



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## Legislative Testimony

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Testimony Presented Before the  
House Committee on Veterans, Military, & International Affairs & Culture and the Arts  
March 23, 2017 at 9:50 a.m.

By  
Donald O. Straney  
Chancellor, University of Hawai'i at Hilo

HCR 177 – REQUESTING THE HAWAII SISTER-STATE COMMITTEE TO  
EVALUATE THE SISTER-STATE APPLICATION AND, UPON APPROVAL,  
PROCEED WITH THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SISTER-PROVINCE  
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE STATE OF HAWAII AND THE  
PROVINCE OF AKLAN OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES

Chair Ito, Vice Chair Tokioka, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony for HCR 177. My name is Donald Straney, Chancellor of the University of Hawai'i at Hilo (UH Hilo). I am testifying as a member of the Hawai'i Island community and I support the intent of HCR 177 to proceed with the establishment of a sister-province relationship between the State of Hawaii and the Province of Aklan of the Republic of the Philippines.

Last month, UH Hilo and Aklan State University, the flagship public university of the Province of Aklan, consummated a Memorandum of Understanding on International Exchange programs to enhance the teaching, research, and outreach activities at both universities. The primary areas of cooperative interest are marine science, aquaculture and fisheries, tropical agriculture, agro/eco-tourism, coastal restoration ecology, sustainable rural livelihood technologies, rural resource management and appropriate industrial technologies for humid tropical islands, and Filipino studies. UH Hilo presently offers a very popular and unique Filipino Studies Certificate program that emphasizes the interface between Filipino culture and natural resource management.

There is a strong desire in the Province of Aklan to forge closer relationship with Hawai'i and the University of Hawai'i at Hilo has several faculty and staff with strong Philippine ties by national origin and international volunteer work with the Peace Corps and NGOs. I urge the Committee to approve this resolution to enhance the international standing of our state and to ensure a bright future for our students with interests in the Philippines.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on HCR 177. Aloha.