
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,
2 Act 82, Session Laws of Hawaii 1975, established an educational
3 non-profit public corporation to administer and operate what is
4 today known as the East-West center. The mission of the
5 East-West 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 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



1 collaborations to address common priorities, including the
2 eradication of invasive species, promotion of economic
3 development, advancement of clean energy, and preservation of
4 peace between nations. Further, it is appropriate for the State
5 to explore and take advantage of additional ways that Hawaii can
6 benefit from international partnerships, including generating
7 revenue abroad similar to many other jurisdictions. For example,
8 hosting facilities abroad for local farmers and retailers to more
9 easily sell Hawaii products in key markets, or investing in
10 projects that generate a return. This enables direct financial
11 benefit that can create revenue to support Hawaii programs and
12 services without additional expense to local taxpayers.

13 The legislature also finds that international relations
14 between East and West across the Pacific have been rapidly
15 changing. Additionally, previous generations of the State's key
16 community, business, and government leaders who have carefully
17 fostered and maintained these important relationships are
18 retiring or passing on. If local residents are going to
19 continue to benefit from the State's international ties, and if
20 Hawaii is going to take advantage of international business and
21 revenue opportunities abroad as so many other jurisdictions



1 currently do, it is critical that the State adjust its engagement
2 strategy, ensure continuity with its sister-state communities and
3 partners, and plan for the future.

4 Therefore, the legislature finds that in celebration of the
5 fiftieth anniversary of the legislature's establishment of the
6 East-West center, the State must update its international
7 engagement strategy, and reaffirm its commitment to building and
8 maintaining the international partnerships that have benefitted
9 the State over the years, so they can continue to benefit local
10 residents for generations to come.

11 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to:

- 12 (1) Engage local leaders with strong relationships abroad
13 to support the governor and legislature in
14 strengthening international partnerships, by
15 redesignating the Hawaii sister-state committee as the
16 Hawaii sister-state and international partnerships
17 commission;
- 18 (2) Enable the East-West center to better help and
19 maintain the State's international relationships,
20 programs, and partnerships; and



(3) Enable the State to more easily generate revenue from international partnerships and investment as other jurisdictions do, where appropriate.

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

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

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

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



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

3 "(b) The office shall:

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

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

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

11 (4) Encourage the development of international sister-city
12 programs, pairing Hawaii cities with cities around the
13 globe for artistic, cultural, economic, educational,
14 and faith-based exchanges;

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

18 (6) Develop an international affairs and peace education
19 curriculum that includes studies of international
20 affairs and peace initiatives and takes a proactive,
21 strategic approach to the development of policies that



1 promote the prevention of national and international
2 conflict, nonviolent intervention, mediation, peaceful
3 resolution of conflict, and structured mediation of
4 conflict; ~~and~~

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

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

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

12 **"§201-81 Establishment of out-of-state offices; purposes.**

13 The department of business, economic development, and tourism
14 may establish and operate offices and facilities in out-of-state
15 locations, including foreign nations, to effectuate the
16 following purposes:

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



- 1 (2) Monitor out-of-state government policies and
2 regulations that have an impact on business, markets,
3 sales, tourism, and related activities;
- 4 (3) Host government and business officials at conferences,
5 meetings and social occasions, or other events on
6 matters pertaining to business opportunities and
7 attraction of investments for the State;
- 8 (4) Develop and conduct advertising efforts, promotional
9 events, media coverage, and educational programs
10 regarding commerce in the State; [and]
- 11 (5) Conduct related operations as needed, such as hiring
12 or contracting for consultants[+];
- 13 (6) Support sister-state, -province, and other
14 partnerships that promote and enrich the people,
15 cultures, environments, and economies of the State and
16 its international partners; and
- 17 (7) Generate revenue for the State."

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

20 **"§201-82 Powers of the department.** The department,
21 subject to the approval of the director of budget and finance,



1 shall have the following general powers to operate out-of-state
2 offices and facilities established:

- 3 (1) To enter into contracts, leases, or cooperative
4 agreements, or perform other transactions with any
5 person, firm, partnership, association, company,
6 corporation, or foreign nation, as may be necessary in
7 the conduct of its business and on [~~such~~] any terms as
8 the department may deem appropriate, using competitive
9 procurement practices, to the extent practicable, in
10 accordance with rules adopted by the policy board;
- 11 (2) To establish operational bank accounts in out-of-state
12 locations, including foreign denomination accounts, as
13 may be necessary in the conduct of its business,
14 notwithstanding the provisions of chapter 38;
- 15 (3) To receive by gifts, grants, devises, bequests, or
16 otherwise from private sources or a foreign nation,
17 any property, real, personal, or mixed, intangible or
18 tangible, absolutely or in trust, to be used and
19 disposed of, either the principal or the income
20 therefrom, in accordance with the conditions under
21 which it was received;



(4) To buy, sell, lease, rent, hold, maintain, use, and operate any property, real, personal, or mixed, tangible or intangible, in accordance with the 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 229-2, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended to read as follows:

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



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

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

~~(1) Speaker of the house of representatives;~~

~~(2) President of the senate;~~

~~(3) Native Hawaiian cultural organization;~~

~~(4) East-West Center; and~~

~~(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 the Hawaii sister-state and international partnerships commission for administrative purposes only.



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

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

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

13 (A) Office of Hawaiian affairs; and

14 (B) East-West center;

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

16 (3) One member appointed by the speaker of the house of
17 representatives; and

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



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

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

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

8 "[~~§~~229-3[~~§~~] **Initiating sister-state relationships.** The
9 Hawaii sister-state [~~committee~~] and international partnerships
10 commission shall evaluate and develop recommendations for the
11 initiation of all sister-state or province relationships and
12 forward its recommendation to the legislature. The legislature,
13 if it so chooses, shall implement the recommendation to initiate
14 a sister-state or province relationship by either adopting a
15 concurrent resolution or by enacting session law to that
16 effect."

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

19 "[~~§~~229-4[~~§~~] **Maintaining sister-state relationships.** The
20 Hawaii sister-state [~~committee~~] and international partnerships
21 commission shall periodically evaluate established sister-state



1 relationships and forward its recommendations on maintaining
2 sister-state relationships to the governor and to the
3 legislature."

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

6 "[~~§~~229-5~~§~~] **Dissolving sister-state relationships.** The
7 Hawaii sister-state [~~committee~~] and international partnerships
8 commission may make a recommendation to terminate a sister-state
9 relationship it deems to be defunct, moribund, or not beneficial
10 and forward its recommendation to the legislature. The
11 legislature, if it so chooses, shall implement the
12 recommendation to terminate a sister-state relationship either
13 by adopting a concurrent resolution or by enacting session law
14 to that effect."

15 SECTION 10. There is appropriated out of the general
16 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
17 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2025-2026 and
18 the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal
19 year 2026-2027 for the office of international affairs to
20 develop an:



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

5 The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department
6 of business, economic development, and tourism for the purposes
7 of this Act.

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

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

17 SECTION 12. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed
18 and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

19 SECTION 13. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2050.



Report Title:

DBEDT; Office of International Affairs; Hawaii Sister-State and International Partnerships Commission; East-West Center; 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. Effective 7/1/2050. (SD1)

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