



## ISLAND MATTERS *Mufi Hannemann*

# A Case For More Foreign Language Education

**L**eon Panetta — former congressman, chief of staff for President Bill Clinton, and CIA and Defense Department head under President Barack Obama — recently opined in the *San Francisco Chronicle* that Americans are woefully untrained in foreign languages.

He wrote, “The United States may be the single most powerful nation in the world militarily, and remains a global economic giant, but we have seen repeatedly that our influence is limited. In part, we are constrained by our inadequate understanding of other nations and peoples, and by our inability to communicate effectively

with them.

“It is therefore disturbing, and evidence of a dangerous myopia, that we continue to neglect training and education in languages other than English.”

Mr. Panetta was repeating an alarm he sounded nearly 40 years ago when he served on the President’s Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies, which found that “Americans’ incompetence in foreign languages is nothing short of scandalous.”

Panetta pointed out that English continues to spread globally. But it alone is inadequate in meeting national security challenges or opening new markets.

For those, we need Americans “who understand the idioms and nuances that characterize true communication in any culture.”

That holds true for those of us in Hawai‘i. I recall we were in many ways unprepared for the influx of Japanese visitors, and it took time for us to find Japanese-speaking tourism workers to meet the demand.

The same holds true for the increasing number of travelers we are welcoming from Korea, China, Taiwan and elsewhere.

Yes, many of our guests speak limited English, but it would be ideal if we could welcome and help them in their own languages.

By the same token, we should support more instruction in the Hawaiian language to give our visitors a cultural experience unique to our islands.

I had firsthand exposure to the importance of other languages as director of International Relations during Gov. John Waihe‘e’s administration in the 1990s, when I was selected to participate in the European Community Visitors Programme, in which young leaders from selected nations visited Europe to better understand what was then a new regional trading bloc.

I recall vividly how impressed I was at an international

school in Brussels, at which students were conversing simultaneously in several different languages in an exercise to demonstrate their multilingual proficiency.

I came to the conclusion that Americans, myself included, did not have enough knowledge of foreign cultures and were unprepared to communicate effectively in international affairs.

Fast forward to the present: Economic globalization and military conflicts are only intensifying the need for us to learn the languages and ways of people across the globe.

As mayor, I also fondly remember breaking the

impasse between the city and Christian Wollfer, owner of Waimea Valley, over our negotiations to purchase that property.

When I shared my German heritage with him and conversed as much as I could in the high school German I remembered, it was an icebreaker, as he lowered his asking price and paved the way for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs’ eventual stewardship of this pristine North Shore treasure.

Panetta is putting thoughts into deeds by joining business leaders and policymakers in directing more attention to the nation’s language needs.

He has partnered with them

LABOR DAY

SALE

NATUZZI  
EDITIONS

THE NAME OF COMFORT SINCE 1959

SAVE UP TO 20%

1<sup>st</sup> item 5%, 2<sup>nd</sup> item 10%, 3<sup>rd</sup> item 15%, 4<sup>th</sup> item 20%.\*

\*cannot be combined with any other offers. See store for details.

COME AND EXPERIENCE IT AT OUR STORE.

HONOLULU, 702 SOUTH BERETANIA STREET, HONOLULU, HI, 96813 | (808) 543-5300

PEARLRIDGE, 98-107 KAMEHAMEHA HWY, AIEA, HI, 96701 | (808) 488-1065

KAPOLEI, 707 MANAWAI STREET, KAPOLEI, HI, 96707 | (808) 792-3201

SALT LAKE, 4360 MALAAI STREET, HONOLULU, HI, 96818 | (808) 421-3100



in recommending training and certification of more language teachers, creation of more public-private partnerships in language education, encouragement for immigrant and indigenous language communities to retain and master languages in addition to English, and more opportunities to study abroad.

Hawai'i should heed the call and embrace a similar effort.

Finally, I couldn't agree more with Panetta's conclusion: "America's leadership in a global world depends on our ability to understand that world. And there is no better way to understand others than to speak their language."

★★★

The primary election is over. While the election generated considerable public and news media attention, that wasn't matched by voter turnout.

According to the Office of Elections, a poor 38.6 percent of total registered voters cast ballots.

In fact, our voter turnout continues to hover near the 40-percent mark, putting us at the bottom nationwide again in turnout. Ouch.

There was one bright spot: The number of mail-in absentee ballots rose to 24.2 percent of the total.

In 2020, a test of all-mail voting for Kaua'i will be conducted by the elections office.

Let's hope for better results, given the increasing popularity of mail-in voting along with being able to register and vote on Election Day.

More, not less, innovation is needed to counter our disturbing state of affairs.

**ESTATE PLANNING AMERICA**

Trust Plans Available for **Single** **Couple**

**\$1,199** **\$1,599**

(reg. \$2,000) (reg. \$3,000)

**Living Trust Plans Available**

**FREE in Home Consultation**

Call Attorney Steven Chang  
808-397-9968  
1888 Kalakaua Ave., Suite C312  
www.EstatePlanningAmerican.com

Exp. 9/5/2018  
Must present ad at initial meeting



## High-Rate Certificates of Deposit

6-Month CD  
**1.25** %  
APY\*\*

12-Month CD  
**1.50** %  
APY\*\*

### Hurry! Limited Time Offer!

- ◆ \$1,000 minimum opening deposit
- ◆ FDIC coverage to \$250,000 per depositor

Visit any Finance Factors branch or  
call **522-2000** on Oahu or toll-free  
at **1-800-648-7136**.

Visit us at **www.financefactors.com**  
for other deposit specials.



\*Annual Percentage Yield (APY) effective 8/12/18 (assumes interest will remain on deposit), subject to change without notice. \$1,000 minimum deposit and minimum balance is required to be maintained for the entire term. Penalty may be imposed for early withdrawal. Fees could reduce earnings on the account. These special rates are available to Hawaii residents and businesses only and may be discontinued at any time.

\*\*Deposit must be drawn from a financial institution other than Finance Factors.



**Down to Earth**  
Organic & Natural

# KAKAAKO

# LABOR DAY SALE

★ Saturday, September 1<sup>st</sup> ★ Kakaako Location Only ★

While Supplies Last • No Rain Checks

## All Day Sale Mega Deals



**GTs Kombucha  
Enlightened  
Gingerade 48 oz.**

**\$5.99**  
reg. \$11.99



**Dr. Bronner's  
Coconut Oil  
30 oz.**

**\$11.99**  
reg. \$23.19



**Navitas  
Cacao Nibs  
8 oz.**

**\$5.99**  
reg. \$15.59



**Food For Life  
Ezekiel Sprouted  
Bread 24 oz.**

**\$3.49**  
reg. \$6.99



**Dr. Bronner's Liquid  
Soap Peppermint  
or Lavender 32 oz.**

**\$8.99**  
reg. \$17.99

Enjoy additional storewide savings all day long

**Get 10% off**  
when you spend \$50 or more storewide

**Get 20% off**  
when you spend \$100 or more storewide

**Get 30% off**  
the Hot Bar and Salad Bar

## Giveaways & Entertainment

- ★ Live Entertainment
- ★ Free Vendor Samples
- ★ Special BBQ themed Hot Bar & Salad Bar
- ★ Awesome Beach BBQ Giveaways including gift baskets, gift cards and a BBQ Beach Grand Prize featuring a grill, a cooler, beach chairs, and more!



**Saturday, September 1<sup>st</sup> ★ Down to Earth Kakaako ★ 500 Keawe Street**  
For more details, visit [downtoearth.org](http://downtoearth.org) or call (808) 947-3249