

1 BY EMCEE FILIBERT:

2 By my watch, I think we are ahead of time by about  
3 eight minutes. But I'm not going to give an eight-minute  
4 introduction for our next speaker. That will probably just add  
5 on her time so she have more time and not rush through.

6 Our next speaker is keynote, keynote for this morning.  
7 And the first time that I met her was actually at an interview  
8 for a job at PREL, Pacific Resources for Education and Learning.  
9 And prior to that, I hadn't met any Heine before. So I thought  
10 that this person was haole. So I dressed up really nice and  
11 thought that I was going to be grilled at the table.

12 But when I went in, I saw her sitting there. I  
13 immediately knew that she was Micronesian and that really put me  
14 at ease. And so I had -- it was a really pleasurable experience  
15 to know that there was another Micronesian in a position to have  
16 interviewed me for a job and that it meant, it was very  
17 meaningful for me. And I guess that was sort of the motivation  
18 for me to keep going and improve my professional development in  
19 the workplace.

20 And so I had worked with her. That was back in 1998  
21 where she had been at PREL for, I think, two years prior to my  
22 arrival. And she's still with PREL, but she has also branched  
23 out and started doing other meaningful things for Micronesians  
24 and also for the people, Marshall Islanders.

25 So without further ado, I'd like to introduce our

1 keynote speaker, Dr. Hilda Heine.

2 Presentation by Dr. Hilda Heine, PREL

3 BY MS. HEINE:

4 Please bear with us on technology. (Break in  
5 proceedings.) While we're fixing the technology here -- I hope  
6 it does come up.

7 (Speaking in foreign language.) I would like to take  
8 the opportunity to thank Dr. Hanlon and Tisha, Julie, and the  
9 Micronesian team that put this conference on. Also I would like  
10 to acknowledge chancellor as well as all the elders from the  
11 Micronesian groups that have gathered this morning to share with  
12 us and all of you who are here today.

13 This is indeed a very special conference, first of its  
14 kind and first to put Micronesian issues at the forefront. And  
15 so this is a very good opportunity and I might say that I am  
16 very happy to be part of it.

17 I want to say I'm not an expert on anything; and as I  
18 look at everybody who is an expert, and so it's hard to think  
19 about what to say to the group that already knows what the  
20 issues are. But I'll try to do my best and share what I know my  
21 own perspectives on things.

22 Before I start, I wanted to share a song. I let Julie  
23 work on this one. But this is a simple song and I was hoping  
24 that my colleagues from the Marshall Islands would be here.

25 (Song starts.)

1           So that's the song I wanted to play. This is the  
2 original national anthem for the Marshall Islands. But more  
3 importantly, it conveys the strong connection and deep feelings  
4 that Marshallese have for their ancestral lands. And so no  
5 matter where they live or their situation, the longing to return  
6 home never goes away.

7           And again, as we gather here, there are lots of us  
8 immigrants or migrants, whether or not, you know, we lived here  
9 for many, many years, there is still that longing to go home.  
10 So I'm sure similar song exists for other cultural groups, but I  
11 wanted to share that with you this morning.

12           I chose not to kind of give you a speech, but to have  
13 a conversation. So this is more of a presentation, rather than  
14 a keynote kind of speech. So hopefully, there will be some time  
15 for Q and A at the end of the presentation.

16           And this is the outline. I will be talking a little  
17 bit about background and we're not gonna be going over too much  
18 of that. Yesterday, Ben's presentation was quite extensive and  
19 covered a lot of important information. So I hope that those of  
20 you who were there benefitted from that introduction yesterday.

21           I'll be talking a little bit about the migration  
22 trends, a little bit of a story. Challenges, that is the title  
23 of my presentation. I chose to put challenges first and then  
24 talk about contributions later because I don't want us to be in  
25 this place, being kind of, uh, down. And we'll be talking about

1 some questions or putting up some questions for reflections,  
2 talk about some long-term impacts of Micronesians and then offer  
3 some general recommendations.

4           Micronesians have always been voyagers. I think we  
5 heard that yesterday. This is evident in their navigational  
6 skills. They are one of the most talented navigators in the  
7 Pacific. Ben discussed some of the bigger picture about  
8 Micronesians in his presentation yesterday so I will not go into  
9 that.

10           But the trip was also made in search of new lands. So  
11 within Micronesia, within the Pacific itself, people voyage and  
12 go from one place to another. And the long voyages between  
13 islands were made also to visit and strengthen the relationships  
14 with relatives.

15           I remember my own grandmother. She was, you know,  
16 from the Marshalls, but she went to Pohnpei for a long period of  
17 time and she ended up -- this is my great grandmother -- she  
18 ended up pregnant with my grandmother from a gentleman in  
19 Pohnpei. And so I have ancestral roots as well from Pohnpei.

20           But this is an example of even way back then before  
21 Continental. People were traveling the region, the vast region  
22 that is Micronesia. And this is, as we all know and most of you  
23 are familiar with this map, these are the three Compact nations,  
24 and I will be talking about or referring to COFA, Compact of  
25 Free Association nations. And we have the Republic of Palau, as

1     you know, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic  
2     of the Marshall Islands.

3             The infusion of trends in the trust territory time and  
4     the development of the wage economy in Micronesia, in a way,  
5     undermined the subsistence economy, as well as the policy of  
6     universal education began to bring people to the centers in the  
7     Marshall Islands or in Micronesia during the trust territory  
8     period.

9             And so people began to move from their communities in  
10    search of employment as well as education. And that migration  
11    is still continuing on today, even from rural communities to the  
12    earlier settlers and beyond to outside of Micronesia.

13            And the Compact's indeed open up opportunities to meet  
14    these creative needs for wage employment. You know, all of a  
15    sudden we needed to have money. We needed to have, uh, we have  
16    so many needs that need to be purchased. And so we moved for  
17    that reason.

18            U.S. policies in Micronesia, including the nuclear  
19    legacy in the Marshall Islands, that displaced many islanders  
20    integral to the story of COFA migration. And Ben talked a  
21    little bit about that yesterday. But I think it's important for  
22    us to remember that migration is not an issue in isolation by  
23    itself. It's part and parcel of a lot of policies that have  
24    been ongoing since the trust territory time in Micronesia.

25            Yesterday Ben talked about some of the migration

1 trends that parallel major economic trends at home. People left  
2 the country some years back due to certain economic situations  
3 that were taking place back home. So there was a reduction in  
4 force that he talked about. And people, lots of people, left  
5 during that year, 1997. Again in 2000 and 2002, many people  
6 left.

7           So when you talk about all this military buildup which  
8 is anticipated for Guam in the coming year, it is soon to be  
9 another policy that we encourage Micronesians, out of communities  
10 in Micronesia.

11           In terms of the number of people that have left -- and  
12 that was well-covered yesterday -- but, you know, just a brief  
13 look at it. We see 25 percent increase for Marshallese people  
14 migrating out between 1997 and 2003, a 36 percent increase in  
15 that five-year period for FSM. Interesting for Palau, too, is  
16 that during those periods, the number actually went down.

17           Right now, people are talking about between 12,000 to  
18 15,000 migrants here in Hawai'i. Some studies have come out  
19 recently are putting those numbers out. Most of the  
20 Micronesians are in Honolulu county, for example, 73 percent;  
21 15 percent on the Big Island; and 11 percent, Maui; and a small  
22 1 percent in Kaua'i.

23           We also see more families are moving out from urban  
24 Honolulu into rural areas. A lot of them are moving to `Ewa,  
25 for example, and we know that the factors, such as housing cost,

1 is major player in that movement.

2 Reason for migration is reported in 2003 census.  
3 Employment was more or less the highest. And then dependents of  
4 employed people who also moved with the head of the household,  
5 medical reasons; and other at 46 percent, I think that includes  
6 education. So although employment is way up there, I think  
7 education is also one of the reasons that people are leaving.

8 This is a common story, and I guess this is my story  
9 of migration. I migrated to Honolulu in 1995 with two children  
10 and a family member. I think there were about 509 people that  
11 migrated that year, according to statistics that Ben shared the  
12 other day. And we were among those 500 people that left. That  
13 was about 12 years ago.

14 I have a job security before we left so that was a  
15 little bit different. A lot of other people are leaving without  
16 job security before they left their countries. And I viewed my  
17 migration, I guess, as a temporary move for me and my family. I  
18 never thought of it as permanent. And I think there are many  
19 people who are in that situation; they see their migration, how  
20 their move here as temporary.

21 Some are able to make it back; some aren't. In my  
22 case, I was able to move back. I moved back to Majuro in 2006.  
23 But in the 11 years that I lived here, I sponsored six nieces  
24 and nephews during -- not all at once because our apartment  
25 could not, we could not allow to have more than five people in

1 the house. So we were mindful of that. But nevertheless, I  
2 sponsor, my family sponsored six nieces and nephews, that all of  
3 them graduated from high school, some from the university.

4 And we hosted numerous relatives on medical care and  
5 treatment. I mean, family members that were transient, they  
6 came here on their way to the United States or they're going  
7 back home on their way from the Mainland.

8 So it was very common for us to have, you know, people  
9 in our living room almost every month. And I think this is the  
10 story that is common for almost all of Micronesians living in  
11 Hawai`i. And you try to work around the requirements for your  
12 rental unit, you know, what is allowed and what is not allowed.  
13 Sometimes you sneak people in.

14 But in my case, it was very hard because the landlord  
15 was right next door. So it was really hard. But I used to have  
16 the landlord come and count and look at the number of zoris  
17 outside my door. And, you know, she was always concerned that  
18 there were so many zoris. But the zoris, you know, like a lot  
19 of us have zoris. You just keep them outside. One person might  
20 have maybe three or so pair. And so she was always worried that  
21 we have so many people in the house.

22 It was here that I was introduced to the so-called  
23 Micronesian problem. I didn't know that there was such a thing  
24 as a Micronesian problem until I got to Honolulu and began to  
25 hear about the problem and read about the problem in the paper.

1           I think our staying here was made successful because  
2 we have a strong network of family members, families and friends  
3 who help us through the initial stages of settling in. And I  
4 think most of our migrant colleagues would agree to that, that  
5 without the strong social network, it would be very difficult to  
6 make it here in Honolulu.

7           And as I said, I returned to the Marshall Islands in  
8 2006. And now I'm at a disadvantage because I'm supposed to be  
9 talking about challenges and contributions here in Hawai`i and  
10 I'm kind of out of touch. So you will have to forgive me, but  
11 I'll do my best.

12           And there are other stories that maybe we could tell  
13 about other migrant families. But for the most part, I think  
14 all of us encounter challenges that are individual in nature.  
15 And a lot of the individual challenges are or have to do with  
16 what we bring with us, how healthy we are, how educated we are,  
17 what size of family we bring with us, social network that we  
18 might have. All of these determine level and type of challenge  
19 that we face in the new land.

20           At the same time, there are also societal challenges.  
21 Societal response to migrants many times is based upon media  
22 coverage. And I have to say that many time the coverage is not  
23 that positive.

24           And so we see ourself in this mirror that is the  
25 society. We're being described by the media and by reactions of

1 people by questions that are being asked. And a lot of it is  
2 often distorted. And we see a person that is not the same as  
3 what we know or it's a totally different person that we see in  
4 the reactions or in the mirror that we see. Needless to say,  
5 descriptions and stereotypes are far more difficult as far as  
6 challenges to deal with.

7           There are other challenges, and some of these came up  
8 in Ben Graham's discussion yesterday -- the fact that Hawai`i's  
9 cost of living is getting out of reach for most migrants. The  
10 self-sufficiency standard for Hawai`i is much higher than other  
11 locations where COFA migrants have settled, for example, in  
12 Arkansas or Washington state.

13           A family of four needs at least 45,000 to live  
14 comfortably here in Hawai`i. And I think when we go and look at  
15 the median salaries for Micronesians, it is half of that. And  
16 so you can imagine the challenge that people have to face. It's  
17 a challenge. And so families are forced to supplement income  
18 with welfare, food stamps, and the rest we all know.

19           These are economic challenges. I think things that we  
20 talk about, we read about in the papers: education; affordable  
21 housing or homelessness; economic and employment challenges;  
22 healthcare; legal issues; acculturation; as well as the level of  
23 awareness of the public at large about issues and about what  
24 Micronesia is all about. These are some of the challenges, and  
25 I will be talking about these in more detail.

1           Education is at the top of the list of COFA  
2 challenges. While there are compulsory education laws in  
3 Micronesia, in all of Micronesia, enforcement is often loose and  
4 attendance is not strictly enforced.

5           And so we come here and we find that the situation is  
6 completely different. Expectations are different. There is  
7 cultural mismatch between home and school curriculum and values  
8 that we come with. They're different.

9           Similarly, school system expectation can sometimes  
10 cost the family their child. Some people, you know, they did  
11 not realize that when they send their children to school, not  
12 bathed or not fed, that somebody will report them to the  
13 authorities.

14           These are things that are new to people. And although  
15 they are important considerations, they also bring to home the  
16 realization that this is a society that is run by regulations  
17 and by laws, which is totally different from what most migrants  
18 experience at home. We have laws, but they don't necessarily  
19 run people's lives. But it's different here, and this is not to  
20 say that this is bad, but that's the way things are.

21           Anyway, we see English language skills as limiting  
22 success in other areas, at least that's what some people  
23 believe. I don't necessarily believe that that is the case. I  
24 think success in school is probably attributed to other issues,  
25 not necessarily level of English, although that helps. It's not

1 the only reason that makes a child successful.

2 But we see here that English spoken at home, according  
3 to the census, an analysis done by Levin and other  
4 statisticians, we see English only at home as reduced for  
5 Marshall Islands to 7 percent in 2003, from 70 percent in 1997.  
6 And same thing for FSM. In the case of Palau, this is about the  
7 only place that you see English spoken at home increased in that  
8 five-year period.

9 We also see that high school and college completion  
10 rates of migrants is below. I had a chance to look at a list of  
11 scholarship students from the Marshall Islands, for example, and  
12 noticed that many of the scholarship students are only those  
13 that are, are mostly those that graduate from the islands. Very  
14 few students who graduated from high schools in the Mainland,  
15 although they know that they're eligible, and part of it might  
16 be that they don't get information about application.

17 But in my own experiences of going around and when I  
18 was doing my study, I noticed that very, very few Marshallese  
19 were going to higher education in communities that I visited.  
20 The percentage was quite low compared to the number that are  
21 going from schools back in Micronesia. So this is an issue,  
22 especially when most of us come here for education.

23 And so how do we make students successful going  
24 through the high school successfully and then on to college? We  
25 found that many of the students didn't know where to go for

1 financial aid. They were graduating from high school without  
2 having seen counselors and so they have no clue where to go or  
3 how to access college information.

4 And so in this place that is large, it's easier for  
5 kids not to be able to find those resources. Back home I think  
6 you know who the counselors are, so you can go directly to them  
7 and seek information. But the story's different here. And so  
8 these are some of the challenges I think that Micronesians face  
9 in going through the education systems here.

10 But not only that, but level of education of migrants,  
11 we see in the graph here, especially for Marshallese people,  
12 they have the lowest number of, at least people with high school  
13 diploma living here, or the migrant groups that are here we have  
14 the lowest number of people that are high school graduates.

15 Then we go to affordable housing. I think all of you  
16 are familiar with that issue. It's been in the paper a long  
17 time and many times and maybe more than enough. But  
18 overcrowding is a challenge. There is certainly mismatch  
19 between cultural obligations of taking care of family members  
20 and housing regulations.

21 You know, what do you do when you have a family that  
22 just showed up on your door and you're supposed to take care of  
23 them and you cannot because you're only allowed three or four  
24 people in your home? So those are some of the issues and people  
25 have actually got kicked out from their homes because of doing

1 their cultural obligation.

2 But it also means that when we have larger families,  
3 we harder time finding homes. Most people don't want to rent to  
4 families with many children. And as you know, composition of  
5 Micronesian families, there are many children. It's hardly a  
6 family without children. You're kind of a rare species if  
7 you're there and you don't have any kids.

8 So you have to take that into consideration, and this  
9 is one of the things we are finding to be challenging. Families  
10 with children, how do you get affordable housing?

11 So according to the statistics, most of us live in  
12 rentals. And actually, the number of people who own homes has  
13 declined since, you know, over the five-year period that the  
14 census has studied. And this is true for both FSM and all three  
15 Compact nations.

16 In terms of employment, migrants from the Compact  
17 nations face a collection of labor market disadvantages here in  
18 Hawai`i. There is low labor (indiscernible) rates. There is  
19 overrepresentation in lower skilled jobs and underrepresentation  
20 in white collar jobs. We are also far behind in vocational  
21 training and higher education.

22 So this collection of labor market disadvantages give  
23 rise to personal income level of, you know, migrants from the  
24 Freely Associated States that are only half of the median income  
25 of households in Hawai`i. And so larger families, smaller

1 income, spell problem in Hawai`i.

2 Again, we talk about income level. This is the median  
3 income level for FSM and RMI and ROP citizens. And RMI and  
4 Republic of Palau citizens make slightly less than FSM citizens,  
5 according to this information from the census.

6 So because of the income level, we see many of our  
7 people, about 40 percent, are covered by med-QUEST. We have  
8 10 percent that participate in temporary assistance for needy  
9 families. We have 16 percent in food stamps, and we have also  
10 60 percent that reported they did not receive public assistance.  
11 So I think it's, given the situation, the picture of Micronesian  
12 migrants and the economic picture, we can understand why these  
13 statistics are there.

14 Then there is the healthcare. The issues -- many of  
15 them. And I think we talked about them before. There is  
16 certainly the issue of medical insurance and finding sources for  
17 care. This is still a problematic area. Even though we  
18 understand there is 10.5 million, according to the Med-QUEST  
19 program to assist Micronesian migrants, it's still not enough to  
20 cover the needs in this area.

21 There are also attitudes and cultural barriers to  
22 effective healthcare. Things like routine checkups are not  
23 necessarily what we're used to. So by the time we find the  
24 health situation, it's already past the place where it can be  
25 taken care of.

1           There are some increase use of medical facilities. So  
2           there are some improvement in terms of people going out to get  
3           medical care, as you can see from the 400 percent increase in  
4           use of one of the medical facility that migrants frequently use.  
5           So I think there is similarly a greater familiarity with  
6           services that are afforded here and people are making use of  
7           those services.

8           But there are also other issues, like communicable  
9           diseases as we seen in the reports. Such diseases as TB and  
10          Hansen's diseases, I think they're higher. We have higher rates  
11          for these than the national average.

12          Then there is also what the unnatural causes, the PBS  
13          presentation show us the other -- I think it was last week.  
14          They talk about living with more stressors; and when you look at  
15          Micronesian situations in Hawai`i, not necessarily in other  
16          places, but in Hawai`i, we're living under so many stress --  
17          unfamiliar environment, unpaid bills. But all of these stress  
18          don't add up to good health.

19          And when you talk about opportunities for good health,  
20          we're talking about things like housing policies as well. That  
21          affects how healthy people are. And so we have to take a look  
22          at, you know, issues around policies in housing or affordable  
23          housing and how that contributes to our healthy or unhealthy  
24          community.

25          There are legal issues, and we're all familiar with

1 those. There is, I think, for the most part, we still have  
2 conflicting information on lack of uniformity about eligibility  
3 of migrants to various U.S. programs. And when you go from one  
4 state to another, the differences are here. And you are not  
5 sure whether here you're qualified for health; you go to another  
6 state and you're not qualified for health. And in many cases,  
7 these are state interpretation of state services.

8 But then there are others. There is the legal maze  
9 that people have to go through when it's about state laws and  
10 legal requirements, rights and responsibilities.

11 We have a case currently going of a family, a young  
12 family, Marshallese family that is going through court. They  
13 lost their two children. Because in talking to them, the social  
14 service person thought that the parents were mentally sick. And  
15 in actuality, they're not mental. They are not mentally sick at  
16 all. But this is found out after the kids have been taken from  
17 them. So they are going through court and trying to see what  
18 can be done.

19 But this is talking about translation issues, what  
20 happens when you don't know where to go for translation support  
21 and services and help. People end up in court because of that.

22 Then there is good news about eligibility for legal  
23 aid. That was just recently being reinstated or allowed so  
24 Micronesians can now get legal aid assistance, from what I  
25 understand. Then there is the whole host of acculturation

1 issues that we all know about.

2 Let's look at Hawai'i's response to these issues.  
3 Actually, there have been some positive response. Service  
4 providers and insurers increasingly take initiatives to learn  
5 more about Micronesian cultures. And they're hiring more  
6 Micronesian speakers.

7 So there are some improvement in this. More could be  
8 done, but I think we're seeing steps in the right direction.  
9 There was no service providers when we started out in '95. So  
10 there's big improvement. When Julie and I started a Small  
11 Island Networks, there was hardly any out there ready to help  
12 Micronesian issues.

13 There is the governor's COFA task force, bills in the  
14 Hawai'i legislature. Even though many of them are killed, there  
15 is still the effort to try to see what can be done. There are  
16 advocacy groups like Micronesian United and other groups that  
17 are organized and are lobbying for increased service to  
18 Micronesians. And we have Micronesian groups also that are  
19 organized to assist themselves and fellow newcomers.

20 So these are some positive steps that we are seeing  
21 even though the picture is not that great.

22 Now, to look at the contribution, we have to -- I'm  
23 starting with the big picture, not just to State of Hawai'i, but  
24 globally. These are some contributions that Micronesians have  
25 made. Of course, we've been a nuclear testing ground for the

1 United States for many, many years, and everyone is familiar  
2 with that.

3 In Micronesia, we have what they call strategically  
4 now rights, which come under the Compact, and basically deny  
5 other countries from coming to the region so that United States  
6 has full rights. And I'm sure judge will talk more about that  
7 when he talks later on today or tomorrow. Then there are the  
8 young people serve in the military. I think we cannot discount  
9 that contribution.

10 Just some statistics, and these are estimates. There  
11 are no hard figures out there to share with you. But I believe  
12 that Micronesians do contribute to the economy here in Hawai`i.  
13 There are, from the 2003 census, of 1,518 households at an  
14 average income of 26,000. We bring in or brought in around that  
15 time, 41 million. And I'm sure there is more now with the  
16 increased number of Micronesians that work in the economy here.  
17 And we pay taxes, of course. It's not as much, but there is  
18 taxes coming in to the state as well for services that we use.

19 And according to the statistics, our expenditures were  
20 higher than income, about 1.46 for every dollar of income. And  
21 according to the economists, this is either purchase on credit,  
22 but it's also relatives that have contact from FSM nations.  
23 Many families send money for their family members here. There  
24 is land payments from the Kwajalein land rental. There is  
25 nuclear payments. So a lot of the families who receive these

1 kind of assistance do live here in Hawai`i, and they bring that  
2 with them and spend it in Hawai`i.

3 Of course, there is the Compact impact system that  
4 Hawai`i is getting; and hopefully, the amount will be increasing  
5 in the coming years. But it's a federalized system that comes  
6 to the state because of the migrants. When we look at amount of  
7 income or percentage of income that we spend in Hawai`i, almost  
8 all of the income we earn, it go back into the economy. So  
9 there is that contribution.

10 There is also laborers. People are recruited from the  
11 islands as laborers in the coffee fields and as macadamia  
12 pickers, jobs that people here don't want to do. And so that's  
13 a contribution too.

14 Then there is the trade, you know, between COFA  
15 nations and Hawai`i. A lot of supplies that we get back home is  
16 purchased in Hawai`i and brought over there. So there is that  
17 contribution as well.

18 In terms of relatives that is being sent from here,  
19 there are some figures here. And so migrants here also  
20 contribute back home to the economies back home, not just to the  
21 state.

22 Then we talk about cultural values. I know that's not  
23 hard to quantify -- that is hard to quantify. But they are  
24 contribution, cultural contributions that we bring with our  
25 different cultures and different way of looking at life, looking

1 at things. And some of these are shared here.

2 There is the different languages that are brought into  
3 the mix of many, many other languages in Hawai`i. That is a  
4 contribution.

5 So having said all of that, I have, you know, wanted  
6 to pose some questions for reflection, just as we think ahead  
7 today and tomorrow, some questions for us as COFA migrants, as  
8 well as those who feel that the issue, that is something that we  
9 work, those that are our partners in working on these issues.  
10 We should be held accountable for the COFA migrants so-called  
11 problem.

12 Are there alternatives to open migration? Right now,  
13 everybody come in and that's in the Compact. Are there  
14 alternatives or should we consider alternatives for this open  
15 migration?

16 What happens to the way of life, as we know it, to be  
17 a Marshallese, to be Kosraen, Yapese, or Pohnpeian? Could these  
18 cultures or way of life survive without stories? And I'm  
19 talking about us leaving our own cultures and way of life.  
20 Could we be satisfied with symbolic homelands, ones we re-create  
21 in our imagination or through rituals that we perform as  
22 overseas residents?

23 And who is responsible for nation building when we  
24 talking about nation building? Who is responsible for nation  
25 building? And I'm putting my hat on as someone who lives now in

1 the Marshall Islands and these questions come from that  
2 perspective.

3 There are certainly long-term impacts of migration  
4 that we know and we cannot discount. On the second generation,  
5 we can be sure of culture and language loss. We can be sure of  
6 traditional loss of traditional skills that we know of. And we  
7 can be sure of changes in outlooks, in values, because we've  
8 learned new ones and mixed with our own. Or we had to learn our  
9 own values.

10 There are economic effects on migration also on  
11 sending countries. We are losing lots of productive citizens.  
12 There is so-called bravery; I don't know what that is for sure  
13 right now, but that's being discussed. And then there is the  
14 fear of Asian takeover. I don't know if that is true, but it's  
15 there and people talk about it.

16 So as we go forward, think about those questions. And  
17 I'm offering also in closing some recommendations, suggested  
18 recommendations, especially for those of us who continue to want  
19 to here.

20 There is this idea of migrant kids as military kids  
21 as, you know, to be qualified or considered as military kids for  
22 federal assistance purposes. And this idea was serviced by late  
23 Patsy Mink long time ago, and the problem was some of issues.  
24 She started talking about that. Why didn't we qualify all the  
25 Micronesian kids in the schools as military kids? Then the

1 state will get extra assistance for the schools. So that's  
2 something to look at, maybe for the senators and policymakers to  
3 look at.

4 What about a form of managed migration? I don't know  
5 what that means, but think about that. Maybe some of the people  
6 with economic backgrounds and policy skills could come with  
7 something that is workable for everyone.

8 And we've heard about orientation programs in sending  
9 countries. I think the responsibility is to also be placed that  
10 in the sending countries. It cannot just be the responsibility  
11 here or having the receiving states or territories be  
12 responsible for the so-called Micronesian migrant problem. We  
13 have our own responsibilities and we should be accountable.

14 So starting with orientation program, there is the  
15 idea of one-stop centers for migrants here in Hawai`i and other  
16 places where all the assistance will be located in one place, so  
17 migrants would not have to go through the maze of looking or  
18 going to different place to find out assistance that are needed  
19 for them to survive here.

20 There is the idea also of consulates, Marshall  
21 Islands, and if they can afford the consulates in Hawai`i.  
22 There is a need to perhaps restructure the priorities and look  
23 at migrants here as our responsibilities, government  
24 responsibilities, government office responsibilities.

25 Right now the consulates focus mainly on assisting

1 visitors from the government back home and sick people -- and  
2 not so much on the people here who live here and need services  
3 too. Maybe calling; we need to call on our governments to look  
4 at the consulate roles and how they can assist migrants.

5 Also along with the consulate, I would say that  
6 churches are very influential with Micronesians. What is their  
7 role? Can their role be expanded to include assisting other  
8 migrants who live here and who need assistance, translation,  
9 transportation, housing? All of these, I think the church --  
10 and I am talking about the local churches, Micronesian churches  
11 mainly. We have organized churches here. What are we doing for  
12 the Micronesians, so-called Micronesian problems?

13 Then there is the need to have consistent message and  
14 implementations of Compact provisions. As I said, this is  
15 different from state to state, and this is driving people crazy  
16 because you're never sure what you -- you know, what support you  
17 can have.

18 And people are talking about census count, if it's  
19 separately from other Pacific island groups as a way to start  
20 getting accurate census, accurate information about who the  
21 associated states' residents, where they are, what they're  
22 doing, what's happening to them.

23 Thank you. That's my presentation this morning. I  
24 hope I didn't bore you to death.

25 \* \* \* \* \*

1 (Audience applause.)

2 MS. HEINE: I think, according to Canisius, we have  
3 time for questions. So I will be glad take some. Don't know  
4 that I will not provide all the answers, but there are other  
5 experts in the audience. I hope they can help.

6 EMCEE FILIBERT: (Speaking without microphone;  
7 indiscernible.)

8 UNIDENTIFIED MALE AUDIENCE MEMBER: There is a part  
9 that covers cultural challenges. And you seem to have skipped  
10 that part, so I was wondering if you could cover that? Or did  
11 you cover it earlier in your presentation?

12 MS. HEINE: (Flipping through PowerPoint  
13 presentation.) Here?

14 UNIDENTIFIED MALE AUDIENCE MEMBER: Yes.

15 MS. HEINE: Well, I guess I didn't want to spend too  
16 much time on that, but this is very important. Acculturation is  
17 a process that all of us go through as migrants.

18 And I remember one time I was doing a  
19 presentation in Maui, and one teacher asked me why aren't these  
20 migrants assimilate? And that question really threw me off.  
21 Because it was like telling me your culture is probably not --  
22 you need to change and become like us.

23 And acculturation is a little bit different, but  
24 it's part of adjusting to the life here. And it has to do with  
25 not just with language, but there's different expectations. We

1       come with -- as we said, this is a new environment, and we  
2       talked a little bit about all the laws that make life a little  
3       bit complex.

4                       And social networks assist with that  
5       acculturation by taking us around. They help migrants about  
6       knowing what's acceptable, what are the do's and don'ts.  
7       Because in every culture, as you know, when you go to a new  
8       place, there are certainly cultural do's and don'ts. So what  
9       are those and how do you get to know what these are? And the  
10      social network help with some of that.

11                      For example, I guess to give an example, just  
12      recently a friend of mine was telling me that a man is in jail  
13      because he thought that he could go and drink beer next to a  
14      school. It was an empty lot. And this happens a lot at home,  
15      you know, empty place, there is really no strict enforcement of  
16      where you can drink or not drink alcohol.

17                      So as a result of that, he was arrested and put  
18      in jail. And then after he got out, he was told that he  
19      couldn't go near the area where the school is. And, of course,  
20      that's next to where the family is living. So he went there  
21      anyway to visit his family, and he got arrested again and he's  
22      back in jail.

23                      And so it's those do's and don'ts that are -- and  
24      this is not cultural, but it's part of things that people have  
25      to be acculturated to. You know, what are you allowed to do and

1       what aren't you allowed to do.

2                       Spanking of kids is another one. Disciplining  
3       kids is another, that that has gotten a lot of Micronesians in  
4       trouble. Because back home, you know, the parents are the  
5       rulers and they lay down the rule, and part of it is spanking if  
6       you have to. And it's something that is acceptable there, but  
7       it's not acceptable here, and parents have been reported for  
8       spanking their kids.

9                       So I guess those are some of the issues about  
10       getting acculturated into acceptable way of life here.

11                      In terms of the final point, I guess what I was  
12       trying to say there is that the social network really helps with  
13       acculturation, but it also slow down the acculturation process.  
14       Because we tend to spend more time with our own people, you keep  
15       to your own group and you continue to live the way you did back  
16       home, except you live here. You eat the same food; you talk to  
17       the same people; and you don't necessarily learn new things.

18                      So there is, I suppose, positive and negative,  
19       depending on how you look at it in terms of a strong network and  
20       how that is helping or hindering acculturation. (Indiscernible)  
21       and then Barbara.

22                      UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE AUDIENCE MEMBER: I wanted people  
23       to know that, in general, most Micronesian families who need  
24       food stamps cannot qualify for food stamps because only the  
25       children who are born here are qualified for food stamps. So I

1 didn't want people to think that the families in general who  
2 have older children not grown here are not qualified for food  
3 stamps.

4                   And also one of the questions that we get asked  
5 in Micronesians United by service workers is why don't  
6 Micronesians get green cards? And the answer is it's almost  
7 impossible for Micronesians in Hawai`i to get green cards  
8 because a group went to, I guess, the place where you can apply,  
9 and they said that Micronesians cannot even get the form to  
10 become immigrants unless they go back home. So it's not a  
11 simple thing that is being asked.

12                   A lot of people say why don't, you know, the  
13 people in Hawai`i who are Micronesian go and get green cards.  
14 It's almost impossible, if not impossible, right now.

15                   MS. HEINE: Thank you, Julia.

16                   UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE AUDIENCE MEMBER: My question is  
17 you talked about things that needed to happen back in Micronesia  
18 as well as in Hawai`i. And I wanted to know from your  
19 perspective, since you're living on Marshall Islands, what is  
20 currently happening in the Marshall Islands to prepare people to  
21 come to Hawai`i?

22                   MS. HEINE: Thank you. That was a very good question.  
23 As far as I know, there is really nothing. We're in the talking  
24 stage about this. We're talking about it. I think the issue is  
25 being discussed at high level at the moment, and I'm hoping that

1 something will happen. And a conference like this, I'm sure  
2 will help make things happen. So I'm hopeful. Thank you.

3 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE AUDIENCE MEMBER: First of all,  
4 thank you very much for the information. I went through three  
5 cultures. I'm born Asian, but I went through European and  
6 American cultures, so I understand about acculturation.

7 My contribution could be in helping people with  
8 psychiatric care since I'm a psychiatrist at the state hospital.  
9 And I wonder what is the network of psychiatric care in the  
10 Marshall Islands or Micronesia? And what is the understanding  
11 of mental illness for the population at large? Thank you.

12 MS. HEINE: That's a very good question. I'm going to  
13 see if anyone is interested or willing to answer that question.  
14 I'll just add a few words, but I hope others will jump in and  
15 help with the question.

16 We actually don't, most of the places don't have  
17 psychiatric doctors. Or if they do have one in the hospital,  
18 there is only one person. So to speak of a network, I think  
19 that's kind of asking a bit than what we are currently have.

20 In terms of mental illness, I don't know. I  
21 guess in terms of in the Marshall Islands, we look at the person  
22 as mentally sick when they just kind of roam around. And the  
23 word that we use is, like, for a mental patient is (speaking in  
24 foreign language), which means, you know, crazy. But the term  
25 "mental illness" itself really doesn't -- we don't have a

1 Marshallese equivalent word for describing that.

2 That might be different in other places. We look  
3 forward to anyone from SFM or from Palau to talk to that issue.  
4 Ben?

5 UNIDENTIFIED MALE AUDIENCE MEMBER: I'll just add on  
6 to what Hilda said. So the Marshall islands, just like the SFM,  
7 Palau, have mental health programs under the ministries of  
8 health; and we do receive assistance from SAMHSA, Substance  
9 Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, that provide  
10 grants to provide some services.

11 But I think the biggest capacity weakness is in  
12 professionals on-island who could provide these types of --. I  
13 don't think there's any trained qualified psychiatrists or any  
14 related type of expertise on my island, Majuro. So that's one  
15 of the weaknesses that, back home, we need to strengthen in  
16 order to improve the situation.

17 MS. HEINE: Thank you. There is one question over  
18 there.

19 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE AUDIENCE MEMBER: Just an  
20 announcement. It has nothing do with mental health.

21 You mentioned in your presentation the unnatural  
22 causes. PBS documentary, it's a four-hour piece that's being  
23 played actually throughout the Mainland right now. The last  
24 segment was played on last Saturday.

25 The segment has seven parts, and No. 6 is all

1 about the Marshall Islands. We can view it Saturday, April 5th,  
2 at about 1:30 in the morning. I called -- (audience  
3 interruption) -- and explained, and they said they are gonna put  
4 the whole series on prime-time later in May.

5 And the nonprofit groups can come get a free copy  
6 of the whole series. So if you need one, trying to get a  
7 freebie, contact myself or Barbara Tom -- (voice fades away).

8 It's called Unnatural Causes -- (indiscernible).  
9 It's all about health issues for various groups throughout the  
10 U.S., including the Marshall Islands. I thought they was gonna  
11 do SFM, but they just decided to do the Marshalls. And it's  
12 pretty good. I've seen it.

13 MS. HEINE: Thank you. Yes?

14 AUDIENCE MEMBER COLLEEN: Hi, my name is Colleen, and  
15 I work for Institute of Human Services which, currently, we have  
16 25 families. And of the 25 families, 23 are from Micronesia.

17 One of the things I wanted to share is almost  
18 all the issues you brought up here is what we are trying to  
19 learn from them and also trying to educate them about some of  
20 the rules that we have here when they come. And one of the  
21 things that you mentioned was orienting them back home, and I  
22 think that's what we feel is really, really important.

23 Because one of the issues we've been working on  
24 is talking to them about taking care of their children. And the  
25 reason for that is many times we find that, you know, they -- I

1     guess I tried to tell them that I know back home it's very safe.  
2     But when you come away from home, there's a lot of people that  
3     would like to have your children.

4                     But almost all of the issues that you shared here  
5     is what we are working with the families here. And I think it's  
6     really, really good that we have this conference because we have  
7     found that the more knowledge that people have, the more power  
8     that we have. And the more power we have, the more change we  
9     can make in the islands. And we all know that many of us are  
10    migrants from, you know, other countries, and we know how  
11    difficult it is.

12                    But I think for a lot of the homeless shelters  
13    here, we have quite a bit of Micronesian families. So we are  
14    really trying to educate ourselves about the culture and even  
15    asking the families to teach us about, you know, their cultural  
16    ways so that we don't take, you know, that away from them --  
17    because we all actually come from some culture and we want to  
18    keep those values.

19                    So I just wanted to thank you for sharing and  
20    especially for talking about the contributions -- because a lot  
21    of times I think we tend to think of problems. But I think by  
22    you sharing the contributions and also talking about, you know,  
23    just to hear that when you got up and knowing that you got an  
24    education -- I mean, I think, for me, that gave me a lot of  
25    hope. Because a lot of the families, they come here because of

1 two reasons: It's health and education for their children.

2 And I think by seeing you and knowing that you  
3 got your education, it makes me feel more empowered to go back  
4 and tell the children that you can do it. So I just want to  
5 thank you.

6 MS. HEINE: Thank you. I'm not sure we can take --  
7 can we take one more question or that's it?

8 Thank you for your comment. And, you know, I  
9 might add that, you know, government bureaucracies are slow in  
10 moving things. So I'm hoping that through this conference,  
11 nongovernmental organizations here and back in the sending  
12 countries will work together to put together information on, you  
13 know, cultural orientation information, videos, and so on  
14 because I think you're most familiar with the laws, the  
15 requirements here. So it would make sense for us to work  
16 together in terms of putting together these information.

17 So I'm really glad about this opportunity to meet  
18 different people and to be able to share, and hope that we can  
19 work together on some important contribution later on.

20 There was one more person, but I'm not sure if we  
21 have time. I'll leave it to Canisius to, uh -- one more. Go  
22 ahead.

23 AUDIENCE MEMBER CARRIE: Thank you. My name's Carrie,  
24 and I work with Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies. We work with  
25 the providers who work with this population and others as well.

1                   And it was really interesting. In one of your  
2 slides, you gave us statistics that the Micronesian population  
3 is using an increased use in medical services, such as  
4 Kalihi-Palama, by about 400 percent which I thought was amazing.

5                   And what I would like to know -- and this is more  
6 of a networking question, but also if you folks can provide any  
7 type of insight on that, that would be great -- how can we as  
8 providers work to support the Micronesian population better,  
9 such as with our pregnant and parenting women?

10                   How can we do that? Especially the woman who  
11 made that comment on the food stamps, I would very much like to  
12 talk to you because this is something that we really need to, I  
13 think, continue to educate our providers about so that they can  
14 reach out and better service this population.

15                   MS. HEINE: Thank you. Thank you all.

16                   (Applause.)

17                   EMCEE FILIBERT: Thank you, Hilda. That was very  
18 informative, and I'm sure there are still some other questions  
19 and comments and you can probably catch Hilda during the break.

20                   We are coming up on our break; but before we do  
21 that, just housekeeping announcements. In your conference  
22 folder contains important information on the breakout sessions  
23 so please read them carefully. There are signup sheets for each  
24 of the five breakout sessions, and they are posted on the  
25 divider wall right there near the makai entrance of the