



**DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS,
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM**
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A HO'OMĀKA'IKA'I

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Statement of
JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA
Director
Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism
before the
House Committee on Economic Development and Technology

Friday, January 31, 2025
10:00 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 423

In consideration of
HB671
RELATING TO NATIVE HAWAIIANS.

Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey and members of the Committee.

The Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT) supports the intent and offers **comments** on HB671, which requires DBEDT to identify all legislative districts in the State in which a majority of the population consists of Native Hawaiians.

While DBEDT supports the intent, we would need clarification regarding the following definitions used in the bill:

- (1) Definition of Native Hawaiians. U.S. Census Bureau uses self-identified races in its American Community Survey which conducted in Hawaii annually with 1.5% of Hawaii households surveyed each year and 7.5% of Hawaii households for 5 years. There are two Native Hawaiian categories: (1) Native Hawaiian Alone and, (2) Native Hawaiian Alone or in Combination with Other Races - which category shall be used for identification?
- (2) Definition of majority. DBEDT tabulates the U.S. Census Bureau data every 5 years from the American Community Survey and posted the most recent data (calendar years 2019-2023) on DBEDT website in the link below:

<https://census.hawaii.gov/acs/acs-2023/>

For the Native Hawaiian alone race category, House District 44 has the highest percentage of Native Hawaiians at 33.3%; and Senate District 22 has the highest percentage of Native Hawaiians at 30.6%. If 50% is used as the threshold and Native Hawaiian alone as the race category, then none of Hawaii legislative district can be classified as a Native Hawaiian Majority District. If Native Hawaiian Alone or in combination with Other Races is used, DBEDT would need to do special tabulations.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.