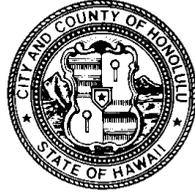


HONOLULU EMERGENCY SERVICES DEPARTMENT  
**CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU**

3375 KOAPAKA STREET, SUITE H-450 • HONOLULU, HAWAII 96819-1814  
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RICK BLANGIARDI  
MAYOR

JAMES H.E. IRELAND, M.D.  
DIRECTOR

IAN T.T. SANTEE, M.P.A.  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

February 7, 2023

The Honorable Adrian Tam, Chair  
and Members  
The Committee on Culture, Arts & International Affairs  
Hawai'i State Capitol  
415 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Tam and Committee Members:

SUBJECT: Testimony in Support of HB499

On behalf of the nearly 300 City & County of Honolulu lifeguards on the island of O`ahu, I am in strong support of HB499, to create a Duke Kahanamoku license plate to raise money for water safety and swim education. We have been advocating for some time to see more attention paid on a statewide basis to endeavors that improve our residents' situational awareness around the ocean. Such awareness must start in our keiki, but must be a lifelong trait.

It might surprise you to learn that virtually all ocean and water safety programs across our islands are led by non-government agencies, by non-profits, by volunteers, and even by our own off duty county lifeguards – on their own time, on their own dime. It is time for state-wide leadership that *begins* to draw together these efforts so that they can be improved upon, invested in, and so that they reach more residents. Who better to do that than Duke? What better way than a reminder as we drive?

O`ahu's lifeguards stand in strong support of this measure and hope it is the beginning of even stronger legislative measures on behalf of statewide ocean safety.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John K. Titchen".

John K. Titchen  
Chief of Ocean Safety  
City & County of Honolulu



**OUTRIGGER  
DUKE KAHANAMOKU  
FOUNDATION**

P. O. BOX 160924  
HONOLULU, HI 96816

[DUKEFOUNDATION.ORG](http://DUKEFOUNDATION.ORG)

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**Testimony to  
COMMITTEE ON CULTURE, ARTS & INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS  
Rep. Adrian K. Tam, Chair Rep. Rose Martinez, Vice Chair  
HB 499, Relating to Special Number Plates**

Dear Chair Tam, Vice Chair Martinez, members of the Committee on Culture, Arts & International Affairs:

I am in **strong support** of HB 499 to create a Duke Kahanamoku license plate to raise money for water safety and swim education. The Outrigger Duke Kahanamoku Foundation exists to perpetuate the legacy and spirit of Duke Kahanamoku. The foundation gives scholarships and grants in Hawaii related to watersports, volleyball, and water safety. Hawaii is known as a place of waterman excellence. However, the drowning data is telling a different story.

**Hawaii is ranked second in the nation for rate of drowning among residents.** Sadly, these resident deaths only account for 46% of the drownings in our state; **more than half the drowning victims in Hawaii are visitors.**\* The United Nations and the World Health Organization have officially recognized drowning as a major public health problem and it's time for our waterman state to do the same and put more resources towards prevention. We need widespread and continual aquatics education for children and adults, and residents and visitors.

Duke Kahanamoku, history's most well-known Native Hawaiian Olympic swimmer, godfather of surfing, and Ambassador of Aloha is an important figure to commemorate. Duke's likeness on a license plate symbolizes the waterman excellence and aloha spirit our state is known for, and surely would be quite popular. It would be an honor to his name to use the resulting proceeds to teach aquatics safety and to save lives.

I strongly urge you to pass this legislation. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Mahalo,

Sarah Fairchild  
Executive Director

\*Hawaii Department of Health "Fatal Ocean Drownings 2012-2021" report attached.

2.6.23 Community Testimony in Support of Duke Kahanamoku License Plate Bill.xlsx

Submission Date	First Name	Last Name	City of Residence:	Testimony:
2023-02-06	Bill	Kesner	Honolulu	Duke accomplished and gave so much for this island, and this is just one small way we can honor his legacy. I support this bill 100%.
2023-02-05	Keola	Hayes	Honolulu	I support this bill. Having personally rescued many people over the years I feel education could have prevented many of those situations.
2023-02-05	Donna	Herbst	Hilo	I support the sake of Duke Kahanamoku license plates to fund safety and educational measures for Hawaii's watersports
2023-02-05	Sinclair	White	Kamuela	I support this bill because I believe we should do all we can to support water safety education to all residents and visitors. The ocean is our playground but it can take a life in an instant.
2023-02-05	Kat	Ahin	Hilo	I support this bill. Water safety is a must.
2023-02-05	Chenoa	Jesser	Kailua Kona	As someone who has grown up on big island swimming all my life but been around people that aren't always as confident of swimmers, I believe that it's really important we teach kids of a young age how to swim, well, and make sure they're comfortable around/ can read the ocean. There is so much joy to be gained from enjoying the ocean and so many lives to be saved with our keiki growing up Confident in the water.
2023-02-04	Leslie	Cochran	Pahoa	I support this bill. Swimming is a core life skill - it offers safety/belonging, opportunities for mastery, fosters independence in the sense of wise decision making and generosity of spirit. Swimmers will also advocate for Kai and wai in the future because they will be immersed and learn to love.
2023-02-04	Rachel	Able	Kealakekua	I support this bill. I lost my 15 year old daughter in November of 2022 in a fatal & tragic surfing accident. She was surfing at Pines aka Kohanaiki. The beach is very popular to ohana & keiki to come & enjoy during their free time. The beach has become so crowded & little safety measures are in place. Councilman & Directors acknowledge & agree that their needs to be a lifeguard stand there but it's a question about how to find the funding. This bill could support a lifeguard stand that could help prevent such a tragic accident from happening again.
2023-02-04	Esteban	Lillo	Kailua kona	I support this bill. I hope there are programs that promote water safety and swim education, as I had to learn to swim the hard way
2023-02-04	Sandra	Wilson	Captain Cook	I support this bill. Our community should be able to go to the beach, enjoy themselves, and be safe. Money appropriated to water safety could make a difference in the lives of many.
2023-02-04	Lindsay	Resetnikov	Kailua Kona	My friend died on the big island last year at kohanaiki beach park in a tragic surfing accident. She was only 15, but a very experienced water girl. Although people were right there, they were not trained on how to safely bring her in after she passed out. There are currently no lifeguards at this beach even though hundreds of people go there each day ☹️ And what better way to raise funds than to honor one of the best Hawaiian watermen. I support this bill.
2023-02-04	Heidi	Ilyavi	Kailua Kona	Far too many drownings on Big Island, tourists and residents. My friend's daughter lost her life in a surf accident on a beach that has no lifeguards or property equipment to save someone's life. All the popular beaches should have lifeguards
2023-02-04	Kari	Vasey	Honokaa	I support this bill as an ocean swimmer. With the most beautiful beaches in the world our state should also provide Keiki & adults the best swim education & water safety programs. Mahalo, Kari Vasey (resident since 1959)
2023-02-03	Tori	Gacutan	Honolulu	I support this bill, not only because it honors Duke Kahanamoku, but it also perpetuates the legacy of other Native Hawaiian watermen/women legends, with Duke as a symbol. It is amazing to be in a time where we have the opportunity to advocate for the commemoration of Duke Kahanamoku on license plates! These license plates can show the community that people from Hawaii can create change in the world, like Duke did. Also, water safety education is always a benefit for our keiki.
2023-02-03	Phil	Sevier	Kailua	I support bill HB499 & SB116 - RELATING TO SPECIAL NUMBER PLATES: 1st HEARING for HB499: 02-8-23 8:30 AM Authorizing the issuance of special number license plates to commemorate Duke Kahanamoku. The proceeds shall be administered by the Outrigger Duke Kahanamoku Foundation to support programs that promote water safety and swim education across the State of Hawaii.

2.6.23 Community Testimony in Support of Duke Kahanamoku License Plate Bill.xlsx

2023-02-03	Bob	Hampton	Honolulu	Aloha I support this Bill because Duke Kahanamoku is Hawaii's Ambassadors of Aloha. Duke's name and image are international symbols of Aloha and represent our state, the "Land of Aloha." Mahalo Bob Hampton
2023-02-03	Kathryn	Heller	Honolulu	I believe any and every opportunity should be taken to perpetuate Duke's legacy and show respect to this legendary water man. This would be a way for everyone to participate.
2023-02-03	Balbi	Brooks	Kamuela, HI	I'm in full support and plan to purchase one
2023-02-04	Ranelle	Kaawa	Lawai	I support this bill, we need desperately need it!
2023-02-04	Robert McKibbin	Mist	Honolulu	I support this bill
2023-02-06	Willow	Roback	Ocean view	I support this bill
2023-02-05	Poppy	Sokham	Kailua-Kona	I support this bill
2023-02-04	Rita	Hirai	Captain Cook	I support this bill.
2023-02-04	Ethan	Peters	Hawaii	I support this bill
2023-02-04	Marissa	Calcagno	Hawli	I support this bill
2023-02-04	Barbara	McNeace	Richmond	I support this bill.

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# ***Fatal ocean drownings, 2012-2021***

***Dan Galanis, Ph.D.  
Epidemiologist  
Injury Prevention and Control Section  
EMS & Injury Prevention System Branch  
Hawaii Department of Health***

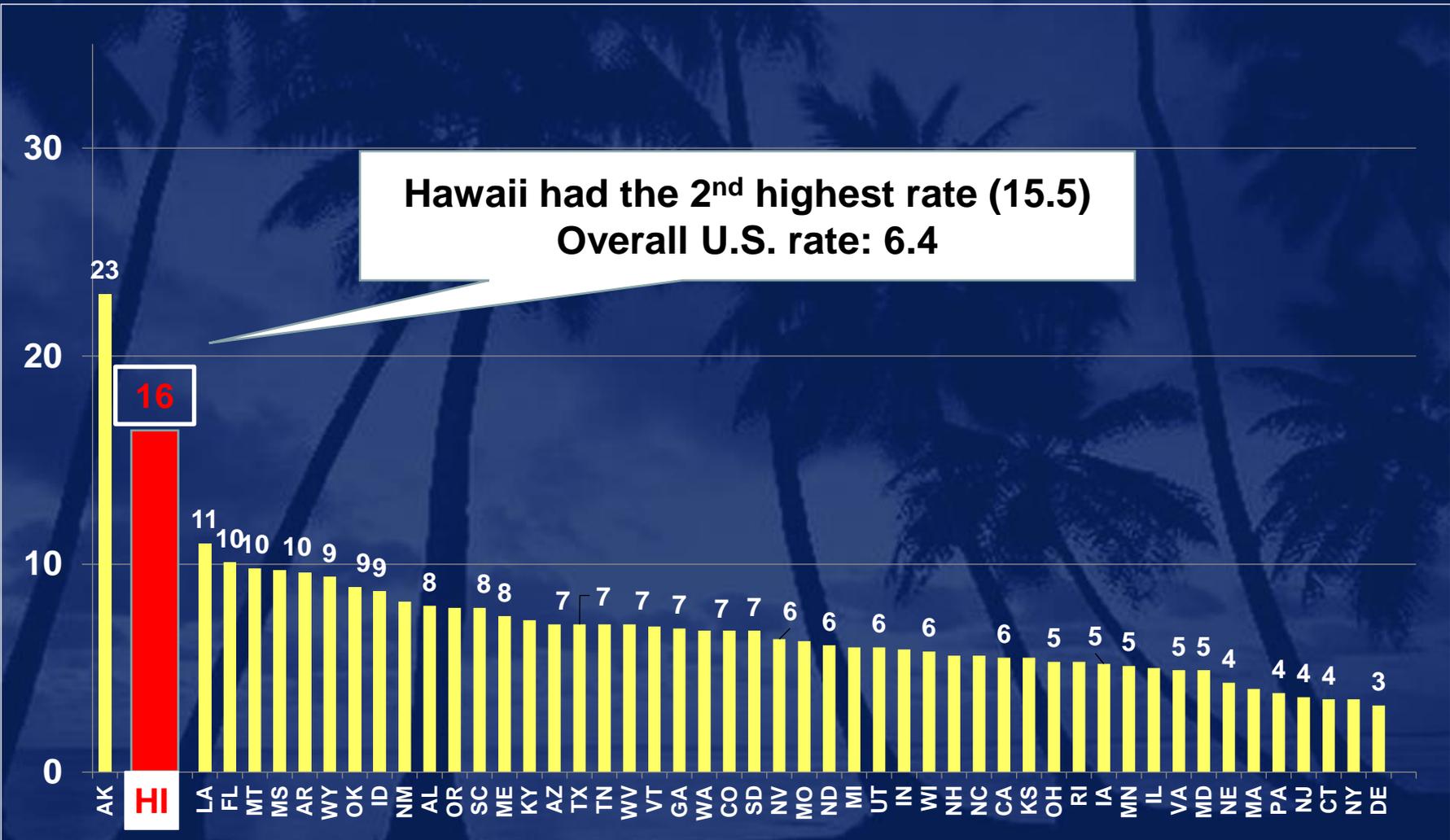
***Ph: 733-9236  
E-mail: [daniel.galanis@doh.hawaii.gov](mailto:daniel.galanis@doh.hawaii.gov)***

# Methodology

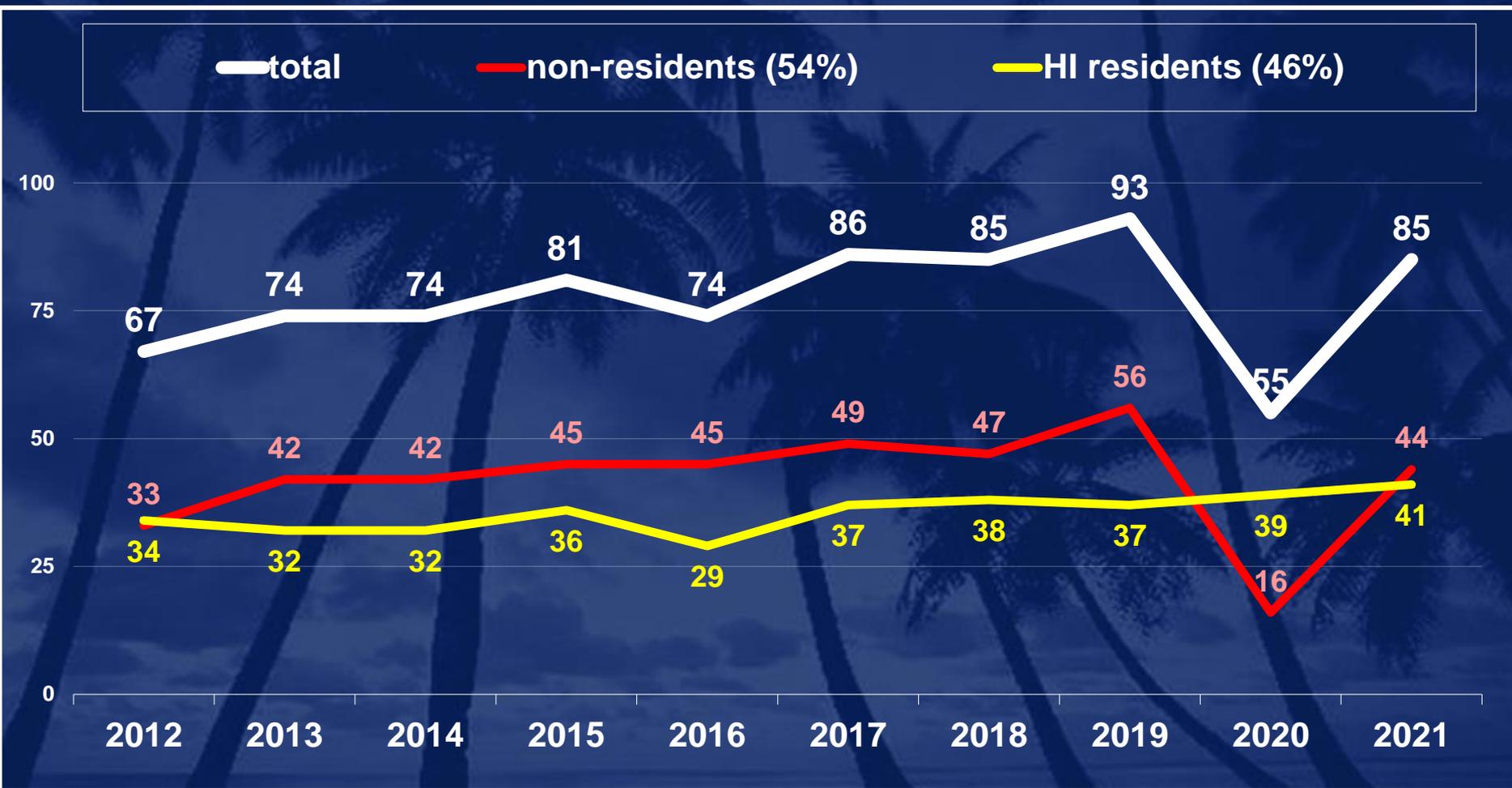
- **Primary data source: death certificate database**
  - ***Includes:***
    - *Unintentional deaths with drowning as underlying cause of death (UCD)*
    - *Deaths (unintentional or related to diseases) with drowning as contributing cause of death (CCD)*
  - ***Excludes:***
    - *Deaths with drowning as underlying cause of death, but either intentional (usually suicide, but also homicide) or possibly intentional (undetermined intent)*
- **UCD drownings are 93% of the total**
  - *Proportion varies by year (lowest (82%) in 2016)*
  - *Proportion varies by county (lowest (89%) for Maui)*

# Average annual drowning\* fatality rate (/1,000,000), by state, 2016-2020

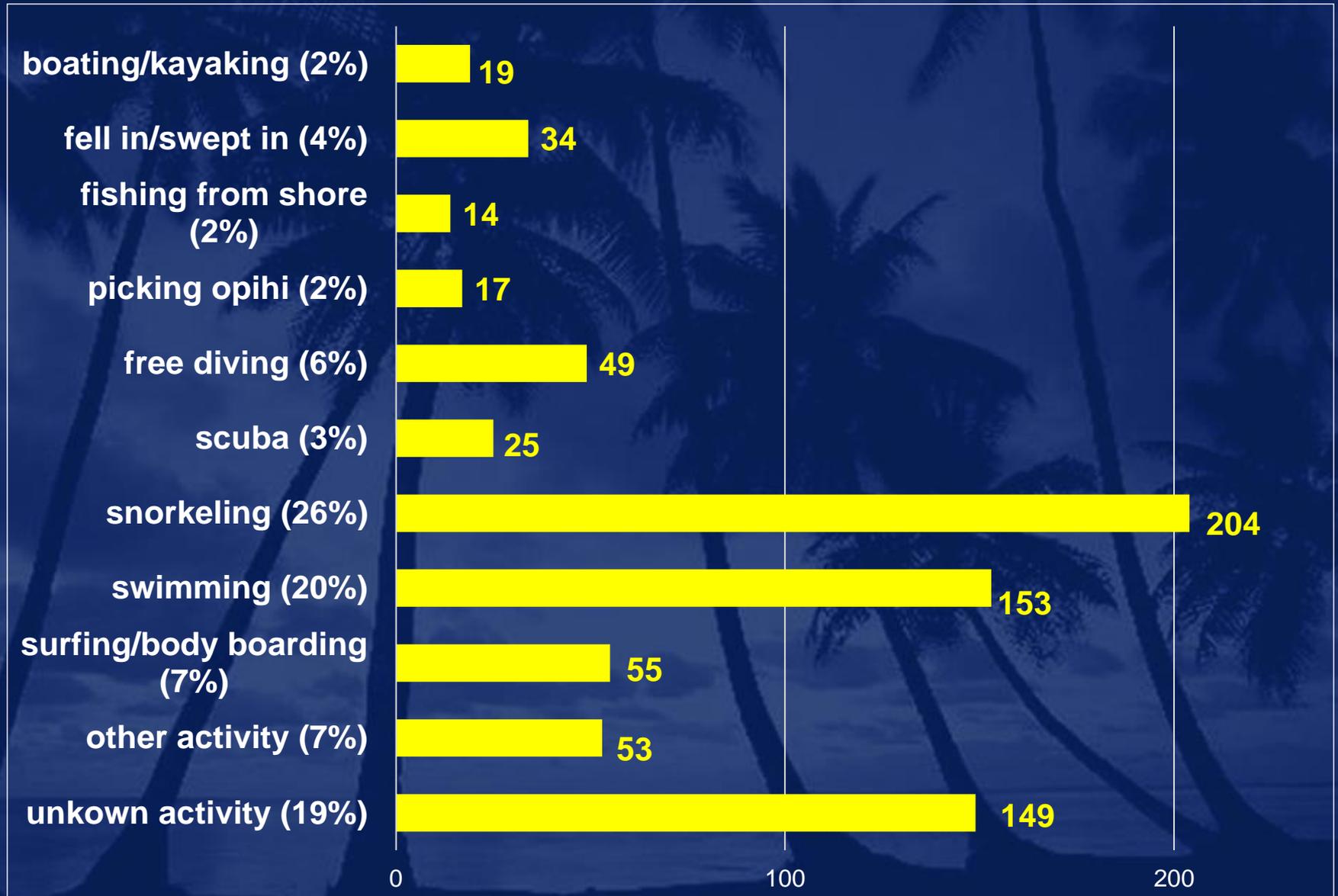
(\*Includes drownings in all environments among residents of that state)



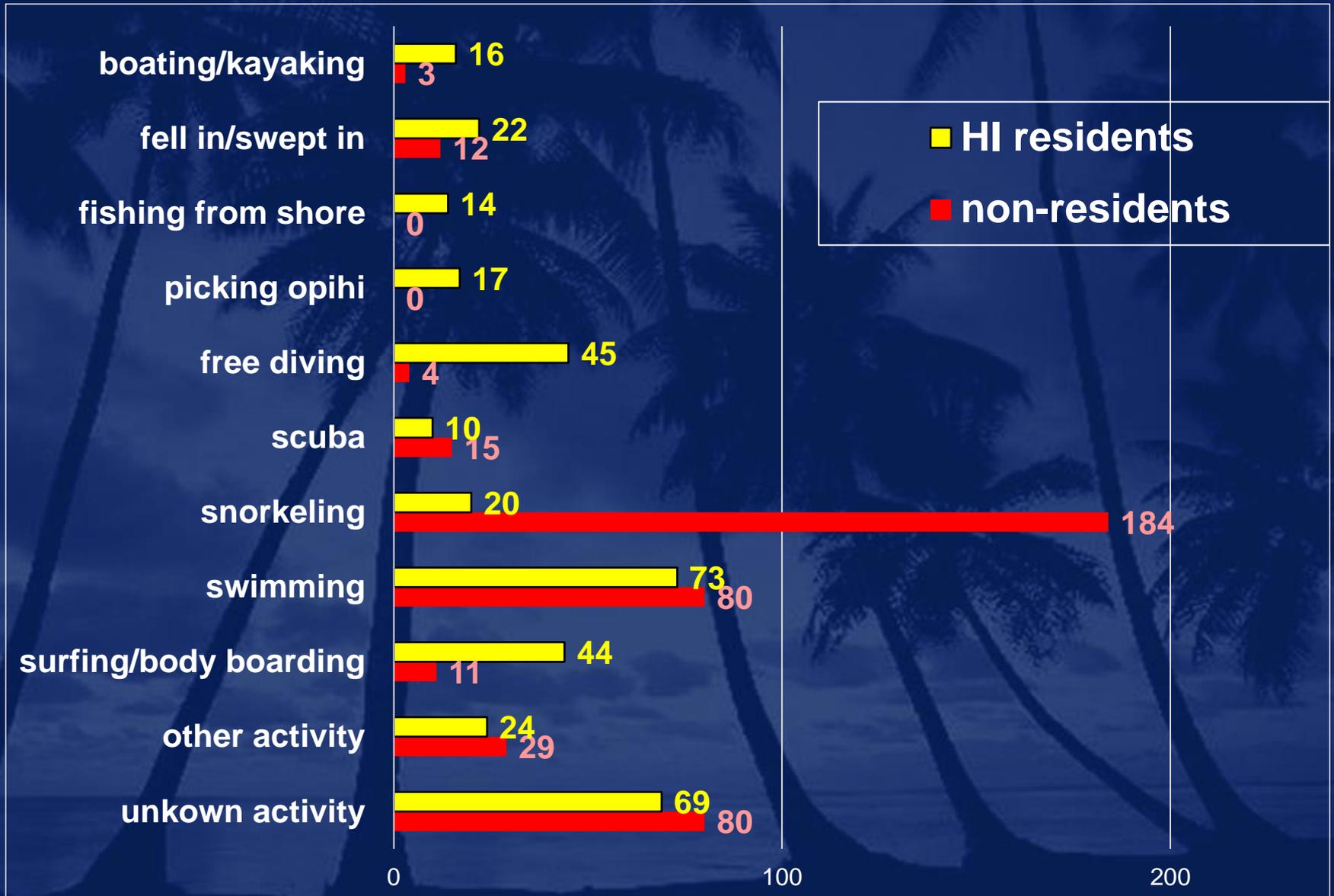
# Fatal ocean drownings in Hawaii, by victim residence status 2012-2021



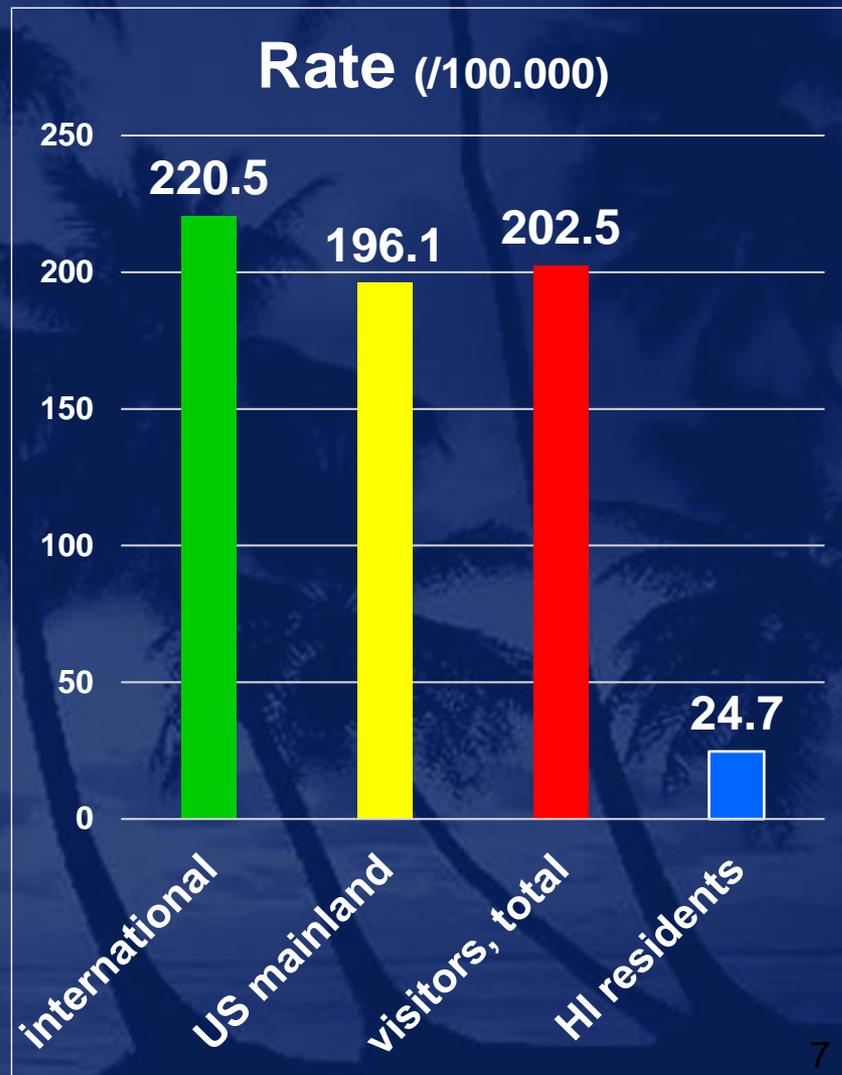
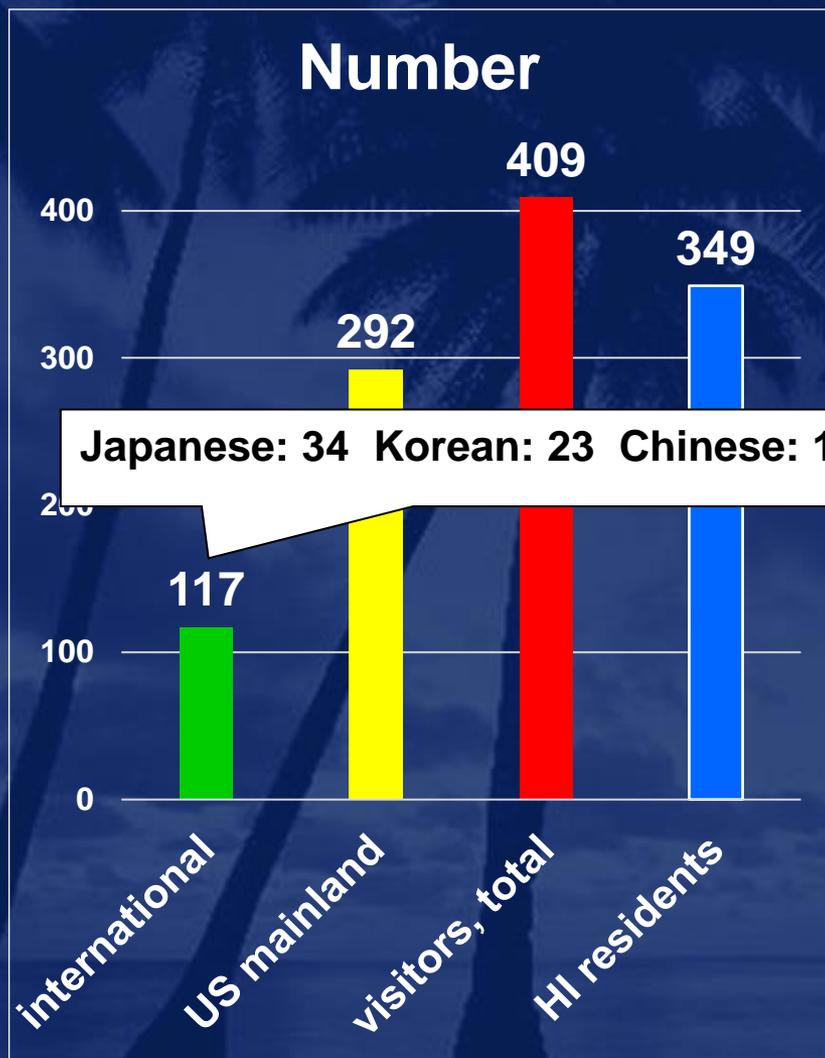
# Ocean drownings in Hawaii, by activity of victim, 2012-2021



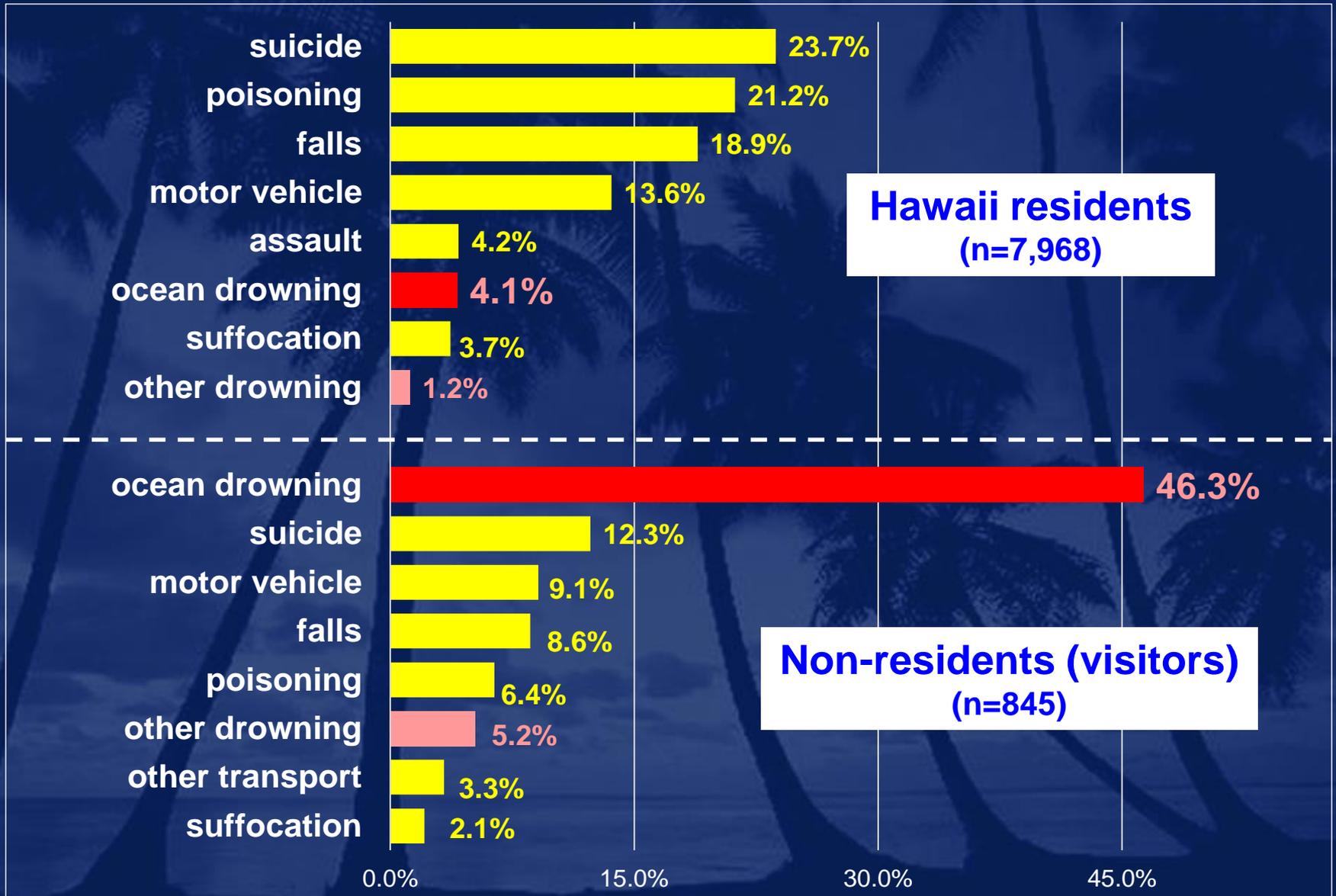
# Ocean drownings in Hawaii, by residence and activity of victim, 2012-2021



# Number and ten-year rate of ocean drownings in Hawaii, by residence of victim, 2011-2020



# Leading causes of fatal injuries in Hawaii, by residence of victims, 2012-2021





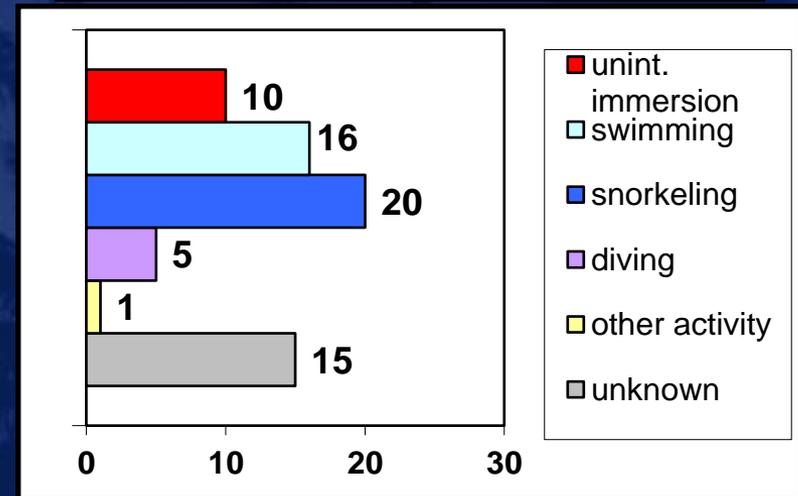
# ***County-specific data***

# Ocean drownings on Kauai, 2012-2021

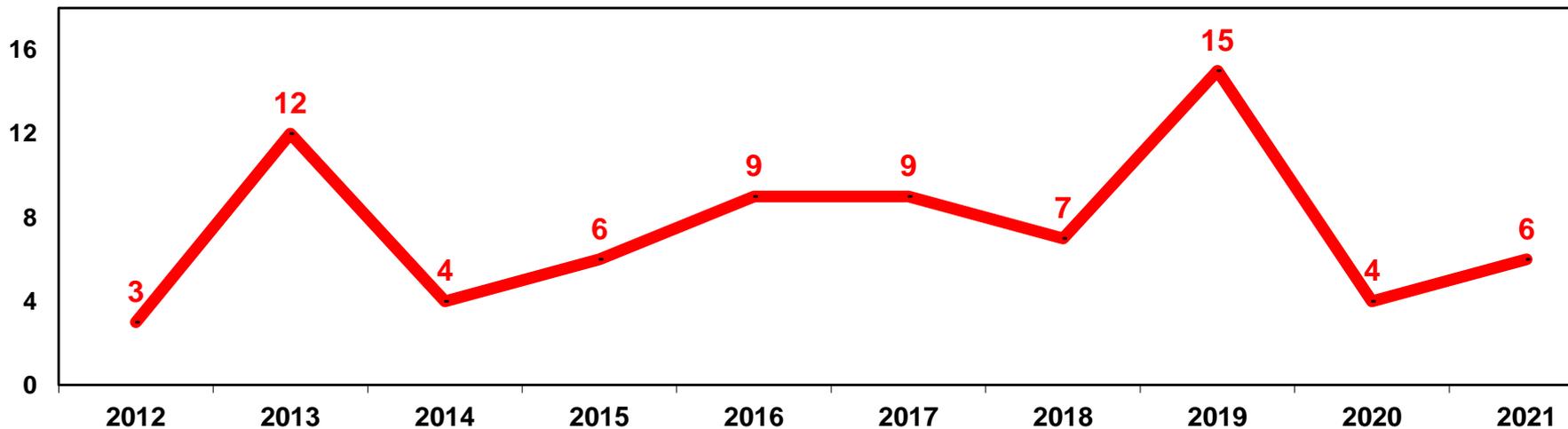
- Summary

- *75 total, 3 to 15 per year*
- *No clear trend*
- *Mostly (71%) non-residents*
- *Activity: Snorkeling (27%) and swimming (21%)*

Number of drownings, by activity



Annual number

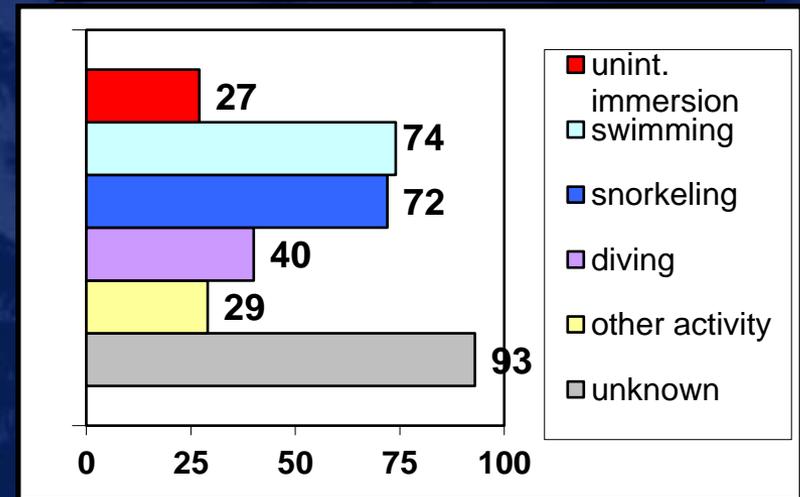


# Ocean drownings on Oahu, 2012-2021

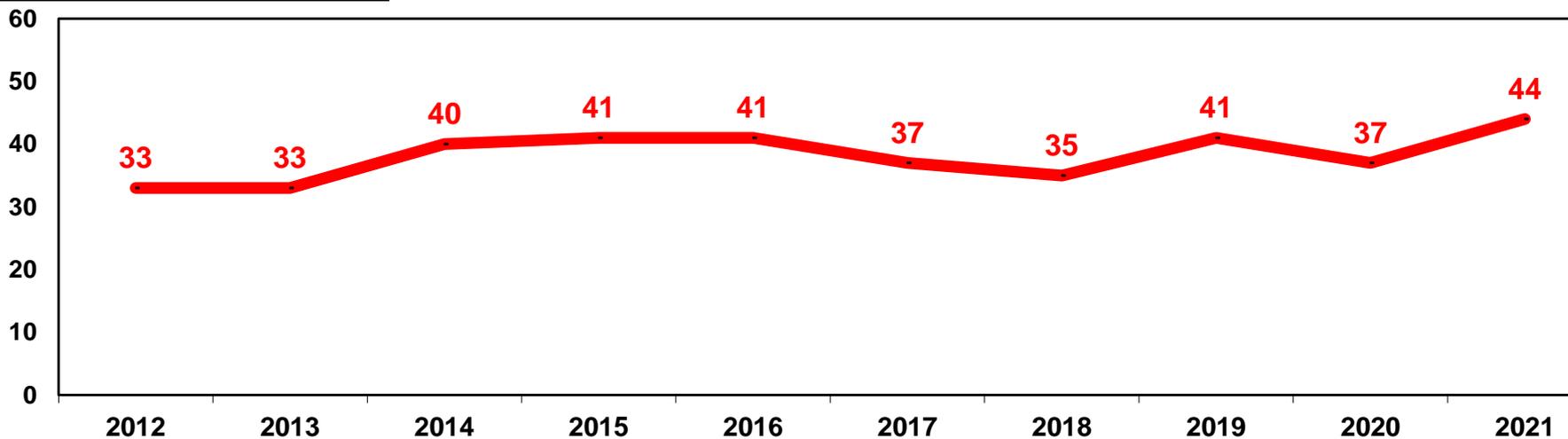
- Summary

- **382 total, 33 to 44 per year**
- **No clear trend**
- **Mostly (55%) residents**
- **Activity: Swimming (19%) and snorkeling (19%)**

Number of drownings, by activity



Annual number

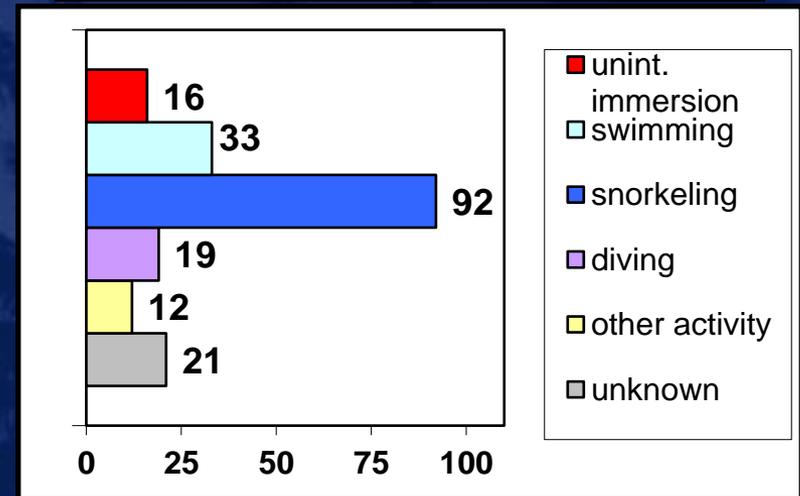


# Ocean drownings on Maui County, 2012-2021

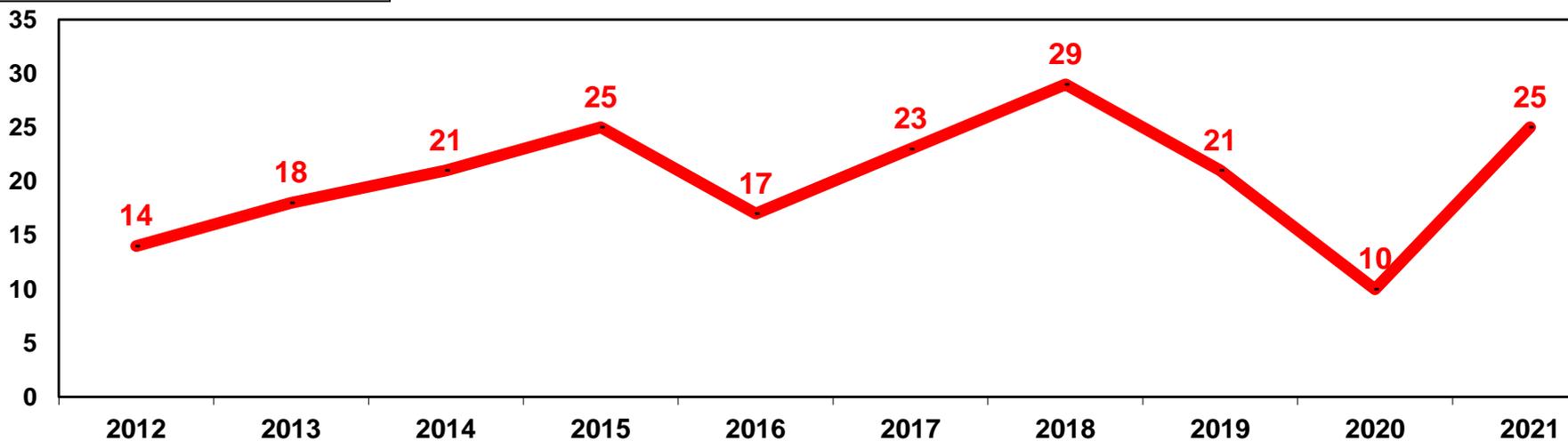
- Summary

- **203 total, 10 to 29 per year**
- **No clear trend**
- **Mostly (69%) non-residents**
- **Activity: Snorkeling (45%)**

Number of drownings, by activity



Annual number

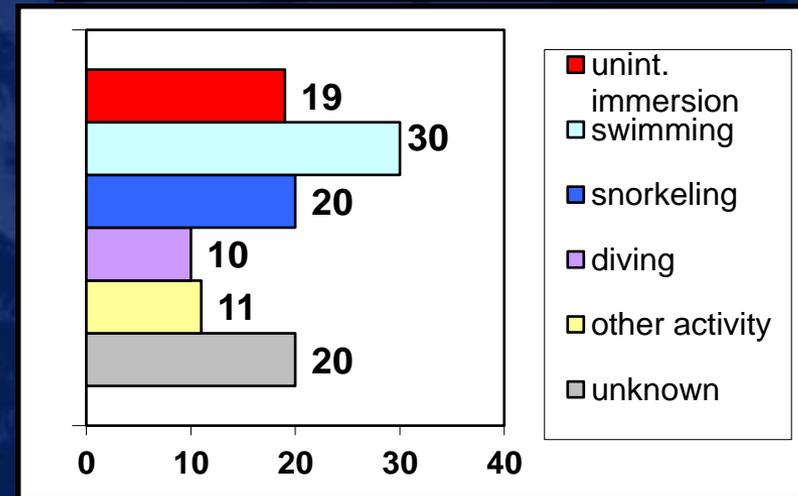


# Ocean drownings on Hawaii County, 2012-2021

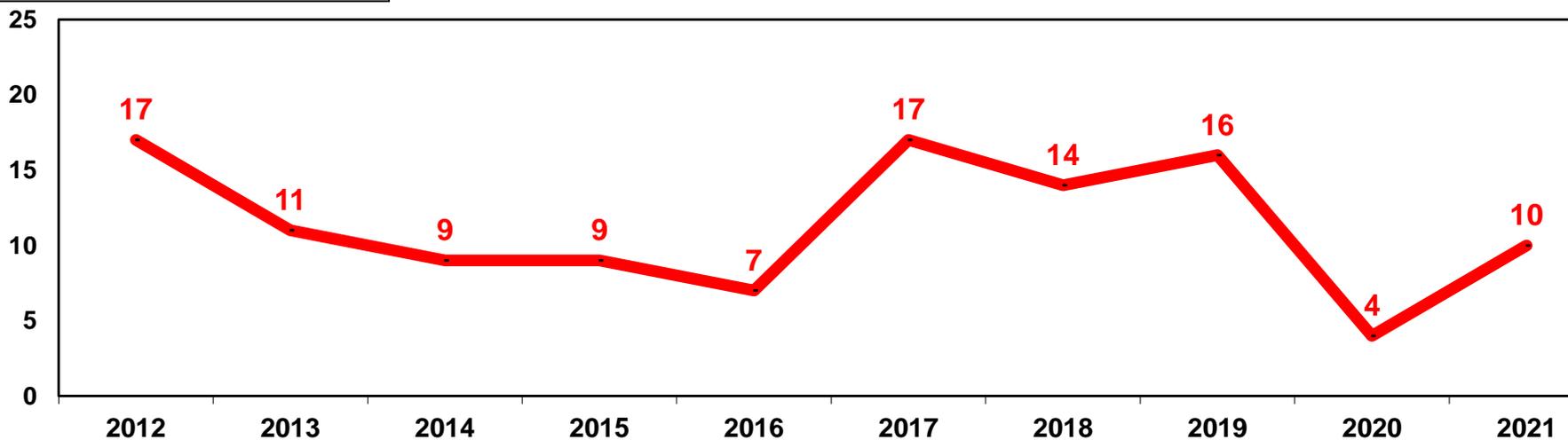
- Summary

- *114 total, 4 to 17 per year*
- *No clear trend*
- *Mostly (54%) residents*
- *Activity: Swimming (26%), snorkeling (18%), unintentional immersions (17%)*

Number of drownings, by activity



Annual number



**HB-499**

Submitted on: 2/6/2023 12:19:29 PM

Testimony for CAI on 2/8/2023 8:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jessamy Town Hornor	Hawaii Aquatics Foundation	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Tam, Vice Chair Martinez, members of the Committee on Culture, Arts & International Affairs,

I am writing on behalf of the Hawaii Aquatics Foundation, a non-profit organization dedicated to providing, promoting, and supporting aquatic safety education and training in Hawaii. We are in **strong support** of HB499 to create a Duke Kahanamoku license plate to raise money for water safety and swim education by allocating funds to the Outrigger Duke Kahanamoku Foundation (ODKF).

Over the last year we have worked closely with ODKF in coalition building and strategic planning in the area of ocean and aquatic safety, and we feel that their integrity and kūleana in continuing Duke Kahanomoku’s legacy makes them worthy of this legislative funding and support.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this written testimony.

Mahalo,

Jessamy Town Hornor

Community Engagement Manager

Hawaii Aquatics Foundation 501(c)(3) dba Hawaii Aquatics Academy

[www.hawaiiaquaticssacademy.org](http://www.hawaiiaquaticssacademy.org)



HEARING OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON  
CULTURE, ARTS & INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS  
ATTN: CHAIR ADRIAN K. TAM,  
VICE CHAIR ROSE MARTINEZ

Testimony Strongly Supporting HB499  
Relating to Special Number Plates

February 8, 2022, 8:30 a.m.  
Conference Room 309 & Videoconference

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Honorable Member of the House Committee on Culture, Art & International Affairs,

My name is Alexa Deike and I am writing in **strong support** of HB499. I am recent graduate of the William S. Richardson School of Law at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa with certificates in Environmental Law and Native Hawaiian Law. Today, I am testifying not as an attorney, but as a surfer and supporter of Native Hawaiian rights.

A special license plate for Duke Paoa Kahinu Mokoe Hulikohola Kahanamoku will not only honor his legacy, but also inspire future generations to follow his footsteps.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Alexa Deike, Esq.