

The Twenty-Sixth Legislature
Regular Session of 2011

THE SENATE
Committee on Judiciary and Labor
Senator Clayton Hee, Chair
Senator Maile S.L. Shimabukuro, Vice Chair

State Capitol, Conference Room 016
Tuesday, January 25, 2011; 10:00 a.m.

**STATEMENT OF THE ILWU LOCAL 142 ON S.B. 232
RELATING TO CIVIL UNIONS**

The ILWU Local 142 supports S.B. 232, which extends the same rights, benefits, protections, and responsibilities of spouses in a marriage to partners in a civil union.

Our support is embodied in the ILWU's motto which declares: "An Injury to One is an Injury to All." This statement is the first in our Union's Declaration of Principles that clearly opposes discrimination in any form.

S.B. 232 seeks to remedy the inequality suffered by same sex couples and heterosexual couples who choose not to marry for a host of legitimate reasons when they are denied the rights and benefits that married heterosexual couples enjoy.

It is not the intent of S.B. 232 to provide for marriage between individuals of the same sex. Through this bill, the Legislature is making clear that marriage remains the privilege of one man and one woman. S.B. 232 also does not require anyone to perform the solemnization of a civil union. The choice is theirs to do or not. However, what S.B. 232 does is extend the same rights, benefits, protections, and responsibilities to partners in a civil union that spouses in a marriage enjoy. S.B. 232 will provide for equality in a society that promotes equality on the basis of race, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age. Why not provide for the same kind of equality for same sex couples unable to marry and heterosexual couples choosing not to marry?

The issue of promoting equality and banishing discrimination should not be put to a popular vote. Elected leaders of this State--in this case, the Legislature and the Governor--must set aside emotional rhetoric, weigh the facts, and do what is right. And what is right is to establish a law allowing civil unions in order to preserve democracy and equality for all.

The ILWU urges passage of S.B. 232. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter.