

Statement by U.S. Representative Kaiuli‘i Kahele
before the House Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee
on State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs

May 17, 2022

Aloha Kākou!

Mahalo nui loa for inviting me to testify before the State and Foreign Operations Appropriations Subcommittee. I would like to take this opportunity to highlight the important work of the East-West Center think tank in Hawaii. I am asking for your support to fully fund the East West Center at \$25.841 million for fiscal year 2023.

Congress established the East-West Center in 1960 as a national educational and research organization to promote U.S. – Asia Pacific relations. As a public diplomacy program, the East-West Center’s primary goal seeks to improve understanding between peoples of the U.S. and the Asia-Pacific Region. Congress chose Hawai‘i as the Center’s hub because of its ideal and strategic location in the Pacific.

At the East-West Center, scholars and policymakers collaborate through multidisciplinary research ventures concerning political, security, economic, and social issues. The Center’s educational programs and seminars prepare students and professionals of all levels to confront these pressing challenges.

The East-West Center has built a worldwide network of 65,000 alumni and more than 1,100 partner organizations. The Center supports American interests by fostering people-to-people

engagement that in turn supports U.S. policy goals, and provides constructive, visible engagement in the Asia-Pacific Region.

Every year, the State of Hawai'i and the East-West Center hosts the annual Pacific Islands Conference of Leaders. The conference provides a valuable opportunity for Pacific Islands leaders—regardless of political status and without formal intergovernmental protocol—to address shared issues, learn from each other's experiences, and develop common approaches to policy. The summit also provides opportunities for the leaders to dialogue with US officials and experts on issues such as climate change, digital connectivity and infrastructure development, and marine resources conservation.

The East-West Center is the only U.S.-based research and capacity-building institution with decades of expertise and active high-level networks in the strategically critical Pacific Islands region.

Additionally, it is the only Congressionally-established U.S. institution dedicated to engagement with the Indo-Pacific region on substantive issues.

As you consider the Fiscal Year 2023 State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations bill, I respectfully request that you include \$25.841 million for the East-West Center. This funding level will guarantee that the Center will have the ability to continue and strengthen its core programs in education, research, policy dialogue and the Asia Pacific cultures with partner organizations in the United States and other countries in the Asia Pacific

Region. Continued funding for the East-West Center is crucial for our nation's foreign policy and national security interests. I appreciate your attention and consideration of this request. Mahalo.