



GM670

SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION TO THE ISLAND BURIAL COUNCIL, ISLAND OF O‘AHU, GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE, JULIAN AKO, FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE 06-30-2029

Senate Committee on Hawaiian Affairs

March 6, 2025

1:00 p.m.

Room Number 224

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS** GM670, which would confirm Julian Ako for appointment to the O‘ahu Island Burial Council (OIBC). Mr. Ako applied for the OIBC through OHA as part of our 2024 IBC recruitment process. After internal vetting of candidates, the top respective candidates for respective IBCs were provided to the full OHA Board of Trustees (BOT) for approval on January 23, 2025. Approved candidates were then submitted to the Office of the Governor on January 28, 2025.

OHA is the constitutionally established body responsible for protecting and promoting the rights of Native Hawaiians.¹ As part of our constitutional and statutory mandate, OHA has been intimately involved with historic preservation related advocacy for decades and is granted specific kuleana under the Hawai‘i Historic Preservation Law, Hawai‘i Revised Statutes (HRS) Chapter 6E, and implementing regulations.² Per HRS 6E-43.5, the Governor must select at least two appointees on each IBC from OHA’s list of nominees.

Mr. Julian Ako is a retired Administrator and Principal of Kamehameha Schools and former Director of the Hawaiian Civic Club of Honolulu. He has served on various Boards and organizations, including the Hawaiian Historical Society, Ahahui ‘Olelo Hawai‘i, Pihana Nā Mamo Program, and Harvard University Principals Center National Advisory Board. Mr. Ako is also an ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i speaker. Mr. Ako has direct experience with Hawai‘i’s burial processes and the administrative rules as he has completed the burial registration process for sites on Kaua‘i, and is also a recognized cultural descendant. Familiarity with these processes is a valuable asset for IBC members to bring with them to the council.

For these reasons, OHA urges the Committee to **PASS** GM670, to confirm Julian Ako to the OIBC. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

¹ Haw. Const. Art. XII Sec.5

² See HRS 6E-3, 43, -43.5, 43.6; and, HAR 13-284-6(c) and HAR 13-275-6(c).

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR | KE KIA'ĀINA

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



**STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII'
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
KA 'OIHANA KUMUWAIWAI 'ĀINA**

P.O. BOX 621
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

DAWN N.S. CHANG
CHAIRPERSON
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT

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FIRST DEPUTY

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BOATING AND OCEAN RECREATION
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CONSERVATION AND COASTAL LANDS
CONSERVATION AND RESOURCES
ENFORCEMENT
ENGINEERING
FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS

**Testimony of
DAWN N. S. CHANG
Chairperson**

**Before the Senate Committee on
HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS**

**Thursday, March 6, 2025
1:00 PM**

State Capitol, Conference Room 224 & Videoconference

**In consideration of
GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE 670
SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION TO THE ISLAND BURIAL
COUNCIL, ISLAND OF O'AHU, GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE,
JULIAN AKO, FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE 6/30/2029.**

The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports Governor's Message 670, nominating Mr. Julian Ako to the Island Burial Council, Island of O'ahu, expiring June 30, 2029.

The Island Burial Councils are established under Section 6E-43.5, Hawai'i Revised Statutes. The Councils determine whether to preserve in place or relocate previously identified native Hawaiian burials site, recognize lineal and cultural descendants, and provide counsel and advise to the Department. With the exception of the Moloka'i Island Burial Council, the island burial councils consist of no more than nine members, of which six representatives shall represent a specific geographic area, and no more than three shall be representatives of development and large landowner interests. Mr. Ako is seeking to represent the Kona geographic area.

Julian Ako is a lifelong resident of Kona moku with a strong connection to the 'āina and people of the district he seeks to represent. He is a respected educator, cultural practitioner, and community leader, he is committed to preserving Hawaiian culture and values. Mr. Ako has held roles as an educator at Kamehameha Schools, President of the Hawaiian Historical Society, and Pelekikena of Kuini Pi'olani Hawaiian Civic Club.

Mr. Ako has been an advocate for the iwi kūpuna and worked to register and protect burials in Pila'a ahupua'a. With expertise in Hawaiian language, hula, and ho'oponopono, he approaches this kuleana with

sincerity and commitment. His experience, advocacy, and cultural dedication make him exceptionally qualified for this role.

Senate confirmation will ensure that Mr. Ako's knowledge and unique lived perspective informs the deliberations of the O'ahu Island Burial Council until June 30, 2029.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this nominee.



Re: GM670 – Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Island Burial Council, Island of O‘ahu, Gubernatorial Nominee, JULIAN AKO, for a term to expire 06-30-2029.

Aloha Chair Herbert M. “Tim” Richards, III, Vice Chair Joy A. San Buenaventura, and members of the Committee on Hawaiian Affairs,

On behalf of the Prince Kuhio Hawaiian Civic Club, I respectfully submit our strong **SUPPORT** for GM670 and express our heartfelt support for the confirmation of Julian Keikilani Ako as a member of the Island Burial Council for the Island of O‘ahu. It is with great admiration and deep gratitude for all his contributions to the Hawaiian community that we wholeheartedly endorse his nomination.

Julian Ako’s lifelong service to our community, especially in the fields of education, culture, and advocacy, has been transformative. He has consistently demonstrated exceptional leadership and a deep commitment to preserving and advancing Native Hawaiian heritage. His efforts in both education and cultural preservation have positively impacted countless individuals, and we are grateful for his ongoing dedication to the well-being of the Hawaiian people.

Beyond his career as an educator and administrator, Mr. Ako has been a passionate advocate for the accurate recounting of Hawaiian history. His work to ensure that the truth of the illegal overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom is acknowledged and taught is particularly noteworthy. One of his most significant achievements in this area was his leadership in the creation and installation of a memorial plaque in front of the McKinley High School statue. This plaque serves as a crucial reminder of the true history of the Hawaiian Kingdom and the illegal overthrow, and it corrects the misrepresentation that a treaty of annexation exists. Mr. Ako's advocacy for this historical accuracy is vital for healing and understanding, and it represents his commitment to ensuring that future generations learn the truth about Hawai'i's history.

In addition to his work in historical advocacy, Mr. Ako’s contributions to Hawaiian language, music, and cultural preservation have had a lasting impact. As Vice President of the Hawai'i Academy of Recording Arts, and through his leadership in numerous Hawaiian Civic Clubs, including the Kuini Pi‘olani Hawaiian Civic Club, Mr. Ako has worked diligently to elevate Hawaiian arts and culture. His achievements in this field, including being honored with the Nā Hōkū Hanohano Haku Mele Award, speak to his commitment to the preservation and promotion of Hawaiian traditions.

Furthermore, Mr. Ako's extensive leadership experience within Kamehameha Schools, where he served as Principal of Kamehameha High School – Kapālama and in other key administrative roles, showcases his ability to lead and inspire. His efforts to improve educational opportunities for Native Hawaiian students and to ensure the growth of Hawaiian culture within the academic space have been transformative and continue to have a ripple effect throughout the community. His leadership roles in organizations such as the Hawaiian Historical Society, the Kamehameha Schools Alumni Association, and the Kuini Pi'olani Hawaiian Civic Club demonstrate his dedication to uplifting Hawaiian communities and preserving cultural traditions. His ability to advocate for both the educational needs and cultural integrity of Native Hawaiians will be invaluable in his role on the Island Burial Council.

We are deeply thankful for all the work Mr. Ako has done, both in advocating for Hawaiian history and cultural preservation, and in his tireless service to the Hawaiian community. We believe his profound respect for our traditions, his leadership experience, and his unwavering commitment to truth and justice make him an ideal candidate for the Island Burial Council. We fully support his confirmation and look forward to the continued positive contributions he will undoubtedly make in this important role.

Founded in 1964, the Prince Kuhio Hawaiian Civic Club (PKHCC) was established to promote the education and social welfare of people of Hawaiian ancestry. Its objectives include supporting high ethical standards in business, industry, and professional fields.

PKHCC urges the committee to pass GM670. Mahalo for your attention and consideration.

Me ke aloha,

Norman Llanos
Pelekikena
president@pkhcc.org

GM-670

Submitted on: 3/4/2025 1:42:03 PM

Testimony for HWN on 3/6/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Allen Hanaike	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of Julian K. Ako - Oahu Burial Council Appointment

To the Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Hawaiian Affairs

I am writing to express my strong support for the appointment of Julian K. Ako to the Oahu Burial Council.

Mr. Ako possesses a deep respect for Hawaiian cultural history, values, and practices.

He has demonstrated his life-long commitment of service to the Hawaiian community throughout his career and through participation on numerous Hawaiian non-profit boards.

The wealth and breadth of his experience in areas of relevance would be invaluable to the Oahu Burial Council's important work.

I believe Mr. Ako will serve with integrity and dedication, ensuring the respectful treatment of iwi kūpuna and the preservation of our cultural heritage.

Mahalo nui for your consideration.

Aloha,

A. H.

Honolulu, HI

GM-670

Submitted on: 3/4/2025 4:59:18 PM

Testimony for HWN on 3/6/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shelly Tokunaga May	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha kākou

I am in full support of Julian Ako's appointment as the representative for the O'ahu Island Burial Council. Mr Ako has many years of experience working on behalf of the Hawaiian community in his professional life as an educator and through his volunteer work with various Hawaiian serving organizations.

I know Mr Ako for over three years as a Board Member on the Ka Huli O Hāloa board. Mr Ako brings integrity, vision, and a heart for the Lāhui. I believe he will bring these same qualities to this new appointment. I wholeheartedly endorse his nominaton on the O'ahu Island Burial Council.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Shelly Tokunaga-May, LSW, EdD

GM-670

Submitted on: 3/5/2025 7:34:14 AM

Testimony for HWN on 3/6/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michael Watanabe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony for GM670 - Julian Ako - Submitted by Mike Watanabe

Julian and I both serve on the Board of Trustees at the Honolulu Museum of Art. Though I've known Julian only a few years, I've quickly come to respect him. He is a remarkably committed, collaborative, and principled member of our board.

In my current role as board chair, I rely on Julian to model and gently lead our team on board best practices and duties. A thoughtful listener, Julian engages in discussions yet is often the first to step back and reflect on our role as trustees.

Julian also brings to our meetings a vital Hawaiian cultural perspective and voice. While the arts often highlight people and cultures worldwide, the Honolulu Museum of Art strives to do so with a deep sense of our place in Hawai'i. Julian's knowledge, passion, and teaching skills help guide us in that mission.

Underlying both of these virtues that Julian brings is the tremendous sense of responsibility that drives his work. He feeds an already deep and broad knowledge base with a curiosity that helps him seek out better answers to difficult questions. My admiration and respect for Julian compel me to stand behind him for this appointment.

GM-670

Submitted on: 3/5/2025 11:43:29 AM

Testimony for HWN on 3/6/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cheryl Matthews	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Your support in confirming Mr. Julian Ako is highly encouraged as he has demonstrated his continued commitment to serving our Native Hawaiian community in a variety of positions here in Hawai`i and on the continent: over thirty years as an educator and administrator at Kamehameha Schools, President of the Kuini Pi`olani Hawaiian Civic Club and the Hawaiian Historical Society, Trustee of the Honolulu Museum of Art, and Director of Ahahui Olelo Hawai`i and the Ka Huli O Haloa Board. In these various roles, he has continued to demonstrate his passion for protecting and cultivating Hawaiian values, culture, and traditions.

Mr. Ako has the knowledge, temperament, and tenacity to serve on OHA's Island Burial Council. I offer my full support of his nomination and encourage you to do the same as he practices what it means to be Hawaiian on a daily basis in all aspects of his life. His presence on the Council will provide a voice of reason and assurance to our Native Hawaiian community that our values, cultural traditions, and respect for our Kupuna continue to be preserved.

Should you have any questions, feel free to contact me via email at konaview@gmail.com.

Malama pono,

Cheryl Matthews

LATE

GM-670

Submitted on: 3/5/2025 1:20:54 PM

Testimony for HWN on 3/6/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Anthony Makana Paris	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

COMMITTEE ON HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

Senator Herbert M. “Tim” Richards, III, Chair

Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Vice Chair

March 26, 2025

Testimony in Strong Support of GM 670

Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Island Burial Council, Island of O‘ahu, Gubernatorial Nominee, JULIAN AKO, for a term to expire 06-30-2029

Aloha Chair Richards, Vice Chair San Buenaventura, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my strong **support** for the confirmation of Julian Ako to the O‘ahu Island Burial Council. Mr. Ako’s lifelong commitment to serving the people of Hawai‘i, his deep understanding of Native Hawaiian culture, and his extensive experience in education, community leadership, and cultural stewardship make him exceptionally qualified for this critical role.

As a respected educator and former administrator at Kamehameha Schools, Mr. Ako has demonstrated a profound dedication to uplifting Native Hawaiian values and ensuring the preservation of cultural knowledge and practices. His thoughtful leadership, rooted in aloha ‘āina and mālama iwi kupuna, reflects the qualities necessary to serve with integrity and respect on the Island Burial Council.

The responsibility of the Island Burial Council is both culturally sensitive and historically significant. It requires leaders with a strong cultural foundation, deep respect for the ancestors, and the ability to navigate complex discussions with care, compassion, and understanding. Mr. Ako embodies these qualities, and his voice will contribute greatly to the Council’s work in protecting and honoring the final resting places of our kūpuna.

I wholeheartedly urge this Committee to confirm Julian Ako to the Island Burial Council for the Island of O‘ahu. His confirmation would serve not only the Council, but also the larger community who rely on the Council’s important work to protect and preserve the cultural and historical integrity of our lands and ancestors.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit this testimony in support of GM 670.

Me ka ha'aha'a,

Anthony Makana Paris

Kapolei, O'ahu, Hawai'i

LATE



March 6, 2025

TESTIMONY OF THE ASSOCIATION OF HAWAIIAN CIVIC CLUBS
To the Senate Committee on Hawaiian Affairs

**GM 670 – SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION TO THE
ISLAND BURIAL COUNCIL, ISLAND OF O'AHU, GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE,
JULIAN AKO, FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE 06-30-2029**

Aloha Chair Richards, Vice Chair San Buenaventura, and members of the committee.

The Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs submits its testimony in support of GM 670, which would consent to the confirmation of Mr. Julian Keikilani Ako to the O'ahu Island Burial Council.

A member and current First Vice President of Kuini Pi'olani Hawaiian Civic Club, and a former director of the Hawaiian Civic Club of Honolulu, Julian has also served the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs as a previous First Vice President of our board of directors. As a retired teacher and administrator of nearly 40 years, Julian Ako invested his knowledge and passion for education into integrating Hawaiian culture with core curricula. He has also been honored multiple times for his contributions to mele Hawai'i and perpetuation of Hawaiian culture.

The Island Burial Councils are a critical resource for the protection of 'iwi kūpuna. His history of education, advocacy, and his many awards as a haku mele (Hawaiian composer) make Julian a uniquely qualified person to serve as a member of the O'ahu Island Burial Council.

The mission of the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs is to effectively advocate for the educational, civic, health, cultural, economic, and social well-being of our lāhui.

Founded by Prince Kūhiō in 1918, the Hawaiian Civic Club movement is the oldest Native Hawaiian community-based advocacy movement. The Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs is a not-for-profit organization that is a confederation of 61 individual and autonomous Hawaiian Civic Clubs and 3,000 members located across Hawai'i and across the continental United States.

We appreciate your favorable consideration of Mr. Ako's appointment to the O'ahu Island Burial Council.

March 06, 2025

The Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi, President
And Members of the Senate
Thirty-Third Legislature
Hawai'i State Capitol, Room 409
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813



Subject: Strong Support for GM670 – Nomination of Julian Keikilani Ako to the O‘ahu Island Burial Council

Dear President Kouchi and Members of the Senate,

On behalf of the Kuini Pi‘olani Hawaiian Civic Club, I write in strong and unwavering support of the nomination of Julian Keikilani Ako to serve as a member of the O‘ahu Island Burial Council. It is with great honor that I submit this letter of support for GM670, which confirms Mr. Ako’s appointment for a term set to expire on June 30, 2029.

I have known Julian Ako for more than 40 years and can attest to his exceptional character, leadership, and commitment to serving our community. He leads with aloha, possessing a good and genuine heart, guided by gentle judgment, discernment, and empathy—qualities that will serve him well on the Burial Council. I first knew Julian as a student at Kamehameha Schools when he was the Dean of Student Activities. When I returned in 1992 as a faculty member, I witnessed his personal journey of reconnecting with his Hawaiian identity. He enrolled in Hawaiian language courses, shaping and expanding his understanding of his own heritage. His commitment to Hawaiian culture and education only deepened over time, culminating in his role as the Principal (Po‘okumu) of Kamehameha Schools Kapālama High School before his retirement.

Beyond his service in education, Julian continues to be a stalwart advocate for the Hawaiian community. He currently serves as the President of the Hawaiian Historical Society and has been recognized as a Living Treasure of Hawai‘i by the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawai‘i. He has also received the prestigious Kalani Ali‘i Award from the Hawaiian Royal Societies in recognition of his lifelong contributions to the advancement of our lāhui.

Julian's journey has been extraordinary. After graduating as valedictorian of his Kamehameha class in 1961, he was offered placements at elite institutions such as Stanford and Northwestern but ultimately attended Macalester College, thanks to the generosity of Reader’s Digest founder DeWitt Wallace. His passion for education took him from Minnesota to Poland, where he conducted dissertation research as a Fulbright Scholar, only to later return home to dedicate his career to Kamehameha Schools and

Hawaiian education. His commitment to Hawaiian language revitalization was deeply personal. Inspired by a trip to Rarotonga, where he saw other Polynesians speaking their native tongues, he dedicated himself to learning ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i, eventually becoming an advocate for Hawaiian language education at Kamehameha.

Julian is also a multiple Nā Hōkū Hanohano Award recipient for his excellence in haku mele (Hawaiian songwriting) and remains deeply engaged in various Hawaiian organizations. He is a life member of the Hawaiian Civic Club of Honolulu and the Kuini Pi‘olani Hawaiian Civic Club. His legacy of service is profound, having served as the First Vice President of the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs when I was President. In 2023, the Association adopted a resolution recognizing his outstanding contributions to our people.

His demeanor—marked by humility, wisdom, and a steadfast commitment to cultural integrity—will make him an invaluable asset to the O‘ahu Island Burial Council. His ability to navigate sensitive matters with discernment and empathy will ensure that our iwi kūpuna are treated with the utmost respect and care.

I commend Governor Josh Green, M.D., for nominating Mr. Ako for this esteemed position and urge the Senate to confirm his appointment. His service on the O‘ahu Island Burial Council will not only uphold the sacred kuleana of preserving and protecting iwi kūpuna but will also strengthen the foundation of cultural stewardship for generations to come.

Mahalo for your time and consideration of this critical nomination. I respectfully urge the Senate’s favorable confirmation of GM670.

Me ka ha‘aha‘a,

Hailama VKK Farden

Pelekikena, Kuini Pi‘olani Hawaiian Civic Club

hailamafarden@gmail.com

It is this same sense of kuleana, reverence for our culture, and steadfast commitment to our people that makes Julian Ako an exceptional candidate for the O‘ahu Island Burial Council. His decades of experience in Hawaiian education, language revitalization, and cultural stewardship demonstrate his ability to navigate the sensitive and critical work of the Burial Council with discernment, empathy, and cultural integrity. His leadership, tempered by humility and wisdom, will ensure that iwi kūpuna are honored and protected with the respect they deserve.

Mahalo to Governor Josh Green, M.D., for nominating Mr. Ako for this esteemed position and strongly urge the Senate to confirm his appointment. His presence on the O‘ahu Island Burial Council will not only bring his vast knowledge and experience to this vital work but will also reinforce the deep connection between music, language, and the perpetuation of Hawaiian identity.

Mahalo for your time and thoughtful consideration of this important nomination. I respectfully urge the Senate’s favorable confirmation of GM670.

Me ka ha‘aha‘a,

Kalena Parish
President, Hawai‘i Academy of Recording Arts
kalenadelima@gmail.com