



HANABUSA, HIRONO CO-SPONSOR PHILIPPINES CHARITABLE GIVING ASSISTANCE ACT

December 13, 2013

By Chad Blair

U.S. Sen. Mazie Hirono and U.S. Rep. Colleen Hanabusa are part of a group of lawmakers who are co-sponsoring the bipartisan Philippines Charitable Giving Assistance Act.

The legislation aims to provide “expedited tax relief” for Americans making charitable donations in support of Typhoon Haiyan recovery efforts in the Philippines.

The bill, according to Hirono’s office, would allow taxpayers who donate to the relief efforts in the Philippines before March 1 to take the charitable deduction when they file their 2013 tax returns. Hirono introduced the bill with Sen. Dean Heller and Reps. Eric Swalwell and Mike Thompson; Hanabusa is an original co-sponsor of the bill, according to Hirono’s office.

“With up to 6,000 casualties, almost 1,800 missing people and more than a million destroyed houses in the aftermath of Typhoon Haiyan, it is clear that our work to help this community rebuild is not over,” Hirono said in a statement.

<http://hawaii.news.blogs.civilbeat.com/post/69899251080/hanabusa-hirono-co-sponsor-philippines-charitable>



GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN AFTERSHOCKS FOR CHARITIES COULD UNDERCUT DONATIONS

October 22, 2013

By Manjari Fergusson

Dozens of Hawaii-based nonprofits took an unexpected financial hit during the 16-day government shutdown due to the closure of the Combined Federal Campaign, the largest workplace charitable giving initiative in the world.

The Combined Federal Campaign is a government run program that encourages government employees to donate to charities via automatic payroll reductions. In 2012, it raised \$258 million for charities around the world.

But the temporary shutdown meant that all Combined Federal Campaign events, training and fundraisers were put on hold. While employees could still donate online, hundreds of thousands of federal workers weren't getting paid during the work stoppage.

It's difficult to say how this will affect the campaign. Most agencies that were furloughed and had their offices shut down during the current pledge drive have asked for it to be extended, according to Toni Allen, deputy executive director at the Honolulu Pacific Federal Executive Board.

So the real issue may ultimately be less about the 16 lost days and more about how workers are feeling about their destabilized financial situation.

"It really depends upon the federal workforce and how tight their money is," Allen said. "We're hoping that it won't affect charities, workers will get their retroactive pay and be as giving as they have always been. I don't think, as of right now, we know what the impact will be of them not being paid during the shutdown."

There's no way to know at this point how much money is at stake. There are nearly 200 Combined Federal Campaigns around the country, of which Hawaii is one.

The Hawaii-Pacific campaign area includes the state of Hawaii, the Northern Marianas Islands, Guam and American Samoa. Local federal employees always keep Hawaii among the top 10 states in the country for donations, according to the campaign website.

In 2012, the Hawaii-Pacific Combined Federal Campaign raised more than \$5.7 million to support 160 charities in Hawaii. The shutdown could mean some nonprofits might be getting thousands of dollars less than expected.

Last year, the Hawaii Humane Society received \$148,718 in donations. A loss of 16 days over the course of a year would equate to a subtraction of an average of about \$6,000. That figure, of course, assumes daily donations are spread out evenly throughout the year.

The Hawaii State Chapter of the American Red Cross received over \$150,000 from the Combined Federal Campaign last year — the most of any local charity. Coralie Matayoshi, CEO for the American Red Cross, Hawaii State Chapter said that with the shutdown it would be difficult to estimate the level of donations that might come in this year.

“The Red Cross is not a government agency and receives no funding from the federal government for disasters,” Matayoshi said. “Since we rely on the generosity of donors, anything that affects the finances of our donors could impact their ability to support our mission.”

President and CEO of Aloha United Way Kim Gennaula also played down the situation, saying that their concern was with the employees who were furloughed and that the charities wanted to support them.

At this point the only certainty is uncertainty. The 2013 campaign runs in Hawaii from Sept. 16 to Oct. 31, when donor events and fundraising drives are held. Allen said the campaign will now be extended to Nov. 15.

She added that people who usually donate through the program tend to be very loyal, regardless of their own situations.

“The federal workforce hasn’t had a pay raise in three years, but they continually give and support the campaign every year,” Allen said. “I have to give kudos to them, they’re still giving.”

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/10/22/government-shutdown-charities_n_4143815.html

PACIFIC BUSINESS NEWS

CHARITABLE TAX DEDUCTION FACING SCRUTINY IN CONGRESS

July 23, 2013

By Jenna Blakely

The fight to restore Hawaii's charitable deduction tax deduction may have one more hurdle on the national level, and the Hawaii Alliance of Nonprofit Organizations is asking local nonprofits to tell Hawaii's senators they support keeping it in place.

In Washington, the U.S. Senate Committee on Finance has asked for recommendations about the tax code, which places charitable giving incentives in jeopardy.

"Members of the U.S. Senate Finance Committee are taking a blank slate approach, so everything is on the table," said **Nikki Love**, director of public policy. "HANO and other state associations across the country are taking this opportunity to make sure that nonprofits let their senators know how important the charitable giving incentive is."

HANO, which supports keeping the deduction for charitable giving, sent an email to its subscribers urging nonprofit leaders to voice their support to Hawaii Sens. **Mazie Hirono** and **Brian Schatz**.

The senators must turn in their recommendations by Friday.

Hawaii, having just **reversed the cap on charitable deductions**, has a unique voice to share on the importance of the charitable giving tax incentive. In HANO's letters to Hawaii's senators, the nonprofit included several examples of first-hand testimony regarding the negative affect the cap had in its two-year lifespan.

"We believe that Act 97 has negatively impacted [our organization's] ability to serve its constituents," an anonymous nonprofit leader wrote in testimony. "Several of our individual donors, who have been generous in the past, have withheld or greatly reduced their contributions to [us] during the recent year. These donors have directly communicated with us that Act 97 has had significant and unwelcome impact on their decisions."

The letter went on to explain the benefit of having the tax incentive in place.

"The true beneficiaries of charitable donations are not the donor or the charitable nonprofit, but the individuals and communities relying on nonprofit programs, services, and innovations," HANO's letter read. "And the community benefit is far greater than the value of the deduction to the individual: for every federal dollar in tax reduction a person gets, the public receives three dollars or more in impact through the work of nonprofit organizations."

http://www.bizjournals.com/pacific/blog/morning_call/2013/07/charitable-tax-deduction-facing.html?page=all