

\$238,000 earmark for the Polynesian Voyage Society (PVS) in Hawaii

The omnibus contained a \$238,000 earmark for the Polynesian Voyage Society to take boat rides and build ancient canoes in the waters of beautiful Hawaii. This amendment would prevent the American people from having to say “a hui hou” (good-bye) to their tax dollars.

This earmark appears to be intended for canoeing trips

Specifically, the earmark provides \$238,000 to the Polynesian Voyage Society for “cultural education programs.” Through these programs, the funds are used to teach individuals to build, maintain, and sail native “canoe-like” boats in the Pacific Ocean using ancient Polynesian navigation methods.

There is certainly value in preserving cultural heritage. However, based on the extremely vague details in the report language, it is unclear how this money will be effectively utilized other than to take tourists on scenic cruises in ancient canoes on the ocean surrounding Hawaii.

The Polynesian Voyaging Society has received hundreds of thousands of dollars from the federal government and reported nearly \$1 million in revenue last year

The Polynesian Voyaging Society is a non-profit research and educational corporation founded in 1973, and is based in Honolulu, Hawaii. The group constructs, repairs, and maintains the canoe-like boats from the historical Polynesian native culture. It also recruits and trains people to sail the canoes in the non-instrumental navigational method of the ancient Polynesian culture.

PVS was founded to research how Polynesian seafarers discovered and settled nearly every inhabitable island in the Pacific Ocean before European explorers arrived in the 16th century. PVS is setting out to show that a voyaging canoe of Polynesian design can be navigated without instruments over the long, open ocean migration routes of Polynesia.

PVS has received a total of \$306,049 in federal government assistance since FY 2001.¹

PVS had \$874,521 in revenue, as well as \$92,000 in cash on hand at the end of the year, according to the organization's 2007 990 tax return.

Since 1975, PVS has only constructed two canoes – the Hokule'a and Hawai'iloa.

This cultural education program is administered through the University of Hawaii Kapi'Olani Community College. The State of Hawaii's FY 2009 operating budget is \$10.5 billion, of which \$2.4 billion goes to education (23 percent of the state budget)².

¹ http://www.usaspending.gov/faads/faads.php?reptype=r&detail=1&datatype=T&sortby=t&database=faads&recip_id=362165&fiscal_year=2008&record_num=f500

² http://hawaii.gov/budget/memos/budget_in_brief/02-Operating_and_Capital_Budget-Statewide_Summaries.pdf