10       between East and West, Inc., shall submit a report to the  
11       legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of  
12       each regular session, which shall include an explanation of the  
13       facility maintenance and other functions accomplished by state  
14       fund expenditures in the previous fiscal year."

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

17       "(b) The office shall:

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





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

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

5 (4) Encourage the development of international sister-city  
6 programs, pairing Hawaii cities with cities around the  
7 globe for artistic, cultural, economic, educational,  
8 and faith-based exchanges;

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

12 (6) Develop an international affairs and peace education  
13 curriculum that includes studies of international  
14 affairs and peace initiatives and takes a proactive,  
15 strategic approach to the development of policies that  
16 promote the prevention of national and international  
17 conflict, nonviolent intervention, mediation, peaceful  
18 resolution of conflict, and structured mediation of  
19 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 locations, including foreign nations, to effectuate the following purposes:

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

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

(3) Host government and business officials at conferences, meetings and social occasions, or other events on



1 matters pertaining to business opportunities and  
2 attraction of investments for the State;

3 (4) Develop and conduct advertising efforts, promotional  
4 events, media coverage, and educational programs  
5 regarding commerce in the State; ~~[and]~~

6 (5) Conduct related operations as needed, ~~[such as]~~  
7 including hiring or contracting for consultants[-];

8 (6) Support sister-state or province relationships, as  
9 defined in section 229-1, and other partnerships that  
10 promote and enrich the people, cultures, environments,  
11 and economies of the State and its international  
12 partners; and

13 (7) Generate revenue for the State."

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

16 "**§201-82 Powers of the department.** The department,  
17 subject to the approval of the director of budget and finance,  
18 shall have the following general powers to operate out-of-state  
19 offices and facilities established:

20 (1) To enter into contracts, leases, or cooperative  
21 agreements, or perform other transactions with any



1 person, firm, partnership, association, company,  
2 corporation, or foreign nation, as may be necessary in  
3 the conduct of its business and on [~~such~~] any terms as  
4 the department may deem appropriate, using competitive  
5 procurement practices, to the extent practicable, in  
6 accordance with rules adopted by the policy board;

7 (2) To establish operational bank accounts in out-of-state  
8 locations, including foreign denomination accounts, as  
9 may be necessary in the conduct of its business,  
10 notwithstanding the provisions of chapter 38;

11 (3) To receive by gifts, grants, devises, bequests, or  
12 otherwise from private sources or a foreign nation,  
13 any property, real, personal, or mixed, intangible or  
14 tangible, absolutely or in trust, to be used and  
15 disposed of, either the principal or the income  
16 therefrom, in accordance with the conditions under  
17 which it was received;

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



(5) To hire such personnel as may be necessary in the conduct of its business and on ~~[such]~~ any terms as the department may deem appropriate; and

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

SECTION 6. Section 229-1, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended to read as follows:

"~~[+]§229-1[+]~~ ~~[Definition.]~~ Definitions. For the purposes of this chapter, unless the context otherwise requires~~[7~~ ~~"sister-state"]:~~

"Commission" means the Hawaii sister-state and international partnerships commission established under section 229-2.

"Sister-state or province ~~[relationship]~~ partnership" means a ~~[relationship]~~ partnership between the State of Hawaii and the state or province or similar governmental or political subdivision of a foreign nation."



1 SECTION 7. Section 229-2, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
2 amended to read as follows:

3 "[~~§~~229-2~~§~~] **Hawaii sister-state committee and**  
4 **international partnerships commission**. [~~(a)~~] ~~There shall be~~  
5 ~~established the Hawaii sister-state committee, to be placed~~  
6 ~~within the department of business, economic development, and~~  
7 ~~tourism for administrative purposes only, consisting of five~~  
8 ~~members appointed by the governor as provided in section 26-34.~~

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

13 ~~(b) The governor shall appoint five members, one member~~  
14 ~~from each of five lists of nominees submitted respectively by~~  
15 ~~the following:~~

- 16 ~~(1) Speaker of the house of representatives;~~  
17 ~~(2) President of the senate;~~  
18 ~~(3) Native Hawaiian cultural organization;~~  
19 ~~(4) East-West Center; and~~  
20 ~~(5) Hawaii State Association of Counties.~~



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

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

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

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

(1) Three members appointed by the governor, with the advice and consent of the senate; provided that two of the three members appointed by the governor shall be from a list of at least three nominees submitted respectively by the:



1           (A) Office of Hawaiian affairs; and

2           (B) Center for cultural and technical interchange  
3           between East and West, Inc.;

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

5           (3) One member appointed by the speaker of the house of  
6           representatives; and

7           (4) The chairs of the respective senate and house  
8           committees with jurisdiction over international  
9           affairs or intergovernmental affairs, who shall serve  
10          as ex-officio, non-voting members of the commission.

11          (d) The commission shall elect from among its members a  
12          chairperson and vice chairperson.

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

16          SECTION 8. Section 229-3, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
17          amended to read as follows:

18          "~~{}~~**\$229-3**~~{}~~ **Initiating sister-state relationships.** The  
19          ~~[Hawaii sister-state committee]~~ commission shall evaluate and  
20          develop recommendations for the initiation of all sister-state  
21          or province ~~[relationships]~~ partnerships and forward its





1 recommendation to the legislature. The legislature, if it so  
2 chooses, shall implement the recommendation to initiate a  
3 sister-state or province [~~relationship~~] partnership by either  
4 adopting a concurrent resolution or by enacting session law to  
5 that effect."

6 SECTION 9. Section 229-4, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
7 amended to read as follows:

8 "[~~{~~]**\$229-4**[~~}~~] **Maintaining sister-state relationships.** The  
9 [~~Hawaii sister-state committee~~] commission shall periodically  
10 evaluate established sister-state [~~relationships~~] or province  
11 partnerships and forward its recommendations on maintaining  
12 sister-state [~~relationships~~] or province partnerships to the  
13 governor and to the legislature."

14 SECTION 10. Section 229-5, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
15 amended to read as follows:

16 "[~~{~~]**\$229-5**[~~}~~] **Dissolving sister-state relationships.** The  
17 [~~Hawaii sister-state committee~~] commission may make a  
18 recommendation to terminate a sister-state [~~relationship~~] or  
19 province partnership it deems to be defunct, moribund, or not  
20 beneficial and forward its recommendation to the legislature.  
21 The legislature, if it so chooses, shall implement the



1 recommendation to terminate a sister-state [~~relationship~~] or  
2 province partnership either by adopting a concurrent resolution  
3 or by enacting session law to that effect."

4 SECTION 11. There is appropriated out of the general  
5 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$200,000 or so much  
6 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2025-2026 and the  
7 same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year  
8 2026-2027 for the office of international affairs to develop an:

9 (1) Updated strategy for the State's international

10 engagement in the twenty-first century; and

11 (2) Analysis of potential investment and revenue

12 generation abroad.

13 The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department  
14 of business, economic development, and tourism for the purposes  
15 of this Act.

16 SECTION 12. There is appropriated out of the general  
17 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$4,000,000 or so much  
18 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2025-2026 and the  
19 same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year  
20 2026-2027 for the center for cultural and technical interchange  
21 between East and West, Inc. to assist in the development and



1 maintenance of the State's international relationships,  
2 programs, and partnerships.

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

5 SECTION 13. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed  
6 and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

7 SECTION 14. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.



**Report Title:**

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

**Description:**

Establishes the official designation of the East-West Center as the Center for Cultural and Technical Interchange Between East and West, Inc., and exempts state fund appropriations to the East-West Center from chapter 42F, HRS. Renames the Hawaii Sister-State Committee to the Hawaii Sister-State and International Partnerships Commission and amends its functions and membership. Requires the Office of International Affairs to provide support to the Hawaii Sister-State and International Partnerships Commission. Expands the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism's authority to establish out-of-state offices to include out-of-state facilities to support sister-state or province partnerships 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. (CD1)

*The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.*

