



Senator English Calls for Hawai'i to Lead the Nation in Human Rights Agreements



Above: Joshua Cooper of the Hawai'i Institute for Human Rights talks to Senators.

Hawai'i leads the United States in its support of international human rights resolutions – but the U.S. is far behind most of the world's nations in its support for basic human rights. That's the conclusion of an April 13 Senate hearing on HCR312, a resolution supporting the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

The CRC sets out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of children. It was ratified by the United Nations General Assembly in 1989 and became international law in 1990. The Convention has been ratified by 192 countries; only two, Somalia and the United States, have so far refused to ratify it. Senator English said, "Instead of leading the world in its support for human rights resolutions, the U.S. has refused to join the rest of the world in standing up for international agreements. This is a situation where the state of Hawai'i can and should lead by example."

At Sen. English's urging, the resolution was revised at the April 13 hearing. The resolution (HRS312 SD1) now calls on the Hawai'i Institute for Human Rights to recommend United Nations human rights instruments that can be adopted by the State of Hawai'i. The new language reads: "while the United States was instrumental in composing the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it has failed to ratify several principal international agreements that are designed to enhance civil and human rights worldwide; and... the State of Hawai'i should not sit idly by while the nation fails to ratify what this state believes to be righteous."

Joshua Cooper, Executive Director of the Hawai'i Institute for Human Rights, said his organization would compile a list of human rights agreements for the Legislature and recommend appropriate legislation.

Chair, Committee on Energy,
Environment,
and International Affairs
Committee Memberships:
Intergovernmental Affairs;
Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs;
Media, Arts, Science, and Technology;
Water, Land, and Agriculture;
Ways and Means



A Message From Kalani

Aloha,

This issue of our newsletter is being printed during a time of day-to-day change at the Capitol. Joint House-Senate conference committees are meeting to hammer out differences between the houses' versions of bills under consideration. The process allows lawmakers to sift through the best ideas available after the public has had the opportunity to comment. We'll provide a thorough update in our next issue.

J. Kalani English



House and Senate Honor Fallen Heroes with Hawai'i Medal of Honor

Between March 2003 and late February, 120 Hawai'i-based men and women were killed in combat overseas. Their memory was honored in an April 18 joint session of the State Legislature that included the presentation of the Hawai'i Medal of Honor to family members and friends of 48 of the honorees. The Medal of Honor was created by the Legislature last year to recognize members of all branches of military service who have lost their lives in Kuwait, Afghanistan, and Iraq.

"Today's ceremony was the first of its kind in Hawai'i," Sen. English said. "Lawmakers created the Medal of Honor to extend long-overdue recognition and thanks for the sacrifices made by the members of our military community. The families of the young men and women who have lost their lives to the cruelty of war need to know that their community honors them."



Senators and Representatives rose to pay tribute after the names of the 120 Medal of Honor awardees were read.

Five-year-old Kaleb Witkowski and his mother, Tina Witkowski, were presented with the Hawai'i Medal of Honor at a joint session of the Hawai'i State Legislature. Kaleb's father, Army Spc. Philip Witkowski was based at Schofield Barracks on O'ahu. He was killed in Afghanistan while serving with the 7th Field Artillery, 25th Infantry Division, which is based at Schofield Barracks. Governor Lingle, Senate President Robert Bunda, Speaker of the House Calvin Say, and Hawai'i State Adjutant Robert Lee presented the medals.



House Concurrent Resolution 329 (HCR329) reads: "Whereas, as a central location of armed forces training and preparation, the State of Hawai'i sent many of its own National Guard and Military Reserves service members and United States Air Force, Army, Marine Corps, and Navy service members to protect Iraqi and Afghan citizens; and...

"Whereas, many airmen, airwomen, soldiers, marines, and sailors with ties to Hawai'i were called to serve in some of the most dangerous areas of Iraq and Afghanistan and came into contact with opposing forces on a daily basis; and...

"It is with utmost bravery that many heroes with ties to Hawai'i were killed in action, sacrificing their lives to protect the lives of American and foreign citizens; and Whereas, the people of the State of Hawai'i are grateful and saddened by the loss of each armed forces member and stand by the surviving family members in support and with aloha; and...

"The service members will be forever remembered for their ultimate act of bravery as heroes who sacrificed their lives so others could be free."

Senators English, Tsutsui Call for Public Forums on Hawai'i Superferry Plans



Hawaii Superferry CEO John Garibaldi fields questions at a Capitol briefing.

Hawai'i Superferry Chief Executive Officer John Garibaldi came to an April 12 informational briefing at the State Capitol to brief lawmakers about plans for the interisland ferry service. The briefing came after Maui Senators J. Kalani English and Shan Tsutsui called for a review of funding appropriated for the Superferry during last year's legislative session. The Senators had asked the Senate Committee on Ways and Means to withhold \$10 million from the \$40 million in State funds already appropriated for the project until community concerns have been addressed. In an April 5 news release, Senator English said, "Hawai'i Superferry representatives have had every opportunity to communicate with the community and the Legislature over the past year, and have failed to do so. This action will hold the Superferry accountable to the community. The people have a right to know how they will protect our environment and safeguard our harbors. They are concerned about traffic and alien species. All the concerns of the community deserve a fair hearing."

At the April 12 briefing, John Garibaldi said his company would respond to local concerns by setting up advisory boards on Maui, Kaua'i and the Big Island.

He also said the Superferry had plans to prevent the spread of invasive species through its interisland ferry service. Ferry routes to Maui and Big Island would be altered during whale season to prevent collisions – in response to another community concern.

The launch of the Superferry in the third quarter of 2007 would depend on harbor improvements to be made by the Department of Transportation (DOT). Those improvements are slated to be paid for with the State's \$40 million appropriation.

Sen. English said, "The Superferry project has the potential to benefit the people of Hawai'i, but only if a variety of concerns can be addressed. It's our job as lawmakers to make sure the voices of the community are heard."

Hawai'i Superferry says it has spent more than \$200 million on its operation. The ships are described as "environmentally friendly, energy-efficient 'semi-SWATH' catamarans" that "meet or exceed government standards for protecting our islands and our ocean."

The ferry service will be offered "for half the cost of flying." On its website (hawaiisuperferry.com) the company says it will begin daily ferry service to O'ahu, Maui, and Kaua'i in mid-2007, with Big Island service to be added in 2009.



Sen. English, Sen. Gary L. Hooser (Kaua'i, Ni'ihau) and Sen. Shan S. Tsutsui (Wailuku, Waihee, Kahului, Paia, Lower Paia) questioned Garibaldi about potential Superferry impacts.

Airports Upgrades Detailed

In response to a request from Sen. English, the administration has provided additional details about planned improvements to 6th District airports:

Hāna Airport: Design and construction of infrastructure needed for compliance to Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)'s Part 139 certification of airports. Upgrade airport rescue and firefighting capabilities; make runway and taxi improvements.

Lāna'i Airport: Improvements to airport rescue and firefighting facilities; installation of a new security access control system; improvements to the general aviation apron.

Kalaupapa Airport: Design and construction of infrastructure for FAA Part 139 certification of airports. This would include airport rescue and firefighting capabilities, runway and taxi improvements. Conversion of large capacity cesspool to septic tank.

Moloka'i Airport: Improvements to airport rescue and firefighting facilities; improvements to security systems; installation of taxiway lighting and airfield improvements needed for compliance with the Federal Aviation Administration's Part 139 certification of airports.

Princess Honored at Capitol



Princess Abigail Kinoiki Kekaulike Kawananakoa came to the State Capitol on her 80th birthday. She was honored with a Senate certificate. The princess was accompanied on the visit by her retinue and members of the Royal Order of Kamehameha.



Steven P. Golden, Director of External Affairs and Planning for the Gas Company, came to Sen. English's office to brief him on the recent statewide propane shortage, which hit especially hard in the rural 6th District. The shortage began when Chevron's refinery went down at the end of February. A March 20 shipment to Maui replenished the available supply. Golden said the circumstances that led to the shortage were unlikely to recur.

How to Reach Us

Hawaii State Capitol, Room 205
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813
phone 808-587-7225
fax 808-587-7230

From Maui, toll free
984-2400 + 77225

From Moloka'i and Lāna'i,
toll free 1-800-468-4644 + 77225

E-mail:

senenglish@capitol.hawaii.gov

To receive this newsletter by
e-mail, please send your request to
vandercook@capitol.hawaii.gov.