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Senator Chris Lee, Chair
Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Transportation and Culture and the Arts

Testimony of **VFW Department of Hawai'i**

Wednesday, April 16, 2025

Strong Support for House Concurrent Resolution No. 94 – Requesting the Governor to issue a proclamation designating Hawai'i as a Purple Heart State on August 7, 2025.

WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY

Honorable Chair, Vice Chair and Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony in **strong support** for House Concurrent Resolution No. 94. This resolution is a formal request to the Governor to issue a proclamation to designate Hawai'i as a Purple Heart State on August 7, 2025. This designation proposes to honor and express gratitude to our veterans who were injured or killed while serving our nation in combat.

On May 6, 2024, Honolulu Mayor Rick Blangiardi approved Ordinance 24-7, which was introduced by Councilmember Augie Tulba as Bill 7 (2024). Ordinance 24-7 declared Honolulu a Purple Heart City. This resolution seeks to expand the designation at the state level.

The Institute of Heraldry is agency of the United States Army and provides the following synopsis of the Purple Heart on their website:

"The original Purple Heart, designated as the Badge of Military Merit, was established by General George Washington by order from his headquarters at Newburgh, New York, August 7, 1782. The writings of General Washington quoted in part:

The General ever desirous to cherish a virtuous ambition in his soldiers, as well as to foster and encourage every species of Military Merit, directs that whenever any singularly meritorious action is performed, the author of it shall be permitted to wear on his facings over the left breast, the figure of a heart in purple cloth or silk, edged with narrow lace or binding. Not only instances of unusual gallantry, but also of extraordinary fidelity and essential service in any way shall meet with a due reward". "



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We urge your committee to pass House Concurrent Resolution No. 94, unamended, to honor veterans statewide.

Respectfully,

Jame K. Schaedel
Member, National Legislative Committee
VFW Department of Hawai'i

HCR-94

Submitted on: 4/14/2025 10:23:24 AM

Testimony for TCA on 4/16/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
tjarry	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Good Morning Chair Lee, Vice Chair Inouye, Members of the Committee,

I am in **Strong Support** of HCR94, which is REQUESTING THE GOVERNOR TO ISSUE A PROCLAMATION DESIGNATING HAWAII AS A PURPLE HEART STATE ON AUGUST 7, 2025.

Before I testify, I would like to introduce myself. I am not a recipient of this prestigious award, nor am I submitting testimony for my own personal benefit. I am simply Sergeant Jiang, a proud United States Army active-duty veteran. I served for 5 years, have been overseas once, and I had a CONUS assignment. My MOS was a 13F, but my MOS code was 13F30L7. I was a Fire Support Specialist, a Forward Observer, but most importantly, a soldier. I worked with Field Artillery and was attached to the infantry. I was the person with the radio that performed reconnaissance, intel, and provided artillery fire, but I was also able to work with the infantry's mortar platoons, the air force's fighters, and the navy's ships.

I believe the designation of Hawaii as a Purple Heart State would let veterans, especially recipients of the incredibly honorable award be recognized. Bringing light to not only the honor and glory, but the pain and sadness as well. This will not only raise awareness for our veterans, but also preserving and educating our future generations. Given Hawaii's deep military history, This resolution would assist in raising awareness for its designated day, as well as our troops. The Purple Heart award is awarded to those who have been wounded or made the ultimate sacrifice protecting our freedom, values, and the fundamentals we built America on. While its true that there are mixed feelings in Hawaii about the military presence, we cannot overlook the sacrifices made by those who wear our uniform, many even calling this place home. Regardless of politics and personal feelings towards the matter, we must find gratitude. Honoring those recipients is about recognizing the human cost of service and those the individuals that stepped forward to protect those who didn't or couldn't. Without our Armed Forces, we may not be living the lives we are living today. Hawaii's involvement with the military first started when it was seen as a strategic location in the Pacific. Following this initial event, the naval base known as Pearl Harbor was secured under the Bayonet Constitution. The very well-known tragedy that took place on December 7th, 1941, known as the "Attack on Pearl Harbor" was a major turning point for the World War, drawing the United States in, and making Pearl Harbor a major military command center and staging area. Now, Hawaii is home to the U.S. Indopacific Command (INDOPACOM) which is the largest unified combatant command, housing major bases across the State. Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

HCR-94

Submitted on: 4/14/2025 10:51:45 AM

Testimony for TCA on 4/16/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Funganimapa Tuipulotu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Lee, Vice Chair Inouye. and esteemed Members of the Committee,

My name is Funganimapa 'Uluvalu and I am in strong support of HCR94.

As a proud parent of two sons, one who is currently serving in the United States Marine Corps and one who previously served, I carry a deep and personal sense of gratitude for all of our service members. I understand the weight of their commitment, their bravery, their selflessness, and the sacrifices they make each day for this country. Watching my sons serve has only strengthened my appreciation for the men and women in uniform and the challenges they face in the defense of our freedoms.

The Purple Heart is a solemn recognition of those who have been wounded or killed in combat. These individuals have endured great personal cost in service to others. Honoring them by designating Hawai'i as a Purple Heart State is a meaningful and necessary gesture. It sends a powerful message of respect, remembrance, and gratitude, not only to those who have earned the Purple Heart, but to every military family who stands behind them.

We should honor our service members in every way we can. Supporting HCR94 is one small yet significant way to do just that. It reflects the values we hold as a community and a state, and it shows our military 'ohana that their sacrifices are not forgotten.

Malo 'aupito and aloha,

Funganimapa 'Uluvalu.

HCR-94

Submitted on: 4/14/2025 11:00:41 AM

Testimony for TCA on 4/16/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tapukitea Tupou	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Tapukitea Tupou, and I am writing in strong support of HCR94.

I am the proud mum of two United States Marines, one who is currently serving, and one who has already completed his service. As a mother, having your children answer the call to serve is a mix of immense pride and deep concern. You raise them to be strong, and then you watch them step into a world that demands every ounce of that strength.

Through my sons' journeys, I've come to understand the weight that service carries, not just for those in uniform, but for the families who love and support them from afar. Every deployment, every phone call, every homecoming, they stay with you. It changes how you see the world and deepens your appreciation for all who serve.

Supporting this resolution means a great deal to me personally. It's one way for our state to show that we stand behind our service members and their families, that their sacrifices are not only recognized but deeply appreciated.

I respectfully urge the committee to pass HCR94.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

HCR-94

Submitted on: 4/14/2025 10:32:52 AM

Testimony for TCA on 4/16/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tevita Tulahe	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Lee, Vice Chair Inouye, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Tevita Tulahe, and I am a proud service member of the United States Army. I was born and raised in Wailuku, Maui, and no matter where my service takes me, Hawai‘i will always be my home.

I write today in strong support of HCR94, which requests the Governor to issue a proclamation designating Hawai‘i as a Purple Heart State on August 7, 2025.

As a Ranger in the United States Army, I have been deployed to combat zones. I am not a recipient of the Purple Heart, but I have had a few close calls, and I have seen the chaos and danger that earns others this sacred recognition. Because of those experiences, I carry a deep and personal understanding of what this award represents. The Purple Heart is not just a medal, it is a mark of sacrifice, courage, and the physical and emotional cost of protecting our freedoms.

I have had the honor of serving alongside soldiers who bear the scars of war. Some have returned with wounds visible to the eye, others with injuries that remain unseen but deeply felt. I know what it’s like to watch a fellow soldier get hurt and still press forward, to hear the silence after a firefight and wonder who didn’t make it. These moments stay with you. They teach you humility, reverence, and an unshakable respect for those who have truly given more than most could ever imagine.

The Purple Heart stands as a symbol of those sacrifices. Designating Hawai‘i as a Purple Heart State is more than a symbolic gesture, it is a public act of remembrance. It is a way for our entire community and state to say: we see you, we thank you, and we will never forget you.

This act of recognition will not only honor Purple Heart recipients but will also help educate our community, especially our keiki, about the price of freedom and the values of service and sacrifice. It reflects the deep military roots and respect that are part of Hawai‘i’s identity.

I respectfully urge the passage of HCR94. Let us honor the legacy and courage of our Purple Heart recipients and show that Hawai‘i stands with our wounded warriors, past, present, and always.

Mahalo nui loa for your time and consideration.

Tevita Tulahe

Testimony in Support of the State of Hawaii Becoming a Purple Heart State

Submitted by Sergeant First Class (Retired) Takumi Abe

Member, Military Order of the Purple Heart, Rainbow Chapter #483 - Hawaii

Aloha,

My name is Sergeant First Class (Retired) Takumi Abe, and I am honored to submit this testimony in strong support of the State of Hawaii being officially designated as a Purple Heart State.

Hawaii is home to generations of brave men and women who have served and sacrificed in every major conflict-from World War II, Korea, and Vietnam, to the Global War on Terrorism. Many of our local heroes have been wounded in action or have made the ultimate sacrifice. Recognizing Hawaii as a Purple Heart State would be a meaningful and lasting tribute to these individuals and their families. It would serve as a powerful acknowledgment of their service, courage, and the sacrifices they've made for our country.

As a proud member of the Military Order of the Purple Heart Rainbow Chapter #483 here in Hawaii, I am personally committed to honoring the legacy of the Purple Heart Medal-our nation's oldest military award-and ensuring the stories of our combat-wounded veterans are never forgotten.

Designating Hawaii as a Purple Heart State would not only honor the past but also inspire future generations to remember the cost of freedom. It would be a tremendous gesture of respect and appreciation for all Purple Heart recipients across our islands.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify. I respectfully urge the passage of this resolution and its advancement to the Governor's desk.

With gratitude,

Sergeant First Class (Retired) Takumi Abe

Military Order of the Purple Heart, Rainbow Chapter #483 - Hawaii

HCR-94

Submitted on: 4/15/2025 8:23:05 PM

Testimony for TCA on 4/16/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jeffrey Martin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To Whom It May Concern,

I propose that the Governor issue a proclamation designating the state of Hawai‘i as a Purple Heart State on August 7, 2025. This designation stands as a powerful testament to Hawai‘i's profound respect and gratitude for the brave men and women wounded or killed in action while defending our nation.

The Purple Heart, our nation's oldest military medal, represents the selfless sacrifice made by members of the armed forces. By becoming a Purple Heart State, Hawai‘i would not only honor these heroes but also extend its heartfelt appreciation to their families who share in the weight of their sacrifice. As someone who has been awarded the Purple Heart, I can personally attest to the profound significance of this honor. Seeing our beautiful state of Hawai‘i designated as a Purple Heart State would fill me with immense pride and gratitude.

Very respectfully,

Jeffrey Martin

HCR-94

Submitted on: 4/15/2025 8:43:32 PM

Testimony for TCA on 4/16/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lee Ann Abe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As the proud spouse of a Purple Heart recipient, I wholeheartedly support Hawaii being recognized as a Purple Heart State. This designation is not just symbolic—it is a powerful acknowledgment of the courage, sacrifice, and service of all veterans who have given so much for our country. Honoring Hawaii as a Purple Heart State is a meaningful tribute to the heroes among us and a reminder that their sacrifices will never be forgotten. It is an honor that belongs to every veteran who has served with valor, and it reflects the deep gratitude of our community.