

Asia Pacific Cultural Center
4th Annual Samoa Cultural Event
July 5, 2014
(As prepared)

Thank you, Faalua.

What a remarkable and growing celebration. Just being here for the 4th Annual Samoa Cultural Day brings up thoughts, in my mind anyway, of being in the faraway place that many of you call home.

I have never been to Samoa, but I love the idea of going there and maybe staying in a Fale (FALLY) on a remote beach cove, with ocean waves lapping gently on the nearby shore, walking barefoot on white, warm sand with palm trees swaying in a gentle breeze and views of great coastal mountain ranges rising high in the distance.

And maybe while we are there we will hear the distinctive beat of the pate (PAY TEE, a traditional percussion instrument made from a hollow log), or a fala (rolled-up matt hit with sticks), and the faraway sound of a conch shell to signal the end of the day, or the gentle strum of the ukulele after seeing a group of dancers perform the Taulaluga (TAL-EH-LU-YA) (traditional Samoan dance). Just thinking about it makes me want to go there - I think I'll book my plane ticket now.

As we see today there are a lot of people from Samoa and Pacific Islander descent who are living now in our state. That you bring your music, dance and culture with you and continue to keep it alive is what helps us to be the diverse place that we are.

Yesterday we celebrated our nation's freedom, the 238th year of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. With that signing our nation recognized, then and still now, the importance of welcoming people from all nations and cultures to our nation, to a land that is free and where we can observe and respect each other and even celebrate that which is different among us.

Thank you for all you have done to make Washington the great state that we are and especially thank you for coming out today to celebrate all that you are and for making a lasting impression on us all.